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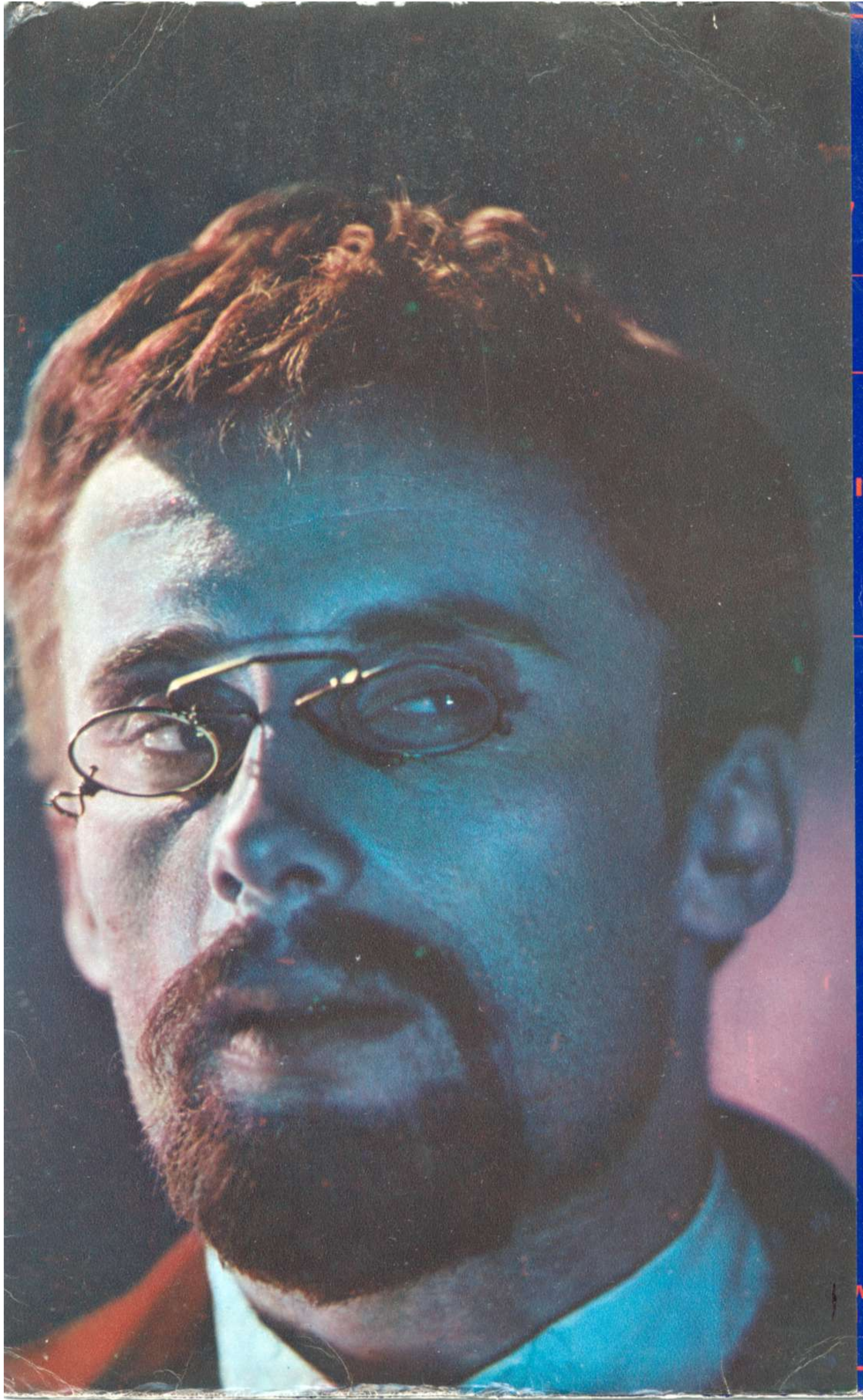
**WESELE**

# THE WEDDING LES NOCES

FILM POLSKI  
Export and Import of Films  
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Warsaw, Poland







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**FILM POLSKI**  
p r e s e n t s

# **THE WEDDING by** **ANDRZEJ WAJDA**

Screenplay based on **STANISŁAW WYSPIAŃSKI'S**  
play by **ANDRZEJ KIJOWSKI**

Photography (Eastmancolor) by **WITOLD SOBOCIŃSKI**

Music by **STANISŁAW RADWAN**

Set decorations: **TADEUSZ WYBULT**

Production Manager: **BARBARA PEC-ŚLESICKA**

**Eastmancolor, 1.66, 110 mins.      Produced at**  
**the Polish Corporation for Film Production, "X" Unit**

## **The Cast:**

**EWA ZIĘTEK**

Bride

**DANIEL OLBRYCHSKI**

Bridegroom

**ANDRZEJ ŁAPICKI**

Poet

**WOJCIECH PSZONIAK**

Journalist

**FRANCISZEK PIECZKA**

Czepiec

**KAZIMIERZ OPALIŃSKI**

Father

**MAREK WALCZEWSKI**

Host

**IZA OLSZEWSKA**

Hostess

**MAJA KOMOROWSKA**

Rachela

**MAŁGORZATA LORENTOWICZ**

Councillor's wife

**BARBARA WRZESIŃSKA**

Maryna

**HANNA SKARŻANKA**

Klimina

**ANDRZEJ SZCZEPKOWSKI**

Nos

**EMILIA KRAKOWSKA**

Marysia

**HENRYK BOROWSKI**

Old man

**MAREK PEREPECZKO**

Jasiek

**MIECZYŚŁAW VOIT**

Jew

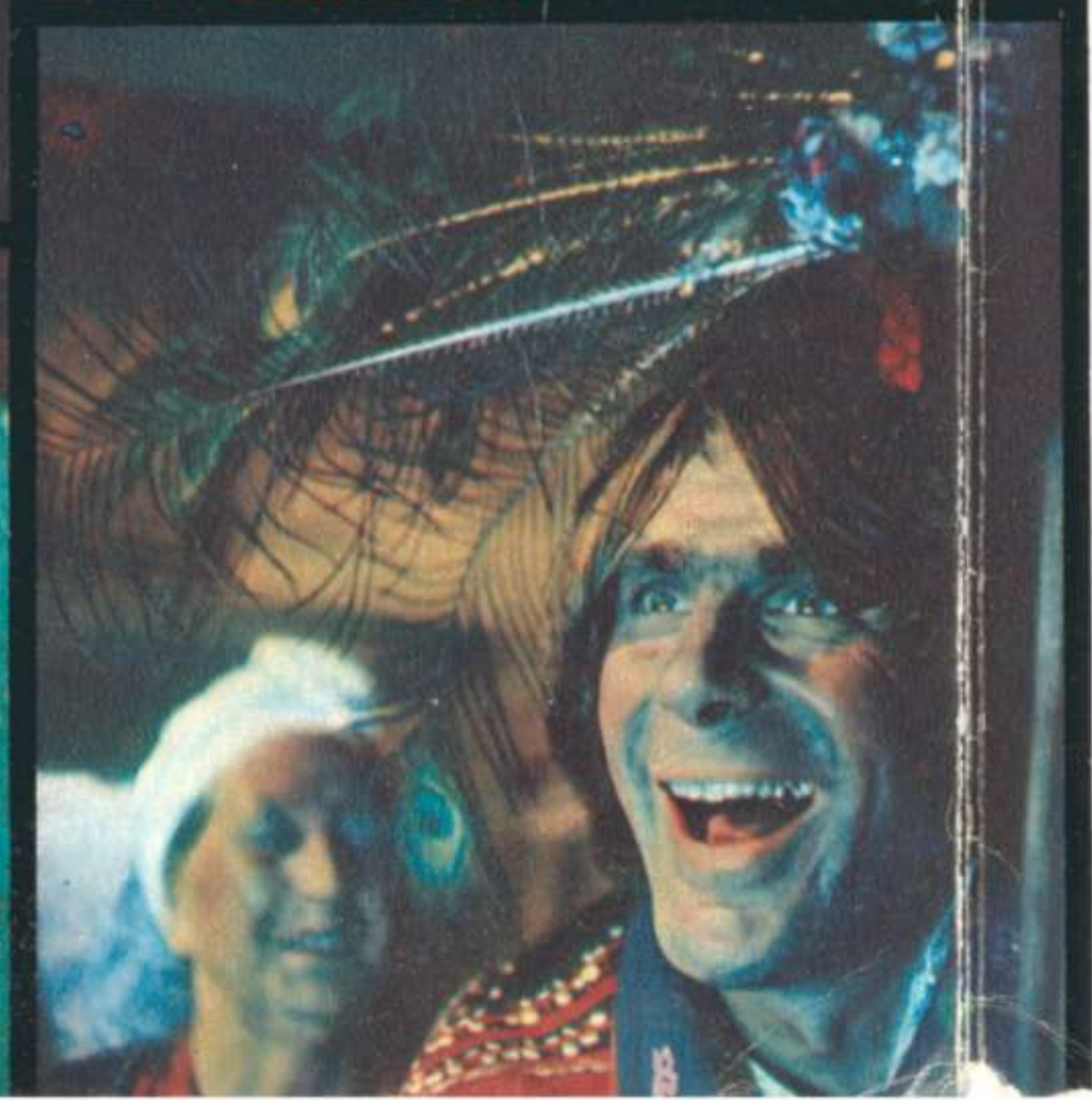
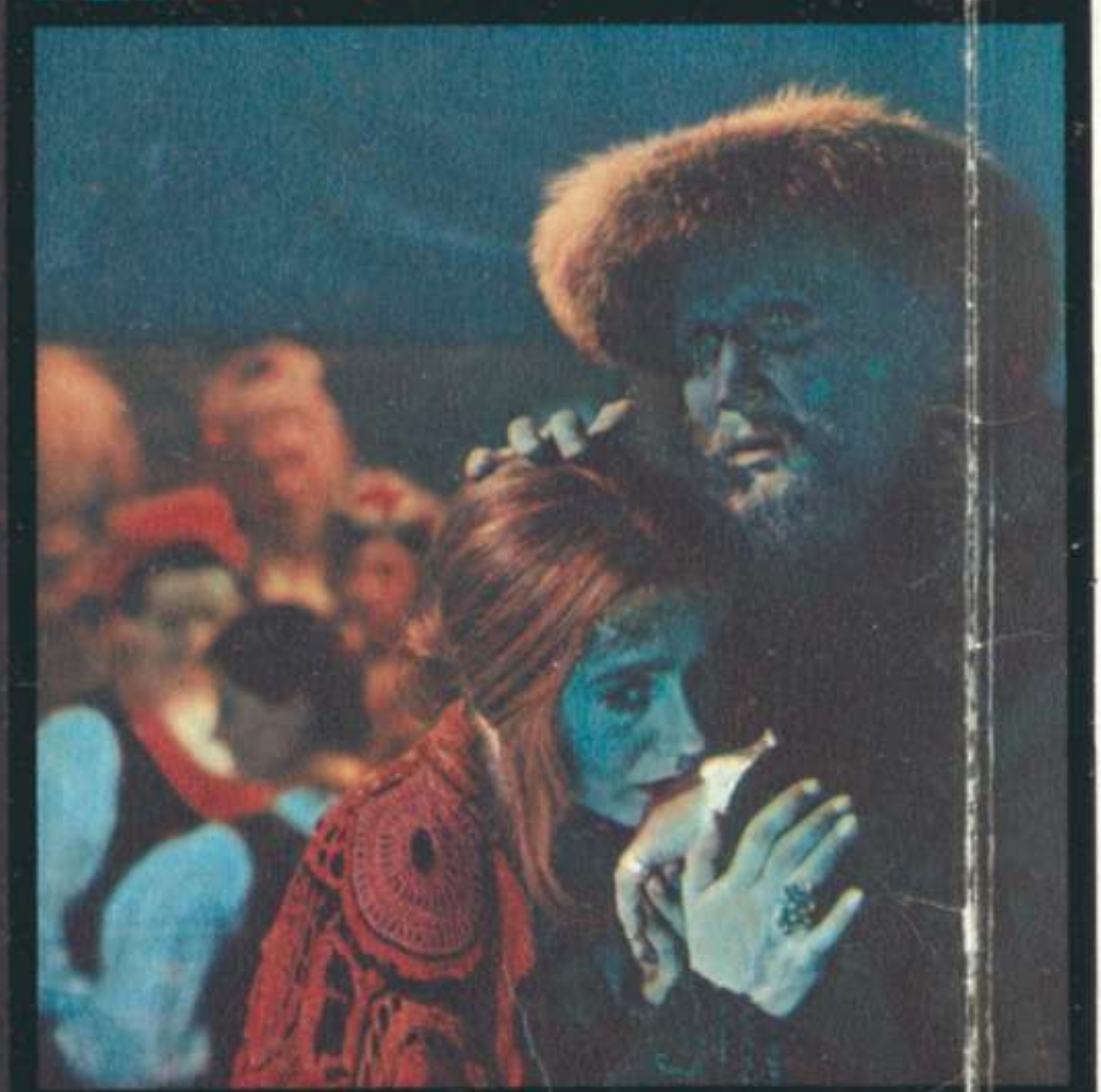
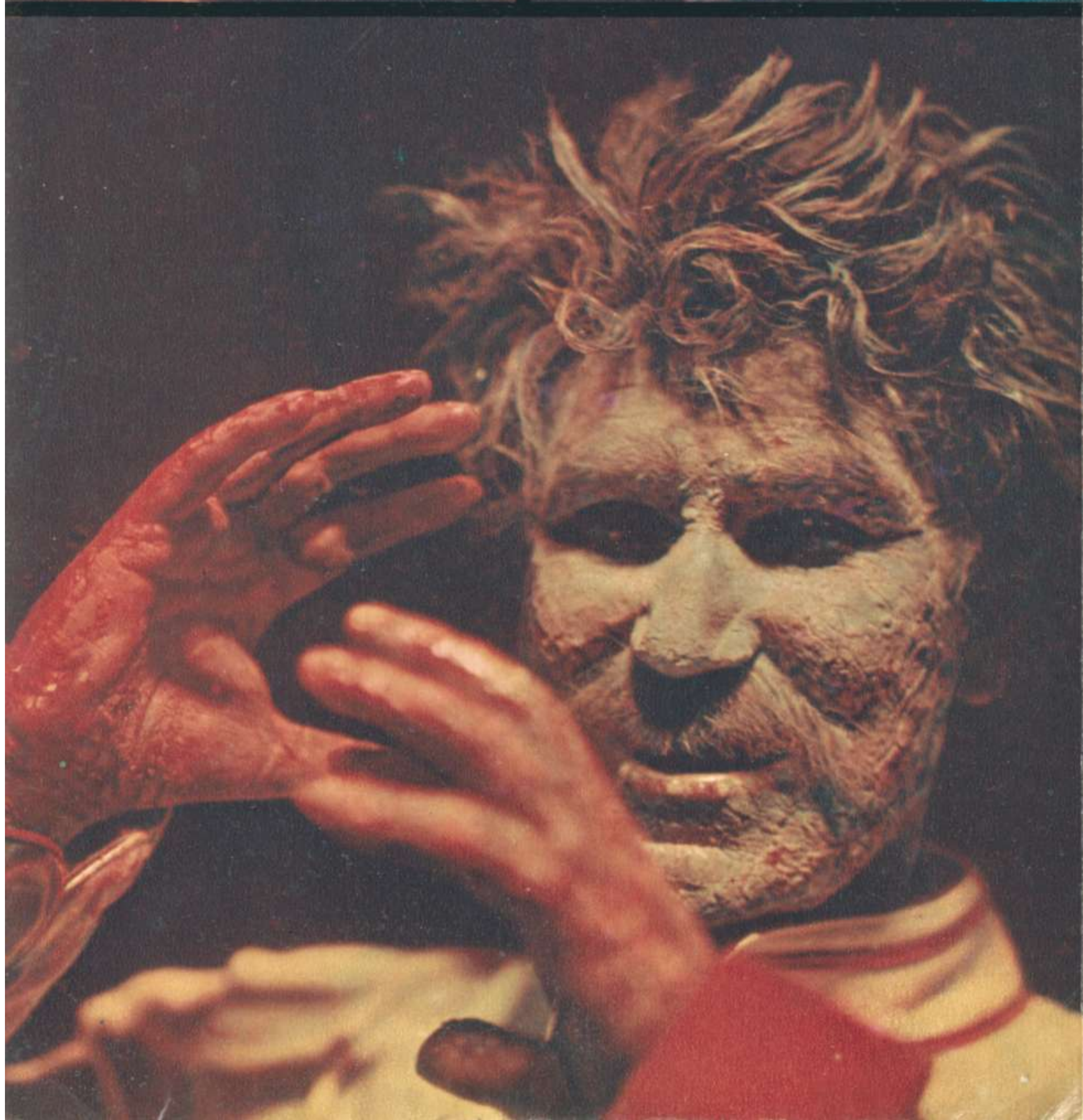
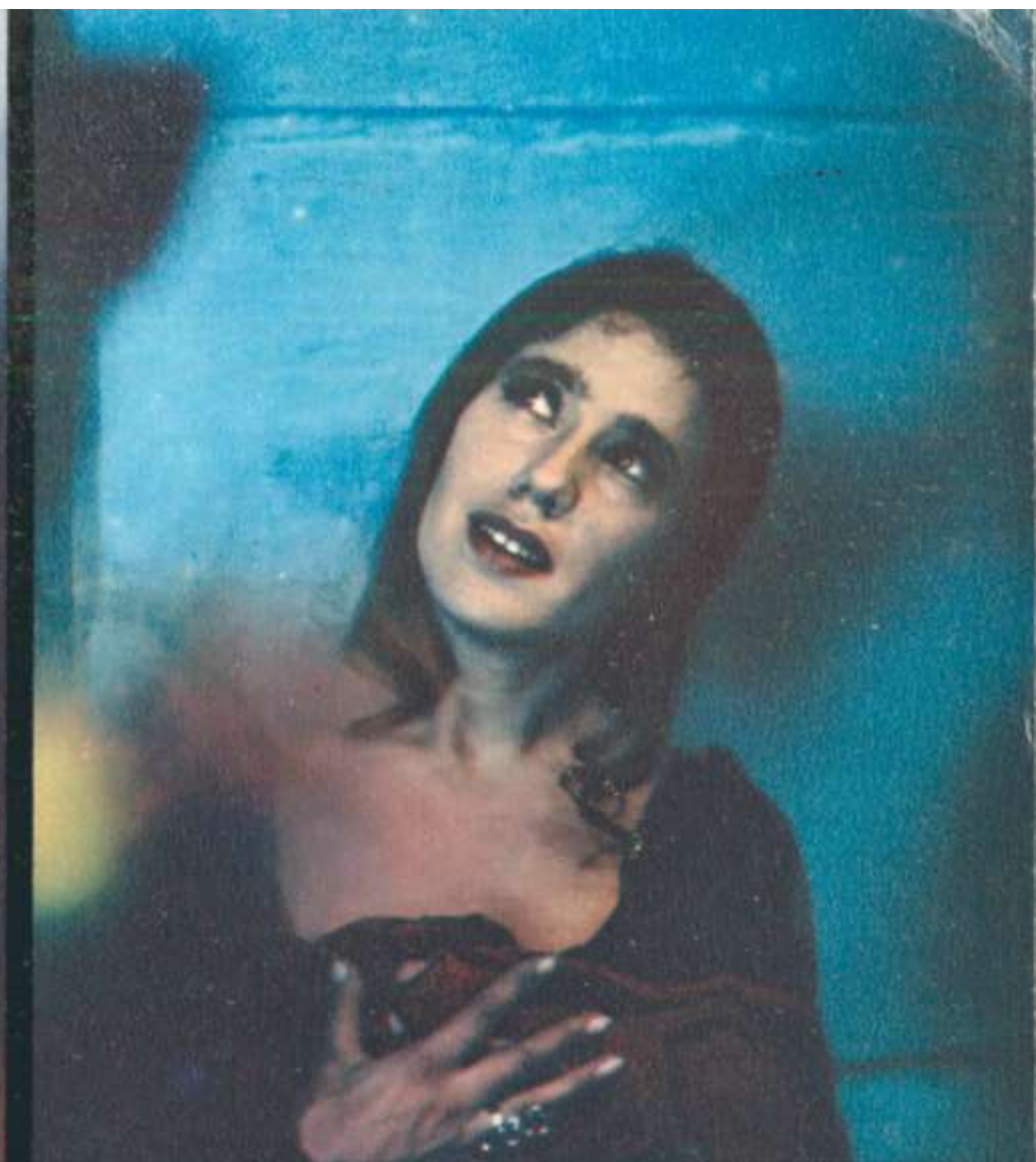
and: **ARTUR MŁODNICKI,**  
**GABRIELA KWASZ,** **MARIA**  
**KONWICKA,** **BOŻENA DYKIEL,**  
**LESZEK PISKORZ,** **MIECZYŚŁAW**

**STOOR,** **JANUSZ BUKOWSKI,**  
**MIECZYŚŁAW CZECHOWICZ,**  
**OLGIERD ŁUKASZEWICZ,** **CZESŁAW**  
**WOŁŁEJKO,** **WIRGILIUSZ GRYŃ**  
and others.











# THE WEDDING

A well-known poet, very popular with the bourgeois society is getting married with a country girl. The wedding takes place in a small manor house owned by another artist, a painter who had already married a country maid some years before.

A real epidemic of misalliances. We must say here that everything in this comedy did actually happen. The poet in question was Lucjan Rydel, the professor of literature at a school for young ladies from the aristocratic elite. The painter was Władysław Tetmajer. He came from a noble family and his brother (the Poet) was the most talented poet of that epoch. And the very author of this play, the outstanding poet, playwright, theatre director and reformer of theatre, painter — Stanisław Wyspiański (1869-1907) in the end married a country girl, too, and settled down in the village where the action of the comedy takes place.

In the year 1900 Poland had been partitioned into three occupational zones for a hundred years already. Her national life was transferred abroad, hidden in conspiracy, concealed in literature.

At the end of the 19th century the most favourable conditions for Polish national life were in the Austrian zone, especially in Cracow where politically engaged persons, intellectuals and artists arrived from other parts of the country which at that time were subjected to severe oppression of Russia and Prussia. Nevertheless, the artistic atmosphere of those days did not favour politically engaged literature that would be consonant with any trend toward active struggle.

Cracow was reached by decadent trends of Paris, Munich and Berlin.

Cracow's Bohemia which sank deep into this decadent atmosphere had a strong feeling of guilt towards the "folk" which expected signals and programmes from intellectuals. They felt guilty

in relation to the traditions of romanticism whose successors they used to consider themselves.

The epidemic of misalliances arose from the sense of guilt: the elite expected to purify itself, to reinforce itself through unions with the "folk", and at the same time to instil the indifferent country population with a national spirit.

The wedding has started. Men of letters, painters, journalists and ladies of Cracow arrive at the picturesque village of Bronowice to take part in a traditional peasant ritual.

Stanisław Wyspiański perceived in this mixed society a kind of comedy of forms and ideas.

The snobbish poet, clad in peasant's attire courting his bride and being nice to her relations becomes the centre of this comedy of form, the comedy of ideas consists in treating those misalliances as political visions.

During the wedding party, in the fumes of alcohol, in brisk rhythms of dances, the guests are haunted by spectres which personify their obsessions.

The Journalist is confronted by Stańczyk, the jester of the great Polish king Sigismund. The legend made of him a symbol of wisdom, courage and sarcasm which are features of journalists.

The Poet is haunted by the legendary hero of the Middle Ages — Zawisza, about whom the Poet intended to write a drama.

The Bridegroom experiences the vision of Poland's partitions. The slaughter of young noblemen performed by rebelled peasantry, helped secretly by the Austrians, is still fresh in everybody's memory. Those young noblemen were preparing themselves for another national uprising. The ghost of the bloody leader of peasants, called Szela, haunts the Old Man who took part in the massacre.

The drunken and sleepy Host "sees" Wernyhora. That legendary prophet of the Ukraine influenced the imagination of poets of romanticism. His apocryphal prophecies used to spread among the countryfolk and foretold unusual events which were to bring freedom to Poland and peaceful coexistence with the neighbouring countries.

From the Host's unintelligible mumble there arises the absurd "order". The violent Czepiec understands that order literally and he endeavours to stir the villagers up to an uprising.

The drunken Jasiiek who was sent with a message to "call together all peasantry" galloped as far as the Russian border, a few kilometres from Bronowice.

The day-break finds the guests moving in a cataleptic dance. There will be no war, no uprising all that was only a gloomy trick played on their entranced imagination. It came from vodka, from idle talking and flirting, from the guilt complex of intellectuals, and perhaps from the spell cast by beautiful Rachel, the educated daughter of the local innkeeper...



**W**hen Jasiek takes the order from the Host "to rush to call country-folk together" he answers with an eager shout: "to the very boundaries". This shout of Jasiek has become the key for my adaptation of "Wedding" since I recollected how near was the village of Bronowice to the Russian-Austrian border, this "quiet village" where the wedding takes place. Thus it was situated on the spot where fourteen years later was to start the first of the great wars of this century.

Cracow of those times was not only a Polish Piemonte, a university town with the Academy of Fine Arts, a few newspapers and cafes, a theatre and old palaces where aristocracy made friends with artists.

On maps of the Austria-Hungary Empire this town was marked with a black star — it was a fortress. The town was surrounded by huge fortifications and training grounds, filled with troopers. It was situated near the border and was a sore point on the world's map.

Not only artists and men of letters found refuge here taking advantage of comparative liberalism of the Austrians, but also all sorts of political refugees, emissaries and ideologists settled in this town.

The Poles knew that their fate would be decided when Russia and Austria come to grips, but they still did not know how they should act in the moment of conflict. The atmosphere of "Wedding" shows this uncertainty and the consciousness of the approaching catastrophe which accompanies this uncertainty.

What really matters here is not the fact that a poet married a country girl and a couple of artists gathered on this occasion in a peasant's cottage. What is important here is that those participating in the masquerade were standing on the edge of a historical precipice and realized that Poland would either emerge from that precipice or perish in it for ever.

During that drunk night they are haunted not only by spectres of the past. They are confronted by the most frightening spectre — the spectre of future, the spectre of their fate, their mission.

They realized they were the generation which was to perform some kind of a mission but they did not know what mission it was to be and against whom it should be directed.

We know perfectly well the climates of awaiting and the climates of approaching catastrophes. We have lived in the period between two great wars and then in the time between one war which just completed and another which for a long time hang over our heads. We know the suffering caused by helpless awareness and this feeling of guilt which accompanies a writer when he knows that his works do not give answers to questions put by his contemporaries. Wyspianski's "Wedding" is a comedy in which main parts are played not by people but by ideas. Inhabitants of Cracow in 1900 associated those ideas with living people whom they could meet in the street. Wyspianski even wanted to call his characters with their real names. For the Poles they are real people even today as most of them may be found and read about in books on literary history. But it is not necessary and indispensable to know all the gossips about "Wedding" to be impressed by its atmosphere. The characters in this comedy are phantoms of our contemporaries and the spectres by which they are haunted are figures from our dreams, myths, our fears and obsessions as well as feeling of guilt towards the reality. The comedy continues.

The group of somnambulists who at the end of Fellini's "La Dolce Vita" descend at dawn to the sea-shore and the guests at the "wedding" who stand paralyzed in the cataleptic sleep are the same family.

"Wedding" is not a story about something that once happened somewhere to someone. It lasts in minds of all people who endeavour to find the key to the reality of their times.

"Wedding" is the best-known literary work in Poland. The play is very Polish since it is so regional in its character. Can it speak with the universal language of the film art? I am convinced it can since it is not a play about Poles but about literature which was faced by a similarly unusual situation as that

of the then Poland and it was confronted by the question put by the reality: what have you to say, what can you give, what is your real meaning and what are your trumps in the coming encounter of social and political powers. Well, this is the question which nowadays faces any literature. The spectres from the cottage at Bronowice, the spectres of greatness, history and the past are haunting the whole world today. The comedy of forms and the comedy of ideas have spread all over the world of our times, the world which seeks a key to the new, incomprehensible and dangerous reality.

Andrzej Kijowski