

## LECH MAJEWSKI

A poet, painter, writer, director and producer. Born in Katowice, Poland, graduated from the Łódź Film School in 1977; has lived in USA since 1981.

One of his student films GRAND HOTEL (1975) won the Grand Prix at the International Festival of Film Schools. While still in Poland, he wrote and directed two feature films: AN ANNUNCIATION (1978) and THE KNIGHT (1980) which Janet Maslin described in the New York Times as "a haunting, austere parable directed with assurance... His film retains its spare, arresting visual style throughout".

In 1982, on the River Thames, he staged Homer's ODYSSEY, receiving much attention and acclaim. The London Times hailed it as "potent theatre". He has published several books of poetry, essays and fiction. Based on his first novel he wrote a screenplay for his US debut FLIGHT OF THE SPRUCE GOOSE (1985). It was produced by Michael Hausman, who brought out such films as Forman's "Amadeus" and Mamet's "House of Games".

In 1986 Mr. Majewski went to Rio de Janeiro to develop a screenplay with the world's most wanted man, Ronald Biggs, one of the perpetrators of the English Great Train Robbery. PRISONER OF RIO (1989) was completed at Pinewood Studios and released worldwide by Columbia Pictures-TriStar. Mr. Majewski acted both as the Director and Executive Producer of the film, raising all of the financing.

In 1992, together with David Lynch's Propaganda Films, he produced and directed GOSPEL ACCORDING TO HARRY (1992), which Piers Handling of the Toronto Film Festival called "a visionary film poem". Viggo Mortensen, debuted in the lead.

His staging of Penderecki's UBU REX in 1993 brought Mr. Majewski to the opera world and won him several awards including a Golden Mask for the best production and Golden Orpheus at the 1994 Warsaw Autumn Festival. In September of 1995, Polish National Opera opened the new season with Mr. Majewski's production of Bizet's CARMEN, transmitted live by CANAL+. The prestigious magazine Opera International cited this staging among the best of 1995 opera productions in the world.

In 1995 he co-produced BASQUIAT, a film based on the story he wrote, starring Benicio del Toro, Willem Dafoe, Gary Oldman, Tatum O'Neal, Courtney Love, Dennis Hopper, and David Bowie as Andy Warhol. In the same year he directed THE BLACK RIDER in Heilbronn, Germany. His version of this postmodernist opera by Bob Wilson, Tom Waits and William Burroughs won him "Killianpreis" for the best direction and was praised by German critics as "a true mastery" (Stuttgarter Zeitung) or "breathtaking journey into the unknown" (Rundblick).

In 1996, he debuted as a composer (together with Józef Skrzek) and a librettist writing his autobiographical opera POKÓJ SAREN. It premiered at the Silesian Opera and was awarded a Golden Mask. Polygram Records brought out a double CD. Subsequently the International Theater Institute (ITI) selected this production to be among the dozen best new operas in the world and presented it in 1998 in Düsseldorf. In the same year, based on his opera, Mr. Majewski made a videoart feature THE ROES'ROOM which Claude Chamberlain, director of the Montreal Film Festival, called: "a visionary and musical poem; a profound, subtle and very

original movie". Ruben Guzman of Buenos Aires Museum of Fine Arts described the film as "a modern visual arts masterpiece".

In 1997 Mr. Majewski staged and filmed in Germany his own version of Shakespeare's A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. A year later, he produced a series of CD's featuring Polish modern music masters, notably Henryk Mikotaj Górecki. In the same year he staged TRAMWAY, an experimental "90 kilometer performance" and built an installation ACCIDENT in the Modern Art Gallery of his native town of Katowice. A videoart based on this exhibition won a Silver Award at the 32nd Houston International Film Festival.

In 1999 he directed a feature WOJACZEK. Presented at a number of festivals, including Rotterdam, Berlin, Jerusalem, Rio de Janeiro, London, Mexico City, New York, Montreal and Los Angeles the film received over twenty prizes, among them the European Award at the Festival of European Cinema in Corato, Italy; a V Forum of European Cinema Award, Strasbourg; and in Barcelona where the International Federation of Film Societies chose "Wojaczek" as the Best Independent Film of the Year 2000, giving it a prestigious Don Quixote Award. The amateur Krzysztof Siwczyk, who played the lead, was nominated by the European Film Academy as the Best European Actor.

In 2000 Mr. Majewski became a voting member of the European Film Academy and began filming ANGELUS, an epic about Silesian coalminers living in an occult commune. Darryl Macdonald of the Seattle International Film Festival described this work, completed in 2001, as "a film of uncommon beauty". It won a number of prizes, including a Fellini Award and Grand Prix at "Cameraimage". In the same year "The Roes'Room" was presented at Venice's Palagraziussi (in collaboration with the Venice Biennale), and a year later in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and National Gallery Jeu de Paume in Paris.

2002 saw a number of Mr. Majewski's works appear. The Lithuanian National Opera staged his new version of CARMEN while theatergoers in Germany could see his production of the THREE PENNY OPERA as well as "Tramway" performed in Düsseldorf. He published his fourth novel METAPHYSICS, on which he based his next film THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS, an Anglo-Italian production shot in Venice and London. Completed in 2004, it won the Grand Prix at International Film Festival in Rome. A year earlier, he published his fifth novel, THE HYPNOTIST and assembled a dozen videoart features - a collection of visual poems entitled DIVINITIES.

In 2005 two major retrospectives of Mr. Majewski's works were organized first in Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata then in London, where British Film Academy, Riverside Studios and Curzon Cinemas showed his films, while Whitechapel Art Gallery presented his videoart installations. A year later The Museum of Modern Art in New York honored Mr. Majewski with an individual retrospective of his works entitled "Lech Majewski: Conjuring the Moving Image". Curated by Laurence Kardish, it presented both films and videoart features. A world premiere of BLOOD OF A POET, a unique sequel of thirty-three videoart pieces that may be seen separately or as a narrative feature, highlighted the opening night at MoMA.