

Prologue

It was a rainy cold Siberian day. It's the year 2003 and I just got home from the university. Tired and wet, my personal "phone answering machine", read: my mother, informs me that someone has called regarding some theatre work and that "they" would call again. "They" did. It was Olga Sidorova, now a very close friend of mine.

As it turns out, "they" have been checking some local galleries in the hopes of finding an artist to create a poster for an opera. Something got their attention. An illustration of Bulgakov's novel "Master and Margarita", featuring a young naked girl proudly flying a broom above a Siberian city. That was one of my first works earning international recognition.

The opera was "Life with an Idiot" and Olga was the personal assistant of Henryk Baranowski, a Polish theatre director.

ACT I

Life with an Idiot

Novosibirsk The Novosibirsk State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre

Co-Production with Hahn Produktion, Germany

Music by Alfred Schnittke

Libretto by Victor Erofeyev

Directed by Henryk Baranowski

Music Director and Conductor Evgeny Volinsky

2003



I had just got my first computer with 32 mb RAM and 4 gb hard drive where I installed a copy of Photoshop I had "purchased" on a Torrent website (for educational purposes of course). And it was with this fantastic equipment that I had my first Photoshop experience. The very next day, I arrive to the theatre for a meeting. Olga takes me to a hotel area and the first person I saw was a man with 2 huge pink penises in hands and a cutter. Enter professor and doctor Giga Lapiashvili. He was invited to work on this production as a set constructor. And then came to scene Henryk, always smiling and shakes my hand.

His Russian was just perfect with no accent, the only thing uncovering him was a particular set of unknown words to the Russian vocabulary.



Strangely enough, his assertive direct sentences with these invented words would come up perfectly understandable in the meaning. That takes skills. Most importantly, this “art nouveau” Russian vocabulary was quickly adopted by the actors as well and frequently used in any conversation in theatre. Some times these phrases would sound really funny even if he was serious. One time during rehearsal he asked very loud on a microphone if he can “possess” leading actors tonight (meaning if they are present on the evening rehearsal) “Yes? And will I “possess” the chorus? Yes? Good!” Saying that in Russian means exactly that, some sort of sexual innuendo! So as strange as it may have been for the Russian actors, confused but respectful, they would always answer correctly as they truly loved this person, it was impossible not to love him. Returning to my story. Giga washed hands and showed me a draft of poster he made. It was a collage with a toilet and a hand sticking out of it, they were not satisfied with it and decided to leave this idea behind. The new idea was a man with a secateurs and a newspaper. But not only that, it should also have some metaphysical atmosphere. Newspaper was an important element

Part of a newspaper design, created for the poster.

of a story and a set design; it was on walls instead of wallpapers.

Famous soviet-Russian news paper “Pravda”, in English it means “the Truth” The secateurs was an attribute of the main character. Also the play had a lot of sex scenes of different kind including homosexual ones. To give some hint, Henryk asked Giga to attach 2 penises to the handles of secateurs, when you hold it you actually have to put your hands on these things. When I entered, Giga was in a process of making them from clay, he showed us his work and asked very seriously if the color and a shape are good, we all were laughing a lot giving opinions on that matter.

FIRST TURNING POINT

Siberian crusaders without a cause

Novosibirsk, besides of being a cultural center of Siberia has a bit of a problem with too much active Christian criticism. Read: too much time and nothing else to do. The so called “Orthodox activists”, whose sole purpose is to storm the city government with demands of cancelling rock concerts and taking down opera theatre’s plays they don’t like or protesting against films they think are bad, so that way were cancelled concerts of Marilyn Manson, Cannibal Corpse, Polish metal group Behemoth, British rock group Cradle Of Filth and not only that in 2015 they protested against Wagner's “Tannhauser” in Novosibirsk opera theatre directed by Kulyabin and as a result the opera was taken out of repertoire and the theatre’s director Boris Mezdrich was fired and replaced. It was a similar situation with Life with an Idiot... it was censored a lot. Welcome to Soviet Union! But nevertheless it got the most prestigious national theatre award “Golden mask” for the



Henryk posing for a poster

best opera, best set design and best male opera role. The poster “life with an Idiot” got a golden medal on an international photo salon in Macau. My university teachers were very impressed and granted me 1 year of free education and a Russian professional union of photo artist accepted me as a member.

We set a photo shoot at a TV studio where I worked at that time and luckily had access to all studio equipment at any time for my own personal use. Olga and Henryk came on time with secateurs hidden in a plastic bag and a few different shirts. The light and a camera were already set up, everything was ready, he sat on a chair and I took the first photo. He said he was not ready, then he strained all the muscles, got very concentrated I literally felt the flow of power from him and I took another photo. That was great. Then we made a few photos where Henryk would hide the handles...just in case. Then he wanted to have on one blade a head of Alfred Schnittke and on the other blade a head of a woman with an orgasmic facial expression. There was one very beautiful woman working in the theatre’s ticket office, she had very beautiful black curly hair and very expressive eyes with always bright make up, Henryk was fascinated with her charming beauty and convinced her for a photo shoot. I made a draft, but this idea didn’t work, instead we made rays of “energy” flowing out of each blade and placed entire scene in the space. Left side of a paper is in Russian and has the opera title and information about theatre, right side is in German.

On the photo: a woman from theatre’s ticket office





Poster for an opera "Life with an Idiot"

INT- TYPICAL RUSSIAN RESTAURANT – NIGHT

That day Olga, Henryk and I went for a dinner to a typical Russian restaurant where He could feel the power of Russian hospitality. We wanted him to try some traditional Russian dishes and ordered "Draniki", it's some sort of potato pancakes, fried graded potato. We made an order, the young waiter accepted the order but returned in minute saying they don't have Draniki, then we asked a simple fried potatoes on a pan instead, she nicely accepted this order but again returned in a minute saying they don't have fried potatoes, and only what they can offer is unpeeled boiled potatoes and they can serve it in half an hour. At this moment Olga started slow and convincing conversation with the waiter

OLGA

So you have potatoes correct?

WAITRESS

Yes

OLGA

So go and tell the chef to take his ass up of the sofa, grade and fry a couple of potatoes NOW.

Well, that worked. Too bad many things in Russia work only that way.

Technically my little work was done and I was going home. But what I didn't know is that for the next 10 years Henryk going to be my best friend and friend of my family, my mentor and a godfather of my little son and that we will work together on many other projects. So right next day Henryk called me and privately hired to do a photo session of Joanna Vos, who had a role of "wife" in the opera and him. And of cause I took a few pictures of Olga as well.

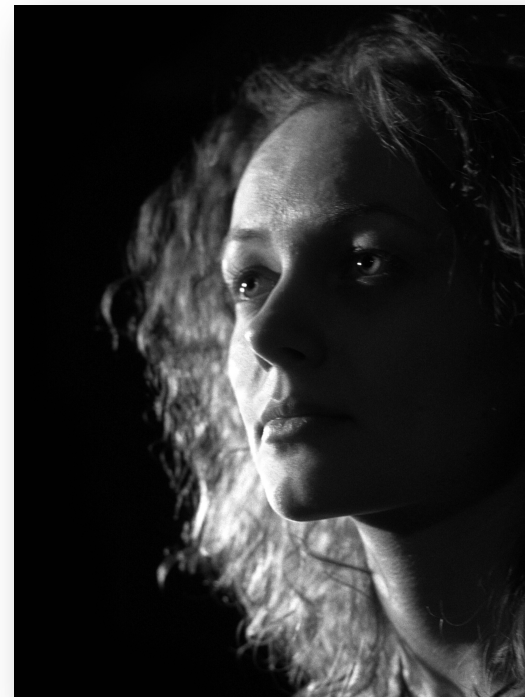
And then again he privately hired me to do all production photography work, I was very happy doing all this work and also I had to hide from a friend of mine Evgeniy Ivanov, he was working for many years in the theatre as a resident photographer and his work was to take pictures of all productions and I really didn't want him to see me stealing his job.



Joanna Woś



Henryk Baranowski



Olga Sidorova



Photos from premiere day "Life with an idiot" directed by Henryk Baranowski, 2003, Novosibirsk Academic Opera and Ballet theatre



ACT II

“Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk” . Novosibirsk, December 2006

Music by Dmitri Shostakovich

Alexander Preiss and Dmitry Shostakovich

after the short story by Nikolay Leskov

Director – Henryk Baranowski

Conductor Teodor Currentzis

Choirmaster - Vyacheslav Pod’elsky

Production Designer Paweł Dobrzycki

Choreographer, assistant director for plastics Sergey Gritsay

Conductors - Beljakin Peter, Alexander Bolshakov

Assistant director - Tatiana Grigorieva ,

Agnieszka KORYTKOVSKA - MAZUR

Choirmaster - Sergei TENITILOV

Video art projections - Svetlana Bakushina

It’s now 2006, when Henryk came to Novosibirsk to work on the opera “Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk”. It was winter and he would wear a Russian hat and a very warm Down jacket. It was so nice to see him again, he came with his assistant Agnieszka Korytkovska – Mazur and a set designer Paweł Dobrzycki. This time I got more responsibility and was trusted to do stage projection video art, it was looped videos with a scene location, one video for each scene, projected to the back screen on the stage.

Also my work included taking portrait photos of all the artists and the creative team participating in the Project to be published on the booklet. Well, Henryk only wanted very close up of his eye instead of a portrait. But first was a poster where Henryk wanted a rat going into his head, while he was looking on the screen of a computer. So we went to his office in the theatre, I stood on the desk and took a photo from above and a photo of his eye, actually he had green eyes, but maybe because of the light, the colour came more blue then green.

Henryk asked the theatre to hire a tai-chi trainer and before every rehearsal all the actors would have one hour of such training and he would exercise with them. He insisted the actors must feel the energy flow, as it affects and changes their performance in a way this opera interpretation requires.





Photo of Henryk, used for a poster design



A poster for an opera "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk" (not published)

Henryk liked a lot the poster and took me to the theatre director Boris Mezdrich for the final approval, Boris looked at it very seriously... and surely enough; I saw his facial expression changing. Certainly he would never approve it. He didn't want to irritate the public with such disturbing image, also this sort of image probably wouldn't help to sell the tickets at all. But no problem, this print was exhibited in many galleries and museums after, so it was actually appreciated by public.



Music video with appearance of Henryk Baranowski, shot in Novosibirsk, 2006
<https://youtu.be/x9WVjrhHZ1k>

*This is a Youtube link.
<https://youtu.be/XGSBIUZ8I2A> One day i came with a video cam and accidentally shot this little episode of Henryk discussing the booklet design with an editor Tatiana Ginevich (in Russian)*

Rehearsal on the big stage. From left to right: Sergei Gritsay, Paweł Dobrzycki, Henryk Baranowski, Evgeny Volynsky



Agnieszka Korytkowska-Mazur, Assistant director



Production Designer - Paweł Dobrzycki



*Sergei Gritsay, Choreographer ,
assistant director for plastics*

Choreographer Sergei Gritsay was a “must person” on all Henryk’s projects in Russia, they had really good personal and professional understanding, actually they were very good friends. A Production Designer Paweł Dobrzycki who also came from Poland was so nice, and I felt he was joking with me all time. One time he laid down on the floor in the middle of a theatre and was pretending sleeping.



other scenes that looked like a black humour anecdote. I would film from my window during almost a year and then I edited
Rehearsal on a small stage. Sergei Gritsay and Henryk Baranowski

it all in one documentary. Actually it had a great success on festivals and so on, so I showed it to Henryk and was looking at his reaction. He started watching very seriously and then he couldn't stop laughing for about 18 minutes of the film, he was even crying laughing, so much that looked funny to him. We finished watching and he said he is going to use parts of this film in the lady Macbeth's stage projection. And so we did.

I was finishing university, and my all life was about all kinds of art, all time involved in numerous exhibitions of different scales, joined art and film projects. So the favourite Henryk's question was : "What will you show me this time", and of course I would show him everything, he would watch it with a lot of interest all the videos, prints or art films I would make with my frugal equipment. In 2006 I already had a baby and had to spend quite a lot of time at home. I lived in the back of a city in a place with the typical soviet concrete buildings, they all look the same, and my neighbours were not the city's elite, if I can say it that way. Every time I would see from window something strange like a wedding with a broom smoking cannabis while waiting for the bride, and many



Premier day. Scene with "a view from my window"



Premier. From left: Conductor Teodor Currentzis, Olga Orlovskaya, Henryk Baranowsky, Nikolay Loskutkin



Me and Henryk



Novosibirsk Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre with a billboard announcing the premier

Between the rehearsals we would go to the theatre's café for a lunch. Henryk was fighting cancer and was very picky with what he eats, usually he would eat a cereal with a fish. He would refuse any chicken or beef because these animals were raised medicated. Also he couldn't ever eat chickens after a story from his childhood, being fed with a chicken he liked and took care of. He didn't like the Russian way to cook everything with tons of mayonnaise, so he would put all the mayonnaise on the side of a plate and wouldn't eat it. Also he would use only plastic forks and knives, sometime he would even bring his own to avoid contacts of metallic tools with food. Paweł got a yogurt and was badly criticised for eating a chemical poison.

The premiere was great and Henryk was incredibly happy, very excited and all time happily smiling. The play won 5 "golden mask" national theatre awards, for the best opera, Henryk Baranowski for the best director's work, Teodor Currentzis the best conductor's work, Paweł Dobrzycki for the best set design and Oleg Videman for the best male role in the opera.

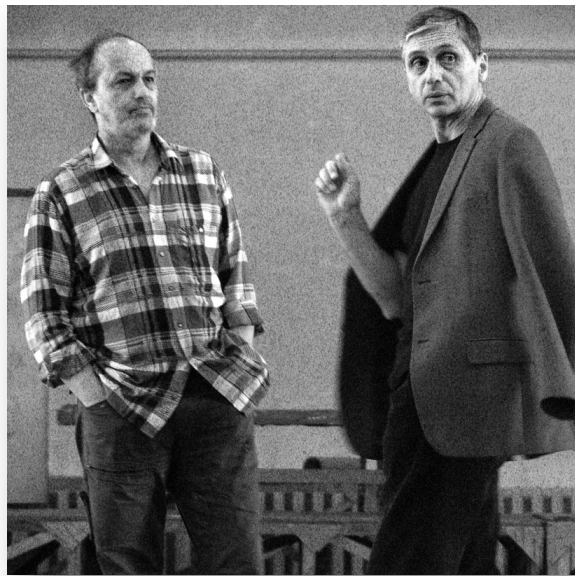
Next day Henryk took all of us Paweł, Agnieszka and me to an Italian restaurant hoping to have better experience then last time with "Russian draniki" place. A very young smiley girl brought us the menu with beautiful photos of nice slices of pizza and a very good, meaning little price for each slice, actually we like the price a lot and ordered. To our surprise girl brought entire pie for each of us. We were talking and eating, the pizza was really good; the place was nice everything was fine until the beautiful smiley girl brought the check. The numbers on the check were quite disturbing and Henryk nicely tried to clear the situation, showing the menu with the prices for the pizza we ordered

- We ordered this pizza (pointing to the menu)
- yes
- here is the price for this pizza we ordered
- yes, it is the pizza you ordered and the price is correct.
- but the price on the check is drastically different
- no, it's the price for the pizza you ordered

I was just waiting when she would say "you should have ordered boiled potatoes instead"

This dialogue wouldn't end and and would go around and around not making any sense at all. Almost like talking to an alien species in a twilight zone. We could make a scandal but didn't, we just paid and left. Welcome to Russia (part deux).

Next project we worked together would be in 2009 and all the problems about to begin.



At Rehearsals. Henryk Baranowski with Sergei Gritsay



Photo "Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk"

To watch full opera go to <https://youtu.be/j-UujMcZnhU>

ACT III

“Loneliness in the net”

Theatre play based on a novel by J.L.Wisniewski

Director H. Baranowski

Set designer Aleksey Porai-Koshits

Video art Svetlana Bakushina

Costumes Irina Tsvetkova

2009



Henryk sent me an email inviting to participate in another project in St-Petersburg at the “Baltic house” theatre. The play was based on a bestseller “Loneliness in the net” written by Janusz Leon Wiśniewski about a virtual love relationship. Henryk explained me his idea to have film-style scenes shot on locations with actors to be displayed in sync with the theatre action. Scenes that are going on the stage would look just as a reflection, coming from the memory of the main character, who is remembering his life on a train station, telling all his story to a homeless man, right before committing suicide. And on the screen we would see in vivid colours the way it was in reality.

Henryk offered me to take care of all video projections for the play as well as filming scenes with actors, editing and creating video art for the screen that would be placed above the stage. Janusz Leon Wiśniewski was expected to come for the premiere and even to appear on the stage in a role of a homeless man in the end of play. Idea was fantastic and I was really excited to start working.

ART AND MATHEMATICS

This was my first project of a large scale with so much responsibility, though I had made a few quite big television projects as DOP before. I started with some preparations. First of all I made a list of equipment I need for the production, it included a camera with certain set of



Henryk Baranowski at a shooting location. Basement under the stage.

lenses, powerful computer and professional video editing software installed, list of the lighting equipment and so on. Then I flew to the meeting with all the creative team and director of the theatre Gergei Grigorevich Shub. I was happy to meet him, the resident set designer Aleksei Porai-Koshits and costume designer Irina Tsvetkova and deputy of director Marina Aronovna Belyaeva, she was the heart of the theatre and seemed to solve any problem in a blink of a eye. She informed me that theatre cannot provide filming equipment nor the computer and asked me me if I can bring my own stuff.

All equipment I could bring was my laptop and a handy cam that's about it. So I suggested to rent a green screen studio and to film everything there, we agreed on it. And the rehearsals started. The stage was designed to represent the train station where the main character tells entire story. There was supposed to be tracks and one "train plate" which could slide back and forth. And all his "memories" (scenes of his life) would have some "train station" attributes, For example the chairs and tables would be wrapped as if they are packed to be transported and so on. Henryk was not comfortable with a big stage as all the scenes are very intimate, personal, so the set designer found an interesting solution to divide a stage into 3 parts, each of the parts would be a "train plate" with tracks and could slide as well. So each scene could be placed on one small plate and moved in front of others, also he ordered the actors to speak with "normal voice", meaning the natural way, not "screaming" from stage, for this purpose every actor had a microphone attached. And here is

another thing, each moving plate had an attached screen with a projector. So here are 3 screens more, totally 4. And there is something else that no one ever realized. I am dealing with creative people and they usually don't think of mathematics. The play's length is 3h 30m. We have 4 screens with projections, it means we multiply 3.30 by 4, it equals 16 hours, considering alternative cast of actors we need each scene shot twice and edited twice, let's double our 16 hours, it's 32 hours. Now let's roughly calculate how much time is needed to produce a 32 hours long feature film and how many professionals should be working on this.

Now the most interesting part begins, let's see if the girl with a laptop gets it done in 25 days.

Henryk and me were given rooms in the theatre's hotel and also they took care about our meals, though Henryk asked for a little electric stove to be installed in his room, he brought from Poland plenty of cereals, soy milk, a lot of herbal tea bags, every time he would make a tea, he would open the bag, throw it away put the herbs in the glass and pour the hot water in it. He also brought a water filter.

Since last time I saw him he advanced a lot his in a bioenergy healing and meditation, he was trying all alternative ways to overcome the disease. In his pocket he kept a pendulum, he would use it every time to check if the food is good or not, and according to the pendulum's signs he would position his bed to have good dreams and to sleep well. He insisted to find a good gym to exercise every day after rehearsals. Not far from the theatre we found probably the best fitness club, it was really luxury one, opened 24/7, 3 floors of all possible classes, swimming pools, saunas and more. So we would go there every day, first he would go for a 10 min. running, then would go to gym for 1 hour, then we would go to sauna and finally swimming pool, he liked to swim so much but stopped doing that because the water appeared to have too much chlorine. After that we would go to a little store to buy Kefir and would go back to theatre, where in his room we drank Kefir, then tea with honey and only after I would go to my room.

He used cognac to brush teeth, he would pour a little bit in the cap of a bottle and would steep the tooth brush in it. He didn't use any tooth pasts because of the chemicals they contain, his doctor advised to use cognac, brush cleans the teeth, alcohol disinfects and cognac has nice herbal flavour. To buy it, we went to the little store in front of theatre and Henryk joked with the seller saying "Today I want to get drunk with my girlfriend, please give us this bottle of cognac", pointing at miniature 50 ml bottle. To note also, is the baking soda use instead of common soap. Also he didn't like the Russian driving habits, cars would never stop to let people cross the road, drivers ignored zebras and pedestrian crossing signs they could even insult you if you cross in front of his approaching car. Henryk had 2 rehearsals a day, one from 10 to 13 and another one from 5 to 8. The girl with a laptop would be present on all the rehearsals. This way I could keep working and learning from Henryk's "method" of working with actors and staging the scenes. The actors were literally in love with him, I heard many times from the actors, that his way of directing was very special and different from their previous experience, and this "special approach" was something that defined him as an extraordinary director. The play "Loneliness in the net" is still in the repertoire of the "Baltic house" theatre since 2009 (I am writing this in 2016) and every time it's a full house, all the tickets are sold, though most of actors changed and some even left our world.

Henryk always needed an assistant to rehearse with actors, just repeating what he made already if he can't attend the rehearsal. He asked me but I just couldn't because was too busy with my primary work. And here appeared Andrey Nikitinskih, a young actor who moved to St-Petersburg from Tomsk, where he worked with Henryk before, Henryk liked this person a lot and though he wasn't working in the theatre,

Henryk gave him a few roles including a role of a Polish catholic Priest, and also he got a position of a second director to help with rehearsals.

Why Henryk needed help I would soon understand.

As usual in the morning I knocked at his door to go for breakfast, he was not opening long time, I was waiting, I heard some noise, door opened, he looked so unusual, had very sleepy tired eyes, he was grey, talking very low, he told me he stays, he needs to rest, to sleep and meditate. He came only to the evening rehearsal, he tried...but couldn't, and everything stopped. He was not in the right mood at all, he apologized and cancelled rehearsal, he said he can't be of any good help and today he would not do "good for anything", he said he just wants to talk or read something. But next day he was in perfect shape again, full of energy and smiling.

The story as Wisniewski wrote it was a scene in a hotel where Eva, the main character was masturbating waiting for a meeting with Jacub in Paris. Henryk was going to work on this scene today, but it went very wrong. The actress refused even to start, she was so much upset with this, and even left the rehearsal, everything stopped. Henryk couldn't really understand what's wrong, he was following the Wisniewski's novel, all the actors read it before signing contracts, he was confused not understanding why the theatre selected a story which the actors can't perform.

He went back to his office and had to find different solution for this scene, changing the actress was impossible. Henryk couldn't understand why all the sudden the actress started to behave that way, he didn't know that in Russia everything related to sex is considered kinda shameful topic even for a conversation.

As it goes, tradition mandates that most of Russians have difficulties even to discuss sex related questions with their partners, and performing masturbation on public even in a theatrical interpretation would be very shameful and embarrassing for an actress, specially in front of her colleagues. So probably that was what she felt and why she got so upset, how could she do something unthinkable like that.

LOST IN RE-TRANSLATION

We found a beautiful gothic church for filming the priest story. It was not open to public; on the walls were prints of contemporary artists reflecting the theme of Christ. Church was not renovated inside, walls had wonderful texture and the basement was exactly what we were looking for. It belonged to a German person who was there and spoke perfect Russian. We explained him the plot and asked permission to film there, he allowed. In a day a big bus with 20 people crew and equipment arrived to the location. It started bad. Henryk, the production manager and me were asked to come for a conversation first. We saw the German person and a younger woman. Henryk was a German resident for long time and started speaking German, but the German person was only answering in Russian, he said the woman is Polish, Henryk started to speak Polish, the girl said a few words with a lot of Russian accent and they stuck with Russian. The woman carefully have read the novel and studied the question in details. She didn't like the scene in the church and put a condition: we can film, then show her the footage and only after her approval we can use it. Henryk told her he had enough censorship in Soviet Union already. And we left. On the way we re planned this shoot and did that differently.



Filming in a studio. On photo Svetlana Bakushina, Henryk Baranowski



From left: Aleksandr Chernyshev, Regina Lialeykite, Yulia Men, Irina Murtazaeva, Alla Yemintseva, Galina Demidova, Tatiana Kuznetsova

We were trying to schedule the shoot for the rest of scenes, but it appeared the costumes would be ready only 10 days before the premiere and we can't shoot anything without them. Nevertheless Irina Tsvetkova, the costume designer forced the costume department to finish some costumes faster at least for the main characters. We decided to shoot some scenes on specially prepared locations inside the theatre and when all the costumes are done to shoot in the studio the rest of the scenes, so the day was for the shooting, the night for the editing. So far everything was good.

Comes the studio shooting day. And from now and on things start getting weird. We rented a big television studio with all the staff, who seemed not to take me seriously. The lighting technician was all time trying to ask me tricky technical questions to see what I answer; also we hired 2 camera operators plus me. In about half of an hour Henryk sent one of the operators to hell and in about the next half of an hour the second guy followed him. Then Henryk loud and clear said (to make sure all technicians can hear) that me (this little girl) is the boss here, and no lights or cameras should move without her order. So the lighting guy ran out of his tricky questions and was quiet for the rest of the day.

Until the camera guy's replacement arrived, I had to operate 2 cams at same time, one would be put still on wide shot, and I would operate the second one. In general there was very tense atmosphere due to very large number of actors, costumes, we even had a real pig there, and so on. Another problem - was the director's assistant, it was a girl appointed by the theatre and she would do everything possible to hide from Henryk, she would avoid any meetings, any conversations and would not even answer the phone when she was needed. It was very hard and long day, we finished at 10PM and to my surprise Henryk asked if I brought my fitness outfit, I didn't, he told me he will wait me in the gym, he didn't seem tired at all, for 1 hour he had his normal training and then went home to sleep and I went to edit. In a week I got ready closing film about the love story of Polish catholic priest. It came great. While I was working on all the other scenes time would go faster and faster and here we already have rehearsals on the big stage and now we really need all projections to see hole picture.



Screen shot from an episode "Ksendz"

Actors: Varvara Markevich, Aleksei Platunov, Andrey Nikitinskih.

Ksendz film link <https://youtu.be/sDc3w2td0Uw>

Although I was sleeping only from 6.30 AM to 9 AM and because I was very cold, I would take to my bed the hot laptop charger to heat my feet. The rest of time I was glued to my laptop editing and compositing the green screen scenes. There was no more time remaining and my 32 hour feature film and I was still somewhere in a far far away galaxy. Henryk already looked like a thunderstorm, every day he would be darker and darker, throwing lightings at everybody. We had very few projections ready and most part was not done at all yet, I was drowning in the footage.



"Les saboteurs" within

Nevertheless the worst is about to happen. My colleagues from the video department had complex issues with connecting 4 projectors, projecting different video channels. They convinced the director to buy very expensive video mixer that has 4 outputs and as they stated, it would solve all the problems. They got the mixer except there was 4 inputs, not outputs (just don't tell to *Stage rehearsal with missing projections* director).

Instead of helping the production they were taking

actions to fail the premiere, they hated me and I

couldn't understand why until one of the guys talked too much and I found out, they thought I was paid millions while the guys were on a small salary. I learned from Henryk how to speak with scary and loud voice to make them move and I learned that very well, I would yell better and louder every day, sometimes using even bad words, it worked most of times. This local "all guys team" were sabotaging.

As the rehearsals continue the projections would appear very little by little, though Henryk liked everything I would do. That was a very unusual understanding. Somehow magically I knew exactly what was his vision and he never told me anything wrong about my work, he would enjoy every pixel of my work and I was happy to be appreciated, that's really unique collaboration. As the pressure was arising and the premiere day was approaching, the terrible feeling of everything failing was in the air and the saboteurs would point at me as the guilty one.

The only way to finish it was getting rid of saboteurs replacing them by a team of editors. I called my university friend who moved to St-Petersburg and asked him to bring right away his friends with their computers. In a couple hours in my hotel room were 3 guys sitting with 2 laptops each editing the remaining footage. One of the guys had a wife delivering a baby in a hospital that day. I was not sleeping already a couple of weeks, Came Henryk for a conversation and I fell asleep while talking, that's how tired I was. So next week the boys stayed in my room working, all 3 of them were taking naps on my bed. Then we replaced all the saboteurs from video department with my friends who did everything fast, well, and on time, with no rest, just asking for more money ... well, I had to pay them from my pocket.



Henryk Baranowski, 2009

3 days before premiere. We are working. There is no more tickets, all sold. Henryk comes to my room and quietly tells us that his wife is arriving for the premiere and she should learn nothing about problems that we had.

Premiere day. Morning. Three of my friends and me still working... Premiere day. Evening. Still fixing edits. Show started. Everything is going well. The play is finishing and it comes to the last scene with a homeless man, where the screen (like a curtain) should go completely down to close all the action on the stage, and we would see the train station on that screen, the main character and a homeless man performed by Janusz Leon Wiśniewski, the "unreachable" director's assistant managed to mess something up and the screen stops half way. I bet she had already a panic attack, but Henryk found it great, it was making more sense then completely closed.

Show finished with a Great success. It was incredible success and still is.

To watch parts of a play go to: <https://youtu.be/zSWFDYWZ5hE?list=PL3rmmNBBkpkGx4jNMyB7xFzjZo0222XjQ>
Behind the scenes and photos: <https://youtu.be/QYbOysHW5yY>



The scene with a homeless man. On photo from left: Andrey Nikitinskih, Valeriy Soloviev, Leonid Alimov



Photo from premiere show "Loneliness in the net" On photo: Andrey Nikitinskih, Varvara Markevich, Andrei Terentev, Irina Murtazaeva

Tempest, William Shakespeare

Volkov theatre, Yaroslavl, Russia
Director Henryk Baranowski
Production designer Jerzy Kalina
Costume designer Zofia De Ines, Dorota Morawetz
Codirector Vladimir Maizinger
Composer Igor Esipovich
Choreographer Sergei Gritsai
Video art stage projections Svetlana Bakushina
Translation Mihail Donskoi
2012

I just had a baby, my second son, and Henryk was invited to Yaroslavl Volkov's theatre to work on Shakespeare's Tempest, it automatically means that Sergei Gritsai and me are in. By this time I moved live in Portugal and my baby was born there as a Portuguese citizen, and going to Russia requires ordering a passport and making a visa for him, as well as for my husband Carlos, who was going with us. All that takes time, and time was limited, Henryk asked us to arrive in 15 days, he already was there rehearsing. At same time my older son was with my mom in Russia, and we made a plan after finishing work in Yaroslavl to pick him up from Novosibirsk (it's 4 hours flying distance). We got a passport for baby and called Russian embassy to make sure we will get visa on time, they confirmed. Next morning we are applying for visa and as usual we face "welcome to soviet union" situation. The consul told us we will receive visas 3 days after we have the flight tickets, I was shocked how does this come that way, I got confirmation by phone, we bought no refund tickets for all of us and it's a fortune to lose. The consul just told us, whoever answered the phone was wrong and that it's us who has to change the plans and there is no way the embassy would make exceptions and change their rules. Also we were charged full fee for the baby's visa. In conclusion, we had



Our Yaroslavl office-apartment.



Henryk Baranowski with a little Alex

really bad feeling after visiting embassy plus the fact of losing a lot of money for tickets we couldn't return. Honestly it was disgusting. But what else could we do against the system. We had to buy new tickets and pick up visas a few hours before the flight. So our 2 month old baby went to Russia with us. First we took 2 planes and a train from Lisbon to Yaroslavl. It was 8th march, the women's day, Henryk came to the train station to meet us with a beautiful red rose which he gave me. He looked so happy, smiling, very energetic, he told me that he thought I would never want to work with him anymore after "Loneliness in the net" play. He got a new attribute, a walking stick, he had another surgery on his back bone and used the cane to ease walking. We were taken to the apartment the theatre rented for us, it was beautiful, with a very nice decoration and all the new furniture. We went to a meeting with a theatre director Yuri Itin and then I met 2 more wonderful people, the costume designer Dorota Morawetz and a production designer Jerzy Kalina.

I was already well prepared and had part of work done, so I kept working on video projection art on my office while Henryk would rehearse with actors at theatre. He had another apartment in a next house. He always had a person, usually a woman who he would hire privately to buy food and cook for him, he had no time for that. He also recommended such person for us as well. so the baby went a few times to the rehearsals, which looked strange and then one time baby stayed with my husband and when I returned in a couple hours he was exhausted and terrified by nonstop screaming baby. He tried everything to calm him but nothing worked. Baby only wanted soft, warm a yummy breasts with sweet milk. It could not continue like that anymore so we hired a nanny. Alex fell in love with her immediately.

Henryk would come every evening to see the baby, he liked to hold him on hands, one time he spent almost half an hour singing to him lullabies in Polish, it was so sweet seeing that. We all decided that Henryk is going to be his Godfather, so we decided to go and baptize Alex, I asked Henryk what he feels about being catholic and going to

Orthodox church, he answered that the god is god and he doesn't worry about religious varieties. There was a church where we wanted to baptize baby, but priest would not accept babies in winter, too cold in the church and he doesn't want babies to get sick. Nevertheless "godfather" title remained with Henryk.

Back to work. Jerzy Kalina was always angry and upset, he would give orders to the stage workers what to put where and what to do, they tried their best to do everything he tells, but they couldn't understand what he says most of times, Jerzy, seeing the person not doing what he said he would get even more upset and would certainly say some bad words, but still no one could understand what he demands, it was the language problem, all the stage workers were afraid of him, I understand, they had to guess the order and if they didn't guess right, Jerzy would get very upset with the person yelling at him.

I actually I enjoyed working with Jerzy, he is a great artist and I learned from him a lot, we were working very closely, he was with his wonderful wife, she was helping to understand Jerzy, she spoke very well Russian and even offered me a sandwich with polish sausage that she brought from home. After all the project was going well without accidents, except one time Henryk felt really bad, the ambulance came and they found he had very low level of sugar. It was fixed and in the evening he felt already good.



Rehearsals "The Tempest"

Trailer "The Tempest" <https://youtu.be/aTKQGRpge8>

The play "The Tempest" <https://youtu.be/YsR4x0x1PNU>

Working moments, behind the scenes <https://youtu.be/JRQHe24BUI8>
<https://youtu.be/cwv-8nMtqTU>



Premiere day, the theatre hall. Installation by Jerzy Kalina. On photo: Henryk Baranowsky launch the boat on the water, man wearing a suit and a blue tie Yuri Itin



The premiere show. From left Svetlana Bakushina, Sergei Gritsai, Henryk Baranowski, Jerzy Kalina

The work was finished, Henryk and all our team went home, but my mission still was still not accomplished. We had to shoot a commercial ordered by a client of ours and we counted with actors from Yaroslavl theatre, we needed a general suit, which Henryk kindly helped us to find asking his friend. And then I had to run to the airport to pick up a plane to Novosibirsk and bring my older son, Carlos had to stay in a hotel with a baby one day and one night, all this operation from beginning to end was very stressful, for me at least. But finally all the family was together and now we getting ready to another adventure-to receive a visa in the Portuguese embassy for my son, who is a Russian



citizen. The trip from hotel to embassy took almost 3 hours, then we couldn't find the right street as there was no signs, I was asking people walking down the street but no one knew where it is until we discovered that this particular street is precisely the the one we are looking for. We entered the embassy one hour after it was closed for visitors, but they let us in. We explained we need urgently the visa for a boy, the consul was interrogating him asking tricky questions if he knows where he goes and if he want to go with us, after all he said yes, he want to go with us because he likes to swim in the ocean. We were asked to wait for a few hours so we went to have a launch to an Irish restaurant and ordered big stakes we were really hungry. In the embassy consul gave us the passport with a visa and we wanted to pay, counsel told us it's charge according to the agreement between Russia and Portugal in which the minors don't pay. Why no one knew about it in Russian embassy? Carlos was surprised and said that was the first thing we got free of charge in Russia to what counsel replied "Here you are not in Russia"

In a few months Henryk called me to invite to the next project Donizetti "Elisir of love" that will take place in Opera Krakowska w Krakowie with participation of his devoted companions Dorota Morawetz, Paweł Dobrzycki and a conductor Evgeny Volynskiy, who moved to Poland from Novosibirsk, Russia after a success with "Life with an idiot" in 2003 which Henryk directed. Henryk asked me to come to do my video projection art, Unfortunately I couldn't go with 2 kids and there was no possibility to solve it , though we tried, Henryk even found the Russian school for the older boy but still it was not possible for us to travel at that moment, if it was under different circumstances I would not think even a second. The premiere was on 2nd December 2012. I called to congratulate him, it was another success as always, this time he didn't apply any projections at all.