

ROMAN POLANSKI

with live music by **SzaZa**



Courtesy of Euro London

Between 1958 and 1962, the acclaimed director and Academy Award® winner, **Roman Polanski** made a series of short films, most at the renowned Polish Lodz Film School - from playful film making exercises: “Murder” and “Teeth Smile” (1957), through the metaphorical “Break Up the Dance” (1957) and “Mammals” (1962) to his award winning graduation film, “Two Men and the Wardrobe” (San Francisco International Film Festival, Brussels EXPO 1958).

These films reveal Polanski’s surreal and dark style, his masterful storytelling ability, and the restless search for the truth about human nature, however crooked and evil it would turn out to be. The grotesque and often disturbing world of his short films, and his meticulous, clean direction are traits that would be later developed in such cinematic masterpieces as “Rosemary’s Baby”, “Chinatown” and “The Pianist”.

In the late 50’s and early 60’s jazz had become a fascination of many Polish filmmakers and it remained an essential element of Polanski’s cinema for many years. We are pleased to present the short films with the live accompaniment by **SzaZa**, paying tribute to the Polish jazz pioneer **Krzysztof Komeda**, Polanski’s long time collaborator both in Europe and Hollywood.



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SzaZa's (Paweł Szamburski / Patryk Zakrocki duo) music is a unique blending of seemingly opposite extremes – of noise and silence, pop and contemporary chamber, beauty and ugliness, of sophisticated wisdom and pure, naive thoughtlessness. Using clarinets, violin, analogue loopstations, subtle effects and interaction with the audience, the musicians seek to collapse those oppositions, attempting to free both the stage and the audience from the bonds of rules and cultural expectations.

Patryk Zakrocki and **Paweł Szamburski** are multi-instrumentalists, improvisers and promoters of culture who have been active on the Warsaw improvised music and independent art scene since 1999.

Szamburski and Zakrocki create music for theatre, film, silent movies and contemporary dance. They are members of the Warsaw-based independent music label Lado ABC and the Lado cultural association, whose activity over the last ten years has contributed a great deal to the dynamic development of new music in Poland.

Credit line: [Venue, eg. The Brooklyn Academy of Music/Cinefamily/SFFS etc] and the Polish Cultural Institute in New York in association with Unsound Festival present... Additional support has been provided by Trust for Mutual Understanding and Janus Films.

THE FILMS:



© Nikola Todorow 1957, Film Polski

MURDER (Morderstwo)

Poland 1957

B & W, 35 mm, 1min 30 sec.

Written & directed by Roman Polanski

Cinematography by Nikola Todorow

Produced by PWSFTviT / Lodz Film School

Polanski's very first film is an atmospheric short scene about a man stabbed to death while asleep in his bed.



© Henryk Kucharski 1957, Film Polski

TEETH SMILE (Uśmiech zebiczny)

Poland 1957

B & W, 35 mm, 1 min 27.

Directed by Roman Polanski

Cinematography by Henryk Kucharski

Cast: Nikola Todorow

Produced by PWSFTviT / Lodz Film School

A handsome voyeur peeps at his déshabillé neighbor, in a random moment of attraction that is ruined when the neighbor's husband steps into the picture.



© Marek Nowicki 1957, Film Polski



BREAK UP THE DANCE (Rozbijemy zabawę)

Poland 1957

B & W, 35 mm, 7 min 38 sec.

Written & directed by Roman Polanski

Cinematography by Marek Nowicki & Andrzej Galinski

Produced by Maciej Zuralski

Cast: Jan Rutkiewicz, Wieslaw Turowski, Andrzej Ziolkowski

Produced by PWSFTviT / Lodz Film School

A band of thugs crash a dance party and disrupt the fun by pushing girls down, beating people up and throwing them in the water. The act of thoughtless vandalism and animal brutality, emblematic of Polanski's cinema, recalls the famous "nosy fellow" scene from "Chinatown."



© Maciej Kijowski 1958, Film Polski



TWO MEN AND A WARDROBE (Dwaj ludzie z szafa)

Poland 1958

B & W, 35 mm, 15 min.

Written & directed by Roman Polanski

Director's Assistant: Andrzej Kostenko

Cinematography by Maciej Kijowski

Produced by Ryszard Barski

Cast: Jakub Goldberg, Henryk Kluba, Roman Polanski

Produced by PWSFTviT / Lodz Film School

Awards: San Francisco International Film Festival (Special Prize for the Achievement in Experimental Film), Oberhausen International FF (Honorary Diploma), Brussels Experimental FF (Third Prize), Montevideo International FF (First Prize)

This story of two men emerging from the sea carrying a large wardrobe into town, where everyone they encounter is hostile and cruel, is a superb example of sophisticated film making, shot with an incomparable sense of surrealism and poetry, violence and delicacy. When the two men are beaten up and their mirror is smashed, they return to the sea as if to avoid complete disillusionment. Theorists interpret the work as a parable of the nonconformist in society and the consequences of carrying a burden.



© Henryk Kucharski 1959, Film Polski



WHEN ANGELS FALL (Kiedy spadaja anioły)

Poland 1959

B & W and color, 35 mm, 22 min.

Written & directed by Roman Polanski

Cinematography by Henryk Kucharski

Cast: Barbara Kwiatkowska, Andrzej Kondratiuk, Henryk Kluba, Roman Polanski

Produced by PWSFTviT / Lodz Film School

Polanski's diploma film is an ambitious, period piece, in which he crosscuts between the present-day, dull existence of an elderly lavatory attendant and her more colourful past as young girl, despite the horrors of two wars and a constant yearning for her lover. Until "The Pianist" over four decades later, this was the only Polanski film that directly evoked his wartime childhood. The dreamy final scene of an angel descending is interpreted by some as a rare instance of explicitly religious imagery in Polanski's cinema.



© Krzysztof Romanowski 1959, Film Polski

THE LAMP (Lampa)

Poland 1959

B & W, 35 mm, 7 min 50 sec.

Written & directed by Roman Polanski

Director's Assistant: Andrzej Konstenko, Wasyl Mirczew

Cinematography by Krzysztof Romanowski

Produced by PWSFTviT / National Film School in Lodz

In the creepy world of an old doll maker's shop, a fire break out, swallowing the doll parts and their empty faces. The unsettling feeling that the doll maker's tedious, committed work has been in vain becomes a larger metaphor in this gloomy, surrealistic vision.



© Andrzej Kostenko 1962, Film Polski

MAMMALS (Ssaki)

Poland 1962

B & W, 35 mm, 10 min 15 sec.

Written by Andrzej Kondratiuk & Roman Polanski

Directed by Roman Polanski

Cinematography by Andrzej Kostenko

Cast: Henryk Kluba, Michal Zolnierkiewicz

Produced by Stefan Adamek

Awards: Oberhausen International Film Festival (Main Prize), Tour International FF (Grand Prix)

Two men take turns pulling each other on one sled through the snow in this cinematic dance of power. The clean, Beckettian story connects to the themes of the political duplicity in Polanski's French 1961 short, "The Fat and the Lean".

Project description based on promotional materials written by Natalia Babinski & Anna Perzanowska of Polish Cultural Institute, New York