

Anastazja Golaj - Anna A. Vik Aniksdal - Marie Ursin Erichsen

First Steps

Anastazja Golaj Nastusia Run!

Gardzienice: the place where women with laughing eyes chop wood in the winter, which people from all over the world visit and where something has been created that will always remain in their memory. Here, in this village, the smell of cows and salted potatoes mixes with the smell of travel, adventure - the smell of the great outside world.

It was here that a child grew up. That was me. And I belonged to both those parts of Gardzienice's life. In the mornings I would run barefoot in the meadow, later on I would help the neighbours with their weeding and in the evenings, together with my friend, Sara Rodowicz, I would go to the theatre-house to fall asleep in a different world: music, dance, and from far away the sound of night, birds singing, books containing so much wisdom. We would fall asleep in our sleeping-bags somewhere in the corner of a rehearsal room full of music.

That is what I remember from my life when I was five.

After that I went to school in Piaski, five kilometres away from Gardzienice. I remember well how my heart was torn between:

- on the one hand people who devoted so much of their time to contemplating life, the nature of existence, and who aimed to fathom the most sublime aspects of philosophy; who spent their time rehearsing every day and clearly worked to achieve a particular spiritual aim.

- and on the other my friends in Piaski who had mothers who worked in florist shops or banks, wore short skirts and oh! when they walked their high heels clacked so wonderfully.

"Theatre? What kind of job is that?" thought one part of myself; but then the other immediately replied: "That's not a job, that's a way of life".

So, at the age of seven I was already torn between material existence and art; between my heart and being sensible.

Who do I want to be in the future? An artist, however that might manifest itself.

Art is in my blood.

I always search for it intuitively in my life, just as I search for adventure and freedom.

Yet, in some strange way I think I have managed to reconcile these opposing worlds and that this experience has given me the ability to be able to accept and accommodate things which are sometimes very different from myself. And so I grew up meandering between two worlds.

Sara and I used to make up our own performances - we would dress up, sing and speak our lines. It was always obvious to me that we were (and would always be) actresses.

Nevertheless I still experience moments where I think, "Nastusia: run! It's impossible to survive and earn a living from art!" Then I imagine myself as a business woman in short skirts and clackety high heels. Then I go back to Gardzienice, stay a while, and...

Who do I want to be in the future? An artist, however that might manifest itself. Art is in my blood. I always search for it

intuitively in my life, just as I search for adventure and freedom.

Gardzienice opened up a lot of spiritual spaces inside me, and has revealed new horizons. It has taught me not to criticise other life-styles just because they are different to mine. And it has opened up my thinking to so many different issues. It has opened up its secrets to me, and taught me how to make wise decisions.

I had a very beautiful childhood.

ANASTAZJA GOLAJ (Poland) is fifteen years old. Her mother, Anna Zubrzycka, was an actress at Gardzienice and is now directing *Song of the Goat* Theatre. Her father, Mariusz Golaj, is an actor of Gardzienice, one of the most well known theatre groups in Poland, based near Lublin.

Anna Andrea Vik Aniksdal

I Want Drama

Interview by Geddy Aniksdal

How do you learn?

I watch. I get told. I get scolded. I ask and I propose.

What is the best way?

To watch.

To watch what?

The others and yourself.

How do you watch yourself?

From recordings on video, or through feedback from the director or the audience.

Is there a big difference between being an old or a young performer?

Yes and no. Old performers have learned a lot, but we younger ones have a greater ability to learn new things. Also in theatre we can play young and old no matter what age...

Do you think you will continue with theatre as you grow older?

Yes, I want to work with theatre or dance, or something that has *drama* in it. I want to go to schools where they have special sections for drama.

How do you feel about being born into the group Grenland Friteater?

It is a lot of fun in many ways, very boring in others.

Can you elaborate a bit?

The best is all the travelling. The worst is all the travelling. The best thing is travelling to other countries, the worst is leaving my friends, and sometimes it is bad when my parents are away.

Is theatre important?

It is important to want to do theatre, if you don't feel it is important you have to stop.

Without theatre we would not have television and without television we would not have soap operas or any other information about what is happening in the world.

ANNA ANDREA VIK ANIKSDAL (Norway) is thirteen years old, and a member of Grenland Friteater. She has performed in *Moment of Eternity*, *Max og Mini og Midi*, *The Imaginary Invalid* by Molière, *High Play* - a stilt parade, and *Dream Station*. Her mother is Geddy Aniksdal, actress and director at Grenland Friteater. Her father is Lars Vik also actor and director at Grenland Friteater, and playwright.

Marie Ursin Erichsen Theatre Is Special

Interview by Geddy Aniksdal

Marie, what is so special about theatre?

It is special because many people meet and do something together. It doesn't have to be that way but this is how I have been in it, and it is fun and special.

What do you think about Jean Baptiste Molière, the man who wrote The Imaginary Invalid, the play that you were last in?

I think he is clever.

Why?

Because I would never be able to write what he wrote. Remember that he wrote many funny plays.

Was he only funny?

No, the play is also sad and very exciting as to how it all will end.

How is it to be such a young actor, is it different

for you than for the adults? Are you treated differently?

I think it is different, I am treated differently from the adults, I don't get to decide as much as the adults and the adults usually get bigger roles.

Would you like to have a bigger role?

A bit bigger, but not like the lead role if there is one.

How did you start?

I don't really remember, I think it all started with *Moment of Eternity*.

How old were you then?

I think I was five years old.

What do you remember from your first performance?

I remember that it was very late in the

evening, that Anna and I were carried in on a wooden horse, that we had a man like a butler who rolled out the red carpet for us. I also remember the funny hats we had.

Do you remember the chocolate that we hid in various places on the stage so that you would stay where you were supposed to stay?
I had forgotten about the chocolate.

Anyway you don't need chocolate to go on stage now, do you?
No.

Who do you learn from? How do you learn?
I learn from the people I work together with, like my fellow actors, the director and also from Anna who is only a few years older than me. We invent things and rehearse them without the others knowing. My mother and father give me good advice.
When you grow older, would you like to do theatre all the time then?

Most of the time, but I would also like to do dance.

Have you any thoughts about growing up in a theatre group?

I will always think it is fun to do and be around theatre. I think that I have met a lot of funny, good people because I am in this group.

Would you like to add something else?
No, not really.

MARIE URSIN ERICHSEN (Norway) is eleven years old. She is part of Grenland Friteater and has performed in *Moment of Eternity*, *Max og Mini og Midi*, *The Imaginary Invalid* by Molière, *High Play* - a stilt parade and *Dream Station*. Her mother is Anne-Sophie Erichsen and her father is Tor Arne Ursin, both actors and directors at Grenland Friteater.



Marie U. Erichsen, Henning Farner and Anna Andrea V. Aniksdal in *The Imaginary Invalid*.
Photo: Hans Petter Eliassen