

BARBARA WYSOCKA

ACTRESS, DIRECTOR, DESIGNER

‘A huge success, an indescribable triumph’

Le Monde, Lucia di Lammermoor, Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich

Born in Warsaw, Barbara Wysocka graduated from both the acting and directing departments of Kraków’s State Drama School, and studied violin at Freiburg’s Hochschule für Musik, and these various talents power a multidisciplinary career that spans theatre, opera and video – as actor, director and designer.

In opera she has directed the German language world premiere of Francesconi’s *Quartett* at the Staatsoper Berlin with Daniel Barenboim, Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* at Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich, and Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* at Bregenzer Festspiele. At Polish National Opera she directed Glass’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*, Dusapin’s *Medeamaterial*, to a libretto by Heiner Müller, the world premiere of Knapik’s *Moby Dick*, Różycki’s *Eros i Psyche* and Puccini’s *Tosca*. She directed *Roméo et Juliette* at Semperoper Dresden in 2025, and her debut at Opéra de Lyon in 2023 with Kát’a Kabanová was greeted with universal critical acclaim. Future plans include with Polish National Opera and Bayerische Staatsoper, and she will make her Metropolitan Opera debut with the world premiere of *The Mothers of Kherston* by Maxim Kolomiets.

Wysocka often incorporates her own videos and images with live action in her productions, such as in Dusapin/Müller’s *Medeamaterial* at Polish National Opera, Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* at Teatr Powszechny, Warsaw and Szapocznikow. *Stan Nieważkości/No gravity* at Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw.

In her theatre work, she has directed Wyspiański’s *The Curse*; Bohomolec’s *The Drunkards* at Stary Teatr, Kraków; Handke’s *Kaspar* at Teatr Współczesny, Wrocław; Müller’s *Volokolomsk Highway*; Sophocles’ *Philoctetes* at Teatr Polski, Wrocław; Büchner’s *Lenz*, *Dantons Tod* at National Theatre, Warsaw; *Woyzeck/Wozzeck* after Büchner and Berg at Kammerspiele, Munich; Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*; Orwell’s *1984* for Teatr Powszechny, Warsaw; and Schiller’s *Don Karlos* for Volkstheater, Vienna.

Her acting performances have often included a musical dimension, performing as a narrator in Schönberg’s *Gurrelieder*, Debussy’s *Le Martyre de saint Sébastien* and with Jordi Savall in *Éloge de la Folie*. She also performs in experimental music theatre pieces such as her creations *Anti-Oedipus* and *Chopin without Piano*.

She is a company member of the Teatr Powszechny, Warsaw, which is at the forefront of political

MAESTRO_{ARTS}

performance, and from 2004 to 2014 she was at Stary Teatr, Kraków, having won prizes and acclaim at both places. She has also performed at the National Theatre, Warsaw, Berlin's Maxim Gorki Theater and Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, as well as in German language feature films and TV productions.

Wysocka is also a founding member of artistic collective CENTRALA, which has produced many innovative pieces since its founding. The latest pieces are *Bieguni* (Flights), an adaptation of the Nobel-Prize winning novel by Olga Tokarczuk; *Sprawiedliwość* (Justice) whose main part is a notification sent to the state attorney explaining how a current MP is guilty of crimes against humanity for her involvement in anti-Semitic purges in 1968; and *Filmy z epoki smogu* (Films from the Time of Smog), a series of short artistic films about air pollution.

She was awarded the Paszport Polityki for her debut opera production Glass' *The Fall of the House of Usher* in 2009; the main acting award in the competition for staging early works of Polish literature for Idalia in *Fantazy*; and the Golden Yorick for her production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* that she directed and also played Mark Antony. She was Cornell Visiting Professor of Theatre at Swarthmore College, 2019–20 and was awarded the Gloria Artis Medal for Merit to Culture by the Polish Minister of Culture in 2025.