

The Era of Tadeusz Pawlikowski and Irish Theatre

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Abstract:

Tadeusz Pawlikowski was arguably Poland's greatest theatre director of the fin de siècle. With stints as Theatre Manager in both Kraków and Lwów municipal theatres, Pawlikowski excelled in developing ensemble casts and cultivating audiences without kowtowing to popular tastes. He was also responsible for bringing many western plays to partitioned Poland, and indeed he oversaw theatrical premieres of Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw and John Millington Synge. This paper will look at the production and reception of these plays and will record how there was a growing conviction amongst Polish critics that Irish dramatists would soon make a towering impact on the age. That said, not all the productions were as successful as perhaps they should have been. When in Lwów, Pawlikowski attempted to flood the city with drama and this ambition entailed brief run-throughs and the shortening of texts in order to facilitate the learning of lines. Needless to say, there was little time for work on characterization. Consequently, it was often pointed out that performances had failed to bridge the cultural gap where a foreign piece was concerned. To this end, this paper will assess both the contribution of Tadeusz Pawlikowski to Irish theatre, and the reception and legacy of the productions which took place under his directorial guidance.

Keywords: Irish Theatre, legacy, Pawlikowski, reception, Wyspiański

Hailing from a famous aristocratic family of artists, writers and patriots, Tadeusz Pawlikowski understudied as a theatrical director in some of the great theatres of Austria and Germany. He came to prominence in the early 1890s as a theatre reviewer for the Cracow journal, *Nowa Reforma* (New Reform), which sought to showcase new trends in art and literature, and like many of his generation, Pawlikowski fell under the spell of Edward Gordon Craig, translating in the process a number of extracts from Craig's *On the Art of*

Theatre (1911), which extolled the communicative function of theatre. Pawlikowski was appointed director of the Cracow's Municipal Theatre in 1893 and there followed seven tempestuous years where he was forced to grapple with an interfering city council, which frequently left the theatre short of allocated funds, while his enemies made much of the fact that he was a married man romantically involved with an actress in the company (Webersfeld 1917, 13). Very often, Pawlikowski was forced to subsidise the running of the company out of his own pocket, and matters came to a head when the theatre entered into protracted negotiations with a belligerent theatrical agent who held the rights to many contemporary foreign dramas (Michalik 1985, 77).

It was in the context of these rather fraught and pecuniarily difficult times that in the spring of 1898 Pawlikowski reluctantly accepted for performance Stanisław Wyspiański's debut verse play *Warszawianka* (The Varsovian Anthem, 1898). However, Pawlikowski refused to give the prospective playwright a concrete date for the premiere and strung Wyspiański along with pep talks and recommendations for further rewrites (Grzymała-Siedlecki 1971, 275-278). In the autumn of 1898, an impatient and frustrated Wyspiański sent to Pawlikowski an envoy in the figure of Alfred Wysocki, an expert in Scandinavian culture who was cutting his journalistic teeth as a staff writer for the Cracow-based art and literary journal *Życie* (Life). Wysocki also failed to make any headway, and so adopted a different strategy by looking to convince the actress, Wanda Siemaszkowa, that one of the play's leading roles had been written with her in mind. Wysocki accompanied Wyspiański to the actress's apartment where the playwright in a trembling voice read through the part. Recognising that this was more than just an exercise in flattery, she agreed to take Wyspiański's part and petitioned Pawlikowski directly. Wysocki's intrigues reaped dividends when Pawlikowski committed to a date for the premiere and assigned directorial duties to Ludwik Solski. However, preparations on the play were soured somewhat by Siemaszkowa's gossipy assertions that Wyspiański had had the gumption to demand artistic control over both the manuscript and rehearsals. Whatever the truth about this matter, Pawlikowski certainly did Wyspiański a great disservice when he inappropriately staged the play together with two rather ephemeral and unimportant one-act works, particularly when he had originally planned to stage *The Varsovian Anthem* in a more suitable pairing with Maeterlinck's *Intérieur* (1894). But Solski oversaw what was hailed as a flawless production, having also commissioned Wyspiański to provide the stage design. In spite of the play's arduous road, *The Varsovian Anthem* had its premiere on 26 November 1898 and it would mark the beginning of a new era in Polish drama, which was principally dominated by the plays of Wyspiański. Unfortunately, Pawlikowski would leave Cracow soon after this production, and he would miss out on being a part of what is regarded as the golden era of Wyspiański, centred around Cracow's Municipal Theatre, that later had its most celebratory

moment with the staging in March 1901 of Wyspiański's *Wesele* (1901; *The Wedding*), a drama that would be seen to depict the inertia of a nation that had suffered for too long under the yoke of foreign rule. Much in the same way that J.M. Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) was vilified and considered by many at the time of its premiere to have libelled the Irish nation, Wyspiański's characterisations in *The Wedding* would also become the subject of a contentious debate, particularly in relation to the absence in the play of a heroic figure around which the Polish nation could draw inspiration. Both dramatists, it seems, were destined to be misunderstood and revered by their contemporaries in equal measure.

A number of months prior to the premiere of *The Varsovian Anthem*, in June 1898, Pawlikowski had taken his Cracow theatre troupe on a visit to Lwów for a month, and their performances were met with great acclaim and enthusiasm (Grzymała-Siedlecki 1971, 298-299). There can be little doubt that this visit laid the groundwork for Pawlikowski's later move to Lwów. Despite running Cracow's Municipal Theatre for one more successful season, Pawlikowski considered the chances of re-election as slim, and so entered into an open competition for the position of manager of the fledgling Lwów Municipal Theatre, which meant running against the acting manager, Ludwik Heller. Following a highly successful public relations campaign, which garnered support from theatrical critics throughout partitioned Poland, Pawlikowski was elected to the position. The unseated Heller was much chagrined, perhaps rightly feeling that the Pawlikowski name had unduly swayed the decision of those who had cast their votes (Webersfeld 1917, 15).

From the outset, Pawlikowski looked to establish a European repertoire that would be performed alongside Polish drama. With this aim in mind, whenever a new play made an impact, Pawlikowski sent a scout at his own expense to assess its merits. He would then oversee all the steps involved in bringing the play before the theatregoers of Lwów, which included his close involvement in the translation of the manuscript, something which we shall return to later when discussing Pawlikowski's staging of Synge's *The Well of the Saints* (1905).

As the theatre manager of Lwów's Municipal Theatre, Pawlikowski would oversee productions of the plays of George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. Pawlikowski gave Shaw his first Polish premiere on Friday 27 November 1903 with the unauthorized staging of *The Devil's Disciple* (*Uczeń diabła*, 1897), only a couple of months after the play's Continental debut in Vienna's Raimund Theatre. The production came at a time when the cast was juggling as many as three plays per week, this policy being a part of Pawlikowski's plan to flood the city with drama (Krajewska 1972, 58). This ambition must obviously have entailed quick run-throughs and the shortening of texts in order to facilitate a rapid learning of the lines. There was often little time for work on characterization, which must have become glaringly evident whenever a

challenging piece came along¹. As a result, many of the plays produced at this time were described as naturalistic, a term chosen to describe instinctive and improvised performances. This approach, as it was all too often pointed out, was not enough to bridge the cultural gap where a foreign piece was concerned, and the shortfall was often exposed. And although Shaw's premiere evening passed off without any glitches, the general sentiment was that both the play and the playwright had deserved a better first outing.

The Devil's Disciple is set at the time of the American Revolution, which pitches an uncompromising life-force in the figure of Richard 'Dick' Dudgeon firstly against puritanical religiosity, and secondly against the injustice of the occupying British. It is a play that could have been readily associated with Poland's own national bondage. But whilst *The Devil's Disciple* boasted a happy and romantic ending, the prospect that the same could be true for Poland in 1903 was still a long way off. Local critics saw in the play a chaotic coming together of emotions and impressions, which ultimately unveiled the nobility of soul, the beauty of self-sacrifice, and freedom of thought, all of which together signify the aspirations of burgeoning nations. The same critics only lamented that in the actors' hands the play had descended into a farcical free-for-all, let down by the fact that some of the supporting actors had forgotten their lines. But instead of excoriating the cast for committing what is a cardinal sin, critics just mildly recommended that the minor actors needed to do better in future performances.

The Lwów premiere of Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) took place on Monday, 23 October 1905, with a repeat performance on the following Wednesday. The play had been translated as a handwritten manuscript by an unknown translator who gave it the title of *Birbant*, meaning 'Reveller', which must have thrown out of kilter the very notion that Algeon was able to excuse his absences to the countryside in order to visit his invalid friend Bunbury.

The principle review of the play, which was featured in *Gazeta Lwowska* (1905; The Lwów Gazette) and penned by critic Adam Krechowiecki, reveals just how the long shadow of Wilde's fall from grace and early death continued to cast a pall over the way in which his works were perceived. For Krechowiecki, indeed, the play was like laughter through gritted teeth, and whilst acknowledging its farcical characteristics, he was much more struck by the mendaciousness which lay at the heart of the play, uttering simulta-

¹ It is important to note that at the beginning of the twentieth century, municipal theatres in cities like Warsaw, Cracow and Lwów were subsidized by the city, and very often their remit or program, as defined by the theatre manager, was to present as many plays as possible. As a consequence, this meant that theatres would very often stage up to three plays a week, which placed almost impossible demands on the actors and often impacted negatively on the quality of their performance. See Adam Grzymała-Siedlecki 1971, 153-160.

neously his disbelief that people could lie with such ease: “Who was leading who?” (“Qui trompe-t-on ici?”). The critic also accepted that the converse of this puzzlement – which obtained also for the play – was that lies are taken as truths because this is the most expedient thing to do. In turn, Krechowiecki felt that Wilde’s fall made for extra textual poignancy, and he recalled that as the curtain was falling he had seen in his mind’s eye a bloodied Wilde, undone by his own Bunburying, and trusting to the fates that things would come right in the end.

This play came at the end of Pawlikowski’s tenure as managing director of Lwów Municipal Theatre, with Heller having been handed the helm once more. For a short time, Pawlikowski was out in the cold, and forced to work as a director for hire. And it was during this period that he directed *Mrs Warren’s Profession* (1893) for Cracow’s Municipal Theatre. Pawlikowski’s Cracow production was an unqualified success. Konrad Rakowski, writing for the newspaper *Czas* (Time), greatly admired both the play and the production, but he was keen to impress upon readers that the play’s loose ends should be put down to the fact that it was not a new play, but a precursor to greater works by Shaw (1907). Two years later, Pawlikowski brought the play to Lwów, where its two performances turned out to be memorable for all the wrong reasons. At this time Pawlikowski was working once again for Lwów’s Municipal Theatre as Artistic Director, having been appointed to act as a counterweight to Heller’s humdrum competence. Indeed, as soon as Heller had taken the reins a perceived rot had set in. The most troubling issue was a crisis of discipline amongst the actors, which had given rise to a number of bloodcurdling situations on stage, where actors were sniggering at each others’ non-scripted jokes. One such episode occurred during the staging of Wyspiański’s *Varsovian Anthem*, when the actors present on stage were accepting news from a mortally wounded messenger-soldier, he was greeted with smiles and sniggers. The most unforgivable development was Heller’s heavy-handedness with manuscripts. With Jan Kasproicz’s *Uczta Herodiady* (1905; *Herod’s Feast*), a play in poetic verse, the director did away with the poetry and put large fragments of the play to the music of German opera. It was not received well, and by the third performance the play was performing to an empty house. However, Heller’s cultural vandalism scaled new heights with the staging of Shaw’s *Candida* (1898) when he advertised the production as a comedy, which would explain why so many jokes had been ‘mis’-fired in the audience’s direction. The sudden and frequent leaps from drama to farce befuddled actors and either left audiences laughing or thinking, but seemingly not both.

Immediately on his return to Lwów, Pawlikowski looked to recalibrate the mission of the theatre by surrounding himself with those of a similar progressive outlook. One such figure was Alfred Wysocki who had left Cracow following the closure of the journal *Życie* (Life) to take up a journalistic career

as theatrical reviewer for *Gazeta Lwowska*. Intrigued by the fact that Wysocki knew Ibsen personally, Pawlikowski wined and dined with the journalist one evening in a top restaurant, which ended in the early hours of the morning (Wysocki 1974, 221). Relations quickly moved on from a social to a professional basis, and Wysocki went on to translate for the Lwów Theatre: Ibsen, Bjornson, and most notably for our story, Synge's *The Well of the Saints*, which had had its Abbey premiere just three years earlier in 1905. Wysocki would translate the title *The Well of the Saints* as *Cudowne źródło* (The Miraculous Spring).

The Well of the Saints was staged on Friday, 11 November 1908, as the second play in a double bill with Wyspiański's *Sędziowie* (1907; The Judges), which was a vengeful tale of ethnic conflict between a Jewish and Huculski family that had actually taken place near Lwów in the early 19th century. It was an episode involving murder, infanticide and other unspeakable crimes. Whatever the remoteness of the plays to one another, the staging of the two playwrights together was clearly a signalling of their comparable stature in their respective national theatres. The plays were performed on Wednesday and Friday, alternating with Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, which was performed on Thursday and Saturday. The theatre review column of the Lwów newspaper *Gazeta Narodowa* (1908; The National Gazette) spoke highly of Synge's play. Although the unsigned review provides little more than a summary of the play, it did show a clear understanding of the poetic theme at the heart of the play, wherein "... lepsza jest czasem ślepotą" (sometimes blindness is best)². Wysocki also wrote a review of the evening's theatrical fare, although he made no mention of his own particular involvement in the production (Wysocki 1908). Indeed, his review devoted more space to Wyspiański's play, although it did emphasise that both plays depicted reality as a point of departure from the unpleasantness of life for a flight into the world of the imagination. However, the reviewer had his doubts about the play's loose treatment of religious beliefs, and was particularly troubled by the idea that Martin Doul could be so removed from a state of blessedness and yet be deemed worthy of having God's grace bestowed upon him a second time. Understandably, given the play's success in Cracow, it was inevitable that Pawlikowski would look to bring Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession* (1893) to Lwów, but the reception the play enjoyed in the city was decidedly different to that which it had received in Cracow. Perhaps unbeknownst to Pawlikowski who had been absent from Lwów for the *Candida* production, in contrast to other theatrical centres like Warsaw and Cracow, the Lwów theatergoing public and critics had been nurturing an antipathy towards Shaw for some time. The premiere performance of *Mrs Warren's Profession* took place on 17 February 1909, and it seems that problems began with the

² All translations from Polish are by the author.

cast, who took a burlesque approach to their roles. Ferdinand Feldman, who played Crofts, the business partner to Mrs Warren, a Madame of continental brothels, conceived his character as a coarse, larger-than-life pimp. Indeed, everything the play offered grated on the sensibilities of sections of the audience, who were in any case generally disgruntled about what they regarded as Pawlikowski's hitherto decadent French-leaning repertoire (Wysocki 1953, 145). During the play's second performance, some people in the audience became agitated when in the third act Mrs. Warren and Crofts paid the pastor a visit to his home, and were then guided by him towards the church. This trampling over sacred ground proved too much for a schoolteacher, a certain Michalski: sitting in the front row, he stood up and demanded that the curtain be brought down on a play that was an offence to the most basic notions of human decency (Kumor 1971, 135-136; Keane 2013, 124-125). Others in the rows immediately behind Michalski soon joined him in facing down the stage. By the time the police had arrived, agitators and defenders were squaring up to each other in isolated pockets of the theatre. The police somehow managed to restore order and remove Michalski from the premises. As a gesture of solidarity, some of his supporters followed him out of the theatre.

On reassuming his post in 1913 as head of the Cracow Municipal Theatre, which had recently been renamed as Teatr im. Juliusza Słowackiego (The Juliusz Słowacki Theatre), Pawlikowski actively sought to stage dramas that were making an impact on the world stage, and tried to balance high-end drama with more popular offerings suited to the tastes of Cracow's notoriously difficult-to-please audiences, who were drifting in large numbers towards the newly opened picture houses (Michalik 1985, 361). In what was a tough winter season for Pawlikowski, he showed his faith in *The Well of the Saints* by staging it again. He was also happy to risk staging Shaw once more, but this time he plumbed for *Pygmalion* (1913).

Pawlikowski's *Pygmalion* was an unlicensed production. Whilst the official licensed translator, Florian Sobieniowski, was working on his translation of the play in the winter of 1913-1914, on behalf of Warsaw's Polish Theatre, the march was rudely stolen on him by an unknown rival in Cracow, Ryszard Ordyński, who was a highly acclaimed Polish theatrical director working at the time in the Berlin's Deutches Theater. Despite his being an acquaintance of Shaw, the evidence suggests that Ordyński undertook the translation without the playwright's knowledge (Ordyński 1956, 261-262). Ordyński had studied librarianship in London in 1908, and, as part of the wider student program, he had also undertaken volunteer work in poorer areas such as Whitechapel, which would by and large involve participating in public library gatherings where over tea and biscuits people enthusiastically asked the foreign students about social, political and cultural issues in their home countries (Ordyński 1956, 262-263).

When in 1911 Ordyński took Max Reinhardt's pantomime play *Sumurun* (1910) to London's Colosseum Theatre, Ordyński had the opportunity to

meet and talk to Shaw in person at an informal gathering of writers and cast which had been organised by Granville Barker. Initially, Ordyński served as an interpreter between Reinhardt and Shaw, with the Irish playwright jesting that Reinhardt could quite conceivably knock him off his perch in terms of potential box-office receipts. Having paid the compliment, however, Shaw proceeded to talk of the need for a dramatic work to be more than a crowd-pleaser, and for it to tackle social issues and reverberate beyond the immediacy of the performance and the theatre itself. Ordyński remained in London for several weeks as a guest of Barker's, and found himself being invited to Shaw's house, where Mrs Shaw served meat meals for this non-vegetarian Polish guest. Back in Germany, Reinhardt handed Ordyński the directorial reins for Shaw's *Misalliance* (1910), and Ordyński took this opportunity to travel back to London to discuss some of the work's many difficult aspects, and hoping to secure permission from Shaw to make cuts which would aid clarification. Shaw politely listened to Ordyński argue passionately that non-English productions of the play needed interpretative room. However, when Ordyński actually took his pencil out and showed where he wanted to make the cuts, Shaw, always smiling, responded by pointing out the problems which would arise from such excisions. Once Shaw had given his opinion on the matter, he told Ordyński that he was free to do whatever he liked with the play, remarking that he had long made peace with the fact that foreign productions were always going to take liberties. But Ordyński realized that he had asked Shaw and been rebuffed. Had he not asked for Shaw's blessing, he may have been free to pursue his plans with a clear conscience. It is for this reason, I believe, that Ordyński did not mention *Pygmalion* to Shaw when he travelled to meet Shaw in London in October 1913, in order to seek the playwright's advice once again for the Deutsches Theatre's upcoming production of *Androcles and the Lion* (1912) with respect of the costumes and the stage design (Ordyński 1956, 359-360).

Basing his work on Trebitsch's German translation, Ordyński produced a shortened version of *Pygmalion* and then sought to have it staged in Cracow's Juliusz Słowacki Theatre, which, as mentioned earlier, was once again under the directorship of Tadeusz Pawlikowski. Ordyński's unpublished manuscript has been preserved in the archive of the theatre and a very interesting instruction from the translator is provided on the page with the list of characters: "Liza w akcie pierwszym i drugim mówi gwarą ordynarną uliczną. Przedstawicielka tej roli musi przeprowadzić ten dżalekt konsekwentnie, zwłaszcza w tonie i przedłużeniu i skracaniu samogłosek bardzo dosadnie" (Eliza in the first and second act speaks the dialect of a street merchant. The actress playing this role must be consistent with this dialect, especially in tone and the exaggerated extension and shortening of vowels). On reading the manuscript, one immediately notices that Eliza's Polish before the transformation is not incorrect, and as such her accent and speech do not signify an impoverished

background. In fact, her disadvantaged state is more discernible by Higgins' allusions to the unpleasant high-pitched sounds that she makes: "I nie jęzz nam nad uszami..." (Ms n. 1750, 8; Don't be screeching in our ears...). With the emphasis less on phonetics and place, and more on the tempestuous relationship between Higgins and Eliza, a crucial interpolation is to be found at the very end of the Polish manuscript, where it is made clear that Eliza will remain with Higgins, and that her decision to stay is very much his triumph.

Pygmalion proved to be the hit of the season, with critics applauding both the production and the play itself³. It is clear, though, that the acquisition of correct speech and accent was less foregrounded than the notion that kindness and good breeding can work their magic on any disadvantaged person. Mirroring the perspicacity of an alert German reviewer, who had pointed out the similarity of the play to Tobias Smollett's adventures with a sixteen-year old beggar girl in chapter 87 of his novel *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751), one Polish reviewer thought that the play must have been inspired in part by Sardou's *Madame Sans-Gêne* (1891), which told the story of a laundress who marries a soldier, who is himself subsequently elevated by Napoleon to the rank of Duke of Danzig (Unnamed reviewer 1914). However, the heroine's newly found fortune and position does not smooth out her rough edges, and she continues to behave in a raucous manner at court, thus earning herself the name of Madame Sans-Gêne, meaning Mrs No Embarrassment. It is an important observation, particularly given the fact that English critics would gleefully speculate that Shaw had agreed to have the play staged in Germany as a pall of plagiarism hung over the play with respect to Smollett. Of course, Shaw provided himself with an inimitable defense: "Do not scorn to be derivative" (Holroyd 1998, 441). The performances of Leonard Bończa-Stepiński playing Higgins and Irena Solska playing Eliza were hailed as career-topping turns, with the same reviewer stating: "Nie mogę sobie wyobrazić lepszych wykonawców tych dwu ról" (I couldn't imagine better performers of these two roles). The Cracow premiere of *The Well of the Saints* took place a week later on Saturday, 31 January 1914, with two more performances the following week. Once again, the play served as a support performance, but this time it strangely followed an adapted Latin work by the late Polish Renaissance dramatist, Szymon Szymonowicz, entitled *Castus Joseph* (1587). Pawlikowski either must have felt that Synge's play would not enjoy success in its own right or he was simply wedded to the idea of presenting the play as part of a double bill, but either way the critics would disagree

³ As Konrad Rakowski wrote, "*Pygmalion* Shaw'a na sobotniem przedstawieniu po swych europejskich sukcesach, zdobył sobie i publiczność krakowską i powodzenie w repertuarze ma zapewnione" (1914, 4; "The Saturday performance of Shaw's *Pygmalion*, following its European triumphs, won over Cracow's theatregoing public and its success in the repertoire is assured").

with his judgment. A review published in *Gazeta Poniedziałkowa* (The Monday Gazette), and signed with the initials Z.R., provided a brief summary of the play and was complimentary about the production (1914). In turn, the reviewer for *Czas* (Pr., 1914) lamented the fact that Synge's play had not been given an evening all to itself, and particularly because the evening had been brimming with quality and burdened by quantity, with one other critic recalling that the audience had been too exhausted given the lateness to really enjoy the play. In relation to the play itself, the reviewer thought that Synge's work was highly evocative of Maeterlinck's play, *The Miracle of St. Anthony* (1904), recently blacklisted by the Vatican. Aside from a short summary of the play, the reviewer also showed a great understanding of its underlying themes: "... a gdy przeszedłszy całe piekło życia, znowu oślepli i zbliżyli się do siebie we wspólnej doli, która im ich brzydotę zaślониła. Nie chcą już za nic w świecę drugiego cudu [...]" (having gone through the hell of life, and blind once again, they reunite in their shared pain, a blindness which hides their ugliness from one another. Not for the entire world do they wish for another miracle [...]). Indeed, for the reviewer, Synge's play was filled with intelligent ironies, which in turn had many delicate things to say about the human condition. Great praise was bestowed upon the actors Antoni Siemaszko and Zofia Czaplińska, who had played Martin and Mary Doul, and who had been fully committed to portraying the delirious delight of expectation, only to be matched by the anguish of the blind couple's thwarted dreams. Warm words were reserved in turn for the way in which the actors had portrayed the abject fear that the Douls had at the prospect of their sight being restored a second time. The reviewer ended by complimenting both the stage design and the choreography of the collective scenes, whilst also applauding Pawlikowski for having brought to the public's attention the "... z talentem oryginalnego poety" (talent of a [highly] original poet). But once again, as something of a parting rebuke, it was reiterated that both plays should have been staged on their own (Flach 1914, 118; see also Poskuta-Włodek 2001, 54).

Pawlikowski died the following year, having left a hitherto unparalleled legacy in both theatrical management and mentorship. We may only regret that Pawlikowski did not give more support to Irish-themed drama, such as the plays of Synge. Certainly, Pawlikowski's unpreparedness to stage other works by the 'Irish Wyspiański' is puzzling, particularly when the reviews for *The Well of the Saints* had been universally positive, and had hailed a kindred bond of sorts between the respective literary traditions of Ireland and Poland. But perhaps his determination to stage as many plays as possible from one week and month to the next meant that Pawlikowski did not always give consideration to one dramatist or tradition over another, and that Synge was in fact fortunate to have been staged at all, and what is more, to have been allowed to make a brief but memorable contribution to Polish theatrical tradition.

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