

Marta: Welcome to another episode of our podcast, “Ucho Horzycy.”
Today we’re talking about our upcoming premiere, Duncan Macmillan’s *Lungs*.
I’m joined by the entire cast: Julia Sobiesiak-Borucka.

Julia: Hello!

Marta: And Maciej Raniszewski.

Maciej: Hello!

Marta: As well as the director, Patryk Warchoń.

Patryk: Hi!

Marta: As you’ve probably guessed, this is a very intimate production. My first question is for you, Maciek. In the play your character asks his partner, Julia, in the children’s section at IKEA: “Do you want to have a baby?” That’s quite a direct question. Is that who he is?

Maciej: He’s definitely more straightforward than his partner. I also think he hasn’t really thought through what having a child entails. And I get him—I became a father at thirty, and I didn’t exactly stop to consider what it would mean. Coming up against reality was tough at times. I think he’s similar. You can’t really prepare for a child—it’s such a big change. Maybe they’d talked about it before, and then, because they’re together and at that stage of life, he suddenly thinks, “Maybe it’s time.” There wasn’t a lot of overthinking there.

Marta: Right—once you’re in the kids’ section at IKEA, the context suggests itself.

Maciej: Exactly—an idea pops up, so he says it out loud.

Marta: It’s not much of a spoiler to say your relationship in *Lungs* is turbulent—there’s love and tenderness, but also hurt and betrayal. What changes for you when you’re playing at those two emotional extremes? Julia, maybe you first.

Julia: Oh wow! The differences are huge—I’m not sure how to answer. For me the essence of this play is that we get to move through all of it from beginning to end. I don’t really break it down into separate scenes. Sometimes it’s one way, sometimes another—we’re trying to hold it as a whole, and in the end it falls into place.

Marta: Let me put it simply—do you feel a difference playing the tender, “nice” moments with Maciek versus the hard, high-stakes ones?

Maciej: No.

[laughter]

Marta: Professionalism above all.

Julia: There is a difference, sure—I just don’t quite know how to put it into words.

Marta: Patryk, a question for you. We talked about whether people love less today than they used to. In your director’s note you cite research saying young people have sex about a quarter less often than their grandparents did at the same age. How do you explore that on stage?

Patryk: Yes, studies suggest younger people are having sex less often than previous generations, for lots of reasons—social, economic, cultural. What interests me is the gap between what we know and what we do. We enter relationships with more knowledge than ever—about psychology, emotions, all of it—so in theory our relationships should be happier. And yet they aren't. Besides the drop in sexual frequency, you see higher divorce rates—right now in Poland roughly one in four marriages ends in divorce.

Despite all that knowledge—even the pop-psych bite-sized stuff from TikTok or Instagram—we're often more focused on ourselves. We prioritize our own needs, and relationships can become more self-centred. I like a line by Ivan Vyrypaev: "Love is two people, which means I'm responsible for your love." That's what seems to be missing.

Marta: How do you read Vyrypaev's words?

Patryk: As a call to focus on the other person—sometimes to stretch your own boundaries or give way. And yet today's discourse around assertiveness and setting boundaries, stressing one's own needs, can go too far. There's less conversation, less working things through; instead we draw lines and chase an ideal that doesn't exist.

Marta: I spoke with a much younger friend this week who said the same thing—people her age enter relationships less and less. Among her friends there's only one couple; everyone else is single. Partly it's fear of losing independence, and partly it's all the "red flags" that instantly rule someone out.

Patryk: People get "cancelled."

Maciej: And then it starts to feel like casting for a partner.

Julia: The perfect one.

Maciej: Exactly. Building a relationship that way is kind of absurd. The essence of a relationship is change—not just in the other person, but in yourself. If you're not willing to compromise, to learn the other person, you'll stay stuck. And that's terribly boring.

Marta: And your production talks a lot about that. But you also said you want *Lungs* to let us breathe. What do you mean?

Patryk: The topic is close to us, and the play is wonderfully written—very personal for the author. Macmillan wrote it 13 years ago, when he was 30, in a single day. He discussed it a lot with his then-girlfriend, so it grows from his own experiences. We're staging it in a very intimate setup—close to the audience, playing with them, everyone visible to everyone. My hope is that the 90 minutes give people space to reflect, to look at their own relationships and experiences.

Marta: Back to that intimacy—if I'm not mistaken, Julia and Maciek, you haven't performed here on our smallest, closest-to-the-audience stage on the second-floor foyer. How are you feeling about that kind of proximity, where the audience will practically be listening in on very private conversations?

Julia: I've performed in a small space, but it was a musical evening with Grześ Wiśniewski—Kaczmariski's songs—so something very different. Honestly, I can't wait for the audience—to see what happens when we tell this story right in front of them.

Maciej: I think it'll be a fascinating experience. We've never played this close to the audience. The space is arranged so the audience is basically in the room with us. Part of me worries about how that will affect the flow of acting, but I'm also hugely curious. I can't wait.

Marta: Last question—just for fun. You've often played couples together, and I've heard you even kept a tally once.

Julia: We did—a ranking of who dumped whom more often. Sometimes I was ahead, sometimes Maciek. We've had a bit of a break from it lately.

Maciej: True.

Julia: And in this show... I'm not sure I can say.

Maciej: I'd call it a draw.

[laughter]

Maciej: In earlier productions we often played romantic pairs—sometimes I got dumped, sometimes Julka did. But this time—look—I think we're burying the hatchet.

Marta: A grand reunion.

Maciej: Exactly.

Marta: Thank you both so much for the conversation. My guests were *Lungs* cast members Julia Sobiesiak-Borucka and Maciej Raniszewski, and the director, Patryk Warchoł.