



1000 years of the Russian Church, 1981

ANATOLY G. ANTOHIN



Self-Portrait, 1982

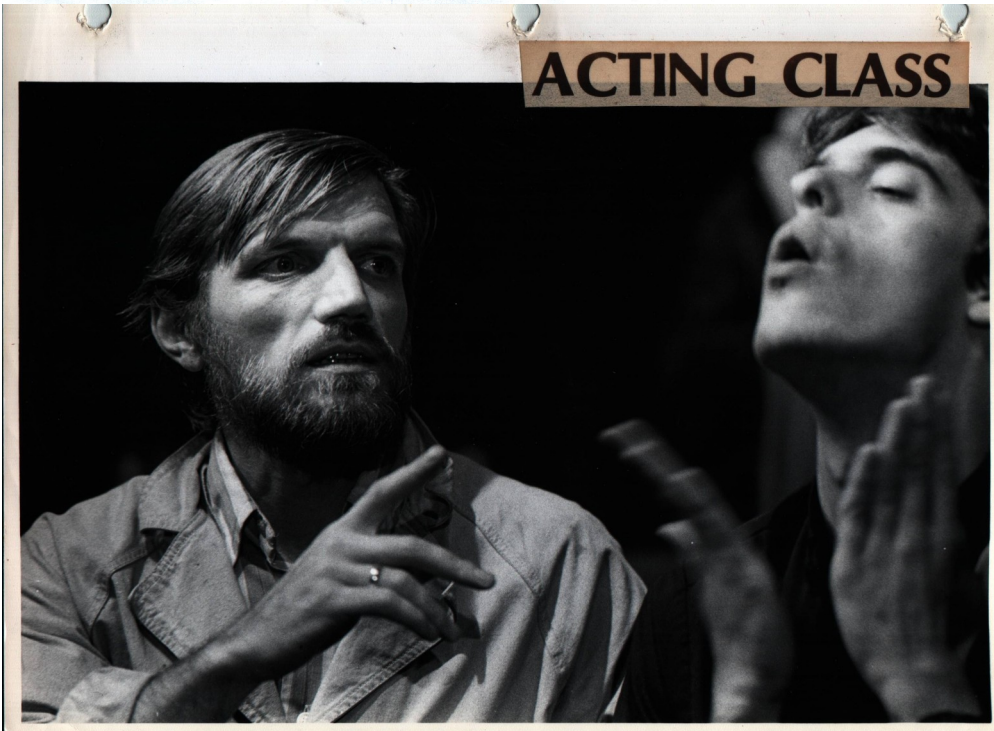
August 4, 2011, Addis Ababa, ET

ለውድ ጓደኛዬና መምህራ
አናቶሌ አንትዋን

በኔ ውስጥ ተለኩሰሃል፤ከዩኒቨርሲቲ ቆይታዬ በላይ ካንተ ጋር በነበረኝ አባታዊ ፣
ወዳጃዊ፣ መምህራዊ ግንኙነት የጨመርኳቸው ነገሮች ብዙ ናቸው። ... ፈትነህ፣ጥግተህ
ሌላውን ያላየሁትን የግላውቀውን የህይወት ጎን አሳይተኸኛል ለሚወዱት ነገር
ለሚወዱት ሰው መኖር ምን ማለት አንደሆነ የገባኝ አንተን ካገኘሁ በኋላ ነው። ስለ
ፍቅር፣ ስለቤተሰብ፣ ስለ ታማኝነትና ሀቀኝነት ነግረህኝ ሳይሆን በቃልህና በዕምነትህ
ጥንካሬና ዕናት ኖረኸው አይቻለሁ ።ካስተማርከኝ ትምህርት በተጨማሪ በኔ ህይወት
ወስጥ ትልቅ ዋጋ የሰጠሁት፤ የወዳጅነታችን መልካም ጊዜያት ያገኘሁት ውድ ስጦታ
ነው ።

ዛሬ ከጎናችን ባትኖርም ራዕይህ ፣ምኞትህ የጀመርናቸውን ሥራዎች ለመልካም
ሰውነትህ ማስታወሻ ይሆኑ ዘንድ ዳር ደርሰው ማየት የዘወትር ምኞቴ ነው። ስለ
ኢትዮጵያ ሃገራችን ከኛ በላይ ስትቆረቆር ግብ-ግብ ስትል ሳይህ ሁሌም ልቤ ይነካ
ነበር። ... አናቶሌ ዘወትር በኔ ልብ ውስጥ፣ በኔ ህይወት ወስጥ ትልቅ ቦታ አለህ!!

ክንዴነህ ታመነ
ጓደኛና ተማሪው
የሲኒማ አምባሳደር ሥ/አሰኪያጅ



He attended special schools throughout his early education excelling in math. He breezed through secondary school often annoying his teachers with his arrogance and rebellion. He entered Moscow University and with the iron hand of his talented parents who had made a career in engineering he graduated in thermo-dynamics. This prestigious field was not to be pursued . . . although it would have yielded him a brilliant carrier, he knew he was an artist and the sterile world of scientific research was not for him. He began his second degree in Film and Cinematography. By



Grandmother “Malashka” with Anatoly and his sister

age 22, he was married to his first wife Natasha Sergienko and had his son Anton.

Although he enjoyed a sterling career (the youngest playwright, awards) he remained dissatisfied by the lack of artistic freedom in his native country, he knew he must depart and realize his creative destiny which lay in the West. He tells his story of how he smuggled a whole book coded, disguised as cigarettes and auspiciously wrapped in a carton. His defection to the West, via Italy is an enthralling story. There, he was in a foreign land shuffling among the displaced in a refugee camp where he taps into his other creative spiritual expression.

The long journey that brought him to Ethiopia includes a path through Italy where in 1980 he defected and deepened his gift for the arts. In this strange but beautiful land he found a new inspiration, he began painting and even made a living doing it until his departure to his new home, America. In the U.S. he found that space, the freedom to reinvent himself, finally quenching that yearning to engage in all his creative pursuits. He said "If freedom exists anywhere, it exists in America". During the thirty years he lived in the United States he authored numerous original adaptations of plays and also directed dozens of shows in New York, Vermont and Connecticut. After his marriage to Esther Fikre Sellassie in 1984, he began a career in teaching theatre arts and film in universities. In 2009, after 20 years of teaching at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Anatoly retired.

Anatoly's choice to come to Ethiopia for his retirement was with full expectation to continue to do theatre here. His affection for this land and particularly for Ethiopia's history is evident in the many websites he had developed over the years. Since his arrival to Addis Ababa, he founded LUL Productions PLC, with the intent to establish a private theatre company that would offer training but also produce shows in English. His collaboration with Addis Ababa University theatre department yielded workshops and the production of 'Andegna' directed by a guest artist in the fall of 2009.

It is truly devastating that Anatoly's desire is unrealized because he was taken away from us. Even so, in his passing we celebrate a man, a husband, a father, a grandfather and a teacher who strode on this earth with such vigor, passion and above all with matchless commitment to truth in all its forms. We thank God for sharing this exceptional human being, who has touched us so profoundly. We take comfort that he will never die in our hearts. We ask his maker to have mercy on his soul.

Esther Sellassie Antohin

“Being born in Russia and having immigrating to the United States, my destiny seems to have become the living of two lives, each dramatically different from the other in all aspects. Consequently my view of the world has acquired symbolic significance in the sense that I perceive the world as possessing double meaning. Incarnating my attitude to life in painting, I appeal not only to my former experience of life in Russia, but also to the values and treasures of history classical myths. In my attempts to decipher the essence of modern life I try to discover in it eternal myths and archetypes. With this perception and understanding, I perceive the world and nature as an eternal and constant process of resurrection. It is not only the resurrection of nature with every season, but it is also the resurrection of the earthly world in man's soul”.

Artist statement, May 1981