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PERIPETI

tidsskrift for dramaturgiske studier

2 - 2004



Why a Theatre Laboratory?

”O vanity! The patching up of everything with big words! A kitchen is a laboratory, a dancer is a professor and a wood-lice is a pterygobranchiate.”

Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*,
Wordsworth Classics, Ware, 1994, Vol. 1, p. 448.



PERIPETI
2 - 2004

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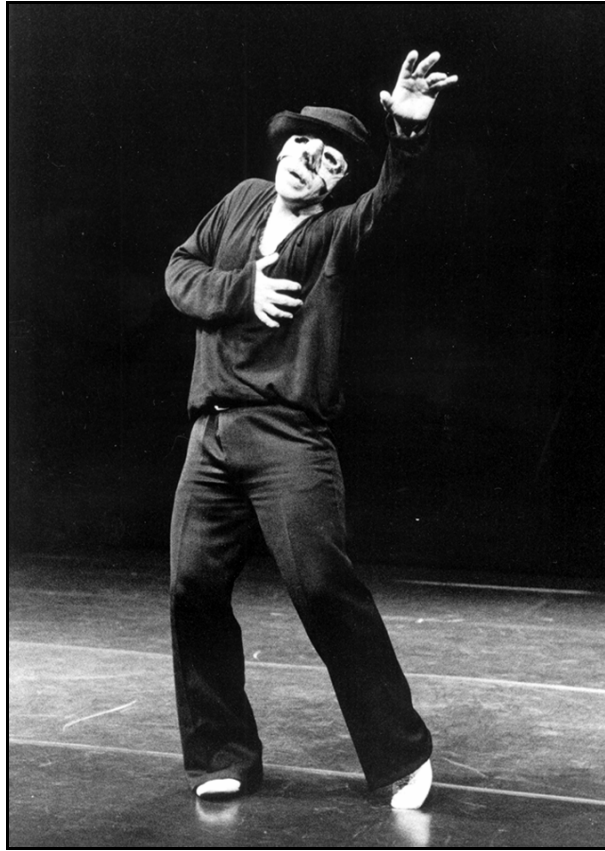
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Gennadi Bogdanov, 1996

INTRODUCTION TO PERIPETI AND SERENDIPITY

By Erik Exe Christoffersen

Peripeti (Danish for Greek *peripeteia*) is the name of a new magazine attached to The Department of Dramaturgy, University of Aarhus edited by staff members of this department. Erik Exe Christoffersen is chief editor of the first issues of the new magazine, assisted by co-editors each taking a turn. The title of the magazine *Peripeti* (change, reversal of the situation, point of no return) refers to a crucial element in practically any kind of dramaturgy. The term originates from Aristotle's *Poetics* in which *peripeteia* is the condition of the dramatic progression towards catastrophe or climax. Also *peripeteia* is central for various forms of rupture, disconnections and new thinking in dance as well as in performance. In a more theoretical or cultural sense, *peripeteia* may represent the crucial turning point of new acts, thoughts and art forms. It is the ambition of *Peripeti* to locate itself in the limbo between theatre, performance and dance, between dramatic, rhetorical or visual strategies and in the fractures of dramaturgy.

Peripeti 2 is about theatre laboratory tradition under the title of *Why a Theatre Laboratory?* It is in English and includes the programme of a three days' international symposium from October 4th through 6th 2004. This is the first initiative taken by the Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies (CTLS), a newly inaugurated centre under Aarhus University in cooperation with Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium. *Peripeti* include articles on Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Copeau, Decroux, Grotowski, Peter Brook, Théâtre du Soleil, and Odin Teatret and the theatre laboratory praxis of these masters and inventors, including, of course, reflections on their function and effect. In the last article, Eugenio Barba reflects on the creative process of Odin Teatret over the last 40 years. In addition, we also include the curriculum vitae on those participating in the symposium.

The occasion of the symposium is to celebrate the 40th anniversary in October 2004 of Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium/Odin Teatret. Congratulations.

The third issue of *Peripeti* (spring 2005) will focus on *New Danish Dramatic Poetry*. The fourth issue will focus on the aesthetics of the dogma movement. The fifth issue is on *Henrik Ibsen* and the relationship between realism and modernism, Ibsen research and different views on the actuality of Ibsen as a dramatist. The autumn 2006 issue will focus on the theme of dramaturgical processes in relation to didactics and art

work. Finally the theme in 2007 will be political theatre and dance with subtitles such as new realism, privacy aesthetics and other hybrids that make use of reality effects in theatre and in dance.

The first issues of *Peripeti* are free of charge and available on request. Please send an envelope with Danish stamps dkk. 21,00 and your name and address on it to the Department of Dramaturgy. Subsequent numbers will be sold at dkk. 50,00 (inclusive of postage).

You will also find the magazine on the website of Department of the Dramaturgy at www.hum.au.dk/dramatur/Forskning/publikationer.htm.

The Principle of Serendipity

Why theatre laboratories? The necessity of a theatre laboratory or theatre studio as a place where scenic life can be investigated and develops independently of performance and audience goes back to the late 1800s. The process in search of autonomy, and maybe only today, has this process reached a final and complete unfolding with a theatre like Odin Teatret. Free as it is from national, textual, and traditional conventions. Odin Teatret is autonomous without being isolated, since the theatre is in constant exchange and dialogue with what is outside its own universe. One could say that theatre is set free as in a vacuum, from the tradition of making and presenting theatre. This, in return, obliges theatre to fill out the empty space both in terms of form and meaning. This condition applies for the actors and the directors, and for dramatists like Ibsen, Strindberg and Chekov. As Chekov puts it through Konstantin Treplev in *The Seagull*, 1896 (in Stanislavski's mise-en-scene performed by Meyerhold):

“Here you have a theatre! See, there we have the curtain, the foreground, the background, and finally the empty space. No artificial scenery is needed. You look straight to the lake and the horizon. At half past eight sharp, at the very moment of the moon rising, we will raise the curtain.”

(Chekov: *The Seagull*).

The empty space must be filled up with the score of the actor. Strindberg indirectly comments on this new concept of staging in *Fröken Julie* (1898) presented by Théâtre Libre in 1893 in a pantomimic interlude:

“Is played as if the actor really were alone in the room; according to a situation, she turns her back to her audience; does not look in the direction of the

audience; is in no way busy as if afraid that her audience should lose patience.”
(Strindberg: *Fröken Julie*).

Theatre invents the frames for autonomy. In Stanislavski's words, it is all about creating an organic behaviour in order to create a believable scene. Clichés, external play, declamation, controversial entries, and frontal play towards the audience were all principles that Stanislavski sought to eliminate by introducing an organic way of performing. First and foremost, the organicity is real action, neither naturalistic nor realistic performing. The organicity is a principle that deals with the connection between the actor and the part, between the mental, the interior and the physical exterior, between subtext as the interpretation and intention of the actor, and the appearance of the character. The organicity is in opposition to the mechanical, automatic behavior, habit and any kind of *doxa*. It is a constant creative process in search for new means and ways of acting, with a never ending necessity of filling the empty space. Stanislavski refers to an organic, creative nature.

“It is not “theatre” (...). It is reality, a piece of life itself (...). In theatre we are looking for living art. It does not find its energy in being logical nor consequent, on the contrary for its audacious lack of logic. It is rhythmic in its mere lack of rhythm, psychological precisely in rising above conventional psychological laws. It breaks all laws, and that is the reason why it is good”

(Stanislavski, *Building a Character*).

Stanislavski accentuates the action, not as a representation or mimesis, but as a scenic reality. Compared to Aristotle, the organic dimension takes a different angle. According to Aristotle, the essential matter of the tragedy is the act. It is the soul of the tragedy. Aristotle sees the act as an organic form in which beginning, centre and ending are linked in a causal entity. The causal dimension demands a progression of the act, and acts that are not causally conditioned are superfluous and unnecessary. Causality demands an organic form in which part and entity are united into a whole. Furthermore, causality means that the narrator is hidden behind the plot, as a narrator's voice or comment would break the organic principle. Also as a general rule, the epic is incorporated into the dramatic act.

It can be said that causality is complicated because the idea of unity goes against basic experiences of modernity and its vision of interpretation as crucial, but also ambiguous. Life cannot be described causally, it must be described as complementary. The retro perspective analysis is turned into a personal and subjective construction, conditioned by present time. The causal linearity is replaced by a form in which one act does not follow the next, rather they are parallel, reflecting or even

contradicting each other, creating a complex heterogeneity. The relationship between beginning and end loses its linear causality, and hence the determinism that encloses the entity. Focus moves from result to method. And this may very well be the essence of theatre laboratory: an experiment with acting, not from a normative perspective, but from a need to fill the empty space. It becomes a question of inventing alternative ways of creative acting.

Serendipity is a term that originates from the British writer Horace Walpole, 1754 and from a Persian fairy-tale about three princesses from Serendip (Arabian name for Sri Lanka), who made discoveries they did not search for. The term is used for scientific discoveries made by chance and in concentration giving unexpected discoveries such as x-rays, penicillin or the Americas, to mention a few. King Oedipus' unravelling of the assassination of King Laios is an example of serendipity: in search of a murderer, eventually he becomes a blind wanderer. Serendipity is a misunderstanding that results fruitfully and fertile outcome may very well be the result of errors and casual premises of a process (see Shakespeare *The Comedy of Errors*). Duchamp's *Readymade* or Man Ray's *Objet trouvé* are based on serendipity, and also Merce Cunningham introduced the principle of chance in the development of choreographic steps and forms. For a good number of artists, this topic becomes a complex question, not only of chance, but about the construction of serendipity.

Serendipity can also be seen in early Romantic thinking with its yearning for the absolute. This yearning is only satisfied in fragments and through tortuous processes of art. The work of art becomes in itself an enigmatic and non-linear road similar to the arabesque. Examples of this are the roundabout methods in a good number of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy-tales like *The Ugly Duckling*. Or Karen Blixen's tale about a man who wakes up because of a noise in the middle of the night in his little house, runs out of the house into the darkness, falls into a ditch, gets back on his feet, falls into a second and a third, and ends up discovering a leakage in the dike where water pours out. Having worked hard all night, the next morning, he finally finds a stork in front of his house. At this point, the reader realises that it is possible to make a drawing of the unsuccessful course of the man, and seen from above, this appears to have the shape of a stork (from *The African Farm*) revealing a totally different reality.

Odin Teatret

“There are dark forces, which blind you, and there are dark forces, which give you insight. We are led by dark forces - where? - We don't know.”

(Eugenio Barba, in *Itsi Bitsi*, 1991).

I shall try to outline some fundamental characteristics of the work of the Odin Teatret in relation to the term of theatre laboratory. The fact that the group is celebrating its 40th anniversary is extraordinary because Odin Teatret often has taken distance from contemporary doctrines. Derided from its beginning as an avant-garde scandal that had nothing to do with theatre, as a theatre which refuses to change. Odin Teatret has maintained a self-reflexive and paradoxical identity which is expressed in its productions and associated activities as a theatre laboratory.

Through training the group had to develop its own specific dramaturgy. This is exactly why Odin Teatret caused a scandal when it began. The work was simply not recognizable as text based theatre. The training, which did not use either costumes or stagedesign, did not even resemble a rehearsal of a text. It was based on various kinds of exercises, including acrobatics and mime, which did not aim to create character but rather to establish a presence in the empty space; the same was true of a number of other activities - film making, seminars, publishing, and pedagogical events. This was a fundamentally different paradigm of theatre that rejected the common understanding of theatre as the interpretation of text and instead took real action as its starting point for theatre: a personal meeting with an existential, ethical and political dimension. Odin Teatret linked itself to the theatre studio tradition of Stanislavski and Meyerhold, and with Grotowski's theatre laboratory with the central idea of developing the actors' techniques. The logic of Odin Teatret's seminar activities and established ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) in 1979; the study of recurrent principles in the performer's scenic presence and dynamism (Barba: 1991, 1995); and later on the creation of CTLS (Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies) in 2003 in collaboration with Aarhus University are all to be found in this connection. Odin Teatret is a distinct theatre group that has created 60 productions and developed a particular way of working, its discipline and needs. At the same time the group has tried to redefine art and theatre in general, both on a formal level by means of the actors' stage presence (in contrast to the theatre of illusion), without distinguishing between dance, theatre, and vocal skills, and in connection with different cultural contexts (geographic, artistic, pedagogic, and scientific). In this sense Odin Teatret is an ensemble company: The group is the

creative subject that develops the material that forms the basis of the various dramaturgies of the performance text. As mentioned previously, this is a theatre paradigm in which the meeting between the audience and the performance is the real action, and this is defined as theatre. The elaboration and exploration of this artistic action has been, and remains, the ambition for Odin Teatret.

The Odin Teatret is built on a need to communicate that applies to both the individuals and the group. At the same time Odin is committed to the inadequacy of language and representation and to the dissolution of given meaning and tradition in modernity. That is to say that, in each individual production, there is a commitment both to create a meaningful communication with the spectators and to make the spectator's access to the work difficult, so that in principle the work is ambiguous in its openness or paradox. Each separate work is at one and the same time open and closed, i.e. there are no simple narrative sequences, characters or references that can be pursued by the spectators. There are several different narratives, several dramaturgical layers that complicate the spectator's "access" and understanding, while simultaneously the spectator is relatively free to choose his or her own associations and thus create a personal meaning. There is no possibility that the work can be decoded as a single subject matter, nor is there a privileged interpretative position from which the performance can be viewed in its totality. This, however, is true for both the artistic subject (the director and actors of Odin Teatret) and for the spectator. This dynamic ambiguity and strange (*verfremdet*) access are common features in the history of Odin Teatret, not only in individual artworks but also in Odin's organisation and its creative process. Odin Teatret shares a principled experience of and insight into Modernity's loss of given meaning with, for example, Chekhov, Kafka and Beckett. Odin's *Kaosmos* offers many points of resemblance with Beckett's *Endgame*, and Kafka's story about the man from the country who could not gain access to the door of the Law is retold in this production. However, it also mirrors the impossibility of the spectator's access to meaning.

The avoidance of unambiguous meaning as a principle can obviously be explained in many different ways. The result, anyhow, is a duality: the loss of meaning is connected with a will to reality at the performative level. The autonomy of both the actor and the spectator is connected with the need to rethink theatre as an institution, as performance practice and relationships. This is a point of view that refers to Stanislavski who coined a number of principles for the individual actor, and the ensemble as a whole in order to perform real actions.

The basis of Odin Teatret is its artistic autonomy. Certainly, Odin Teatret is far from the centre of the art establishment, but maybe that is exactly why the autonomy is maintained as a space protected in very many concrete ways. The closed performances, in contrast to the “open” political street performances, are created in an abstract, black room (the black box) where the spectator is able to concentrate entirely on the work, and where all superfluous elements have been removed. The space creates the autonomy of the performance and each performance has its specific scenic arrangement. The spectators are not allowed access to a performance after it has begun, and it takes place, without breaks, within a finite period of time. Odin constantly tries to recreate and redefine the essence of theatre autonomy by rejecting everyday life. Economy of movement, pragmatism, “the spirit of the time”, habits, and clichés are being fought against persistently for the sake of a *different* relationship between body and mind and a *different* historical continuity, a *different* perspective. What is essential is not idealism or a transcendent truth; rather the link is with a theatre action that combines necessity and ambiguity.

However, Odin Teatret also carries on the tradition of the historical avant-garde, (especially the Russian avant-garde), in which the clash between Aristotelian poetics and realism leads to a renewed interest in the formal issues: movement, sound, dynamics, and the actor’s physical presence. Interest in the real action, in accordance with Stanislavski and Copeau, leads Odin Teatret to break with the text and with the theatre’s representational way of thinking, so that it becomes possible to speak of theatre as real life, as a second organicity, an intensified presence complementing the textual formation of meaning. To this can be added that the political ambition of the avant-garde was that art should replace everyday life and create another way of life, and the organisation of Odin Teatret is an example of this. Odin Teatret, to a large extent, shares the political tendencies seen in the Russian avant-garde and in theorists of the avant-garde like Brecht and Benjamin. The political issue is emphasised in Odin’s various cultural exchanges, like the *barter* which has been employed all over the world as an organised exchange with a particular local culture; the *work demonstration* which, like Brecht’s *Lehrstück*, draws the spectators into a creative space and demonstrates decisive principles for the actor’s presence and creative processes; and the *Festuge*, an annual event in Holstebro, during which Odin Teatret coordinates and works with many of the local cultural institutions, organisations and initiatives in Holstebro, using the urban space as a seven-day performance stage.

At the same time Odin Teatret has assumed many of the artistic features of the avant-garde: the montage, the principle of coincidence, fragments of reality as a

communicative action of the performance. Odin Teatret makes and explores *theatre*. Thus Odin's concept of the essential is close to being a paradox that breaks with tradition and also carries it on. Odin is anchored in a romantic yearning for the absolute, and at the same time one can talk about modernism's avoidance of unambiguous meaning and a search for personal meaning as being central to the work. The group consists of "homeless" individuals searching for the historic roots of their own theatre. The essential becomes a process between oppositions, a dynamic birth, an action and a principle of mutability. The essential is sought through the principles of negation and complementarity, not by causality as Aristoteles defines action. The essential is not the result but the way of serendipity.

The blindness of the process

The serendipity effect is the unforeseen result of a process, a discovery, which turns out to have a character completely different from what one was seeking. It is not just Odin Teatret's performances that are characterized by something unlooked-for:

"When somebody looks at our past, or when we ourselves let memories flow, we seem to forget the innumerable zigzags, the long deviations and senseless detours. They were not conscious 'searches' for anything in particular, merely symptoms of uneasiness, restlessness, desire for adventure and an irresistible feeling that luck was waiting for us elsewhere. (...) European twentieth century theatre sprang from an Oedipean bubo, not only because it killed the authority and the model of tradition which had generated it, but also because, like the adolescent Oedipus, it set out on a wandering solitary yet personal search for meaning, origins and identity".

(Eugenio Barba in Watson, 2002.s. 252)

The strategy of working with several different layers of meaning is a key feature of Odin Teatret. This means that the process being created is not interpretative but one that searches for chance connections or pivots. Furthermore the creation of meaning is rendered difficult by a deliberate avoidance of redundancy in the staging. Movement, voice, text, props create a *heterophony*, but do not say the same thing; rather they are saying different and often contrasting things. This dramaturgical controversy creates a *Verfremdung* (Brecht), a grotesque (Meyerhold), or for the Russian formalist Shklovskij, *Ostranenie*. It is a disturbance of the predictable creation of meaning, giving birth to paradoxes in the performance text and in the actor's single score and theatres history.

The place of enunciation is the Odin Teatret: the theatre's black room, the training room, the room of exile with different dramaturgical layers. The fictional level can be seen as a modern tragedy about the loss of illusions and innocence, and modernity's schism between words and action. Odin is an analysis of "revolution", revolution that fails in many ways: *The Gospel according to Oxyrhyncus*, 1985; *Talabot*, 1988; *Itsi Bitsi*, 1991; *Kaosmos*, 1993; *Ode to Progress – A Ballet*, 1997; and *Mythos*, 1998. All of these are works that, more or less directly, take the post-war combination of modernity, fragmentation and progress as a theme.

"His (the Angel of History) face is turned towards the past. There, where we see a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe that constantly piles wreckage upon wreckage, throwing them at his feet. He would prefer to remain, awaken the dead and put back together what has been laid waste".

(Walter Benjamin's text on progress is handed to each spectator after the performance *Talabot*, Barba 1999, p. 318).

What is crucial, however, is the fact that this is not viewed from the outside. The theatre is part of this pile of wreckage; the theatre is in the middle of modernity's fragmentation and not outside it. The "leaps" of the montage may as such be termed "wreckage upon wreckage", a piling up of the past as metonymic displacements or coordinated connections.

It is characteristic of Odin Teatret that Modernity's loss of experience, expressed in pathos, is connected with romantic irony, in which fragmentation and discontinuity create a sceptical self-reflection. There is no discrepancy in the relationship between irony and pathos in Odin Teatret, rather there is a complementarity linked to the necessity and ambiguity of their articulation. On the one hand, the loss of "home" is a tragic condition. On the other hand, however, the nomadic and provisional elements are a strength that makes it possible to overcome the tragic condition, although this is not the same thing as rejecting it.

Odin Teatret consists of a group of individuals all of whom go their own ways and follow their own principles, although bound by a common history, organisation, and performances. Odin Teatret allows individual development and this is clearly demonstrated by the number of solo performances and work demonstrations. The autobiographical theatre is manifest in *Itsi Bitsi* (1991):

"Since I started to feel whole as an actor, I conspicuously lost the ability to speak. Was that the price I had to pay to find my own language? ... It is as if I can still hear Eik whispering, let us never grow cold and cynical, never become empty inside. If he could see us now, would he be able then to see the little

flame which I try to protect, which speaks in the characters I portray and which the others call theatre?”

(Text in *Itsi Bitsi*)

Here and in others performances the basic is real action:

“Does such a thing exist which is constant and absolute? If it does, it is at the bottom of a labyrinth. Thus the thread becomes sacred because it does not bind but combines you with something or someone that keeps us alive (...) It is said that a performance is images and metaphors. At this point I am sure. I know that it is not true. A performance is real action. That is why I do not allow the thread to be stretched until it breaks”

(Barba, letter to Aramis/Grotowski. Programme, *Itsi Bitsi*, 1991, Barba, 1995).

The theatre is a public performance place but also a way of protecting a dream or vision and a way of surviving, i.e. real action and life. The performance creates and renders visible personal roots and it is detours that combine theatre with a historic and concrete reality. The autonomy of training is the condition and necessity of the theatre as real, organic action, whereas the difficulty of access to the performance and its concentrated ambiguity allow the audience to experience the surprising and fruitful force of the serendipity principle.

Translation: Annette Gregersen og Birthe Kibsgaard

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WHAT IS A THEATRE LABORATORY?

By Janne Risum

In 1905 Stanislavski and Meyerhold opened the first pioneering stage laboratory of this experimental kind.

"But in what form and where were we to realize our dreams? First of all they demanded preparatory laboratory work. For this there was no place in the theatre with its daily performances, its complex duties and its stringent budget. We needed a special institution, which Meyerhold aptly named "theatrical studio". This was neither a full-fledged theatre nor a school for beginners, but a laboratory for the experiments of more or less mature actors." (Stanislavski, *My Life in Art* 1926)

For the rest of their lives both were to continue on their own such a laboratory - or studio - activity, which permits an independent, continuous and systematic experimental work with the means of expression of the actor, uninterrupted by the normal time limit and result orientation of preparing a performance. They considered it to be a historically vital task - and so an absolutely necessary complement to their stage productions - in this way to explore the basics of the various traditions of acting and to develop modern ways of acting from the most essential devices of the art of the actor. Through their apprentices this laboratory approach has been passed on for instance from Vakhtangov to Grotowski and Barba, or by those pupils of Stanislavski who took their own version of it to the USA. In France Copeau was a pioneer. In 1916 Craig, Copeau and Stanislavski even planned to start an international studio cooperation, but had to drop it due to the subsequent radical changes in Russia. After the Second World War the laboratory approach to theatre work has grown to become a trendsetting innovation with countless offsprings all over the globe, and with such other major European innovators as Decroux, Brook, Mnouchkine, or Kantor.

The CTLS studies the aspects of this development. However it has so many simultaneous, paradoxical, and widely ramified aspects, that even though some family patterns are evident, it would be ridiculously reductive to look for a simple genealogical tree. The danger the other way round is not to be able to see the wood for the trees. Therefore the CTLS starts by posing a strictly analytical question: what is the technical artistic meaning of the term laboratory, and does a theatre laboratory

tradition exist which could be defined objectively by a category of historiography? That is, to which degree do theatres using the laboratory approach or defining themselves as laboratories actually share activities or values?

One pertinent question is that of context. Thus the policy of Stalin is the immediate context, when Stanislavski announces in 1935:

"Our main task is to create a theatre laboratory, a theatre of great masters, a theatre of model devices of the actor's mastery. Such a theatre must serve as the pinnacle, to which all other theatres aspire. We must make the highest demands on such a theatre and give it the greatest resources. But the laws of eminent mastery, the laws of profound realistic art, are not the privilege of high-ranking theatres, on the contrary, all amateur circles, young workers' theatres, and studios can and must study them." ("October and the Theatre", *Sovetskij teatr* 10/1935).

To throw some light on all this the CTLS will host an international symposium with invited speakers, *Why a Theatre Laboratory? Risks and anomalies in Europe 1898-1999*. We have chosen to look at the activities of some central theatre innovators from this angle and to do so in an international research perspective. We have so invited a group of theatre scholars from different countries to speak, who are specialists in the subjects which they are going to examine. Together, the speakers will thus throw light from many sides on a series of central and in many ways related aspects of the question. We might of course have invited many more qualified scholars, not to speak of theatre practitioners with long experience in the field of what they consider to be theatre laboratory work, also in many countries. However this is beyond our capacity on this one occasion.

CENTRE FOR THEATRE LABORATORY STUDIES (CTLS)

Aarhus University and Odin Teatret agreed in the autumn of 2002 to establish the *Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies* (CTLS) with its home base at Odin Teatret in Holstebro. The Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies is the result of more than 30 years collaboration between Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium (which is the umbrella organisation for Odin Teatret and all its activities), and the Department of Dramaturgy of the Institute for Aesthetic Studies, at Aarhus University. The Centre's activities will concentrate mainly on the following points:

- 1) to research into the artistic, technical, conceptual and social contribution of contemporary as well as past theatre laboratories;
- 2) to establish an archive of all Odin Teatret's activities, as well as gather and spread knowledge of the history and consequences connected with the experiences of theatre as laboratory;
- 3) to promote an exchange, both theoretical and practical, between the Centre's national and international network;
- 4) to take the initiative for analytical and practical seminars and conferences on theatre laboratories as a creative professional and theoretical environment;
- 5) to implement a working milieu to stimulate scholars and artists who intend to do theoretical and practical research within the Centre's framework.

Longstanding collaboration

Regular collaboration has existed between Odin Teatret and the Department of Dramaturgy at Aarhus University since 1966. At that time the department's teachers, Tage Hind and Christian Ludvigsen, played a crucial roll in establishing a connection with Holstebro Town Council, making it possible for OdinTeatret to move from Norway to Holstebro.

Since then Odin Teatret's actors and Eugenio Barba have periodically taught at the Department of Dramaturgy. Several of the Department's teachers are permanent members of the scientific staff of ISTA, International School of Theatre Anthropology - the itinerant research environment that today constitutes one of the

many activities of Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium/Odin Teatret. In 1988 Aarhus University bestowed an honorary doctorate on Eugenio Barba.

This mutual professional interest culminated in a 3 weeks interdisciplinary project at Aarhus University in March-April 2000. Odin Teatret's performances, working demonstrations, didactic films and lectures formed the basis for a course involving teachers and students of literature, music, dramaturgy, semiotics at the Institute for Aesthetic Studies. The result of this interdisciplinary course, whose point of departure was Odin Teatret's artistic and research activities, was collected in the book in English entitled "Odin 2000" and published by Aarhus University Press.

Today this long and active connection has been formalised through the Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies thus extending the possibilities for using theoretical-practical resources within both institutions.

The Centre is led by a director, Janne Risum, nominated by Aarhus University. The Board of Directors consists of four members: two nominated by the Institute for Aesthetic Studies and two by Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium.

Perspectives

The Centre's research into theatre laboratories that have represented a ferment in the evolution of twentieth century theatre will focus on three different perspectives: the historical, the contemporary and the future.

The historical perspective: The historical or retrospective element in the Centre's activities will be based on the extensive archives already existing at Odin Teatret, such as magazines, books, videos, films, tapes, programmes, photos, posters, etc. These include material and documentation from ISTA's international sessions, from the Eurasian Theatre University and from Odin Teatret's performances, international seminars held in Holstebro and other activities both local and international.

This archive will be organised according to the relevant new technology to make it as simple and user-friendly as possible. A collaboration will be established with other theatre laboratory archives, first and foremost The Centre of Studies for Jerzy Grotowski's Work and for Cultural and Theatrical Research in Poland, and The Living Theatre's documentation centre, Centro Living Europa, in Italy.

A homepage will be established to disseminate information about the archives and its contents to attract the attention of international researchers and give them the possibility to study them in Holstebro.

The contemporary perspective: This perspective is based on Odin Teatret's present activities, deepening the already well-developed ties between Odin Teatret and the Department of Dramaturgy. It will expand into increased exchange and interaction within pedagogical and research fields.

This will take the form of a continuous exchange of teaching staff, where the respective institution's personnel can stay at each other's institutions in connection with their own research projects. Odin Teatret's staff can contribute to the tuition at the Department, and on the other hand the Department's staff and students can take advantage of Odin Teatret's facilities and doings as a part of their education. Odin Teatret will regularly present its performances at the Kasernescenen in Aarhus, which is administrated by the Institute for Aesthetic Studies.

The newly established Centre will permit the staff of the Department of Dramaturgy to participate more actively in Odin Teatret's artistic and research activities. This could be through shared research projects, conferences and symposia of a national and international character. This collaboration can also extend to include other centres and university institutions, for example, Laboratoire de recherches sur les arts du spectacle du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris, Fondation René Hainaux in Liège and eventually Gosudarstvennyj institut iskusstvoznanija Ministerstva kul'tury Rossijskoj federacii in Moscow.

Already, at the present time, two international symposiums are planned which will take place in the autumn of 2004 in both Holstebro and Aarhus on the occasion of Odin Teatret's fortieth anniversary. The dates are 1-6 and 7-10 October 2004 and the titles are: "A theatre laboratory: why?" and "The Theatre which Dances".

The Centre will furthermore give the possibility to international research activities both for Ph.D. scholarship holders as well as on a Masters level.

Future perspective: The two above mentioned perspectives are based on Odin Teatret's present activities. In the future, it is obvious that Odin Teatret will not be able to continue the same activities, which depend on the present staff. Therefore, the Centre can be seen as an existing potentiality where future theatre artists and researchers with specialised competence, research qualifications and artistic vigour will inject new life into the theatre laboratory tradition out of their personal needs as well as of the circumstances of their time.

In other words, the Centre constitutes a space which is a legacy for anomalous practice and research. It can generate unpredictable contacts between theatre people and scholars across traditions and nationalities confronting scientific practice and artistic theory with constant new methods, keeping alive the inheritance and tradition of theatre as laboratory.



Odin Teatret, 1965

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE CONCERNING THE SYMPOSIUM “WHY A THEATRE LABORATORY?”

By Eugenio Barba

The aim of the symposium “Why a theatre laboratory?” is to raise a number of questions. The symposium is not a review of the most important historical and contemporary examples, nor does it propose a phenomenology or praise that specific theatre genre. Do theatres which defined themselves or which we consider as ‘laboratories’ share something in common? Or is it just a matter of a recurring name.

Is it possible, by comparing the practice of such different theatres, to sketch the profile of a shared idea, a destiny, a social position, an attitude towards the craft and the art of theatre? Or are we, on the basis of our personal experience, merely projecting a non-existent category on the past and the present?

We have chosen a few examples from Europe. They are very different both from the point of view of the historical period in which they were active as well as of the culture in which they were rooted. We have cast a stone - the same question - in each of these small ponds: “Why can we call that particular theatre a theatre laboratory?” But we are not totally sure that this is the right question to ask. And if not, why not?

There are pertinent questions, inappropriate questions and also paradoxical questions. We have rejected the apparently safe path: the path which might have attempted to give a theoretical definition of the qualification ‘laboratory’, and later verify its possible application to any of the examples provided by European theatre in the 20th century.

By following the path of paradoxical questions, we run the risk of searching for what is uncertain by means of the uncertain. But the straight path which claims to start from the certain, often leads sure-footedly to the vast icy sea of tautology.



Konstantin Stanislavski, 1899

KONSTANTIN SERGEYEVICH STANISLAVSKI

By Franco Ruffini

Konstantin Sergeyevich Stanislavski (1863-1938) was the founder of the Moscow Art Theatre which, apart from being a model, is also an essential point of reference for twentieth century theatre. He was one of the inventors of theatre direction and also the greatest scientist within the actor's art. His discoveries, handed on under the name of the "system", have changed the way acting can be approached, not only by those who practice it, but also by those who study it. He was a theatre master.

Stanislavski can also be considered a *master of thought*, independently of theatre. For two reasons. The first is the way in which he resolved the problem of the *transmission of experience* through the written word. The second is the practical and systematic work which he conducted on the borderline *between body and soul*, regardless of its utilization in a performance. He built, *as a program*, a system for the actor's work, while his thought built *objectively* a kind of yoga for work on oneself.

Unlike what occurred for other 20th century masters, Stanislavski's theatre thinking developed as a reflection - hidden or explicit - which took its starting point from the events of his life. This is why it is possible to expound Stanislavski's thinking following the thread of his biography.

Stanislavski was born in Moscow on 5th January 1863, the second son of a group of ten in a family of rich and enlightened entrepreneurs, the Alexeyevs. He changed his name to Stanislavski in 1884, when he entered the professional theatre. His passion for the stage stayed with him for his entire life. In 1877 he opened a small theatre in Liubimovka, his family's country house. The "Alexeyev circle" was born, in which the whole family devoted itself to acting in various roles. In 1888, with Alexander Fedotov, a well known actor and man of the theatre, he started the "Society of Art and Literature". This is the beginning of his professional period with his first attempts at directing and his experiments as an actor through every form of imitation. His most significant experience in this period was *Othello*, in 1896, in which Stanislavski learnt at his own expense that one cannot force emotion.

A decisive turning point was in 1897. In a memorable encounter with Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, the well known theatre critic and established playwright, the project of the Moscow Art Theatre took shape. The opening came a year later, with *Tsar Fyodor Ioannovich*. Among the many productions of the first seasons, were *The Seagull* by Chekhov (1898), which is the symbolic baptism of the

Art Theatre, *The Lower Depths* by Gorki (1902) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904). The Chekhovian productions remained in the repertoire during the following decades, thus fixing a model for the staging of the texts of the greatest theatre poet of the age. Stanislavski's image as a director in these years is characterised by a style based on melancholic tones, accurate realism and vivid crowd scenes.

In 1905 Stanislavski created a Studio with Meyerhold to put the innovations of Symbolism to the test. These are the first attempts at a different relationship with the text. But Meyerhold's path had starting points too far away from Stanislavski's and the Studio closed the same year. In January 1906 the Art Theatre company left for its first tour abroad. In Berlin they were received triumphantly. In particular Stanislavski's interpretation of Dr. Stockmann in *An Enemy of the People* by Ibsen was highly acclaimed. It was the character he had successfully played for more than five years in Russia. On his return from the tour, Stanislavski allowed himself a brief holiday in Finland. It was there that thinking about his interpretation, and disappointed by it, Stanislavski conceived the first embryo of his "system".

This is how Stanislavski remembers Dr. Stockmann: "After having read the play, I understood it immediately. I relived it and acted the part already at the first rehearsal... The body and soul of Stockmann and Stanislavski merged organically, one with the other." But in Finland, rethinking his work, Stanislavski realised that the organic fusion was no longer there: only the body remained. Every evening the character's gestures and attitude presented themselves unchanged, but this happened just because of "muscular memory". The memories and the live emotions that justified those actions had been lost.

"How can I preserve the role from this gradual spiritual death?" Stanislavski asked himself. The difference – or rather the opposition – between the "actor's condition" and the "creative condition" became clear. It was necessary to feel the scenic truth *as if* it was the real truth in order to reach and maintain the creative condition. From now on Stanislavski would dedicate his research on the "system" to making that *as if* function technically, trying to induce "the soul to believe". Later he would realise that "if the body doesn't begin to live, the soul doesn't believe". And this will be, after his qualms in Finland, the other revolution in Stanislavski's life in art.

From 1906, his productions are above all stages in the gradual growth of the "system". Stanislavski definitively realised that the external action must always be associated with a corresponding inner action. In 1911 *Hamlet* opened, directed by

Gordon Craig. A great event, typical of that farsighted egoism that characterised Stanislavski's generosity.

The true testing ground of the "system" was the First Studio, inaugurated in 1912. Stanislavski called his friend Leopold Sulerzhitski to direct it. "The good Suler", as he was called, had little experience of theatre but a profound insight into human beings. The First Studio was made famous by *The Cricket on the Hearth*, an adaptation from Charles Dickens which opened on 24th November 1914. But success was followed by an irreversible crisis. After the First Studio, a Second Studio, the Checkhov Studio (led by the actor Michael Checkhov, nephew of the great playwright) and then the Vachtangov Studio were created. All these Studios were enlivened by a theatre vision that distanced itself from the performance as an immediate product and favoured instead the process of growth, merely considering the performance as a far off goal.

On 11th January 1916, the Art Theatre started rehearsing *The Village of Stepanchikovo* by Dostoyevski. Stanislavski had just played *Mozart and Salieri* by Pushkin. This performance had shown him that it's not enough that "the soul believes". He sensed the decisive importance of music or of something equivalent with a similar function. *The Village of Stepanchikovo* was the dramatic turning point between a way of working totally based on reliving (*perezhivanie*) and a new way, in which it was above all the "body that lives" which induces the soul to believe. Stanislavski immersed himself fully in the "given circumstances" to let them trigger the action for each tiny section of his part. He worked for a whole year in this way, but without success. After a disastrous dress rehearsal on 28th March 1917, Nemirovich-Danchenko took his part away and gave it to another actor. To be faithful to his research, Stanislavski paid the most humiliating price for an actor with his experience and fame.

From 1918 to 1922 he worked at the Bolshoi theatre, creating an Opera Studio where, amongst other things, he concentrated on the research on tempo-rhythm as a direct physical way towards feeling.

From 1922 to 1924 the great Euro-American tour took place. Already famous, the tour consolidated the consecration of Stanislavski to the point of transforming him into an icon. It was abroad that he started to write his first book, *My Life in Art* in 1924. In Russia, in its definitive and much more articulated version, *My Life in Art* was published in 1926.

After the return from America, the commitment to stage productions became less intense than in the past. The teaching activity, on the other hand, grew.

In 1926 the Opera Studio became the Stanislavski Studio. Besides the staging of operas, the research involving the “physical way” of the actor’s work continued. From 1930, preparation started for the printing of *An Actor’s Work on Himself*. The collaboration with Elizabeth Reynolds - who was responsible for the American edition - is at the root of many misunderstandings of Stanislavski’s thinking.

In 1935, Stanislavski established his final Studio, the Opera-Dramatic Studio. Meanwhile, in the secret of his own home, he went about revolutionising the “system”. At the end of his life, without denying or contradicting it, he considered it as a starting point to advance his research. In 1938, notwithstanding the concrete danger that this act of solidarity could bring about, he welcomed into his Studio his great rival, Meyerhold, whose theatre had been closed by Stalin.

He died in Moscow on 7th August 1938. *Tartuffe*, which was the last activity of his Studio, opened on 4th December 1939.

Stanislavski’s life stretched from the reign of the Tsars to Stalinism, passing through the 1917 October Revolution. In the small world of theatre, this meant: from the amateurism and patronage of the rich to the nationalisation of theatres and state funding. In this arc of extreme opposites, Stanislavski remained faithful to a theatre vision as a practice of ethical dignity. In the Moscow Art Theatre he created a place where the actor could be free from the slavery of the tour, the roles and the market, but assuming full responsibility for these liberties. He completed the transition from actor manager to director, rejecting from the very beginning its more authoritarian aspects. He conceived the director as the actors’ more expert companion and “first spectator”. He substituted the “actor’s condition” in which s/he simulates feelings that are not his/her own for what he called the “creative condition”. In this particular state the actor relives emotions making them evident in such a way that the spectator cannot avoid sharing them.

Translation: John Dean

VSEVOLOD MEYERHOLD

By Béatrice Picon-Vallin



Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940) is a leading figure and one of the greatest directors of the 20th century. Rejecting the theatre of his time, and confronted by Stanislavski who opened the way to re-materialising the stage by focusing on a realist environment and psychology, Meyerhold puts into practice his

dematerialisation which privileges the invisible and the world of dreams, while at the same time opening up onto a political and thought-provoking theatre. He takes part in some of the most radical theatre adventures: symbolism, constructivism and the Russian revolution. Executed in 1940, this communist artist who, according to Vakhtangov, “provided the roots for the theatre of the future”, disappears from the Soviet and European scenes.

From the 1970's this indefatigable and daring experimentalist is progressively restored to his rightful place. His works, abounding with fertile contradictions seem to be split by the schism that the 1917 revolution represented, but their coherence is linked to a very high esteem for the art of theatre and to the will to elaborate a complex and poetic scenic language.

From Realism to Symbolism

Born in 1874 in Penza into a Russian German family and endowed with a solid musical education (he played violin) Meyerhold, who had take part in amateur theatre in his home province, abandoned his law studies for the theatre. He was awarded a place at the school of the Moscow Philharmonic Society in 1895, where he was a student of Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, who in 1898, brought him into the Art Theatre

he had just founded with Konstantin Stanislavski. A noteworthy character, he played such parts as Johannes (*Lonely Souls* by Hauptmann), Malvolio (*Twelfth Night* by Shakespeare) and Treplev (*The Seagull* by Tchekhov). He soon distanced himself, both on a political level, as he was close to the revolution intelligentsia he had frequented since Penza, as well as on an aesthetic level because he was critical of the painstaking reproduction of reality as practised by Stanislavski.

In 1902, Meyerhold left the Art Theatre and founded the Brotherhood of New Drama in the provinces. Here he produced about 160 plays, from Tchekhov to Maeterlinck, via Przybyszewski, Ibsen and Wedekind. He was not only an actor, but also translator, teacher and director. After having used the experience acquired with Stanislavski, he moved on to focus on the plastic and rhythmical elements as well as on the suggestive function of scenic imagery.

In 1905 he was called back by Stanislavski who seemed to have exhausted the possibilities of naturalism when he became aware in 1904, of the failure of his method to stage Maeterlinck. Meyerhold opened with him a Theatre-Studio and together with the young painters, Sapunov and Soudeikin, he hopes to take up the gauntlet of symbolist dramaturgy. The pictorial order commands the direction, and the actors have to express their inner dialogue through the plastics of their movements and the rhythm of a slow and precisely articulated diction. But *The Death of Tintagiles* conceived in this way did not satisfy Stanislavski, giving rise to another break-up between the two researchers which coincided with the first Russian revolution.

It was at the Vera Komissarjevskaia's theatre, in Petersburg, that Meyerhold pursued, in 1906-1907, this radical experimentation on the scenic space and the acting inspired by Fuchs' and Craig's books, and following in the footsteps of the poet Briusov who, since 1902, had talked of "useless truth" referring to the imitation of real life on stage. The stage becomes an Impressionist painting, a bas relief, a circular space or an empty place structured only through lighting effects. The mise-en-scène is inspired by Memling or Goya (Maeterlinck's *Sister Beatrice* in 1906, Andreyev's *The Human Life* in 1907). With Blok's *The Fairground Booth* (1906), Meyerhold conceived a specific theatre space, that of the mountebank's stage and masks. Originally linked to symbolist dramaturgy, this research into "convention" became the method of a creator in search



of the laws of a “theatrical theatre” implying the activity of the spectator who is regarded as a “fourth creator”.

A Multidirectional Activity

Dismissed by Kommissarjevskaja who was disappointed by her acting results Meyerhold was appointed to the Imperial Theatres (1908-1918). Considered the “ideal actor” by Eisenstein who was his student in 1922, it was there that he interpreted his last role, although he continued to satisfy his desire to act by using demonstration to direct his actors. With abundant resources at hand, he created some fabulous productions with the stage designer Alexander Golovin, his alter ego. His “traditionalist theatre” method is neither nostalgic nor restorative: for Molière’s *Don Juan* (1910) he studies, re-interprets, and synthesises the style of a period and of an author with the help of elements taken from the great theatre traditions, both Italian and oriental: proscenium, masks and *kurombo* (the visible stage hand in Kabuki). In *Tristan and Isolde* (1909) he reflected upon the notion of the total Work of Art while reading Appia and all of Wagner. He then directed one of the first modern operas in which the singer/dancer developed a plastic pantomime in relation to the music. Gluck’s *Orpheus* (1911) marks the realisation of a harmonious union of all the arts. This is a period of multidirectional activity for Meyerhold. Research on classical dramatic and lyrical genres is paralleled by an interest in minor genres - circus, cabaret (*Columbine’s Scarf*, a pantomime by Schnitzler, 1910) - or new genres like the cinema *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1915, *A Strong Man*, 1916. Together with Bakst and Fokine, he directed *Pisanelle* by D’Annunzio at the Chatelet Theatre in Paris (1913).

The Grotesque

Meanwhile, under the Hoffmannian pseudonym “Doctor Dapertutto” Meyerhold opened his own Studio (1913-1917). Unlike Stanislavski, who had been focusing on affective memory since 1912, he plunged his students into the heart of theatre’s memory (theoretical and practical research on the commedia dell’arte) and strived towards polyvalent actors who were both jugglers and musicians. This work was described in his Studio’s magazine whose title derived from Gozzi’s tale *The Love of Three Oranges*, published in one of its issues. In the third part of his book *About Theatre* (1913), Meyerhold defended “fairground theatre” and put forward the concept of the *grotesque*: synthetic theatricality based on contrast, dissonance, switches

from the familiar to the strange in order to restructure the relationships between all the arts involved on the stage, and thus engender a new way of looking at daily life. The actor builds for himself an artificial body, organised in time and space by thought as well as plastic and musical culture. “The art of theatre rediscovers the art of form which it had lost” stated Meyerhold, who believed, like Pushkin, that its essence excluded verisimilitude.

October in the Theatre

The revolution allowed him to engage with new audiences whose presence alone could transform the theatre. After the magnificent *Masquerade* by Lermontov (1917), a performance which was the fruit of years of hard work, Meyerhold left the Imperial Theatres, joined the Communist Party, and directed *Mystery-Bouffe* by Mayakovsky (1918). At the head of the Direction of the theatres of Petrograd and later of Moscow, he introduced the programme “October in the Theatre”: the negation of an apolitical attitude and of psychological realism, the support of self-active companies, measures to integrate workers into the theatre, and the Mayakovskian aesthetic of the stage as a “magnifying glass”. Demoted for wanting to declare “civil war” on the theatre, Meyerhold resigned and it was at the R S F S R Theatre No. 1 that he implemented the principles of “October in the Theatre” with manifesto-performances. His pre-revolutionary decorativism was purified through the asceticism of a theatre-forum (*The Dawn*, adapted from Verhaeren, 1920), of the workshop and circus (*Mystery-Bouffe*, second version, 1921). Meyerhold allied himself with the poetic and plastic avant-garde, was close to the LEF theories (Left Front of Art), advocated the removal of the curtain and painted decors, the precise organisation of the space, the use of raw materials and committed actors who could be a theatre worker and tribune. For Crommelynck's *The Magnanimous Cuckold* (1922) there was an “acting workbench” - a scenic machine-tool - a constructivist non-figurative device, set in the middle of a bare stage. It was made up of platforms, steps, ramps and wheels. Here the actors in their overalls demonstrated their “biomechanical” training which was evocative of the ideologies of the time (productivism and taylorism), as well as of the traditional roots of a theatre of movement. The aims were mastery of rhythm and balance, awareness of the mechanics of the body, decomposition of each movement into the components intention-action-reaction, (according to Pavlov's reflex theories) and a constant relationship with the partner. In the image of a Utopian new human being, efficient and organised, the actor was also the advocate or the attorney of his character. In this

acting system, all psychological states are conditioned by physiological processes and physical constructions according to William James' theories. The text was submitted to a re-writing, cut up in episodes which re-actualised and gave weight to its arguments (*The Earth in Turmoil* adapted from *La Nuit* by Martinet, 1923). The stage underwent a "cinefication" itself with *The Forest* (1924) an adaptation of Ostrovski's text in which Meyerhold directed his actors towards a model of Chaplinesque acting. The same was the case with *D.E. (Give us Europe!)* by Erenburg and *The Tunnel* by Kellermann, 1924) with its and rapid movement of rolling panels which constitute the dynamic set.

Towards Musical Realism

After the huge success of *The Warrant* by the young Nikolai Erdman (1925), came Mejerhold's work of art: *The Government Inspector* adapted from Gogol (1926). In this fifteen-episode adaptation, "musical realism" was refined into a complex scenic score, requiring very skilled actors, for which the laboratory-performance, *Bubus, the Teacher* by Faiko (1925), had established the technical basis. The music became a "co-construction" of the performance. Meyerhold collaborated with the great composers of his period: Gnessin, Shostakovich, Prokofiev. After having banished painting from the stage, Meyerhold could reintroduce its active principle through a *mise-en-scène* based on "scenic composition". He named himself "author of the performance", but it was without altering the text that he directed Mayakovsky's *The Bed Bug* and *The Bath House*. (1929-1930). In 1930, the Gos TIM (Meyerhold's State Theatre) went on tour to Germany and Paris.

In the nineteen thirties, with the rise of Stalinism, Meyerhold witnessed his authors being persecuted (Erdman, Tretiakov). He explored in depth the polyphonic musical structure of the performance (*The Lady of the Camellias* by Dumas junior, 1934 and *The Queen of Spades*, opera by Tchaikovski, 1935). In 1936, he was one of the targets of the campaign against formalism. He defended himself publicly, but to no avail. Accused of being a "foreign theatre", in a country where Socialist Realism was triumphant, the Gos TIM was closed in 1938. Stanislavski welcomed his former student into his Opera Studio, but his death deprived Meyerhold of all protection. Arrested in 1939, he was shot on 2nd February 1940 in Moscow as a spy and a Trotskyist. His aesthetic rehabilitation was slow and the conditions of his death were only known in 1988.

Meyerhold was attuned to the conflicts of a troubled era. He gave them shape in a non-mimetic theatrical language, by working directly on scenic material in

which words are only one element. Each sign possesses multiple facets which mirror and focus the complex stage relationships between literature, music, painting, movement, vocal art, and cinema. Whilst imposing the seal of his personal view, where the theme of destiny which dominated the nineteen-tens was followed by the tragi-comedy of imposture, Meyerhold sought a specific style for each author he directed.

In the beginning he was open to European plays that he introduced into Russia, then later his repertoire privileged national dramaturgy, reinterpreted according to a “fantastic realism”. Through the theatrical treatment he gave to classical texts, he contributed to the emergence of a new Soviet dramaturgy. His theatre does not seek to be a reflection of life, but to take part in its transformation. It is founded on the associative interaction between the performance and the audience. If Stanislavski represents the paternal founding figure of modern theatre, Meyerhold reinvents the artist, the inventor, and the revolutionary. His work is intimately linked to the Utopian adventure of 1917, embodying its foreboding, elation and disenchantment. We have as yet to uncover all its treasures.

Translation: Claire Carre

JACQUES COPEAU

By Patrice Pavis



Jacques Copeau (1879-1949) was a French actor and director, but he was also one of the first reformers of the theatre, and undoubtedly the first French theatre person to propose a complete training for the actor. But all his great plans aimed at radically changing the theatre by staging classical plays in order to rediscover them, make them accessible to a larger audience, and thus pave the way for a new dramaturgy. He did not produce a new dramaturgy, nor did he really change the situation of the theatre, but he was successful in one thing: in understanding the new task of the director and in helping him to use the actors in the best possible way.

His interest for literature precedes and maybe surpasses his work on the theatre. In 1909 he founded the “Nouvelle Revue Française” which he controlled until 1913 when he opened the theatre and the school of the Vieux-Colombier. After the war and his departure for New York in 1917, he reopened the school briefly (1920-1924). He then left Paris and settled in Burgundy with a group of students and actors. With the “Copiaus” he performed in villages, and this paved the way for “decentralisation”. He did not really leave Paris for good, as he staged plays at the Comédie Française with three other members of the “cartel” (Jouvet, Dullin, and Baty). During the German occupation, he was appointed Administrator of the Comédie Française (1940-1941), an unfortunate choice as he was in charge of expelling the Jews from the Comédie.

It is therefore difficult (for me) to raise a monument to Copeau or even a modest laboratory, but I am more than ready to consider his work on the mise-en-

scène, both practically and theoretically as a remarkable achievement, which is as valid as a long-term and indestructible laboratory.

But was Copeau actually in search of a laboratory? He certainly never used the term and he was more a “bel esprit” and a “littéraire” than a scientist. He belonged more to the humanistic tradition of the hermitage and the monastery than to the factory of constructivism or biomechanics. His intention was to educate (more than to train) the very young actors teaching them the main principles of dramatic art, the basics of movement and the intuitive laws of acting. In this respect his school was one of the most systematic and well thought out acting schools ever invented. Its curriculum remains the basis for many contemporary schools.

So the laboratory remains invisible, consisting of a clear, systematic, innovative conception of mise-en-scène. An intellectual construction, perhaps, but an edifice which informs the whole theatre life. The laboratory would indeed remain an empty edifice or box, if it were not supported by an intellectual construction, an understanding of a production as a mise-en-scène, i.e. as a system organizing all the materials of the theatre for the spectator’s gaze.

Copeau’s definition of the mise-en-scène summarizes all the important elements of the director’s tasks and should be studied in any theatre school:

”By mise-en-scène we understand the drawing of a dramatic action. It consists of the ensemble of movements, of gestures and attitudes, the harmony of facial expressions, of the voices and of the silences; it is the totality of the stage performance which stems from a single way of thinking, which conceives it, regulates it and harmonizes it. The director invents and imposes between the characters this secret and invisible bond, this reciprocal sensibility, this mysterious correspondence of links, without which the drama, even if it is interpreted by excellent actors, loses the major part of its expression.”

(*Registres*, I, pp.29-30).

At the origins of mise-en-scène, we have the impression that since the eighteenth century or even since Racine and Molière, we live in an interregnum, in which no new way of acting and staging has been invented. The so-called innovations are not really new, they are often technical improvements without any goal. This is why Copeau is suspicious of technical improvements or of formalistic experiences à la Meyerhold or Tairov. Copeau is concerned that the principles of interpretation would be at the mercy of well educated, but soulless performers. It could easily lead to the useless invention of pleasant things which do not help the spectator to understand the play better, but simply cover the text with sensational signs. The director should rather “invent inside”, i.e. “fill with reality, saturate with poetry all that is done and said on

stage, but without exaggerating the meaning, without overrunning what I call the pure configuration of masterpieces” (p. 199).

We might indeed be here in the most logocentric conception of theatre, but this idea of filling the text can also be seen as a way of constituting the text and its meaning from within by trying out different situations of enunciation. Sooner or later the classical notion of harmonious *mise-en-scène* will break apart, and the need for a laboratory where things can be artificially reassembled, for instance in the Grotowski or Barba ways, will of necessity emerge.

But Copeau does not go so far. He moves to the country but keeps an eye on Paris and becomes obsessed with the notion of “poor theatre” before its birth, of faithfulness, of sacred texts (be it Molière or the Bible). He therefore cannot invent new ways of writing and staging and his own plays are a failure, because he is frightened by the possibilities of a provocative *mise-en-scène* which would question the centrality of the word.

Therefore the laboratory of Copeau closes upon itself and becomes a place where nothing else happens. What began as a new practice of the stage becomes a series of rigid rules, a logo-centric and ethno-centric view which will be attacked by the next generation, particularly in the popular form of Planchon (rather than of Vilar), who spoke of *mise en pièces des chefs d’oeuvres* (the breaking in pieces, the tearing apart of classical canons and conventions).

Thus what remains are not the remnants of a school, or the scars of a struggle, but the dialectical practice of *mise-en-scène* as an ongoing struggle between centrality and periphery, between recognizable style and expressive novelty, between a single aesthetic event and the continuity of a permanent school. Everybody is free to choose his lab, in the same manner as everybody has a right to choose the prison of his dreams.



Théâtre du Soleil, 1982

ETIENNE DECROUX

By Marco De Marinis



Decroux was born in the 19th century (1898, to be exact) and remained active in his school in Paris into the 1980s. He trained, then, in the great period of the historic avant-garde of the early part of the century, began his career as theatrical creator, researcher and pedagogue towards the end of the 1920s, gained major public recognition first in France and later throughout the world between the 1940s and the beginning of the 60s. When all was said and done, he had been involved in teaching, almost

without interruption, for more than half a century having among other students Jean-Louis Barrault, Marcel Marceau, Marise Flach, Ingemar Lindh, Yves Lebreton, Thomas Leabhart, Corinne Soum and Steven Wasson.

These simple facts alone should caution one against speaking of Decroux and his work in the singular and, even more, from thinking of corporeal mime as something that can be contained in a single formula that could be defined once and for all. Such caution is moreover absolutely necessary when considering all the “founding fathers” of contemporary theater; but it is particularly important in reference to the author of *Words on Mime* (1963) and not only for the chronological reasons I’ve just mentioned.

It is not enough to recall that Decroux spanned literally a whole century of theatre revolutions; one must hasten to add that he did so as an active protagonist, deeply involved--despite a certain distance he tried to interpose early on between himself and the rest of the world--and, above all, that he did so as a tireless researcher,

forever dissatisfied with the results and forever reaching with tremendous spirit to surpass them.

There are then *several* Decroux, that one could identify first of all by the many seasons of his very long theatrical career, beginning with the training at Copeau's school in 1923/24, until his death in 1991. But aside from this *diachronic* plurality (to which, moreover, he holds no exclusive ownership) we find in him as well a *synchronic* or vertical plurality, no less important, that concerns the different levels on which Decroux's artistic and pedagogic research developed, more or less consciously.

In speaking of synchronic plurality, I'm not thinking principally of the well known fact that Decroux, besides his work on mime, was also a professional theatre and movie actor, as well as many other things. I'm referring to something more important, more essential, even; that is, that possibility of pinpointing, as I just said, several levels within his artistic and pedagogical research in the area of corporeal mime.

I think it is possible to point out at least *three different levels*, closely tied to one another, of course:

1) There is, first and foremost, Decroux as the inventor of corporeal mime as a new theatrical genre, a genre founded on the rigid exclusion of words and, in addition, strongly codified: a rarity in the West, as we all know. His repertory included more than a hundred pieces, most of which lasted only a few minutes. There were a few exceptions, as for instance his first production *La vie primitive*, in 1931, and *Petits soldats*, in 1950.

2) There is then Decroux, the researcher of a *pure, essential, theatrical art form* based of course on the aesthetic use of the human body, but without rigid exclusions and also without the obligations of strict codification/formalization.

3) Finally, there is at least a third Decroux: that is, he who carried on for an entire half-century one of the most rigorous, thorough and systematic investigations that European theatre has ever known, on the foundations of the art of the actor; that is, on physical action on the stage, its techniques, its principles, its dramaturgy.

It's obviously not a question of determining the major or minor importance of these three Decroux. And yet, I think the deepest and most lasting contribution Decroux made to the theatre of the 20th century and bequeathed to future generations belongs to this third level.

If we attempt to examine, outside any consideration of genre, the questions posed by the creator of corporeal mime during his complex career as artist and teacher, they are really the same ones that drive the work of the other masters of the new

contemporary theatre: what does it mean to produce *actions* on the stage? What enables the actor to move authentically that is, in an effective, credible way? How can the actor become an artist--that is, a creator and dramaturg, using what an actor has at his/her disposal?

Decroux' relentless technical research on the actor reveals its double opposite potentialities: on the one hand, a necessary plunge to the heart of the problems that stir contemporary theatre in order to reach the level of art; on the other hand a privileged path from among those taken by contemporary theatre in order to go beyond theatrical presentation, beyond art and oneself, by means of a radical questioning of its *worth* and *meaning*.

Translation: Sally Leabhart



Ryszard Cieslak, 1965

JERZY GROTOWSKI AND LUDWIK FLASZEN

By Leszek Kolankiewicz and Zbigniew Osinski



Jerzy Grotowski (born on August 11, 1933 in Rzeszów, Poland, dead on January 14, 1999 in Pontedera, Italy) theatre director and innovator, practical researcher in the field of performing arts, and, above all, the art of an actor, creator of ritual arts, theatre anthropologist. He studied acting in Cracow, Poland (1951-1955), then directing in Moscow, Russia (1955-1956, under Yuriy Zavadsky) and in Cracow (1956-1960). He worked as an assistant professor in the Theatre Conservatory in Cracow, and debuted as a director with *The Chairs* by Ionesco in the Old Theatre in Cracow (1957). He received his directing diploma in 1960.

In 1959, together with Ludwik Flaszen, Jerzy Grotowski took over Teatr 13 Rzędów (the Theatre of 13 Rows) in Opole, Poland, and founded there an institution later widely known as Teatr Laboratorium (the name was adopted in 1962). The Theatre Laboratory moved to Wrocław, Poland, in 1965, and operated there until 1984. After emigrating from Poland in 1982, Grotowski continued his creative activity with several international teams – first in Italy, then in the USA (Irvine, California, 1983-1986). He finally settled in Italy, where in 1985 he founded in Pontedera the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski (in 1996 renamed into the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards).

Grotowski's creative work consists of several periods: the theatre of productions (1957-1969); the theatre of participation or "paratheatre" (1970-1978); the Theatre of Sources (1976-1982); the Objective Drama (1983-1986); and the Art as a Vehicle, the Ritual Arts (1985-1999). It remains debatable whether the Theatre of Sources should be regarded as a separate period, or that it should be seen as a part of

the theatre of participation or the Objective Drama period. Similarly, the Objective Drama period could be treated as a preparatory phase for the Art as a Vehicle.

In the theatre of productions period Grotowski was creating theatrical performances based on his own scenarios adapted from Polish and world classics (especially of the Romantic period), such as *Cain* after Byron (1960), *Faust* after Goethe (1960, in the Polish Theatre in Poznan – the only production directed away from his Laboratory Theatre), *Mystery-Bouffé* after Mayakovsky (1960), *Sakuntala* after Kalidasa (1960), *Forefathers' Eve* after Mickiewicz (1961), *Kordian* after Słowacki (1962), *Akropolis* after Wyspiński (1962), *Doctor Faustus* after Marlowe (1963), *Study about Hamlet* after Shakespeare and Wyspiński, *The Constant Prince* after Calderón and Słowacki (1965) and *Apocalypsis cum Figuris* (1968).

He called 'poor theatre' a theatre work presented in a specially arranged space (in collaboration with the architect Jerzy Gurawski) to create a new relationship with the spectator, different in each production. Performances of the Laboratory Theatre were designed for a small audience, so that the actors could create an active and immediate relationship with every spectator regarded to be a witness rather than an observer. This theatre was 'poor' because the means of production were highly reduced, leaving the actor the main creator of the performance. The Laboratory Theatre performers trained daily to make their actions organic even though non-realistic, and going beyond an ordinary behaviour only to culminate in an act of transgression called a 'total act' (a model example was Ryszard Cieslak in *The Constant Prince*). Grotowski compared the shock created in the spectator by the 'total act' to the symbolic effectiveness of the ritual. The Theatre Laboratory's performances were seen by only a handful of spectators, but thanks to Grotowski's book (*Towards a Poor Theatre*, 1968) the idea of a 'poor theatre' became widely known.

In the theatre of participation period, more widely known as "paratheatre" or "active culture," Grotowski refrained from productions, and instead took on projects that assumed active involvement and collaboration of all participants. Among them were: *Special Project* (since 1974), University of Research of Theatre of Nations (1975), *The Mountain Project* (1977). These projects focused on the research on the expression of a human being acting in relation to other people and to nature. Unlike work-products (productions), these work-processes (projects) adopted the character of events (some conducted outdoors) based on scenarios that included rudimentary myth and ritual motives, and realized through improvised simple actions leading to a meeting between human beings. Grotowski called 'Holiday' (*Holiday: the day that is*

holy, 1973) the meeting of human beings away from the game and pretending of everyday.

In the Theatre of Sources period, Grotowski and his international team led transcultural research aiming at practical experiences and reflections in the fields of theatre anthropology and ecology of culture. From ritual techniques selected from different traditions he built simple structures of actions – mainly outdoor ones, based on the perception of the visible world – which were to create a possibility of reaching transcultural “sources of techniques.”

In the Objective Drama period, and later in the Art as a Vehicle, Grotowski dealt with the methodology of ‘physical actions’ (Stanislavski’s term) treated with the same rigour as ritual actions. The goal was not the theatre transformation, but rather a living inspiration, which, always mobilized by practice, would feed other domains of culture and the people who cultivate them. The *Performer* – not a theatre actor but a man of actions with an attitude of a warrior and a spiritual concentration of a priest – was to make his organism an open channel for passing energies through singing and dancing (*Performer*, 1988). In the field of Ritual Arts, Grotowski created *Action* (1988), an *opus* with a structure resembling a theatre performance, however not meant for the benefit of the spectators, but instead meant as a testimony of the quality of the energy of *Performer’s* ritual actions.

In all periods Grotowski led laboratory work, each time essentially different, and with a renewed or completely new team of young collaborators.

In 1997 Grotowski was nominated to chair the Theatre Anthropology at the Collège de France in Paris, France.

Ludwik Flaszen (born on June 4, 1930 in Cracow, Poland): Polish literary and theatre critic, essayist, theatre director, researcher in the field of performance art. Flaszen became famous as the author of the first lampoon against socialist realism literature, which he published in 1952, and later reprinted in the book *Głowa i mur* (*The Head and the Wall*; 1958), confiscated by political censorship. In 1959, together with Jerzy Grotowski, he took over Teatr 13 Rzędów (the Theatre of 13 Rows) in Opole – since 1962 Teatr Laboratorium in which he worked as the literary director, the director’s advisor, and, in the final period (1980-1984), as the head director. He greatly contributed to the crystallisation of the notion of ‘poor theatre,’ the term he coined and provided with its first description. His book, *Cyrograf* (*The Pledge*; 1971), an ironic representation of the condition of the member of Polish intelligentsia, offers a philosophical commentary on the communist society. In the 1970s Flaszen led his

own work-processes in the Laboratory Theatre called *Meditations Aloud*, which were based on orature and direct communion in dialogue. They were to lead to a meeting between human beings through exposure as in an intimate confession (*Księga – The Book*; 1973). He has been living in Paris, France, since 1985, where he leads acting methodology workshops and directs theatre (mainly his adaptations of Fyodor Dostoevsky's and Franz Kafka's works).

Why did Grotowski adopt the laboratory formula in 1962? Firstly, because of pragmatic reasons. Grotowski and Flaszen's theatre operated as an official, professional state institution under the Ministry of Culture and accordingly, under the appropriate regional authorities in Opole and later Wrocław. Acknowledged in the administrative classifications (however not used before), the formula 'theatre-laboratory' allowed for a relaxation or even complete removal of the authorities' requirements, which the official theatre institutions were obliged to fulfil. The demands included realization of four plans: the season plan of eight to twelve premieres each season (at least one of them had to be a work of the Soviet or Russian drama or a play from one of the countries of the communist block), the performance schedule containing at least six shows a week, the attendance plan, and the annual financial plan.

A second reason was the specific situation Grotowski found in theatre. It made him refer to a dear to him tradition of theatre laboratories, above all to Konstantin Stanislavski and the Reduta (1919–1939) – the first Polish theatre-laboratory led by Juliusz Osterwa and Mieczysław Limanowski.

Last but not least, Grotowski's personal dispositions were decisive, his inclination to a specifically understood and practiced research work, which he pursued throughout all his life.

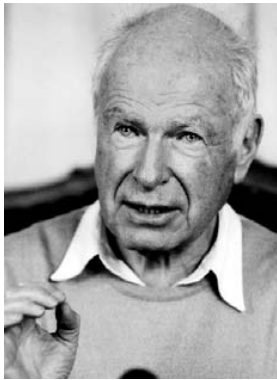
By adopting the formula and the status of 'theatre-laboratory' Grotowski and Flaszen acquired the optimal possibility of conducting creative research under the circumstances of communist Poland, thus being able to create particular performances and artistic projects in Opole and Wrocław.

Note that Grotowski led a laboratory type of work until the end of his life, even though his Workcenter in Pontedera did not use the term 'laboratory' in its name.

Translation: Grzegorz Ziółkowski and Kris Salata

PETER BROOK

By Georges Banu



Peter Brook was born in 1925. His parents, Russian Jews, had left the country following the upheavals caused by the First World War and also because of the political unrest after the revolt in 1905. They settled in London where Mr. Brook senior worked as a chemical engineer. They had two sons, Peter's elder brother made a career in

psychiatry and his professional advice was called upon for various performances. Peter Brook studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he came to be the youngest graduate in comparative literature. This is where he started, in 1944, with *Dr. Faustus* by Marlowe and embarked upon his cinematographic career in the same year with an adaptation of *A Sentimental Journey*, by Laurence Sterne, trying to lead a double career in theatre and cinema, without quite succeeding.

His career really took off in Stratford where, immediately after the end of the Second World War, the Shakespeare festival opened, as in other places in Europe. He directed *Love's Labours Lost* there, whilst already announcing his interest – later confirmed - in Shakespeare's so called "secondary" works. He focused on extending the Shakespeare repertory by working on the less well-known texts at the time, such as *Measure for Measure* or *Titus Andronicus*, alongside, obviously, on the more frequently represented great works such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* or *King Lear*.

Brook constantly adopted this double approach to Shakespeare which he used in order to reveal cinematographic fluidity as well as the relevance of these historical works to the here and now. Firstly, he demonstrated an approach based on the exploitation of cultural references taken from the history of art, and then he based himself on the discoveries of modern artistic practices, like concrete music for example, to then take inspiration directly from the data of contemporary life and society. Brook progressively transformed his work on Shakespeare to arrive at what would become, and remain a masterpiece of theatre directing, his *King Lear* in 1964, a production where he puts into action all the conquests of the Theatre of the Absurd,

of Beckett's in particular, and the tragic experience of war and the war camps. His production was the most convincing confirmation of Jan Kott's thesis in his revolutionary book *Shakespeare, our contemporary*. It was while working on this text that Brook embarked on the path of "Empty Space", abandoning all superfluous scenography and sacrificing the temptation to do elaborate scenery, still going strong at the time.

As a particularly open-minded man of the theatre Brook was also interested in opera and he was responsible for performances that were a resounding success such as Mussorgsky's *Boris Godounov* (1948) and Richard Strauss's *Salome*, the latter with a scenography by Salvador Dali. He was also, quite fleetingly, Artistic Director at Covent Garden before breaking off from the world of opera for a long time. In this first period, he stands out for the broad spectrum of his deliberately eclectic repertoire, as he stretches unabashed from Shakespeare and Seneca to lower-brow playwrights and contemporary agit-prop writers. He is compelled to try everything and not to cut himself off by making too rigorous choices before having explored the field of writing in its whole complexity. Acknowledged at this early stage as the most outstanding director of English theatre, Brook worked with the greatest actors of that time: John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh and later on, Paul Scofield and Glenda Jackson.

Meanwhile he pursued a successful career in the film industry, creating two of his greatest and most internationally celebrated films *Moderato cantabile*, with a scenario by Marguerite Duras, and Jeanne Moreau in the leading role, and in particular *The Lord of the Flies* after William Golding's famous novel. Unfortunately, carried along by the success of his drama productions, Brook dropped author cinema only to come back to it later in life, and at the time settled for a few choice films based on his most accomplished drama productions.

In 1964, Brook set off on an experimental journey exploring theatrical language and opened a workshop heavily inspired by Artaud's work, to whom he was then indebted alongside "our whole generation", as he admitted. He involved himself in experimental work on communication in the theatre and, at that time, he invited Jerzy Grotowski to London where their enduring friendship began. Brook had found an ally and a helper: their work went in a common direction and on that basis a real collaboration was born. Following the experimentation around *The Theatre of Cruelty*, Brook embarked upon what still remains to be one of his most remarkable successes, the work on the relation between madness and politics, based on the renowned play of that time, *Marat – Sade* by Peter Weiss. In tune with the political "engagement" of

that time, he made a performance documentary called *US*, based on the Vietnam War and its effect on the Western world and on the young generation in particular.

In 1968, following Jean-Louis Barrault's initiative, Brook gave an international workshop in Paris. This same workshop was the origin of his break with theatrical institutions, most specifically with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and his leaving London to settle in France. Before this almost final separation, Brook took leave gracefully with one of his most dazzling productions, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where he places Shakespeare's nocturnal world in a most unexpected context: a completely white box where magic is performed with the help of acrobatics borrowed specifically from the Peking Opera. Brook then imposed not just a different angle on the work, but an unknown way of seeing Shakespeare's plays. He prised them out of a pastoral tradition, and endowed them with both an extraordinary vitality and a contemporary relevance as yet never revealed with such passion. Meanwhile, during that time, he initiated his research thanks to what would become known as the *Exercises on The Tempest*. Then came the separation, with Brook leaving his place of origin - homeland and his theatre lineage - to follow a new path.

He settled in Paris where he created the Centre International de Recherches Théâtrales (CIRT) and devoted himself to research on improvisation and voice-work. That led him to the great adventure *Orghast* (1971, in Persepolis) where he worked on a mixture of imaginary languages and archaic languages in order to find the origin of sound. As a second stage (1972) he led his team on the road to Africa, where the aim was to work on improvisation whilst testing the foundations of theatrical exchanges in a context free of any prestige or cultural conditioning. From then on he launched himself into "the quest for the theatre of simple forms". One last journey, this time in the Reservations in the USA (1973), closed that period after which, in 1974, the Bouffes du Nord opened, a theatre space completely devoted to Brook's aesthetics.

Brook took over an old, dilapidated Italian-style theatre, and restored it, keeping the traces of the passage of time, and re-organised it so as to reclaim the actor/spectator proximity, so precious to modern theatre people. He managed there to create a poetic synthesis between the authenticity of un-theatrical places and the evocative power of a traditional venue. Brook became inseparable from this place where he and his international team put their names to an impressive number of memorable productions ranging from *Timon of Athens* (1974) at the opening of the theatre to *The Cherry Orchard* (1981) and *The Tempest* (1990), to adaptations of non-theatrical texts like the anthropological novel *Les Iks* (1975) or traditional poems like *The Conference of the Birds* (1979) by the Soufi poet Farid Uddin Attar, and up to the

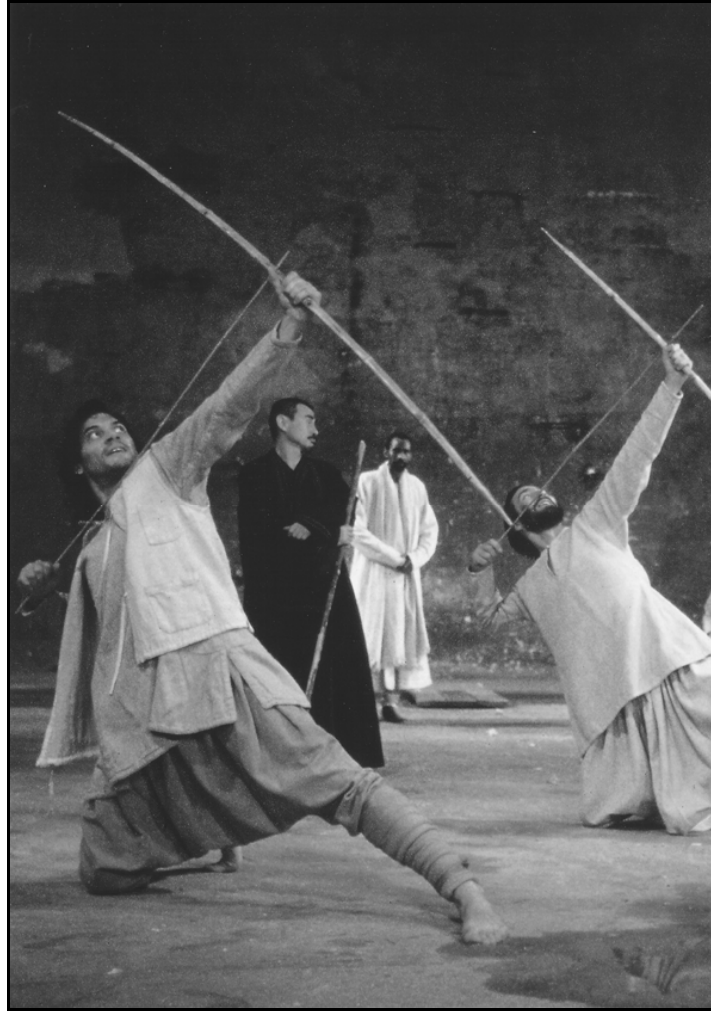
realisation of the historic *Mahabharata* (1985). Brook's theatre emphasises the right to simplicity and to one's emotions against a backdrop of the extolled powers at the very core of theatre. In this way he was able to perfect, in his words, *the heart cycle*.

In the early nineties, Brook launched into a new cycle which led him to an even more austere form of expression to undertake what he himself named as "the brain cycle". He adapted Oliver Sachs' text about mental illness *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, and turned it into *The Man Who* (1992) a true reflection on psychic disorders and everything that these entail in terms of the disconnection from reality suffered by victims of these illnesses. Another production, about the same subject, *I am a Phenomenon*, was on the subject of absolute memory being the painful destiny of a person who becomes a slave of his past. In 2001, Brook returned to Shakespeare with *Hamlet*, a production in which he links both cycles, of heart and mind, in a performance where we can witness the essence of the Brookian approach.

We cannot underestimate the importance of the role of Africa in Brook's research: he gave parts to a great number of African actors, he put on African plays, and he went there often. In fact, his latest production is based on the work of one of the most distinguished African authors, Ampateba. The theme of Africa has run like a red thread through Brook's dramatic opus for over thirty years.

Brook is also the author of the famous book *The Empty Space*, conceived in 1968, a true reflection on the nature of drama work and of the essence of its quest. It is a quest for contrasts and impurities against the backdrop of a bare stage with just an actor in the centre who hides nothing in order to give the pleasure of pure playing, and is capable of entering into a dialogue with an audience which feels constantly desired by the stage. Brook's theatre was forever to remain an open theatre. His autobiography, published in France under the title *Oublier le temps*, retraces the path of the artist for whom theatre and self-fulfilment remain inseparable, forever nourishing and enlightening each other.

Translation: Claire Carre



The Mahabharata by Peter Brook, 1985



Théâtre du Soleil, 1982

ARIANE MNOUCHKINE

By Georges Banu and Béatrice Picon-Vallin



Ariane Mnouchkine, born in 1939 and of French nationality, has been directing the Théâtre du Soleil since its creation. She defended and implemented this particular type of theatre which is directly related to the politics and spirit of 'May 1968'. An adept of collective creation for a long time, Ariane Mnouchkine returned to the text in 1981, be it classical (Shakespeare, Greek tragedies) or contemporary, but always inspired by the great events of world history. She and the Théâtre du Soleil incarnate one of the most original aspects of French theatre.

She studied psychology at the Sorbonne University and founded the Association Théâtrale des Etudiants de Paris, with which she created her first production, *Genghis Khan* (1961). After a long trip to Asia, she turned her drama group into a professional company: the Théâtre du Soleil (May 1964) which functioned according to the model of a worker's cooperative. It opened with *Les Petits Bourgeois* by M. Gorki (1964), then with an adaptation by Philippe Léotard of *Capitaine Fracasse* by Théophile Gautier (1965) where one of Mnouchkine's most cherished themes became apparent: travelling theatre and the problems that arise from the encounters with different types of audiences. After touring with *Capitaine Fracasse*, Mnouchkine entered the International School of Jacques Lecoq. The troupe became more prestigious thanks to *La Cuisine (The Kitchen)* by Arnold Wesker (1967), in which the audience is shown life behind the scenes of a big restaurant's kitchen, orchestrated like a symphony. This production was awarded several prizes, and was

performed in the Citroën factories in 1968. *Le songe d'une nuit d'été* (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) (1968), performed in the same manner as *La Cuisine* in Cirque Medrano's circus ring carpeted with goatskins this time, pushes the dreamlike quality towards sensuality and joyful bestiality. With *Les Clowns* in 1969 (a production created in Aubervilliers and performed at the Avignon Festival and at the Piccolo Teatro of Milan) Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil confirmed their interest in forms of popular theatre that had tended to be undervalued, and released the poetic nature of this most particular and festive universe.

The Cartoucherie and the French Revolution

The real outburst took place with *1789* (1970) created at the Milan Pallalido on Paolo Grassi's invitation. It was rehearsed and later performed again at the Cartoucherie de Vincennes, a derelict site that Mnouchkine took over and transformed, and which progressively became a sacred place for the Parisian theatre world, a place outside drama institutions and off the beaten track of the usual thespian circuits. *1789* taught the spectators who had undergone the 1968 revolution to participate in the scenic action of the earlier revolution, the one which had founded the Republic. In this case the nature of the subject is as fascinating as the form of devising which the Soleil had been pioneering for a good while: *collective creation*. Its aim was being to abolish any contradiction between the theory and its implementation: both must be given life by one and the same spirit. Work on the audience, who can watch the action from the outer circle or immerse themselves in this action, is an aspect which flows from this constant quest for coherence: actors and spectators feed off the same values that belong to the model of a collective, theatrical and political action. *1789* is a re-evaluation of the tradition of fairground theatre, of street entertainers re-enacting historical events in the market place. The second part, *1793* (1972), brings the audience into the action, whilst inviting a reflection on the Revolution and its last moments. If we consider *1789* to be the Soleil's first production involving political participation, then we can consider *1793* to be its first production of political thinking. For a long time, both the French and the European theatre were to bear the mark of these two seminal works, in which history has a fascinating relevance to the present and its troubles. Mnouchkine's utopia was always to create a production which talked loud and clear about our contemporary world.

From improvisation to text

Mnouchkine experimented with *L'âge d'or* (1975), based on a collective scenario that had never been published, in a new “ephemeral architecture” realised by Guy-Claude François, director of scenography at the Soleil. *L'âge d'or* is about present-day issues using commedia dell'arte and oriental storytelling techniques. The success of the production was mainly due to the exceptional quality of the theatrical language, which linked a contemporary topic to these antique forms. In this instance, Mnouchkine's point of reference is Jacques Copeau's work, as he too wanted to stage a modern-day commedia.

After *L'âge d'or* the company went into a crisis which worsened after shooting the film *Molière* (1976-1977). The collective devising and creating period ended for a while. In 1979 Mnouchkine adapted dramatisation of Klaus Mann's novel *Méphisto* (the demise of the left and the rise of Nazism in Germany in the thirties). She then engaged in an ambitious project, preparing for the production of twelve Shakespeare texts. In the end she only produced three: *Richard II* (1981), *La nuit des rois* (*Twelfth Night*) (1982), and *Henry IV, Part I* (1984). Her aim was to use the traditional techniques of Kabuki and Kathakali to highlight the theatrical nature of Shakespeare's works. The sheer beauty of the shows, with their plastic quality, was at odds with French scenic tendencies of time, which were dominated by the grey tones imposed by Brecht's epigones. Mnouchkine combined the Oriental theatre's splendour with the raw energy of Shakespearian verse, and in this way she restored the fine taste and appreciation of beauty of French theatre, the first call of beauty being the extraordinary mastery of the body, in the company's physical theatre vocabulary.

Telling the story of the world

The third period in the history of the Soleil could appear to be a synthesis between the chorus-aspect of a company and the unique presence of a certain playwright, Hélène Cixous, all of this being organised by the guide, Mnouchkine. Cixous's writing projects developed in collaboration with Mnouchkine and in relation with the company's own reality. *L'histoire terrible mais inachevée du prince Norodom Sihanouk* (1985) and *l'Indiade ou l'Inde leurs rêves* (1988), are two plays in which we find ourselves confronted with the great political tragedies of the contemporary world, through a Shakespearian experience. This is the path which Mnouchkine, Cixous and the Soleil embarked upon together, drawn by the alliance between history and stage worthiness which must always be a source of pleasure and joy, because the Soleil plays

for vast audiences who are fired by a social conscience. Mnouchkine always assimilated theatre to a community festivity, without ever throwing overboard the political and 'agit-prop' aspect of her productions. After Vilar, Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil went back to the activist roots of popular theatre whilst making it very personal and interpreting it in their unique fashion.

The tragedy and the tragic

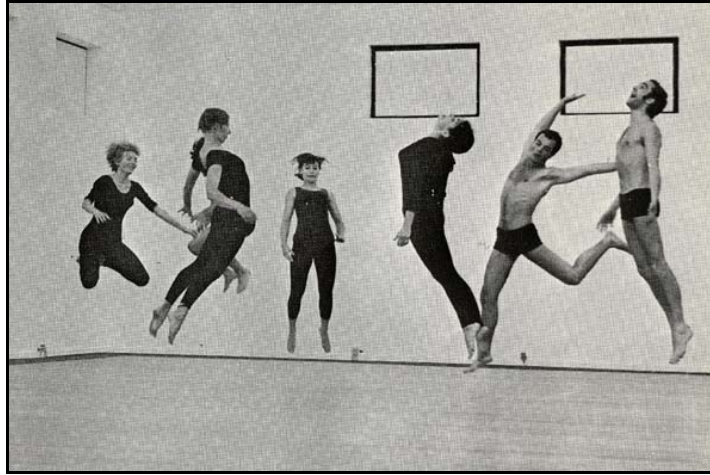
From the 1990's, Mnouchkine embarked upon her long journey into the origins of theatre and devoted herself to the cycle of the Atrides: she adopted a similar approach to the one she used when she worked on Shakespeare, in the sense that it was still a matter of bridging the gap between an ancient Western text and a traditional Eastern form, Kathakali. The cycle reunites four tragedies: *Iphigénie à Aulis* by Euripides, (1990), *Agamemnon* by Æschylus (translation by Mnouchkine), (1990), *Les Choéphores* by Æschylus (translation by Mnouchkine), (1991) and *Les Euménides* by Æschylus, (1992). Those were three years of great success at the Cartoucherie and on tour internationally. Mnouchkine had succeeded in creating a formal repertoire of signs which could be reused, transformed, and re-integrated in another context: this process gives rise to dazzling visual beauty. Meanwhile, Mnouchkine developed an original theory and practice of the chorus whose very presence confirms with brilliance the resources of dance-theatre.

Mnouchkine and Cixous then decided to tackle one of the most symbolic scandals of modern life: the issue of contaminated blood [blood which, although suspected of being contaminated with the HIV virus in hospitals was given to a great number of patients]¹ which became the basis for a disturbing and controversial production: *La ville parjure ou le réveil des Erinyes* (1994). Working on Greek tragedy led Mnouchkine to start questioning the role of tragedy as modern destiny. For her, theatre presented the opportunity to reflect on the powers of the stage as well as on the contradictions of the present: *Le Tartuffe* (Avignon Festival 1995) was the best demonstration of the way in which an old fable from a long-distant past could be etched into the context of contemporary religious fanaticism. In 1997, Mnouchkine directed *Et soudain, des nuits d'éveil*, "a collective creation in tune with H. Cixous", dedicated to the suffering of Tibet, and the start of an investigation into the virtues of activism. A return to the source is initiated, enriched by all the previous work on the text.

¹ translator's note.

Tambours sur la digue (1999), was described as a “piece for puppets interpreted by actors”, in which Mnouchkine succeeded in creating a magical piece, after a difficult and lengthy period of research in which the company took it upon themselves to play either sumptuous puppets, with supple masks and fixed hands, or their *kokens*, their demonstrators and manipulators, dressed in black. The text was written by H. Cixous, inspired by Nô theatre. This production is about politics and power relationships, told through an old Chinese legend and played with refinement and extremely elaborate acting. Being an artist who accepts all challenges, Mnouchkine shot a film (2002) based on this production, accentuating stage worthiness in order to find the cinematographic quality, which was then to be released on DVD. Since *Tartuffe* and the production of a film about the rehearsals of this production, (*Au soleil même la nuit*, 1996-97), video also became a work instrument for the director and her actors. In *Le dernier caravansérail* (first part, *Le fleuve cruel*, April 2003; second part, *Origines et destins*, November 2003), Mnouchkine reverted to collective creation, in a most engaged and contemporary production, drawing together the themes of exile, refugee camps, Muslim fundamentalism and the role of the West in this context. Already a large company, the Soleil took in yet more actors. *Le dernier caravansérail* is played in the midst of bold scenery made up of mobile stage elements of all sizes, where individual entries and exits take place, as well as group scenes. These pieces of scenery are pushed on by actors who are at the same time the audience’s representatives; the scene’s close-up witnesses echoing the remorselessness of modern reality. Text is reduced to a bare minimum. Spoken in all languages by the actors of this international company, the French translation is projected onto various surfaces. Some life stories, recorded by Mnouchkine during the long quest that served as the production’s matrix, are projected and translated on the grey backdrop which is used as a big screen. Mobile staging, use of the text, languages and voices, relation to the immediate world issues, acting echoing the great silent films; all these elements compose a new form of theatre. The complete play lasts six hours up to now (1.10.2004) the most recent production by the Théâtre du Soleil. Mnouchkine is considering making a film adaptation.

Translation : Claire Carre.



Odin Teatret, 1969

ODIN TEATRET: PHASES OF A THEATRICAL ENCLAVE

By Ferdinando Taviani

In order to avoid confusion, I will use the term 'theatrical enclave' instead of 'laboratory'. Are they the same thing?

The life of the Odin Teatret as a theatrical enclave can schematically be depicted through the complementarity and alternation of introvert and extrovert activities. Among the introvert ones we find Barba's work with the actors, the actors' work on themselves (the training, the autonomous elaboration of materials for a production) and the rehearsals. The extrovert activities include Odin's own productions presented on site and on tour in Denmark and abroad; 'barbers' with various milieus in Holstebro and elsewhere; the organization of encounters for theatre groups; hosting other theatre groups and ensembles; seminars in Denmark and in the countries where the Odin brings its productions; the annual Odin Week; the publication of magazines and books; the production of didactic films and videos; sessions of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA); the collaboration with the CTLS, Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies of the University of Århus; the *Festuge*, (Festive Week) in Holstebro; the triennial festival *Transit* devoted to women in theatre; children's performances, exhibitions, concerts, round tables, cultural initiatives, etc. in Holstebro and the surrounding region.

There is no rigid separation between the above two spheres of activity. They are planned and realized by the same people and often overlap, decanting energies and stimuli from one field to another. The life of the Odin enclave depends on the precarious equilibrium between these two different dynamic dimensions.

In reality the dimensions are three: the third one consists of books. With the years Eugenio Barba has shaped an autonomous profile as a writer, independently from his renown as a director, yet indissolubly linked to his experience in the 'earth of the theatre'.

1964-1965

Odin Teatret was established on 1st October 1964 in Oslo, Norway. Three of its five founders - Eugenio Barba and the actors Else Marie Laukvik and Torgeir Wethal - are still today (2004) a part of it. For the first two years, in the absence of grants, the

economy of the group was guaranteed by its members who worked half time to afford their need for theatre. While concentrating on its professional apprenticeship, the Odin published 'Teatrets Teori og Teknikk', a quarterly magazine which until 1974 appeared with 23 monographic issues and books. Odin Teatret organized in Oslo the first tour abroad of Grotowski's Teatr-laboratorium with *The Constant Prince*. Odin Teatret's first production and Eugenio Barba's first direction was *Ornitofilene* (The Birdlovers, November 1965), an unpublished text by Jens Bjørneboe. The performance toured in Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Altogether, it was presented 51 times.

1966-1968

In June 1966 Odin Teatret found its permanent home in Holstebro, Denmark. Its second production, *Kaspariana* (1967), written specially for the Odin by Ole Sarvig, included actors from several Scandinavian countries, among them Danish Iben Nagel Rasmussen. Odin Teatret received its first grant to promote cultural activities, which helped to finance its productions. Eugenio Barba edited *Towards a Poor Theatre* by Jerzy Grotowski ('Teatrets Teori og Teknikk' No 7, June 1968). From June 1966 until 1976 the Odin organized seminars twice a year for professional Scandinavian theatre people. Among the teachers were Jerzy Grotowski, Ryszard Cieslak, Dario Fo, Etienne Decroux, Jacques Lecoq, the Colombaioni brothers, Charles Marowitz, Otomar Krejca, Joseph Chaikin, Julian Beck, Judith Malina, the Javanese choreographer Sardono, the Balinese masters I Made Djimat and I Made Pasek Tempo, the Japanese Nô masters Hisao and Hideo Kanze, the masters from Indian classical forms Shanta Rao, Krishna Nambudiri, Uma Sharma, Ragunath Panigrahi and Sanjukta Panigrahi. The latter is among the co-founders of ISTA in 1979.

1969-1973

Barba's third production, *Ferai* (1969), from a text specially written for the Odin by Peter Seeberg, gave international acknowledgement to Odin Teatret and its director. The following production, *Min Fars Hus* (My Father's House, 1972), confirmed their prestige and at the same time put them in contact (particularly in Denmark, Italy and France) with a young theatre milieu which was extraneous to the official theatre and to the elitarian avant-garde. Alternative cultural associations, universities and theatre groups active in small centres approached the Odin not only to perform, but also to give lectures, working demonstrations and workshops. Step by step, the character of the tours changed. More and more often the Odin Teatret expounded, in addition to

its performances, the whole range of its culture as a theatrical enclave. In 1971 it began to produce didactic films on the actor's training, directed by Torgeir Wethal.

1974-1975

After *Min Fars Hus*, Odin Teatret moved to Carpignano, a village in southern Italy, where it worked for 5 months between the spring and autumn of 1974. The following year, the Odin went once again to Carpignano for 3 months, and then to Ollolai, a village in the mountains of Sardinia. The Odin began to create open air performances for many spectators, itinerant shows and parades. These performances were put together by assembling material belonging to the repertoire of the individual actors or of the whole group (theatricalised exercises from the training, clown gags, etc). The actors made masks, stilts, showy accessories for themselves as well as costumes in vivid colours which made an exotic impression. The practice of the 'barter' began in the autumn of 1974: instead of selling its own performances, the Odin enclave exchanged them with cultural and performative manifestations by the hosting milieu (cultural associations, villages, neighbourhoods, schools, psychiatric hospitals, prisons, etc). The practice of barter through theatre was to characterize Odin's social action until the present day.

The Odin enclave now introduced itself to the outside with a double face: performances for few spectators, in sheltered environments; and crowded and grotesque open air performances. The first required long periods of preparation, with the director and actors starting afresh every time. The others derived from a rapid structuring of already existing material. For the sake of convention, we will call the first ones 'new productions' and the second ones 'assembled productions'. This double productive line typifies Odin's following years. The enclave now possessed a vast repertoire.

Between 1976 and 2004, the 'new productions' are: *Come! And the Day will be Ours* (1976); *Ashes of Brecht* (1980); *The Gospel according to Oxyrhincus* (1985); *Talabot* (1988); *Kaosmos* (1993); *Mythos* (1997); *Andersen's Dream* (2004).

The 'assembled productions' are: *The Book of Dances* (1974); *Johan Sebastian Bach* (clown numbers, 1974); *Anabasis* (an itinerant performance, 1977); *The Million* (1978); *Ode to Progress* (1997); *Great Cities under the Moon* (2004).

An exception to this distinction between 'new productions' and 'assembled productions' was *Inside the Skeleton of the Whale* (1997). It also derived from another performance (*Kaosmos*), but instead of shaping its existing scenes with a view to a

larger audience and a grotesque style, it pushed them in the direction of a rituality presented as 'secret performance' or 'empty ritual'.

Since 1980, the Odin widened its repertoire with a series of a new type of performance: work demonstrations. And since 1984 it started creating productions with one to three actors (we will call them 'Kammerspiele').

1976-1980

During April and May 1976, Odin Teatret participated in the Festival of Caracas with *Come! And the Day will be Ours*. Outside the Festival's framework, it was active with exchanges and encounters with other groups, barbers, parades and open air performances. The Odin bartered with a Yanomami tribe after a lengthy journey to their territory in Amazonia. It was the beginning of lasting ties between the Odin's enclave and numerous Latin American theatre enclaves. Some of these were present the following autumn in Belgrade, where Eugenio Barba led the International Encounter of Group Theatre within the BITEF Festival/Theatre of the Nations. On this occasion, Barba published the manifesto on the Third Theatre. Other International Encounters of Group Theatre, with Barba as a point of reference, were held in Bergamo (Italy, 1977), Ayacucho (Peru, 1978) and Madrid-Lekeitio (Spain, 1979).

Each Odin member was engaged in local initiatives and in an intense continuity of tours, creation of material, rehearsals and seminars. But new independent activities emerged within the Odin involving individual actors or only Barba with one of the actors. This also applied to ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology) in its first years. Barba established ISTA in 1979 and its first session took place in Bonn 1-31 October 1980 and continued in Porsgrunn (Norway), Stockholm (Sweden) and Holstebro (Denmark) during the whole month of November.

ISTA

The ISTA is not a rigid institution, but an environment or a nebula. It assumes a defined form only during its public sessions. The rest of the time it is an interlacement of changing relationships. It gathers together people who *do theatre* from the most different specializations and traditions. Some *do theatre*, narrating its history and analyzing its procedures; others - the most numerous - practice its art and pass on its techniques and ethos. What makes the meeting possible is a discordant way of

thinking and a common desire to question the actor-dancer's behaviour. It is within this milieu that Barba has confronted the Odin enclave's experiences with other performative genres, elaborating a new field of study: theatre anthropology – the study of scenic behaviour in an organized situation of representation.

Between 1980 and 2000, 12 sessions of ISTA were held: in Germany (Bonn, 1980), Italy (Volterra 1981), France (Blois - Malakoff 1985), Denmark (Holstebro 1986), Italy (Salento 1987), again Italy (Bologna 1990), Great Britain (Brecon - Cardiff 1992), Brazil (Londrina 1994), Sweden (Umeå 1995), Denmark (Copenhagen 1996); Portugal (Montemor-o-Novo - Lisbon 1998); Germany (Bielefeld 2000). In October 2004 the 13th session will take place in Seville - La Rinconada (Spain) and in April 2005, a new session is planned in Wroclaw (Poland).

An ISTA session is centered on a theme or a question which is placed under investigation (improvisation, organic effect, founders of traditions, form and information, etc.). It includes 5 or 6 masters from different traditions and their ensembles, 60-80 participants and a group of about 10 scholars/researchers. It usually lasts for 15-20 days although the longest session, Volterra 1981, went on for 2 months. In addition to the international public sessions, always accompanied by a two-day symposium and the performances from the masters' ensembles, ISTA has developed another activity: *The University of the Eurasian Theatre*. Devoted to specific historiographical/ practical subjects, it is articulated as a restricted intensive course of a few days, usually held in Italy: in Padua in 1992, Fara Sabina in 1993, and since 1996 every year in Scilla or Caulonia, organized by Teatro Proskenion.

Session after session, since 1990, an ensemble under the name of *Theatrum Mundi* has grown out of the public demonstrations given by the ISTA masters. The *Theatrum Mundi* productions are events with 45-50 performers and musicians from diverse genres and traditions, under Eugenio Barba's direction.

The *Theatrum Mundi's* ensemble is stable and intermittent. It is stable, because the participating artists have collaborated with Eugenio Barba for many years within ISTA. It is intermittent, because the ensemble's various masters gather once or twice a year, and for the rest of the time devote themselves to their own professional field in the country and the tradition to which they belong. The way in which Barba collaborates with performers from different traditions is characterized by two opposite aspects. On the one hand he practices a scrupulous respect for the original styles; on the other, he interweaves the heterogeneous pieces belonging to the personal repertoire of each artist into a unitary whole in which, in the end, no sign of syncretism can be detected. This particular solution unifies without conforming, and allows every actor-

dancer to remain rooted in his/her own professional identity. The *Theatrum Mundi*'s ensemble embodies one facet of the empirical research on the performer's pre-expressive level within Theatre Anthropology.

After 1990, Barba began to amalgamate ISTA with the Odin milieu. A dilated enclave took form whose nucleus was the Odin, now surrounded by theatre and dance artists as well as scholars from many countries. Sometimes it is difficult to trace precise delimitations.

1980-2004

As mentioned, since 1980 the dynamics within Odin Teatret assumed two further dimensions. Individual lines of research were created in addition to the collective work. Parallel with her presence in Odin Teatret, Iben Nagel Rasmussen founded the group *Farfa*. Then, in 1989, she started *The Bridge of Winds*, an international assembly of actors and directors usually active in their own country, yet periodically gathering around Iben Nagel Rasmussen for a few weeks to concentrate on their personal professional work. The actor Toni Cots - Barba's closest collaborator in planning the encounters of theatre groups and the first ISTA sessions - developed with *Basho* a self-directed activity of pedagogy and performances still in concomitance with his tasks inside the Odin. Julia Varley participated in the *Magdalena Project*, a network of women in contemporary theatre (that she helped to found in 1986), co-edited its annual journal 'The Open Page' and, in the same perspective, organized since 1992 the triennial festival *Transit*. Each Odin actor, in a more continuous and formalized way, shaped autonomous fields of action and intervention.

At times, it is difficult to maintain an equilibrium between extrovert and introvert activities, as well as that between activities involving the whole group and those concerning the individual actors. The Odin compactness, that appears unassailable from the outside, is experienced internally as a problem that requires a continuous state of alert. In this article, we are observing the Odin from the outside.

One of the consequences of these inner dynamics has been the flourishing of 'small' productions, often with an intensity equal to that of the whole group's 'new productions'. The following Kammerspiele, always directed by Eugenio Barba, were added to Odin's 'new productions': *Marriage with God* (with César Brie and Iben Nagel Rasmussen, 1984); *The Story of Oedipus* (with Toni Cots, 1984); *Judith* (with Roberta Carreri, 1987); *Memoria* (with Else-Marie Laukvik and the musician-actor Frans Winther, 1990); *The Castle of Holstebro* (with Julia Varley, 1990); *Itsi-Bitsi* (1991, with Iben Nagel Rasmussen and the musician-actors Jan Ferslev and Kai

Bredholt); *Doña Musica's Butterflies* (with Julia Varley, 1997); *Salt* (with Roberta Carreri and the musician-actor Jan Ferslev, 2002).

Unlike the 'new productions' that play for 3-4 years and are then eliminated, the Kammerspiele remain in the repertoire for a long time (for instance *Judith* is 17 years old in 2004). They belong to the actor even if s/he leaves the Odin (as was the case with Toni Cots).

The working demonstrations also remain in the repertoire for a long time. The first one was *Moon and Darkness* by Iben Nagel Rasmussen in 1980. The actress presented the various phases of her training and the elements with which she built some of her characters. Other demonstrations followed: *Traces in the Snow* by Roberta Carreri; *The Echo of Silence* and *The Dead Brother* by Julia Varley; *The Paths of Thought* by Torgeir Wethal. Iben Nagel Rasmussen's *White as Jasmine* has a particular quality. In the space of one square meter she makes a long journey and recalls her own experiences through her characters' songs and words.

Seen as a whole, the working demonstrations indicate clearly that the Odin enclave is not characterized by a uniform vision, but by a mosaic of methods and individual perspectives which compose a 'small tradition' with a manifold face. The most obvious proof of this is the performance-demonstration *Whispering Winds in Theatre and Dance* with Roberta Carreri, Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Julia Varley, Torgeir Wethal and the musicians Kai Bredholt, Jan Ferslev and Frans Winther. Created on the occasion of the ISTA session in 1996, the four actors used the disguise of one or more characters to show ironically and wittily the manner in which each of them experienced and reflected upon the difference and the identity between theatre and dance.

The Odin enclave alternates in an ever more obvious way periods of concentration with periods of opening up.

Since 1989, the Odin has organized an intensely eventful 'Festive Week' (*Festuge*) every three years in Holstebro, hosting foreign theatre groups and artists, but above all collaborating with over a hundred local associations and institutions. Theatre, music, dance, figurative art, lectures and debates are interwoven with the daily activities of schools, churches, barracks, old people's homes, the train station, buses, shops, cultural institutions and discriminated spaces. The *Festuge* pervades the whole town, day and night for an entire week, with a grotesque and disturbing spectacularity, from impressive performances for the crowd to 'barbers', from actors' visits to private birthday parties to incursions into administrative offices.

Since the 1980's, another recurrent annual activity, is the *Odin Week*. It provides an opportunity for 30-50 people from different countries to be introduced to the multiple-sided structure and life of the Odin enclave. They train with the actors, get acquainted with their personal working methods, with the management and the organization of the theatre, watch the many performances and working demonstrations and have a daily theoretical/practical meeting with Eugenio Barba.

Repertoire and finances

In 2004, Odin Teatret's repertoire is constituted by: A) the ensemble productions: *Mythos, Inside the Skeleton of the Whale, Ode to Progress, Great Cities under the Moon, Andersen's Dream*; B) scenes and small acts to be used in barbers and itinerant open air performances; C) the Kammerspiele: *Judith, Itsi-Bitsi, The Castle of Holstebro, Doña Musica's Butterflies, Salt*; D) the working demonstrations: *White as Jasmine, Traces in the Snow, The Echo of Silence, The Dead Brother, The Paths of Thought, Whispering Winds in Theatre and Dance*.

Two more working demonstrations have recently been added: *Dialogue between two actors*, with Roberta Carreri and Torgeir Wethal, deals with the interpretation of the last scene from Ibsen's *A Doll's House*; *Text, Action and Relationships*, with Tage Larsen and Julia Varley, shows the process of interpreting a scene from Shakespeare's *Othello*.

The Odin tours have a tendency to turn into prolonged residencies with an ample variety of pedagogical, theatrical and cultural manifestations. The encounter with and the expressions of a *different* culture has replaced the traditional forms of the tour or presence in festivals. Eugenio Barba often speaks of *difference* as a goal, a 'condition to be conquered'.

Odin Teatret's turn-over (2003) is about 13-14 million Danish kroner (Euro 1,800,000). The earnings from the various activities of the Odin enclave oscillate between 35% and 50% with respect to the grants received from the Danish Ministry of Culture and the municipality of Holstebro.

Translation: Judy Barba

CHILDREN OF SILENCE
REFLECTIONS ON FORTY YEARS OF ODIN TEATRET
To the secret people - the friends of the Odin

By Eugenio Barba



I often react as I used to fifty years ago. 'Look at that elderly person', I say to myself observing a man of about forty. And I immediately laugh at myself, aware that he is the same age as my theatre and was a child when I already started thinking that my latest production would be the last.

I also feel like smiling when Odin Teatret performs in a new town and we meet young people who know us from books. They believe we are just a chapter of theatre history, and our abnormal persistence disturbs their way of thinking.

Bones hurt, the sight has weakened and it is a lot more tiring to work twelve hours a day. Yet it is as if an unreasonable force keeps alive my need to do theatre. Several motives make me continue. I can synthesize them in a single sentence: the theatre craft is my only country and Holstebro my home.

And here I am, celebrating the fortieth anniversary of my theatre, rehearsing a production on Hans Christian Andersen and his fairy tales. I am almost seventy years old and people will assume that I am becoming childish.

I too would like to write a fairy tale. It would tell of two brothers, children of Silence, who travel the world, the one as the shadow of the other. They have the semblance of hooligans and their names are Disorder and Error.

Disorder

In recent years, I have been using the word 'Disorder' more and more when speaking of the theatre craft, aware that it creates confusion. For me it has two opposite meanings: the absence of logic and rigour characterising nonsensical and chaotic works; or the logic and rigour which provoke *the experience of bewilderment* in the spectator. I ought to have two different words for this. Instead I will use an orthographic trick - the difference between small and capital letters - to distinguish disorder as a loss of energy, from Disorder as the irruption of an energy that confronts us with the unknown.

What I have always longed for with my performances is to arouse Disorder in the mind and the senses of a particular spectator. I would like to shake up his habits of foreseeing and judging, to set in motion an emotional oscillation and sow amazement.

The spectator about whom I speak is not a stranger, someone to be convinced or conquered. I am speaking first of all about myself. Whoever directs a performance is also its spectator. Disorder (with a capital letter) may be a weapon or a medicine against the disorder that besieges us, both inside and around us.

I know that no method exists to provoke Disorder in the spectator. Nevertheless, I believe that I can come close to it through a particular form of self-discipline. This implies a separation from the correct and reasonable ways to consider the values, justifications and objectives of our profession. It is an attitude that nobody can impose on or grant me.

It has to do with liberation and, as with all liberation, it is a source of pain.

A clearing

The clearing is just a few kilometers away from a town. A handful of men and women are gathered in front of a hut. They belong to the class of the dominated and exploited in an African colony in the middle of the twentieth century.

The gathering is secret and forbidden. It looks like a conspiracy but it is not, since the rifles are fakes like those used in theatre. But it is not theatre. Yet these people disguise themselves and turn into characters. They put aside their daily way of speaking and walking and behave differently. They pretend. Is it a game? They mean it seriously. In common accord they perform a transgressive and violent act. In the centre of the clearing a dog is being cooked in a big pot and its meat, which is taboo for them, is eaten.

The people who have turned into characters are possessed, but not by the gods of their past. Instead of the traditional divinities, their actual masters manifest themselves: the governor of the town, the chief of police and the ladies of the European upper class in a colonial country. For a few hours, the Africans are no longer dominated by the whites who rule them. They embody them and, through possession, appropriate momentarily their life and destiny.

The protagonists of the rite seem insane and out of control. The European who records their images in a film considers them, however, masters and calls them 'mad masters': two incompatible terms striving to define Disorder.

A recent newspaper article makes me watch again the half century old film sequences of those possessed people in an African clearing. For a ruse of the imagination and memory, the figures of other departed masters, dear to me and always near, surface in my mind.

Mad masters

On the night between Wednesday 18th and Thursday 19th February 2004, Jean Rouch died at the age of 86 in a car accident in Niger, 600 kilometers north of Niamey. He was a leading personality in French cinema, one of the fathers of the *Nouvelle Vague*. They called him *le maître du Désordre*, the master of Disorder. Fifty years ago, on the outskirts of Accra, the capital of Ghana, then a British colony, he shot *Les maîtres fous*. This ethnographical film showed directly one of the cases in which chains still weighed painfully on the flesh and the mind, and Disorder and torment blended in an attempt at liberation.

This film was the testimony of another rationality, subterranean and subversive. It overwhelmed Jean Genet, who wrote *Les Nègres*, it made an impression on Peter Brook and his production of *Marat-Sade* by Peter Weiss, and it accompanied Grotowski's reflections on the actor. Anecdotes and legends circulated in European theatre milieus concerning the influence of *Les maîtres fous*. In those years the parallels and distinctions between theatre and ritual were discussed more and more frequently. Some artists were inventing a subtext which today is more than evident: theatre can be a clearing in the heart of a civilized world, a privileged place in which to evoke Disorder.

Let's move for a moment to Moscow, where the streets are white with ice. On one of the first days of January 1889, Anton Cechov wrote a long letter to the rich publisher and literate Aleksej S. Suvorin. Reading it, I feel the same red-hot taste of suffering and conceit that I sense when observing the ceremony in the African

clearing: the scorching agony of liberation. With raw realism Cechov describes in advance the tensions and raptures of the participants in that ceremony as it outlines a man "who, drop by drop, squeezes out the slave in himself."

It is not an ex-enslaved African, it is the great and famous Russian writer, son of a serf. Despite the relative comfort that surrounds him, he recognizes in himself the wounds from invisible chains. Many times he suffered the lashes of his father and teachers who educated him to revere hierarchies, to kiss the hand of *popes*, to bow to other people's ideas and give lavish thanks for every crumb received. He had become a youth who tormented animals, enjoyed lunching with rich relatives, a hypocrite towards God and humankind because he was aware of his own nothingness.

The Cechov who confesses the struggle against his own chains and sense of nothingness is a sharp, sensitive and self-ironic writer of civilised Europe. His words are not unrestrained. But their *composure* is fed by the same Disorder that nourishes the actions of that African ceremony, disturbing and, to our eyes, unrestrained.

At the news of Jean Rouch's death, this master of Disorder, I wonder: do his *mad masters* also say something about me, my history, my imaginary theatrical ancestors? Which are the chains we want to break?

I don't know how to explain it, but something unarticulated, almost shameful, urges me to recognize a few theatre artists from the past as mad and possessed masters.

Silence

When I think about the extremism of their thought, the protagonists of the theatre revolt in the twentieth century, from Stanislavski on, become for me *maîtres fous*.

In a climate of aesthetic, technical and economic renewal, they raised questions which were so absurd that they were met with indifference and derision. Since the incandescent core of these questions was wrapped in well formulated professional theories, these were considered as attacks against the art of the theatre, or 'utopias', which is a harmless way of saying that we do not need to take them seriously. Here are some of these cores:

- to look for *life* in a world of papier-mâché;
- to let the *truth* stream into a world of disguises;
- to reach *sincerity* through pretense;
- to transform the training of the actor (an individual who imitates and represents people different from himself) into a path leading towards the *integrity* of a New Human Being.

Some of the masters of the extreme added insanity to insanity. Unable to understand that those 'utopias' were unachievable, they realized them.

Let's imagine an artist today applying for a grant from the Ministry of Culture to research the Truth through theatre. Or the director of a theatre school writing in its program: here we teach acting with the aim of creating a New Human Being. Or else, a director who demands from his/her actors the skill to dance in order to mirror the harmony of the Celestial Spheres. It would be permissible to consider them as nutcases. Why, then, do theatre historians describe Stanislavski, Copeau and Appia as if their mad questions were noble utopias and original theories?

Today it doesn't cost anything to see in their apparent madness a sensible reaction to the strains of an epoch that was jeopardizing the survival of the theatre. It is easy, today, to recognize perspicacity, coherence and cleverness in the *bewilderment* that the masters of Disorder brought to the theatre of their time. They rejected its century old organization, overturned hierarchies, sabotaged the well tested communicative conventions between the stage and the audience, cut the umbilical cord with literature and surface realism. They brutally stripped the theatre down and reduced it to its essence. They justified themselves with a paradox: they gave life to performances that were unimaginable in their extremism, originality and artistic refinement in order to deny that theatre is *only* art. Each of them, with different words, stressed that the theatre's vocation was to break intimate, professional, ethical, social, religious or cultural chains.

We are used to reading the history of modern theatre upside-down. We don't start from the incandescent cores of the questions and the obsessions of the masters of Disorder, but from the reasonableness or the poetry of their printed words. Their pages have an authoritative and persuasive tone. But for each of them there must have been many nights of solitude and fear, while suspecting that the windmills they fought against were invincible giants.

Today we see them portrayed in picturesque photos: intelligent faces, well fed and ironically placid, like Stanislavski; suggestive begging kings, like Artaud; proud and aware of their own intellectual superiority, like Craig; eternally frowning and pugnacious, like Meyerhold. It is impossible to sense in each of these bright spirits the incapability to forget or to accept their own invisible chains. We are unable to feel that their efficacy derives in part from the strain of tearing themselves away from a condition of impotent silence.

Art which is capable of provoking *the experience of bewilderment*, and thus of changing us, always conceals the zone of silence that has produced it. I think about

this sort of silence that is not a choice, but a condition suffered as an amputation. This silence generates monsters: self-denigration, violence towards oneself and others, gloomy sloth and ineffective anger. At times, however, this silence nourishes Disorder.

The experience of Disorder doesn't concern the categories of aesthetics. It happens when a *different reality* prevails over reality: in the universe of plane geometry a solid body falls. As when unexpectedly, like lightning, death strikes a beloved one; or when, in a split second, our senses ignite and we are aware of being in love. Or when in Norway, as a recent immigrant, I was contemptuously called 'wop' and a door was slammed on me.

When Disorder hits us, in life and in art, we suddenly awaken in a world that we no longer recognize, and don't yet know how to adjust to.

A clearing in the confusion

Artistic directions are always individual paths trying to escape prefabricated mechanisms, rails and recipes. They must discover their own organicity which is our 'need'. These paths breathe and remain alive according to a personal self-discipline.

Self-discipline doesn't correspond to a voluntary adhesion to norms invented by others. I repeat: it consists in separating ourselves from the obvious and reasonable ways to consider the values, aims and motivations of our craft. It also implies the strength of mind to submit ourselves to that inner silence which enchains us and arouses fear, but which we sense may guide us as a mad master in an African clearing.

The self-discipline which is one of the premises for realising Disorder in my mind as a spectator, is born out of a clot of silence. It has such a particular nature that it remains unknown even to myself when I feel the first symptoms. Therefore no method can steer towards Disorder.

There are performances where the actors, the director and the spectators know the story. There are performances where the actors and the director know it but the spectators do not. With the years, I like to let a type of performance grow in which, at the start, neither me nor the actors are able to imagine the story that we are telling. We have to discover not only *how* to tell it, but also *what* we are telling. Only the performance to which we will give life can partially disclose what we wanted to say.

It is a consciously hazardous way to lose and find myself again, making use of two contrasting forces: on the one hand, I trust my long professional experience; on

the other, I try to invalidate this experience by building disjointed and arduous conditions of work. I want to paralyse the certainties of my knowledge, to disarm the mannerisms of my reflexes and *to relive the experience of the first time*, revitalising my skills through a bewilderment in front of a situation that I don't control. Such an enterprise is feasible only with the actors of Odin Teatret whose strong personalities have been tempered through this paradoxical exploration: *we know how to search, but we don't yet know what we are searching for*.

I have to create a new production. The first effort consists in being able to create a state of collective incubation starting from 'black holes'. These may be two or three different texts or else several captivating stories, a few questions which are reciprocally incompatible, or else the positioning side by side of discordant themes. The actors and I let these 'black holes' act on us attracting a flow of ideas, memories, ghosts, associations, biographical or imaginary episodes and historical facts. Through improvisations and a work of conscious composition, we give an anatomy to this inner flow - a nervous system, a dynamic and sonorous temperament in the form of physical and vocal actions. This scenic material will be macerated, blended and distilled during the rehearsals letting, at times, sensorial, melodic, rhythmic, associative and intellectual connections appear which were impossible to foresee: *something we ignored in the beginning*.

It is a process shadowed ceaselessly by uncertainty and apprehension. Days and weeks fly past and we feel as if we are shipwrecked in a sea of disparate proposals, strange potentialities, incongruous scenes and directions: *confusion*. I proceed by leaps, coincidences, incoherent choices, misunderstandings and accidental interferences. I decide without knowing why, and my intuition is often disconnected. Tiredness and obstinacy guide me. With time, I have acquired a certain familiarity with my way of thinking, seizing my thoughts that I interpret in words to myself and my companions. A reflex warns me which roads lead nowhere and which, instead, bring me home. *I pursue presentiments*. I presage the house of winds that we are blindly building.

This way of proceeding is not an example to be followed, especially for inexperienced directors who might be seduced by the charm of serendipity, of fortuitous discoveries and unexpected solutions through erring - making mistakes and going astray - during a laborious period of rehearsals.

When I try to lean on safe rules, I am penalised for my naivety. If I resign myself to the idea of a world deprived of rules, I pay for this naivety with failures that are just as drastic. What is there, then, between rules and absence of rules? Between law and anarchy? If I think in the abstract, the answer is nothing. But practice teaches

me that there *is* something there, combining simultaneously the nature of the rule and that of its negation.

This something is usually called *error* and it is this that helps me out of the confusion. I recognize two types of errors: solid and liquid. The solid error may be measured, shaped or modified, thus losing its quality of inaccuracy, misunderstanding, insufficiency or absurdity. It may be brought back to the rule and turned into order.

The liquid error cannot be seized or appraised. It behaves as a spot of damp behind a wall. It signals something that comes from far away. I notice that a certain scene is 'wrong', but if I am patient and don't make immediate use of my intelligence, I become aware that it should not be corrected, but pursued. Just the fact that it is so *obviously* wrong, makes me suspect that it is not merely foolish, but indicates a lateral way which leads I don't know where.

The most difficult thing to learn is the skill to cling to an error instead of immediately correcting it, and so discover where it carries us.

This acquired tacit knowledge is buried in me, in my nerves, in the muscle of my heart. It cannot be taught or passed on as a method which can be formulated and applied. Each one of us, caught up in the confusion, becoming dazzled and going off track, banging our heads against our own silence and solitude, must jeopardize professional certainty and guess where to open a fissure to our particular Disorder.

The anarchy of fairy tales and the art of error

Disorder does not build anything. At times it is extremely unpleasant, but it helps to break the chains.

I have been taught: love your enemies. In everyday life, this is the enterprise of saints. In artistic life, it is normal practice. How many times, preparing a production, do I plunge into the confusion and realize that I'm on the wrong road. Confusion and disorientation are enemies to be loved.

I have been taught: life is a dream. It is not true. Life is a fairy tale. It is a world of pure anarchy where those who stubbornly try to prevail, struggling along reasonable paths, lose. And those who behave foolishly find a princess in the end.

The world of fairy tales is pure anarchy because it concentrates on the need to break the chains. A fairy tale breaks the fetters that tie the stories to the world such as it is. It pays for this liberty, however, with the risk of arbitrariness. Therefore fairy tales are populated by monsters, shadows endowed with an autonomous life, men and women who are half animal, speaking corpses and objects which think and are alive. It is not the world of myth or imagination. It is one of confusion. It is a world that

children love, but which doesn't love children. There they die in profusion, are abandoned and overpowered. They experience naked reality: anxiety and fear broken by flashes of unreasonable justice.

What does the pure anarchy of fairy tales teach me in my theatre work?

While rehearsing, if confusion takes the upper hand, everything becomes indistinct. The fog prevents me from seeing in any direction. To find my bearings, I force myself to condense this evanescent confusion into solid errors to be corrected and eliminated, reinstating order into the situation.

At the same time, I have to know how to detect the liquid errors on which to slide to places where I had not imagined going. Where I didn't want or believe it possible to go.

If it were true that fairy tales could teach, I would have to admit that above all they prove that error can be a blessing. The foolishness or the forgetfulness of a protagonist, a person mistaken for another, a prolonged sleep, a dead crow that you put in your pocket are often the premises and the conditions for an unexpected happy ending.

Does an art of error exist? Now, after forty years with Odin Teatret, I am inclined to affirm that there are errors which increase confusion and errors which liberate. Of course I believe in inspiration, in the voice of the muse, in the *dáimon*, the *duende* or the guardian angel. But I have more faith in errors which liberate when I have the adroitness to predict them and pursue them. They are signs which detach themselves from the silence. They originate from that part within me that I ignore. I consider them as messages that the mad master has entrusted to me.

Organic material

All this involves the whole body, not only the flesh and bones but muscles, nerves and the complex relationships between organs, blood circulation and synapses. The body resembles thought precisely because it is organism-spirit: body-mind.

Therefore the organic material which makes up theatre has always been a passion of mine, together with the radiations which this material releases. I love to work with this living material in order to weave silent dialogues with anthropophagous spectators - people with the need to devour with their senses. I like to use this material to open up paths which will immediately close behind me, allowing me and my actors to remain in transition.

During my apprenticeship, I have occasionally lived through the unexpected clash with a theatrical reality that sowed bewilderment within me. *The Mother* by

Brecht/Gorki with the Berliner Ensemble, a long *kathakali* night in Kerala and *The Constant Prince* by Grotowski remain indelibly printed on my brain and marrow.

Similarly, in an unexpected and involuntary way I have experienced and still experience Disorder while working with my actors. From the very beginning, certain designs of their physical or vocal actions, continuously repeated and refined, leap into another reality of being.

I have personally witnessed it: a denser, brighter and more incandescent body than the bodies we possess emerges in the theatrical space from an *elsewhere* which I cannot place. This body-in-life irrupts, regardless of good or bad taste, by a combination of chance and craft or because of an unforeseen event in a highly structured calculation.

Today it is clear to me: theatre has represented a precious tool to make *incursions* into zones of the world that seemed out of my reach. Incursions into the unknown region that characterise the vertical or spiritual reality of the human being. And incursions into the horizontal space of human relationships, of social circles, of power and politics in the viscous daily reality of this world which I inhabit and to which I refuse to belong.

Still today I am captivated by the fact that theatre furnishes tools, ways and alibis for incursions into the double geography: the one which surrounds me and that which I surround. On the one hand, the external world with its rules, vastness, incomprehensible and seductive regions, evil and chaos; on the other, the inner world with its continents and oceans, its folds and fertile mysteries.

What has the training of my actors been if not a bridge between these two extremes: the incursion into the machine of the body, and an opening for the irruption of an energy that shatters the limits of the body?

Theatre can be the craft of incursion, a floating island of dissidence, a clearing in the heart of the civilized world. On rare and privileged occasions, theatre is turbulent Disorder that rocks my familiar ways of living the space and time around me and, through bewilderment, compels me to discover another part of myself.

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Leszek Kolankiewicz is a theatre anthropologist. He teaches Theatre and Performance Studies at the Institute of Polish Culture at Warsaw University and at the Theatre Academy in Warsaw. From 1973 to 1982 he collaborated with Jerzy Grotowski and the Theatre Laboratory in Wrocław as text editor and anthropological advisor. Main publications: *On the Road to Active Culture: The Activities of Grotowski's Theatre Laboratory Institute in the Years 1970-1977*, Wrocław 1978; *Święty Artaud* (Saint Artaud) Warsaw 1988; *Samba z bogami. Opowieść antropologiczna* (Dancing Samba with Gods: An Anthropological Tale) Warsaw 1995; *Dziady. Teatr Święta zmarłych* (The Forefather's Eve: The Dead Feast's Theatre) Gdansk 2000; *Wielki mały wóz* (The Big Little Vehicle) Gdansk 2002.

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Gennadi N. Bogdanov (1949) studied acting at the State Institute of Theatrical Arts (GITIS) in Moscow and biomechanics with N.Kustov, one of Meyerhold's actors. In the period 1972-1992 he was an actor at the Satire Theatre in Moscow. Since 1972 choreographer and director of stage movement and combat. 1986-1999 teacher of biomechanics at RATI (GITIS), a course which he introduced and which is now a regular part of the 3-year acting curriculum. Has participated in over 30 films. Since 1993 he is the director of the International School of Biomechanics which offers annually 2-week intensive courses to international students and professional artists. Teaches regularly abroad.

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Teatr Piesn Kozła. Grzegorz Bral and Anna Zubrzycki founded the **Piesn Kozła Theatre** in 1997. The company spent its first four years in residence at the Jerzy Grotowski Centre for Theatre culture Research, in Wrocław, Poland. Since 2002 the company has its own studio space – the refectory of a 14th century monastery in the heart of Wrocław. The Piesn Kozła Theatre is an international ensemble company with members from the UK, Sweden, Norway and France as well as Poland and draws young performers from all over the world to participate in its extensive artistic and pedagogical program. It organizes workshops regularly over the year, teaching its own unique approach to the actor's craft. Its pedagogical work is the subject of an MA and postgraduate diploma in acting for the Manchester Metropolitan University School of Theatre which the company runs in its studio in Wrocław. **Performances:** *Song of the Goat – a dithyramb* (1997); *Chronicles – a lamentation* (2001); *Lacrimosa* (2004).
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Le Théâtre du Mouvement was created in 1975 by Claire Heggen and Yves Marc who direct it. They were trained in different movement techniques, principally in Etienne Decroux's corporal mime, but also in Moshe Feldenkrais' and Gerda Alexander's techniques. Their research involves the interaction of gestures, voice, words and objects. In addition to many courses abroad, they teach regularly at the Universities of Paris III and VIII, at the Festival du Mime de Périgueux and, in the summer, at the Centre de Formation de Trielle. They are active in 'Tranversales', a European network concentrating on stage movement. Le Théâtre du Mouvement has created 30 productions and toured in 57 countries.
tmouvement@wanadoo.fr

Odin Teatret was created in Oslo, Norway, in 1964 and moved to Holstebro in 1966 changing its name into Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium. Its activities include: Odin's own productions presented on site and on tour in Denmark and abroad; 'barter' with various milieus in Holstebro and elsewhere; the organization of encounters for theatre groups; hosting other theatre groups and ensembles; seminars in Denmark and in the countries where the Odin brings its productions; the annual Odin Week; the publication of magazines and books; the production of didactic films and videos; sessions of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA); the collaboration with the CTLS, Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies of the University of Århus; the *Festuge*, (Festive Week) in Holstebro; the triennial festival *Transit*

devoted to women in theatre; children's performances, exhibitions, concerts, round tables, cultural initiatives, etc. in Holstebro and the surrounding region.

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Palle Granhøj, professional dancer since 1986, has worked with many internationally acknowledged choreographers. In 1990 he had his debut as a choreographer with *Torso* and at the same time founded *Granhøj Dans* in Aarhus, Denmark. Besides choreographing regularly in collaboration with set designer Per Victor, he created the choreography *Mette* for the Royal Danish Ballet (1995) and *KIP* for Nomadi Production in Finland (2000). Awards: Main Award in Nordic Choreographers Competition of Contemporary Dance (1992); Award for the performance *Obstruction Ultimatique* from Danish Arts Foundation (1997); Edith Aller's Memorial Grant (2000); Reumert Prize, The National Prize of Stage Art (2001); Albert Gaubier's scholarship (2002). Of fundamental importance is the obstruction technique, developed by Palle Granhøj. The obstruction technique is used to attain a greater sense of presence and credibility in the dancer's movements and expression. It results in a new dance form in which the original expression and movements are limited by someone or something outside or inside the dancers. Granhøj Dans tours regularly abroad.

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On the occasion of Odin Teatret's 40th birthday

CENTRE FOR THEATRE LABORATORY STUDIES (CTLS)
AARHUS UNIVERSITY

and

NORDISK TEATERLABORATORIUM/ODIN TEATRET,
HOLSTEBRO
in collaboration with
GRAN TEATER FOR DANS and KULTURHUS AARHUS

SYMPOSIUM:

Why a Theatre Laboratory? Risks and anomalies in Europe 1898-1999

Monday 4.10 Moderator: Jean Marie Pradier

- 9.30-11.00 Janne Risum: *Introduction*, Mirella Schino: *Theatre Laboratory as Blasphemy*, Exe Christoffersen: *In Search of the Essence*.
- 11.00-11.30 Break
- 11.30-13.30 Franco Ruffini: *Stanislavski - Why a Theatre Laboratory?*
- 13.30-14.30 Lunch
- 14.30-16.30 Béatrice Picon-Vallin: *Meyerhold - Why a Theatre Laboratory?*
- 16.30-17.00 Break
- 17.00-18.30 Patrice Pavis: *Copeau - Why a Theatre Laboratory?*
- 19.00-20.00 Dinner
- 20.00 *The Embodied Tradition - Meyerhold*: demonstration by Gennadi Bogdanov and general discussion.

Tuesday 5.10 Moderator: Clelia Falletti

- 9.30-11.30 Marco de Marinis: *Decroux - Why a Theatre Laboratory?*
- 11.00-11.30 Break
- 11.30-13.30 Zbigniew Osinski and Leszek Kolankiewicz: *Grotowski and Flaszen - Why a Theatre Laboratory?*
- 13.30-14.30 Lunch

- 14.30-16.30 Georges Banu: *Brook - Why a Theatre Laboratory?*
 16.30-17.00 Break
 17.00-19.00 Béatrice Picon-Vallin and Georges Banu: *Le Théâtre du Soleil - Why a Theatre Laboratory?*
 19.00-20.00 Dinner
 20.00 *The Embodied Tradition - Decroux*: demonstration by Théâtre du Mouvement and general discussion.

Wednesday 6.10 Moderator: Monique Borie

- 9.30-11.30 Ferdinando Taviani: *Odin Teatret - Why a Theatre Laboratory?*
 11.30-12.00 Break
 12.00-13.00 Raquel Carrió: *Irradiations in Latin America*.
 13.00-14.00 Lunch
 14.00-15.30 Nicola Savarese: *Irradiations in Asia*.
 15.30-16.00 Break
 16.00-17.30 Richard Schechner: *Irradiations in the USA. Why a Theatre Laboratory in the Third Millennium?*
 17.30-18.30 Eugenio Barba: *Final Reflections*.
 18.30-20.00 Dinner
 20.00 *The Embodied Tradition - Odin Teatret*: demonstration by Iben Nagel Rasmussen and general discussion.

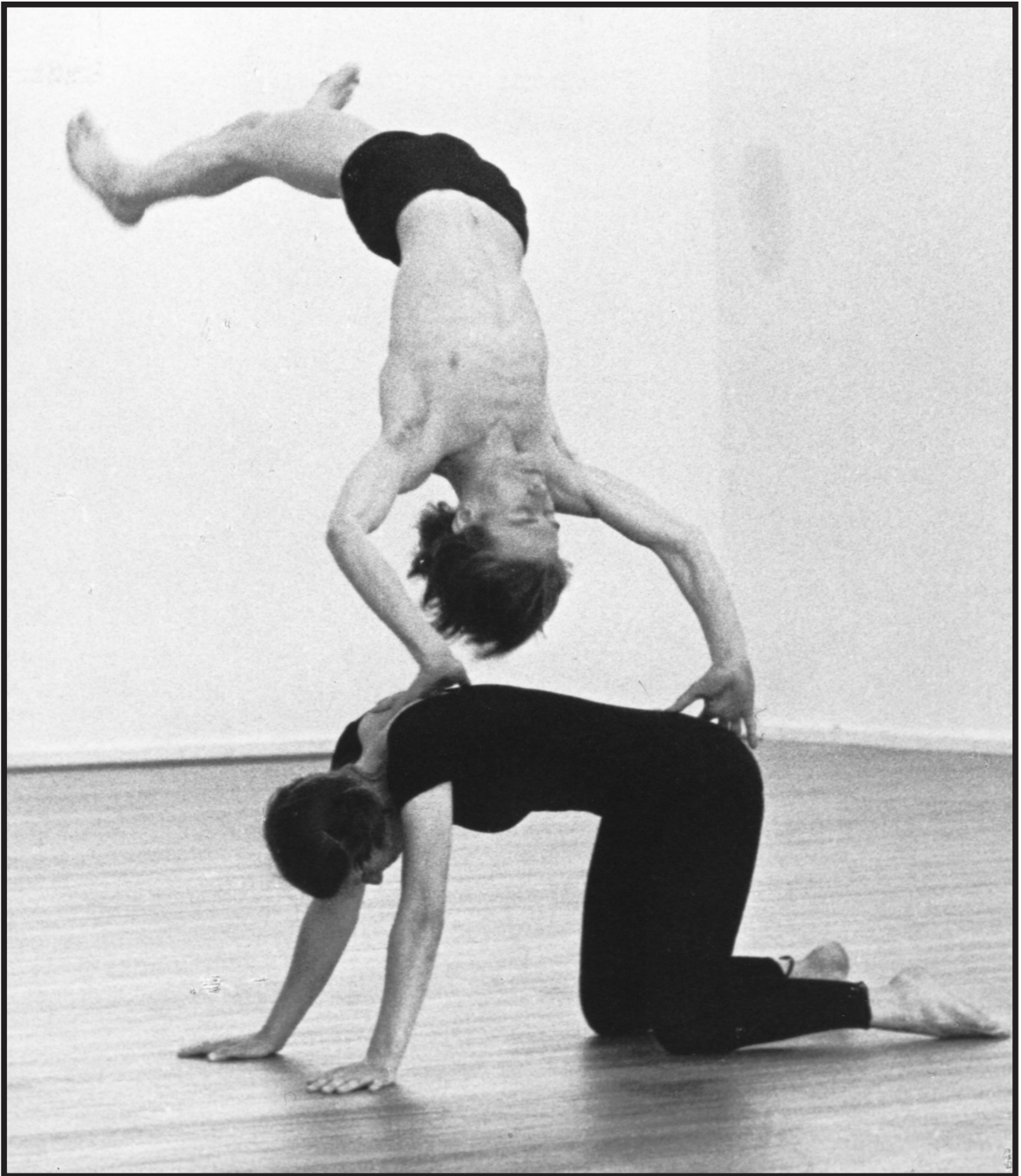
SYMPOSIUM: "The Theatre That Dances"

Thursday 7.10

- 8.30-10.00 *Practical session* with Augusto Omolú, (Afro-Brazilian Orixá dance).
 10.30-11.00 Introduction by Eugenio Barba.
 11.00-13.00 *Demonstration*: Granhøj Dans.
 15.00-16.30 Discussion time with Exe Christoffersen.
 17.00 Théâtre du Mouvement: *Le Chemin se fait en Marchant* (performance).
 20.30 Odin Teatret: *Ode to Progress* (performance).

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| Friday 8.10 | |
| 8.30-10.00 | <i>Practical session</i> with Augusto Omolú, (Afro-Brazilian Orixá dance). |
| 10.30-13.00 | <i>Whispering Winds</i> , demonstration by Odin Teatret commented by Eugenio Barba. |
| 15.00-17.00 | <i>Demonstration: Théâtre du Mouvement.</i> |
| 17.30 | Augusto Omolú: <i>Orô de Otelo</i> (performance). |
| 20.30 | Granhøj Dans: <i>8IQ</i> (performance). |
| Saturday 9.10 | |
| 8.30-10.00 | <i>Practical session</i> with Augusto Omolú, (Afro-Brazilian Orixá dance). |
| 10.30-13.00 | <i>Demonstration: Augusto Omolú and Julia Varley</i> commented by Eugenio Barba. |
| 15.00-16.30 | Discussion time with Exe Christoffersen. |
| 17.00 | Odin Teatret: <i>Judith</i> (performance). |
| 20.30 | Teatr Piesn Kozła: <i>Lacrimosa</i> (Work in progress). |
| Sunday 10.10 | |
| 8.30-10.00 | <i>Practical session</i> with Augusto Omolú, (Afro-Brazilian Orixá dance). |
| 10.30-11.00 | Discussion with Eugenio Barba and Exe Christoffersen. |
| 11.00-13.00 | <i>Demonstration: Teatr Piesn Kozła.</i> |
| 15.00-16.00 | Odin Teatret: <i>Doña Musica's Butterflies</i> (performance). |
| 17.00-18.30 | Final reflections. |
| 19.00 | Teatr Piesn Kozła: <i>Chronicles - A Lamentation</i> (performance). |

This event is part of the project
EUROPEAN THEATRE LABORATORIES AS CULTURAL INNOVATORS
organised by Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium/Odin Teatret (Denmark), Le Théâtre du Soleil (France), Teatro Atalaya (Spain), Teatro Tascabile di Bergamo (Italy) and The Center for Studies of Jerzy Grotowski (Poland) with the support of the
CULTURE 2000 PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN UNION



Why a Theatre Laboratory?