VII ISTA
in Brecon and Cardiff, United Kingdom, 4 - 11 April 1992

Working on Performances East and West / Sub-Score

Organisers
Richard Gough and Judie Christie, Centre for Performance Research, Cardiff, Wales.

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Foundation, The Royal Danish Embassy, The Development Board for Rural Wales, Routledge UK and The
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PRESENTATION

Working on Performance East and West Sub-Score

The session will focus on the work of the director and, through practical work with ISTA’s performing staff,
will explore ISTA’s discoveries on pre-expressivity and extra- daily (performance) technique and
behaviour, comparing different acting techniques, both personal and traditional, and analysing common
principles underlying the different styles.

ARTISTIC STAFF

BALI
Desak Made Suarti Laksmi, dancer, musician
I Gusti Ayu Srinatih, dancer, musician
I Ketut Partha, musician
I Ketut Suteja, dancer, musician

INDIA
Sanjukta Panigrahi, dancer, Odissi
Raghunath Panigrahi, singer, musician
Hemant Kumar Das, musician
Annada Prasanna Pattnaik, musician
Gangadar Pradhan, musician

JAPAN
Kanichi Hanayagi, dancer, Nihon Buyo

ODIN TEATRET
Kai Bredholt, actor, musician
Jan Ferslev, actor, musician
Tina Nielsen, actor
Iben Nagel Rasmussen, actor
Isabel Ubeda, actor
Julia Varley, actor
Torgeir Wethal, actor

SCIENTIFIC STAFF

Fabrizio Cruciani, Italy
Patrice Pavis, France
Jean-Marie Pradier, France
Franco Ruffini, Italy
Nicola Savarese, Italy
Ferdinando Taviani, Italy
Susanne Vill, Germany

SPECIAL GUEST

Mark Oshima, Japan
REPORT

During the ISTA session a two-day symposium (10-11 April) on “Fictive Bodies, Dilated Minds, Hidden Dances”, led by Eugenio Barba, was held open to the public. It included work demonstrations by Sanjukta Panigrahi and Julia Varley. Speakers: Fabrizio Cruciani (Italy), Patrice Pavis (France), Franco Ruffini (Italy), Nicola Savarese (Italy), Ferdinando Taviani (Italy), Julia Varley (Great Britain/Odin Teatret).

ISTA presented 7 public performances by Balinese, Indian, Japanese ensembles and Odin Teatret, organised 1 barter, and presented 1 Theatrum Mundi.

The following is an excerpt from the “Report on the 7th Public Session of ISTA” by Ric Allsopp, Centre for Performance Research:

“The first part of the ISTA project took the form of a practical workshop for 35 UK and international theatre directors held in Brecon in mid-Wales. Starting with the theme of “The refusnik - the individual who does not follow the norms, opinions or doctrines of authority” - Eugenio Barba led ten working sessions together with members of the ISTA research team.

The work focused on concepts of “pre-expressivity” and the idea and practical implications of “subscore” - broadly defined as a network of images, associations and structures that informs the performer’s patterns of behaviour and interaction in performance conditions.

The directors’ workshop in Brecon included public performances each evening by the visiting artists as well as a “barter”, or exchange of performances, with local groups.

The weekend in Cardiff presented to an assembly of 160 an “introductory” conference on the work of ISTA with papers and demonstrations from members of the ISTA research team on dramaturgy and codes of the performer, and research in theatre histories undertaken in the light of Theatre Anthropology.”

The following is from the paper prepared as background for the conference session: Dramaturgy of the Performance-Remembering Histories by Fabrizio Cruciani, University of Bologna, Franco Ruffini, University of Bologna, Nicola Savarese, University of Lecce and Ferdinando Taviani, University of Aquila: “But what does a “present body” mean? Gradually, we came to understand that the quality “present” ought not to be related to space (the body present=the body which is there, in a given point in space) as much as to time: the body present=the body which is totally involved in the present, at a precise moment in time. Which implies, clearly, but as a consequence, a precise point in space.

In sum: energy=the quality of the “body present”=the body involved in the here and now.

This is to say: the body present=the credible body; presence=credibility. Credibility, not legibility.
For example: the body of a man involved in defusing a bomb who risks death at the slightest wrong movement, is credible even if we do not know he is defusing a bomb. Stanislavski advised actors to watch pairs of lovers in the street from a window. Even if we do not understand or hear their speech, we believe their every movement. Their bodies have the quality of presence: they are in the here and now of the present.

Taviani has carried out research into the acting of Henry Irving, concentrating on his style as it appears between the received wisdom of the nineteenth century acting manuals and Craig’s biography of him.

On the basis of the specific results of this analysis, the comparison - proposed by Craig himself - between Irving and the “Über-Marionette” is emerging as far more than merely a suggestive metaphor, or generic praise. The “Über-Marionette” is emerging as an image which indicates the actor in flesh and blood (who rarely exists, but is no less desirable for that) who is capable of exercising absolute control over the slightest of his physical functions.

The self-control of which Craig speaks and the consciousness Artaud insistently refers to can be seen, therefore, as different ways to indicate the same ideal actor, or better, the same concrete project - even if difficult to bring into being: an actor able to refrain from betraying his score or script, but, no less important, to execute it every time as if it were the first time; an actor who is able to stay within the script, but to move withing the script.

This is a first step which leads forward to a perspective which replaces the historiographical notions of ‘European Theatre’ and ‘Asian Theatre’ with the notion of a ‘Eurasian Theatre’".