

Words for Roberta

There had to be flowers in this performance – lots of flowers! Roberta Carreri chose these flowers as the main symbol celebrating Torgeir Wethal. Both roses and sunflowers are honouring Torgeir's unlimited curiosity and anarchistic talent as a skilled actor and a philosophic human being.

Norwegian Torgeir joined theatre director Eugenio Barba and was a founding member of Odin Teatret in Oslo in 1964. Italian Roberta joined Odin Teatret in 1974. These two gifted artists ended up as the strongest couple, on stage and in real life - until 2010 when Torgeir died from cancer.

Roberta has taken the tough and tearful journey through mourning and sadness. As a disciplined Odin actress, she has been pursuing her wish of transforming her private grief into an existential piece of art. Simultaneously, she has been touring as an actress with Odin Teatret, performing, giving workshops, and coaching young artists worldwide.

As a dramaturg, I have had the special privilege of following her on small parts of her exhausting and unpredictable road leading towards this condensed performance. I have tried to keep up with her search of novels and poems about grief and death. I have listened to her exquisite choice of music - and I have seen it all being framed by the powerful, unpublished words by Torgeir himself.

I have seen her juggle with exquisite phrases of love and loss, elegantly jumping from one language to the other. I have heard her sing out her passion and I have watched her create her own figures of sorrow and seduction. I have felt her urge to reach an aesthetic expression on stage that would be just as strong and uncompromising as the artistic ideals of Torgeir - and just as grotesque and joyful.

Through the string curtain Roberta enters the world of memories. She literally creates a conversation with the iconic photos and videos of Torgeir, and he smiles back on the subtle and everchanging video design by Stefano di Buduo. Playful as a lover's game and surrounded by flowers, just like Roberta wanted Torgeir to be remembered.

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