

A woman in a flowing, multi-layered orange and red dress is captured in a dynamic dance pose on a stage. Her arms are raised, and her legs are in a wide, expressive stance. In the foreground, a large, vibrant bouquet of orange flowers is visible. The background consists of dark, vertical curtains. The overall lighting is warm and dramatic, emphasizing the colors of the dress and flowers.

Flowers For Torgeir

Roberta Carreri | Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium



Flowers for Torgeir

By and with Roberta Carreri

Stage, Video and Light Design | Stefano di Buduo

A Roberta Carreri & Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium Co-Production
(2020)

Text | W.H. Auden, Pablo Neruda, Drummond de Andrade,
Roberta Carreri – and Torgeir Wethal

Music | Olafur Arnald, Amalia Rodriguez, Adolfo Ernesto
Echeverria Comas, Erik Truffaz, Joseph P. Webster, Wojtek
Mazolewski and Alice Carreri Pardeilhan

Costumes and props | Roberta Carreri & Karoline Banke

Dramaturgy | Anne Middelboe Christensen

Photos | Stefano di Buduo

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Dragone

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Denmark

Can grief become a light?

Can grief become a light that illuminates one's path in life?

In 2010 I lost my partner of many years, in work and in life.

The loss of a dear person has two dimensions: grief and gratitude.

The joy that has filled my life over so many years in his company, shines through the grief and makes it transparent. There is no cure for grief. One must learn to live with it, like with a chronic illness. I am not the same I was before Torgeir's death, never will be. But I am still able to sing and smile, feeling the presence of his absence following my steps.

It is said that you die twice, the second is when you are forgotten.

I don't want Torgeir to be forgotten.

Torgeir Wethal was born in Oslo, Norway in 1947 and discovered the world of theatre when he was eight years old. He was only eleven when he began to earn money performing on a traditional stage. At seventeen he met Eugenio Barba and became a founding member of Odin Teatret. At nineteen, Torgeir moved from Norway to Denmark with Barba and the ensemble, settling down in the small town of Holstebro. Here he lived and worked, alternating local activities and international tours, until the day he died on June 27, 2010. He was 63 years old. Torgeir took part in the rehearsal of the performance *The Chronic Life*, up till one month before he passed away. His scenic presence was unique. And I miss it since he died. That is why I made this homage to him. Flowers to a great actor. Flowers to a great person. Flowers to Torgeir.

Love Sonet XCIV

by Pablo Neruda

If I die, survive me with such a pure force
you make the pallor and the coldness rage,
flash your indelible eyes from south to south,
from sun to sun, till your mouth sings like a guitar.

I don't want your laugh or your footsteps to waver,
I don't want my legacy of happiness to die.
Don't call to my breast. I'm not there.
Live in my absence as in a house.

Absence is such a large house
that you'll walk through the walls,
hang pictures in sheer air.

Absence is such a transparent house
that even being dead I will see you there,
and if you suffer, Love, I'll die a second time.

Translation | Stephen Tapscott

Fragments of

Residue

by Drummond de Andrade

Of everything a little still remains.
Of my fear. Of your disgust.
Of the stammered shouts. Of the rose
a little still remains.

A bit of light remains
captured in the hat.
In the eyes of the seducer
some tenderness remains
(so little).

Little remains of this dust
covering your white shoes.
Some bits of cloth remain,
a few torn veils,
few, so few, so very few.

But of all things a little still remains.
Of the bombarded bridge,
of the two leaves of grass,
of the - empty -
package of cigarettes,
a little still remains.
For of everything a little still remains,
a little of your chin remains
stamped in your son's chin

Of your rough silence
a little bit remains, a bit,
on the irritated walls
in the mute, ascending leaves.

A bit of everything is left
in the porcelain saucer,
broken dragon, candid flower,
of wrinkles on your brow,
portrait

Some bits remain floating
in the delta of the rivers
and the fish do not avoid them.
A little: not to be found in books.

Of all things a little is still left.
And of everything only a little remains.

Ah, open the bottles of perfume
and suffocate
the insufferable stench of memory.

But of everything, oh terrible, a bit remains,
and beneath the rhythmic waves,
and beneath the clouds and winds
and beneath the bridges and beneath the tunnels
and beneath the flames and beneath sarcasm
and beneath the mucus and beneath the vomit
and beneath the sobs, the prison, the forgotten
and beneath the performances and beneath the scarlet death
and beneath the libraries, the hospices, the triumphant churches
and beneath yourself and beneath your already rigid feet
and beneath the hinges of the family and of the class,
a little of everything still remains.

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 tesque 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.

Anne Middelboe Christensen, M.A.
Dramaturg and Theatre Critic

