



*Odin Teatret, training, 1967, Photo: Roald Pay*

## The Beginning.

*By Iben Nagel Rasmussen*

They were enthusiastic, the two candidates who, together with me, sought to be admitted as students at Odin Theatre in 1966.

A few months before, they had attended a seminar in Holstebro with *Scandinavian Theatre People*.

Jerzy Grotowski was the new big name. Eugenio Barba's master from Poland. The experience had been overwhelming, so now the two girls wanted to apply to Odin Teatret, which apparently (or so they had heard) was following the same principles.

To be accepted as a student, we had to go through a trial period of one month. The training began at seven o'clock in the morning and ended in the evening, with a break in the middle of the day. After almost two weeks, one of the girls came to me and said, "My

understanding was, that through this workout we would achieve some form of catharsis - but I feel nothing. No revelation, no insight, nothing!”

I do not remember what I answered, but what I thought was: "The performance I saw, *Ornitofilene* - the first performance of Odin Teatret, is obviously not the result of a few weeks of training. It must have taken a long time to achieve the precision and terrifying depths of the characters that I was witnessing. I am going to lay down the path of my life with a perspective that extends many years into the future.”

That minor event stayed with me as a guiding principle: the learning process takes time. Four years later, I began to teach. First, new students at Odin Teatret and later on, seminars during our tours with the theatre's performances.

It was during the tours and the seminars that followed, that my doubts were confirmed. The workshops lasted less than a week, and I found it frustrating to start over with participants who had little or no prior experience. I thought up a new course of action. I decided to work with the same people over a number of years. First, a small group *Hugin*, with only three participants. Then *Farfa*, with eight.

I could have never imagined, that now, 50 years after I joined Odin Teatret myself, I would be surrounded by a group of apprentices that will soon celebrate its own 30th. anniversary.

But that is exactly what *The Bridge of Winds* is: actors, singers, dancers, directors, a scenographer and a photographer from 12 different countries, the diverse group that has been meeting once a year since 1989, to further develop a work that goes far beyond the craft, but could not have existed without it.

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