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editorial

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On the occasion of the release of the book *August Strindberg* (jointly published by the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona and editorial Comanegra¹), on 9 October 2019 the journal *Estudis Escènics* (in collaboration with the Faculty of Philology and Communication of the University of Barcelona) held a day of debate on the Swedish playwright, his work and influence (“*I Am Contemporary! Strindberg and Today’s Theatre*”). No pretext was needed. For more than a century, Strindberg’s work has been able to find the right ways to confront his contemporaries, profoundly and poignantly, with both the social and individual conflicts of their time. So it is no surprise that even today his writing inspires playwrights and theatre directors in their determined attempts to go beyond the conventions and aesthetic and ideological boundaries that mark the present. After all, this is always about the same thing: achieving a drama that is authentically *ahead of its time* (contemporary). And it seems clear that Strindberg can serve as a good guide to achieving this goal.

For the “Dossier” associated with the debate, we have selected a collection of the most interesting contributions from all the activities presented. First of all, the presentation by one of the greatest scholars of the work of August Strindberg, Jean-Pierre Sarrazac, who not many years ago published his invaluable study *Strindberg, l’Impersonnel*. Sarrazac describes, with a profusion of documents and data, his journey through Strindberg, from the pedagogical drive of the seventies and his various theatre works (as a director and playwright) to his well-known theoretical studies on the subject.

Teresa Rosell, professor of Literary Theory and Comparative Literature at the University of Barcelona, studies how the work of August Strindberg shakes up the form and foundation of drama (categories such as situation, action, conflict or psychological depth of the characters). Specifically, she focuses on *The Ghost Sonata*, which shows a clear loss of referentiality and where the trend towards subjectivism begins (another perspective on reality

1. On the link <<https://sites.google.com/institutdelteatre.cat/jornada2019>> you can consult the programme, videos of the presentations, and complementary material from the Day of Debate.

that causes strangeness and generates suspicion regarding the make-up of modern identity).

Bringing together cinema and theatre, Imma Merino, specialist in history of cinema at the University of Girona, analyses Strindberg's influence on the films of Ingmar Bergman. The filmmaker, who also directed numerous plays by the Swedish playwright, drew on Strindberg's work to construct his film dramas as an exploration of human pain, of the discomfort of love and sexual relations, of the dead turned into ghosts that haunt the living, of the uncertain boundaries between reality and dream, among other issues.

Finally, two more contributions. The first from probably the greatest translator of Strindberg's work into Catalan, Carolina Moreno, who explores one of the playwright's most renowned plays, *The Stronger*, with the desire to delve into the "unknown terrain" of the Swedish playwright's "free" artistic creation. And, finally (in the "Documents Dossier" section), the reflection by the Franco-Norwegian professor, playwright and director Jonathan Châtel, based on the experience of presenting his acclaimed version of *The Road to Damascus* a few years ago at the Avignon Festival (*Andreas*), from the structuring stages of the adaptation to the rewriting of the original work.

Moreover, the "Theory" section of our journal includes articles on various subjects (some of which emerged from the *2nd Independent Theatre Research Conference*, MUTIS, held in the spring of 2019 at the IT). From radical performative experiences in some theatres in Barcelona in recent years (with names such as Sònia Gómez, David Espinosa, Roger Bernat, Lidia González Zoilo, Àlex Serrano and Ferran Dordal) to the history of theatrical initiatives of great interest (some from the past, such as Pequeño Teatro Dido, responsible for introducing the "theatre of the absurd" into Spain, and some more recent ones, such as the Vladimir Tzekov Stage Action Laboratory based in Granada) and the little-known history of the School of Dramatic Art, which was linked to the colony of artists in the city of Darmstadt, led by Joseph Maria Olbrich and Hermann Bahr, who around 1900 were inspired by the Stanislavski system.

As ever, we do hope you find it interesting. We invite you to review and read the back issues of our journal and especially the last three (the first in our new digital era).

Thank you!

