



# THE ODIN TEATRET ARCHIVES

*The Odin Teatret Archives* presents collections from the archives of one of the foremost reference points in global theatre.

Letters, notes, work diaries, articles and a wealth of photographs all chart the daily activity that underpins the life of Odin Teatret, telling the adventurous, complex stories which have produced the pioneering work that defines Odin's laboratory approach to theatre.

Odin Teatret have been at the forefront of theatrical innovation for over fifty years, devising new strategies for actor training, knowledge sharing, performance making, theatrical alliances and ways of creating and encountering audiences. Their extraordinary work has pushed boundaries between Western and Eastern theatre; between process and performance; and between different theatre networks across the world.

In this unique volume, Mirella Schino brings together a never before seen collection of source materials which reveal the social, political and artistic questions facing not just one ground-breaking company, but everyone who tries to make a life in the theatre.

**Mirella Schino** is professor of Performance Disciplines at the University of Roma Tre. From 2008 until 2015 she worked at the creation of the Odin Teatret Archive.



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# THE ODIN TEATRET ARCHIVES

*Mirella Schino*

*Translated by Gabriella Sacco*

*Foreword by Eugenio Barba*

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# 1

## THE COUNTRY OF SLEEP AND PASSION

*by Eugenio Barba*

One must not forget. Memory is important. It is instructive. It avoids repeating the vicissitudes of the past. It stimulates us to follow their example. It makes us perspicacious and sharpens our ability to choose. Knowing the past inspires solutions for the present. Memory is knowledge. Knowledge is power.

These commonplaces are not harmful.

For years, I myself have spent hours, days, weeks and months in a library, bent over the same books. I looked with ironic curiosity at the researchers who were admitted to the *sanctum sanctorum*: the archive that guarded microfilms and even manuscripts, annotations and original letters by Henrik Ibsen, Nordhal Grieg and Sigurd Obstfelder. I wondered about the fascination for all those papers, what sort of revelations those yellowing pages promised, what novelties they might suggest.

The library of the University of Oslo was like the temple of an ancient divinity, and the stout columns of its façade confirmed its solemnity. In reality it was the dormitory for innumerable Snow Whites dozing in glass coffins while waiting for the caress of a look or the light touch of a hand which might briefly bring them back to life.

The library was a country of sleep and silence. Its inhabitants whispered in a rarefied landscape of people hugging a book, a magazine or an illustration. It was the country of a passion that blinded. I too became blind when I chained my eyes to sentences and words that inexplicably aroused feelings, desires and daydreams.

Nietzsche warns against those people who daydream and want to realise their dreams. This may apply in many fields, but not in that of the actors. Daydreaming is one of the fundamental techniques of improvisation. It enables them mentally and, through their own physical and vocal presence, to sail on a river whose final course they ignore. In theatre, daydreaming is the premise for unpredictability, for surprising and being surprised. Above all, it is the compass of serendipity, the technique to find that for which we are not searching.

I have lived in the regions of the theatre for almost sixty years without worrying about leaving traces, although I was aware that I did so. I was always straining to find a way which would enable me and my actors to find the pass through the mountains before us.

But every life is a deluge of tracks, remains and leftovers. At the Odin Teatret, because of a biographical reflex of mine, nothing was discarded. I belong to the generation which World War II taught

to keep even that which seems superfluous and useless. Everything was stored: costumes and minutes of meetings, budgets, programmes of performances which were never realized, posters, invitations, film clips, photos, visiting cards, thousands of letters, hundreds of failed projects. Like a mediaeval castle or the belly of a biblical whale, our offices, storerooms, corridors, cellars and attics were furnished with voluminous cupboards overflowing with remnants of our activities.

We fill our house with furniture, knick-knacks, books and pictures whose affective value is incalculable. They are the white pebbles which guide us through our past life. We die, and our heirs call a rag-and-bone man to take everything away and sell what he can.

To theatres befalls another destiny. An avatar is offered to the spoils of their past in the form of a consecrated sleep. Their remains become a cultural patrimony and they find repose in state archives and benevolent foundations. What were once young girls in the bloom of their youth, end in glass coffins as a part of inventories, series and fonds, embalmed and digitalized, waiting for a prince charming to bring them momentarily back into the light.

The past has a language which consists of emblematic signs alluding to silence and introducing us to *another* space. A science exists to evoke what happened in a turbulence and simultaneity of calculated decisions, irrational impulses, emotional reactions, accidental coincidences, contradictions. *It is not a question of recounting, but of CREATING through recounting.* Only a few dominate this science which resuscitates the past as a path of initiation for the reader, making him or her daydream. The great theatre historians are poets, mermaids whose songs are irresistible. Reading their books which have germinated in the archives makes us blind and clairvoyant. Angelo Maria Ripellino is the supreme example. To organize an archive means to give it life in order to inspire the mermaids to sing.

Also, the past of the Odin Teatret has slipped into the country of sleep. But fate has been benign. A team of young researchers from all over the world has for many years and with endless patience systematized the stuff of its vanished life in coffins of glass. But they have also done their utmost to spread signs and allusions – secret messages for that poet-historian who *will create* by recounting “the weapons, virtues and loves” which nourished our theatre’s struggle against the spirit of the time.

The gratitude of all of us at the Odin Teatret goes to each of these. For years your chatter and seriousness, your commitment and appetite for life, have animated the spaces of light and those of darkness in “Samarcanda”, the name we gave to our archives. You have danced with ardour and delicacy on the glass coffins in order to give eternal youth to our own dance when crossing the mountains. To you, Mirella Schino, who led and inspired them, a thanks that will follow you to the end of our days for creating Samarcanda and transforming, like a sorceress, the language of the snow of our past into a nest of birds ready to take flight.

– Translated by Judy Barba

# 2

## SEVEN YEARS

### A preface to the inventories

*by Mirella Schino*

According to the dictionary, an inventory is a list “useful to retrieve what is to be found in a specific place”. In archival studies, the term inventory is meant as a “more or less analytical description of the systematically arranged contents of one specific archival fonds”. In this book I present the rearrangement of one section of the Odin Teatret Archives, which I coordinated. It is just one section because the archives contain much more: photographs, films, audio documents and posters – which are only marginally present in this book.

This is the book of documents, but it is also the book of the Odin Teatret Archives: the traces of the first fifty years of activity of a living theatre.

The main feature of the archives of the Odin Teatret is their completeness. The contents include all kinds of material, fonds created by the theatre and individually by its members, along with endowments from people of the Odin environment.

The material includes many wonderful and revealing documents. We can investigate through some of them (for instance, Barba’s notebooks) the peculiar creative process for the performances of this theatre. We can also sketch the profile of a world that goes much beyond the history of a single theatre. The documents suggest considerations about the meaning and weight of the multifarious activities of this theatre; they crack open areas of theatre that are difficult to study; they reveal the outline of a network of relationships: from the one with Grotowski to the connections with unknown South American groups, to scholars from all over the world, and equally diverse actors.

I will not go into a description of the quality and types of documents here; these are dealt with in the introduction to each series and in the descriptions of the document binders. I will write instead about the history of the archives. The way in which the documents were collected, preserved and presented will influence their future accessibility and for this reason it needs to be explained here.

The first thing to be noted is that this book presents the rearrangement of an inventory that is slightly anomalous. It is not a conventional inventory. It is an authored inventory, which does not imply an improved inventory but just a different one.

*A letter to the mode*

I will start my story with a letter from 2008 addressed to the *mode*, the weekly meeting of the complete Odin staff, generally held on Tuesday morning during which information is exchanged and agreements or work decisions taken. The archives were established in 2008, a few months prior to my letter. Let me give you some preliminary information: Sanjukta is Sanjukta Panigrahi, the great Orissi dancer who died in 1997. She was a fellow of the Odin Teatret (through the International School of Theatre Anthropology, or ISTA) for many years. Clearly enough, Eugenio is Eugenio Barba. Samarkand is the name used by the theatre (whose members love to nickname its spaces) for the library on the first floor (a room added at a later stage to the previous theatre building) where the work for the archives took place:

*From Mirella to the Tuesday mode: I would like to send you a few lines of explanation about what we are doing in Samarkand. What we are doing could be called a project about memory. A project about memory is not the same as embalming mummies or building monuments. It is not the same as the crystallization of memory. We are working on the very life of memory. We need to work now, while there are people still willing to tell, and add information to the documents. Otherwise, what the Odin Teatret has built over many years with utmost care risks getting partially lost: not being forgotten (to forget is good) but being remembered in an incorrect way, a dead way.*

*We have worked in response to this question: how can we convey the living spirit of the books by and about the Odin Teatret forever? The films; the testimonies – how can we keep all this alive even when the Odin Teatret becomes just a celebrated name? There is something that is rougher and more incomplete than a book but it has the mobility and randomness of life: documents. Inside their binders the documents seem inert, yet they keep the odd energy of unwilling memory, still unshaped.*

*What we are doing is not moving folders from one space within the theatre to another, though this is important as well in order to save the materials from future destruction. Chiefly, we are trying to list them as well as to “explain” them in an inventory, weaving in memories, explanations and anecdotes.*

*We had in our hands a myriad of very precious records: documentary dossiers on the editing of the text for Ferai, on Brecht’s Ashes, on Itsi Bitsi – documentary files on the meticulous and scrutinised work by a theatre that “can do without texts”. True, Eugenio has written about this in the performance programmes. But do you think this is enough for this work to be understood?*

*What will remain of the contacts between Grotowski and the Odin Teatret stays in your books and your testimonies. But here, in the Odin papers, the records give the material details of your relationship: sustained assistance to obtain visas and funds; “official” letters – and “false” ones in which you pretended to bind him to imaginary agreements with the Odin Teatret and with ISTA in order to help him get out of Poland during hard times; letters and phone calls regularly dispatched to Grotowski. Your complicity translated into practice: here is memory unplanned.*

*In a flash, Sanjukta popped up out of a box, more alive than in most stories, from two lines of a letter Eugenio wrote to Schechner, in which he writes about seeing her dance in all her magnificence for thousands of spectators in a remote Indian village, after she had spent an entire night on a train.*

*Kisses to you all – let me thank you once again for your hospitality, kindness and love – Mirella*

*– Barba Fonds, Series Letters, b. 22*

The work of the Odin archives lasted seven years: a fairy tale number, joined by iron footwear and barrels of tears. Barba is right, archives and fairy tales do have something in common.



Iben Nagel Rasmussen as the Angel of History in *Talabot*, 1988. Photo Jan Rüzsz. *Talabot* tells the story of the generation that was twenty years old then, around 1968, through the biography of the anthropologist Kirsten Hastrup, laced with the presence of the hidden people of Nordic legends or “Huldrefolk” and the presence of our dead. The hidden people observed the story of Kirsten and the world during those years. A Trickster, in the guise of the angel of history, listed wars and massacres one by one. The angel of history appears on a postcard given to the spectators before the beginning of the performance. On the back, there was a text by Walter Benjamin: “The face of the angel of history is turned toward the past. Where we perceived a chain of events, he sees a single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. The storm is what we call progress.” Photographic Fonds, Series Paper, Subseries Performances.

The work started in 2008 and was completely funded by the Odin Teatret. It ended in February 2015 when the vast majority of the physical documents and a digital copy of photographs and audiovisual documents were transferred to the Royal Library in Copenhagen. All the documents are now accessible from Copenhagen and Holstebro, the Odin home which stores a digital copy of everything that was sent to Copenhagen and the documents still needed by the theatre – for example, press releases. The Odin Teatret still retains the physical paper photographs, the audio



files and, of course, the pending materials which are yet to be inventoried and arranged, such as organizational and administrative binders.

The documents retained at the Odin Teatret will be placed with the other records by 2024, when this theatre (independently from the Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium, the organization that contains it) will terminate its activities. The Odin Teatret Archives thus continue to exist: good, because there is much more to be done.

### *The anomaly of the Odin Teatret*

The Odin Teatret has always been interested in its future and archives are desires for immortality. However, not all theatres, not even the very famous ones, are granted the fulfillment of such a desire. Oftentimes when theatre documents leave the place that generated them and land in an archival institution what is kept is only what seems important to the eyes of the spectator: in general terms, that is everything regarding the creative process and the performances, or their finances.

We have worked to identify and restate not only the existence but also the importance of so many other activities created by the Odin Teatret and of the documents left as their traces.

The Odin Teatret is in fact a theatre-laboratory.

A theatre-laboratory is (also) a theatre that produces more than performances. The range of activities produced or conceived by the Odin Teatret, besides performances and films, is astounding. The theatre pioneered in the elaboration of a form of alternative apprenticeship (the training), as well as in the study of the actor's knowledge of Asian theatres. It organized theoretical and practical seminars, meetings with innovative activities, generated books and journals, created new genres (such as the *work demonstrations* or the *barters*), invented strategies of survival, alliances, types of training and creation for the actor, alternative circuits, ways to conceive theatre and the history of theatre. They produced spectators in places far away from theatre, facilitated studies and conferences on the actor's techniques – not only of the East and the West but “Eurasian” ones too.

These widely assorted activities are so far removed from what is considered “normal” theatre work that they may easily be unintelligible to a reader unfamiliar with the Odin Teatret. In the current famine of space, time and money, only a few archival institutions would be willing to comprehend and preserve the traces of all this.

What is even more difficult to convey is that the activities are not important in themselves, but they are important for the way in which they were organized and the ensuing relationships. Of paramount importance is the connection between these activities and performances that have touched generations of spectators. These are not “side” activities. But how can we make people understand, especially people who are not necessarily theatre experts, let alone experts of such an anomalous theatre?

The Odin Teatret is a self-focused system: it has its own language, nomenclatures and internal priorities which are very hard to understand for an external observer who could see them as abstruse and self-referential. This is all the more true if the external observer is an archival institution, with its very own nomenclatures, priorities and rigorous arrangement systems. Several of the Danish archival institutions that we contacted about the existence of the systematized archives of a theatre as famous as the Odin Teatret and of a man of Barba's stature (who was awarded the Sonning Prize, the highest Danish award), reacted very unenthusiastically to the idea of hosting the archives in their entirety.

Our job was in fact to act as mediators between the logic of the Odin Teatret and that of an arrangement that would be useful for the future (and intelligible to archival institutions).

Although our meetings with reluctant institutions had somewhat increased our doubts, and part of the Odin Teatret would have preferred to keep all the documents on their premises, we – the OTA (Odin Teatret Archives) – endeavoured to let the archives find their final destination in a Danish archival institution.

We must think of the future. In order to survive, archives need a real and excellent archival institution, their guarantor for a long life – an institution that caters to the documents, transfers them onto new media, strives to advertise them and arranges them anew.

We are grateful to the Royal Library for accepting not only the material of the Odin Teatret but also their priorities, their arrangement, the abnormal inventories, the completeness and size of these archives. This operation required forethought and for this I would like to thank our mediator, Alette Scavenius of the Royal Library.

### *Staff, donors, support*

While building the archives, it was important to understand how to work for the future, by applying proper archival methodologies. This is probably the reason why the OTA was conceived, founded and directed by a person like me: a scholar who has known this theatre very well, for many years and from several standpoints.

To build the archives, we worked in a group of three: Francesca Romana Rietti, Valentina Tibaldi and myself, a *trimurti*. Without any single one of us, the result would have been different; perhaps better, but different in any case.

In addition, several other people worked with us. They formed the team of young researchers mentioned by Barba: Kasia Chojcka, Paula Isiegas, Miguel Jerez López, Sabrina Martello, Pierangelo Pompa, Lucia Repašská, Gabriella Sacco, Ana Woolf, Chiara Crupi and Claudio Coloberti (filmmakers of the Odin Teatret). The Odin Teatret financed the work of this team, as well as of Francesca and Valentina. The Odin Teatret purchased the computers, the scanners, and paid for the website.

During these years, a number of students, from the Department of Arts, Music and Performance of Roma Tre University and from the University of Åhrus, spent an internship period at the archives. They were genuinely helpful to our work: Mariagiulia Colace, Sara Marzocchi, Roberta Germanò, Ditte Bille Winther and Frederik Behrend. I am grateful to all of them.

Besides these people, I should mention those who were essential to our work without being part of the OTA: for example, Nando Tavian; or Lluís Masgrau, who for many years worked on Barba's writings and invented a system to arrange their complicated contents. I also wish to thank the AUT designers collective, who built our website and did it with curiosity, commitment and a passion for discussion – much more than what is generally expected of a professional collaboration.

I need to mention the donors especially; these people gave us their personal documents, convinced about our work: Nicola Savarese let us have the complete series of his negatives on ISTA. Agnete Strøm gave us the letters that she wrote to her husband during the first period of the Odin Teatret's stay in Denmark (in them she describes the life of the newly born Norwegian Odin Teatret that had just landed on Danish soil). Marianne Ahrne donated the transcriptions of the seminars by Jerzy Grotowski held at the Odin Teatret during the Sixties. Ferdinando Tavian, Ana Woolf, Raúl Iaza, Tina Nielsen and Christian Ludvigsen also donated some important material.

The Odin actors had faith in our work and entrusted us with their papers. Roberta Carreri gave us her work diaries, which are among the most wonderful documents in our archives. Equally generous were Eugenio Barba and Iben Nagel Rasmussen. Torgeir Wethal's papers were donated by his wife Roberta after his death.

We had the support of other people, covering our backs, from the archivist Giulia Barrera to Rina Skeel, the Odin actors and director. I will touch upon this later on as they deserve a very special acknowledgement.

We formed a real team: the three of us – Francesca, Valentina and myself – along with our international staff. Together we educated ourselves and trained each other. We learnt techniques and processes that we never knew existed. We debated. We were the Odin archives not because we worked there for a long time, but because this work was a time of shared growth. For seven years the archives became our land.

### *The first cupboard and a book*

Now that the work is finished, before talking about what these archives are and the peculiarities of these inventories I am publishing, the question that most often comes to mind is: why did I do it? True, without Francesca and Valentina these archives would not have happened, but I am the one who really wanted them. As I have already said, this is what determines the anomaly of the inventories. To explain or justify it, a fragment of autobiography is needed.

This is a book written for scholars. There is then no need to define the uses of archives. We know them well, although some of us work better or with more pleasure on documents and others less. I, for instance, like old papers. I have often worked on the letters by actors of the nineteenth century, essential documents in order to understand a misperceived and misrecognized culture. But I had never thought that I would have to build an archive myself.

To tell the truth, the work for the Odin archives came from a book (Elsa Kvamme, *Kjære Jens, Kjære Eugenio*, Oslo, Pax, 2004), it is about the friendship and collaboration between the Norwegian writer Jens Bjørneboe and Eugenio Barba. Elsa Kvamme, a former Odin actress, also published their letters. Perhaps, had the letters been written in a language I understood, things would have gone differently. But instead, I flipped through the pages written in Norwegian and my fingers felt an itch for documents. I had heard many Odin stories. I was familiar with their mythologies and emotions, but at that time I wanted documents.

I kept following the traces of Bjørneboe at the Odin Teatret for ten years, my article only came out in 2014 (in *Teatro e Storia*, n. 34) and in the meantime, the archives were born.

My curiosity for documents persuaded me to ask Barba about them: where did he keep them? For example, the originals of Grotowski's letters which had already been published, where were they physically kept? In response, he opened a small magic door in his study. It was a perfectly common wardrobe, and it was the door to our "Narnia". Inside there was everything that Barba had preserved by and about Grotowski: typescripts, letters and articles. Francesca was by my side then as she was to be for the next seven years. Barba started filling our arms with documents, and the work started from there.

I suggested he organize "real" archives of the various Odin materials, many of which over time had been transferred to a faraway storage unit for lack of space. He answered he would accept my proposal, as well as the economic commitment this entailed for the Odin Teatret, if I in return accepted to manage the archives. The presence of Grotowski's and Bjørneboe's letters, although already published, and the sensation that the documents were the only possible antidote for a theatre about which stories had often been told, induced me to say yes.

Archival documents whisper stories. We do need to put them together, connect them, give way to interpretations and passages; within themselves they tell stories. Until the folders were transferred to Copenhagen, when one entered the rooms where meters and meters of "binders" were kept, it felt as if the air was filled with whispers.

For this reason, the archives, which were basically born out of a book, gave life to another book: this one. The original inventories in themselves were a cache of information and stories. I extended them, arranged them, added quotes and photographs, followed the stories and documents through a scholar's logic to help them to become more comprehensible.

The photographs included in *The Book of Inventories* were neither chosen for their beauty nor for the beauty of the related performances. They are not even didactic photographs, as opposed to those from 'the training'. Most of them are snapshots: images of ordinary life, often without special charm. This brings forth another important type of document, although we are still uncertain about how to integrate them. Perhaps it is also too early to document the daily life of this living and operative tribe – a friendly tribe at that. The photographs give indications for the future about what is also essential: the complex relationships of power, love, friendship and work structuring the life of a "group". If we wish to go beyond anecdotes, there are few records to document this but some can still be found.

A long friendship with the Odin Teatret cannot help but influence the outlook of the person who studies it. Just like everybody else, I too have my own Odin: on the one hand, the Odin of some unforgettable performances and the actors, and on the other that of ISTA and the Eurasian Theatre University, of the great adventures of the mind pursued for years, together with an international group of bright and restless scholars researching in the company of inquisitive theatre-makers as peers – which was a great and unique opportunity. Maybe that is why, in choosing the photos, I was unwillingly partial to my latter Odin, which is only one of the many possible ones.

The original inventories can be read on the archives website ([www.odinteatretarchives.com](http://www.odinteatretarchives.com)), and soon they will also be accessible on the website of the Danish Royal Library ([www.kb.dk](http://www.kb.dk)).

### *Inventories, fonds, series, subseries, binders, folders*

Building the inventories entailed mastering a nomenclature. The archival tradition of "inventories", catalogues of archives, varies from country to country, even from situation to situation. They can be mere indexes of the documents included in the binder, but in some traditions they are not just simple lists of collected materials. They explain the way in which a specific environment has preserved its documents; they retain the fundamental connection linking single binders; they provide indications about the documents or groups of documents that appear to be particularly significant. Through the inventory, binders are no longer single items, they are nodes in a documentation network. We used this second system.

The Odin Teatret usually kept its documents in folders (it still does) often in separate plastic pockets. Once we acquired a folder, which means we had read, catalogued and listed it in an inventory, it would change its name and become a *binder*. A binder is the basic archival unit. It can be further divided into smaller units: the *folders*. A coherent set of binders, which at its best is created by the subject producing or receiving the documents and not by the archivist, is a *series* (often divided into sub-sets or *subseries*). The task of establishing the series was very difficult and unexpectedly useful. The complete set of *series* produced by one institution is called the *fonds*. The documents of the Odin Teatret Archives are collected in five fonds. In order of acquisition, the fonds are: the Barba Fonds, the Odin Fonds, the Rasmussen Fonds, the Wethal Fonds and the Carreri Fonds.

This system is something like a set of Chinese boxes: the biggest box is the fonds, consisting of series which in turn are divided into subseries. Subseries consist of a set of binders whose contents can be divided into folders. The nomenclature is abstruse and it is not important for the reader to remember it, although at some point it needed to be explained as it was fundamental to our work.

The document inventories were mostly written by me with the contribution of Francesca Romana Rietti. She was specifically responsible for these records: in the series Activities in the Odin Fonds; binders 7 to 15 in the series Publications; binders 12 to 16 in the series ISTA-A and binders 19 and 20 in the Carreri Fonds. Francesca was a great help in choosing the photographs included in this book. For Roberta Carreri's diaries, I was also helped by Sara Marzocchi who worked on two diaries from b. 17, four from b. 21, three in b. 26 and one in b. 33.

Besides documents, the OTA acquired, inventoried and digitized other items: audiovisual material, audio material, and photographs. This material is also included in detailed inventories, which I supervised but were compiled by Francesca Romana Rietti, Valentina Tibaldi and Pierangelo Pompa. The Odin Teatret also preserves posters, stage objects, stage sets. These items are kept at the Odin Teatret and have not yet been acquired by the archives: they were not made ready for the future.

### *Working method*

The work for the archives lasted seven years, like Jacob waiting for Rebecca. I hope this does not mean that seven more years await me.

We, the *trimurti*, had to learn on the job. One cannot improvise as an archivist. We could not have done anything without the person that Barba early on, and not improperly, named our fairy godmother: Giulia Barrera from the General Archives Directorate of the Italian Ministry of Culture. She taught us the basics of the method for historical archiving, according to which ordering an archive first of all implies the reconstruction and preservation of the original order of papers, as arranged by the institution that produced them. This is not just extra information which should not go missing: it forms the backbone, the order around which other information should be gathered while revealing the link connecting all the material.

We needed to preserve and reconstruct the order of the numerous folders that had been transferred into storage. This task was not quick or easy. It should also be noted that the historical method is not usually used in Denmark: this order thus needed to be implemented in a way which would be understandable, grounded and plausible enough to convince a Danish institution not to alter it (here, I must again be grateful to the great kindness and perspicuity of Alette Scavenius of the Royal Library).

Giulia also highlighted what was essential for the inventories. If anything went wrong this was not due to her but to our own misunderstanding or stubbornness. The first task was not to number the papers, compile excel sheets or create preparatory tools for the database. Instead, it was essential to focus on the preservation of what is otherwise physiologically destined to be dispersed: such as the memory of how these materials were born, as well as how and in what order they were preserved.

Stories are essential, Giulia told us, "so write down anything that is informative, or interesting. It does not matter if you produce an anomalous inventory, all inventories are anomalous." We may have gone a little too far along this road. A more conventional archivist would probably be scandalized at these inventories: explanations for each binder, including some extremely long ones; considerations on the quality of the documents; no numbering of the papers. However, we took only the first step (or rather, I did – as it is fair that I take all responsibility for everything that concerns the inventories). In technical terms, we can call this a transfer list. Others, after we finish, can add the data included in the documents. What we did have was the opportunity to record in writing what could otherwise have vanished: the protagonists' memories. And we could use our peculiar methodology as a strength: real archives that were not built by professional archivists.

I then had no hesitation in adding my own considerations, I indicated my personal hierarchy of documents (which, as may already be obvious, is partial to those regarding the soft dimension of theatre, the connecting links and the overlapping areas between private life and craft – meaning letters, diaries, notes and projects). The result is not a dissertation; the inventories are built on the basis of the biased look of an interpreting scholar.

As I have said before, I am the one primarily responsible for the main choices which made the inventories definitively anomalous, by the inclusion of information, and at times detailed descriptions, almost narratives of the things that the Odin people came to tell us in order to explain the origins and foundation of various documents. It was not a very neutral choice.

We went hunting for information, explanations and stories too: pure, subjective narratives of the past – something apparently antithetical to documents. We could only do this thanks to the help of various Odin people: Torgeir Wethal, whose presence at our side during the last months of his life is an unforgettable memory; Roberta Carreri, who contributed with her trademark precision; and Iben Nagel Rasmussen, who cannot remember one single date but can laugh about the past, and knows how to bring it back to life.

Ferdinando Taviani, a great scholar, shared his precious time by sitting beside us for hours and days in order to recognize the faces of some obscure participants of ISTA or passing friends in the photographs.

Eugenio Barba spent even more time with us. He told us stories about the past; he allowed us to navigate through the events, at times weird events that produced unintelligible documents; he guided us through languages inaccessible to us, as, for example, Polish.

These inventories narrate a saga on two levels: one level is about the documents, the other is about the people. There is also my occasional interference.

This road has not been free from problems, but it has been profoundly useful and wonderful.

The protagonists' memory, certainly helpful in collecting further informative detail, has its damaging aspect: it is imprecise and misleading – it is conditioned – it is biased.

And yet the value of this memory often lies in its harshness and incongruity. The Odin people often told stories about their theatre in books, articles, interviews and public speeches. However sincere and truthful, such stories have oftentimes been retold and made coherent in order to be more intelligible to the reader, deprived of the inevitable contradictions of life. For this same reason, it is extremely useful to reactivate memory forms that are more immediate and incoherent, to be coupled with the totally different story of the documents.

Both the original inventories and their more readable extended versions are published here as catalogues and as something else: they are a theatre epic telling the deeds of a community by passing down its history and identity, directly – through the documents and through narratives.

They are the basic structure that will make it possible to retrace the logic binding together the memories of different people in and around the Odin Teatret.

They are the history of Odin stories.

For us, this was the essence of the definition Barba loved to give us: "Living Archives" – a marriage of voices and documents; these inventories are their offspring.

### *Living archives*

The first act of our work involved thinking of a name. This was easy: the Odin Teatret Archives, OTA. The second act was a poster that Claudio Coloberti and I created together. It was important: we needed a symbol that could be presented to the theatre and the world.

The third step did not come from us; it was a definition Barba gave us: you are Living Archives. It is an interesting definition, and it gave us food for thought; mainly because it shows the dread of a theatre at being mummified by its archives.

The formula or definition, “Living Archives”, has actually become quite trendy in recent years. Surfing the internet it is easy to come across some Living Archives (these are mostly multimedia museums, or other institutions frequently using multimedia tools to advertise their activities). Often archives are considered “living” when they organize intense promotional activities: seminars, conferences, guided visits, informative leaflets etc. In other cases, the phrase Living Archives is used in a more interesting way: to discuss performance traditions such as classical ballet or Eastern theatre-dance: “embodied knowledge” – a tradition recorded not on paper but carved on the body of the performer.

None of these uses of the formula can be adapted for the Odin Teatret Archives which are archives made of paper and luminosity: paper, audiovisual and digital documents.

Certainly, well organized archives are always “living”: as they guarantee life in the future.

However, there are at least two uses of the Living Archives formula that are somewhat less metaphorical. The first one refers to archaeology. Specifically, it concerns the excavations in Mesopotamia. Archaeologists made a distinction between different types of documents: retrieved from living, dead or silent archives. The first category, Living Archives, are those that a civilization, city or institution continues to develop until its disappearance.

The second scientific use of the Living Archives formula can be found in cultural anthropology studies. It is simply an expression we use when we state that certain people with a long life experience and steadfast memory are veritable “living archives”. In cultural anthropology, this formula is used to indicate collective memory, and specifically for those people who are recognized as the repositories of this collective memory – containing rules, habits and values that are vital to the community, although they are not fixed in writing. Living archives are people that a community recognizes as repositories of its own basic cultural rules.

More generally, the expression Living Archives is also used to indicate the importance and legitimacy of using not just written sources, but spoken ones as well; as long as their peculiarities are taken into account.

Neither the first nor the second scientific use of the Living Archives formula has really anything to do with the work we did. But there are assonances which are useful to highlight the basics: on the one hand were all the difficulties and the energy of archiving, an activity yet to be concluded; on the other was the extremely important presence of a specific sort of memory in the inventories of the protagonists’ spoken tradition – the minutiae of daily memory filled with anecdotes, details, crossings and casual events – of memory that is not history but when placed alongside the documents it can give rise to history.

### *The work*

We retraced the order in which the Odin Teatret kept its papers; we catalogued all of them and prepared an inventory about them. We wrote inventories about the audiovisual material and photographs, tried to retrieve the biographies of the photographers and the circumstances or needs that produced the photographs. We also threw away heaps of those plastic folders much loved at the Odin Teatret, and known to eat up the ink from documents and photos.

We created a website for the Odin Teatret Archives. We digitized photographs, papers, audio material and arranged the audiovisuales. We collected information about the people and the events captured in the photos about which nobody seemed to know anything anymore. We prepared

these materials, that would ‘speak’ to a scholar, not just for present times when direct knowledge of this theatre and its world is still possible, but also for the future.

We managed to accomplish this objectively heavy work in so few years because at the Odin Teatret the papers and photographs were already part of a smart filing system (and they still are). Different people at the Odin Teatret were responsible for it, especially Rina Skeel. She did not work for us, she worked for the theatre, of which she has been a part for decades. But without her, our work would have been different, and much slower. We thank her from the bottom of our hearts.

In conclusion, it should be remembered that the creation of the Odin Teatret Archives responds to an old desire of the Odin Teatret itself. There was at least one Odin archival project concurrent with the foundation of CTLS in 2004, the Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies in collaboration with the University of Århus. Another more ambitious project was conceived by Nicola Savarese, another scholar and old friend of the Odin Teatret, about the creation of an “online database” for an archival network of laboratory theatres. But this project and other ones never reached a conclusion.

### *What is missing*

The introduction to a book of inventories must include references to what is missing. The Odin archives are unusually complete; in this lies their value. Still, one important part is missing, a system with which to address the traces of the material culture of the actors and the theatre: spaces, stage sets, costumes and objects which have not been archived.

A way should be found to collect the memory of daily life too, that land in between homely daily-ness and work: the memory of emotions. This is essential in theatre; we talked about it when discussing the choice of photographs. In the Odin archives, there is really too little of the emotional dimension, that which is not really private but still does not match one’s public face. As Torgeir Wethal also noticed, even in this extreme wealth of iconographic material, there is little from this emotional dimension: the Odin Teatret always tried to present its official face in the photographs.

We have just started to address the solution to this problem.

There is some access to this emotional dimension in the private archives, especially if we consider the photographs. As I have already said, we have materials such as Roberta’s work diaries, or the unintelligible yet intriguing notebooks by Barba.

In the end, we attempted to create material for this context by ourselves, in collaboration with Claudio Coloberti and Chiara Crupi, filmmakers of the Odin Teatret. For example, we searched for (and eventually found) perspective different from the one most commonly used when talking about the training, by having long interviews with the Odin actors and director. Early on this work had to be interrupted, but we see this as a first step for the anomalous archiving of this theatre’s material culture, a project which, at that moment, could not be developed further.

### *What is there*

I come back to myself and my basic question: why did I do it? Just the job of compiling the inventories was more than arduous. Managing a whole team of young researchers from all over the world was not a part of my skill set at all. I had to learn the archivist’s craft and also had to learn about film, photography, supporting media and scanning, much more than I wanted to know.

I could say I did it for the Odin Teatret, which I have known for many years: it is not just a famous theatre, it is also an infinitely loved one, by many. This means that its memory risks being



strangled by too much love and devotion. The only way to save it was to resolutely turn our backs on the legend and plunge ourselves into the documents instead: a rawer, less glossy, less conformist reality – a living entity.

Yet I did not do it just for the Odin Teatret.

A reason much more important than its precious memory (and not incompatible with it) appeared before me: the widely extended network of relations slowly appearing from the papers which went far beyond the history of a single theatre. Voices of youth and old age emerged. Why does age have so much importance in theatre? There emerged questions to and questions about theatre and with them emerged a whole emotional network, with its specific quality of feelings and needs. There emerged what we could call the arterial system of theatre: a labyrinth of requests, responses, episodes in history, upturns of scholarly hypotheses in different countries. In such an environment, this unpredictable theatre acted as a catalyst, a spectator, an object of love, a protagonist – and its remainders too. Through the years, this network has evolved into an actual theatre network, which these archives document on different levels. For many it became a *forma mentis* – a way to conceive and observe theatre. All this did not come from the Odin Teatret alone, not at all; how could that be? Perhaps it came from the whole environment.

It is undoubtedly difficult to study these documents. But they speak something beyond the history of a single theatre, they speak about a theatre generation – about a generation beyond theatre.

It is the history of a world – my own world.

Here lies the special beauty of the OTA: the archives preserve the traces of a particular world's way of thinking. Perhaps I am repeating myself, but it is strange to think of the archives of one specific theatre as the archives of an era – and it is not easy to accept this. It is as if the natural selection process that dispersed and preserved the documents, coupled with their process of conservation (the creation of the glass coffins that Eugenio talks about) gave rise to a purifying fire. They, the Archives, eliminated the waste. What remains are stories: beautiful, ugly, insignificant, unbelievable stories. They are stories about a particular world, not about a renowned theatre – a somewhat self-centred one, but one with a very long life.

It is nice to think that the work is now finished; that from here on these archives will be managed by an archival institution such as the Royal Library; that they will be an essential and unavoidable threshold to know about the history of the Odin Teatret – and not just about the history of the Odin Teatret.

We can imagine scholars working on these documents in about a hundred years from now, ready to question them in order to reconstruct impulses, desires and requests that do not just concern the theatre.

Finally, perhaps anthropological, historical or sociological studies too will begin to see theatre as a possible key to access areas in the study of the behaviour of human beings which are otherwise difficult to approach.

Theatre museums are impossible, theatre archives often disappointing. Theatre is a fleeting art, incarnated in fleeting bodies. But its memory can be an opening, a window to areas otherwise difficult to observe.

The obsession with preservation reigning supreme at the Odin Teatret even gave us a methodological indication for theatre archiving: the need to find space for those types of documents which are about the social life of a theatre, both internal and external, and not just for its status as an art-maker.

This is not the time to delve into these very subtle issues. But we should at least make mention that the multidimensional character of this set of activities and relationships, the environment that

has emerged through the years, this magma descending from it, are interesting in themselves – from the point of view of theatre, anthropology and sociology. And they are also something more: they are the extended image of a deep nature, not of the Odin Teatret, but of theatre itself. They are X-rays.

### *The most precious material*

The prime material that permits us to study theatre as a set of relationships consists of the bulk of the material kept in the Odin archives: the letters. These are not letters by or to objectively or subjectively important addressees (those are there too), but letters by countless contacts: people who were just simply touched by the Odin Teatret, including anonymous spectators.

Our first duty to these letters was to protect them with clauses sanctioning the impossibility of mentioning or consulting them for a set number of years, unless there is the explicit consent of the writers. As much as they are living and precious, these documents are also vulnerable and hence must be safeguarded.

Among all the possible documents on theatre, letters are the ones that allow us to access territories rarely open for exploration the most – as, for example, the areas concerning emotional relationships. As a document type, letters are particularly difficult to examine: by definition, they are non-objective and transitory documents. They do not aim to reconstruct an event, but they keep trace of that event. They are certainly unreliable as documents of some objective value in the light of stage art history. They can convey information about techniques and styles, but this is rarely their focus. Those addressing them are required to do so with respect and caution, maybe even with some amount of compassion for the writer.

However, all these reasons also make them a fundamental tool in the study of theatre. They do not tell stories, they witness. And they do not witness rigid forms, but something transient and often more important: emotional temperatures. They are living materials, to be handled with care and kindness in order to not kill them.

They are truly the most precious gift that came out of these archives. They are the mark that defines them, among other definitions, as one of those rare cases of emotional archive: an archive of the feelings and emotions nurtured by theatre in those who do it and those who see it. With the permission of the writers, I allowed myself to mention them as often as possible, especially in this book, and partly in the original inventories as well. It is a foretaste for the future.

Because the archives at this point (I have repeated it already too often) are not the present life of the theatre, and not even of tomorrow. Their field is the distant future; once the natural transmission of memory depending on the human life cycle has vanished.

### *Acknowledgements and apologies*

The time has now come to talk about the most important people involved in the building of these archives, those who produced the documents: the Odin people.

As I have said before, the importance given to the future of the theatre, even to its distant future, by Barba and some of the actors, has been of inestimable assistance to the archives.

Naturally, there were also difficulties. Creating the archives in a theatre which is still active has its consequences. The Odin Teatret responded as any living body would with hands plunged right into it: it reacted through its molecules and organs, no matter what decision the brain had taken.

I believe that the Odin people did not always enjoy seeing their drawers being plundered (metaphorically speaking), the press releases being moved – the ones concerning the performances first, then the ones concerning the ISTA – then other materials; or seeing us run into the storage room where the oldest papers were kept. I would like to apologize to them for the turmoil.

Building the archives in the way it was done – conceived for future use and organized almost as an area separated from the theatre – is not a neutral operation. It is especially not neutral for a theatre like this one, which, for some aspects, is really a peculiar living body. A great amount of intelligence was required from the Odin Teatret to submit to this operation on such a large scale, unnecessary for its daily life, and to endure it for so many years. I believe it is necessary not to just duly note this intelligence, but also to highlight the problems this kind of operation can engender. For this reason, I took the liberty of writing what at first sight may appear as a trifle or useless irony, including some touches of unrequired autobiography. The history of these archives has its precise outline, with its problems and solutions to those problems. At the same time, the writing of this inventory is inevitably and heavily marked by my experience as a scholar, old friend of the Odin Teatret, and coordinator of its archives.

Mostly, the problems had to do with understanding. The Odin Teatret, as Barba also writes, is a theatre that has always kept its documents, almost obsessively. The theatre was, and is, full of folders – even the ones containing documents from remote times were not thrown away but sent to a faraway storage space: the prelude to dispersion from the point of view of consultation; but this behaviour also reveals the great care for preservation.

Paradoxically, this is what made irksome the understanding of what we were doing: we were not preserving but archiving. What is the difference? Is it important? It was, to us. It has already been said and repeated, and it might not be hard to understand, but we must put ourselves in the shoes of a living body. Preserving was something that had always been done. It was, therefore, difficult to accept the new and completely independent logic that was driving our frenetic agitation, the folders moved from where they had always been – or the way in which they were handled: marked with new labels, used as something that was no longer theirs but ours. Or better, something belonging to the future, to future scholars instead of contemporary theatre-makers – or to young pilgrims devoted to the Odin Teatret who often examine its papers, in awe. The Odin Teatret was used to this, to such loving concern, but it was less used to our attempt to impose the logic of the future as obvious and independent.

I believe we annoyed almost everyone and sometimes, possibly even hurt everyone: our new order did not have the Odin Teatret as its fulcrum.

Who would enjoy hosting an extraneous body within, ransacking the papers to look at them through eyes basically interested in future users? I understand the Odin people. In many ways, I am on their side – but I am a scholar: I love archives. I know the value of memory that is unplanned, not pre-organized. There were too many wonderful documents in there, too many opportunities for future understanding. I have already said it: the documents reached far beyond the Odin Teatret, but for the Odin Teatret they were the only possible chance for real memory, unsuffocated by excessive love. It was important.

That is why the issues, the processes, the needs and the rules of the Odin Teatret – the tacit and the explicit ones – very soon shifted into the background. I just wanted them to let me work in peace.

I believe that the result is an inventory written by a person who is a friend but is not biased. The different positions taken by the Odin people on the one hand and people from the archives on the other produced a level of objectivity to the information that could have been compromised

by the intense and long-lasting love that bound us. I felt that it was right to highlight this, even by mentioning our history and difficulties – with lightness, I hope.

Perhaps the time has come to thank all of them and conclude this work.

To all the Odin people, first of all to Eugenio, who tolerated us without much patience and with farseeing resignation; to Francesca and Valentina, friends and fellow workers that I love and without whom the archives would have never existed; to Nando, who always supported and helped us, with great love; to Giulia Barrera and to Sandro, my husband, who worked in other archives in years now long gone, and who was for us an essential point of reference with his suggestions and with the firm conviction that it was a useful and important task; to all of them I dedicate this book, my work, and these seven years that have evaporated through my fingers.



The Angel of History. Iben Nagel Rasmussen in *Talabot*, 1988. Photo Tony D'Urso. Photographic Fonds, Series paper, Subseries Performances.

# FONDS ODIN TEATRET

## Series Activities

Activities

Activities-B

Activities-C

Activities-D

## Series Performances

Perf-A

Perf-B

Perf-C

Perf-D

Perf-E

Perf-F

## Series ISTA

STA-A

ISTA

## Series Publications

Publications

Publications-A

Publications-B

Publications-C

## Series TTT

## Series Environment

Environment (Ludvigsen)

Environment (Nando)

Environment (Ana Woolf)

Environment (Iaiza)

Environment (Tina Nielsen)

Environment (Agnete Strøm)

## Series Letters

## Miscellaneous

This Fonds collects materials about the life and activities of the Odin Teatret as they were produced and preserved by the theatre itself. We have organized the fonds in seven “series” collecting the various binders; we have retained the internal arrangement of the binders and simply substituted the plastic pockets containing them – they were always used at the Odin Teatret and almost became its trademark – with “folders”, our unit of measurement.

In order to better understand the documents preserved at the Odin Teatret one has to take into account its peculiarities. For example, the fact that since its foundation this theatre has focused equally on two main activities: rehearsing and presenting performances with the same group of actors (who, as in everything else, change over the course of the years but only partially and slowly), and by the same director; and the organization of seminars, networks, anomalous festivals, encounters, research and pedagogic events, among which ISTA (the International School of Theatre Anthropology, founded by Barba in 1980) is the most significant.

List and brief description of the series in Fonds Odin Teatret:

- 1) Series Activities: it contains documents about the numerous activities of the Odin Teatret different from performances (training, seminars, conferences, daily life at the theatre), or the weekly meetings gathering together the complete theatre staff or, for example, a journey to Italy by members of the Holstebro City Council. One of the theatre’s activities, the International School of Theatre Anthropology, ISTA, is so important that we decided to make a separate series for it. This choice was indeed discretionary as some of the materials about ISTA can still be found among the “Activities” documents. The series were further arranged in four subseries: Activities; Activities-B; Activities-C; Activities-D.
- 2) Series Performances: materials about the performances and performance-related events, such as work demonstrations, a typical Odin activity. It contains internal Odin materials (such as texts or preparatory materials for a performance), as well as press clippings and spectators’ letters. It is arranged in six subseries: Perf-A; Perf-B; Perf-C; Perf-D; Perf-E and Perf-F.
- 3) Series ISTA: materials about the organization, the participants, the performances, the guest masters at various sessions of the ISTA. As mentioned above, it should belong to the series Activities, but for years ISTA sessions were, besides the performances, one of the most important activities organized by the Odin Teatret. It is arranged in two subseries, ISTA-A and ISTA. About ISTA, see also the Barba Fonds.
- 4) Series Publications: original or photocopied typescripts of the published and unreleased texts by the Odin Teatret people; typescripts or photocopies of articles about the Odin Teatret and its activities by specific scholars connected to the theatre over many years; binders with documents about books written or published by the Odin Teatret, or about copyrights. It contains four subseries: Publications; Publications-A; Publications-B; Publications-C.
- 5) Series TTT: the magazine *Teatrets Teori og Teknikk* (Theatre Theory and Technique), abbreviated to *TTT*, was created in Oslo in 1965 by Barba. The publication ended in 1974 after twenty-three issues, including five books. The binders of the series TTT are collected in eighteen boxes containing articles, photographs, lead clichés for printing photographs, off-set films, etc.
- 6) Series Environment: materials given to the Odin Teatret by friends, collaborators, former Odin members, or about friends, collaborators, and former Odin members. It is arranged in six subseries: Environment (Ludvigsen); Environment (Nando); Environment (Woolf); Environment (Iaiza); Environment (Nielsen); Environment (Strøm).
- 7) Series Letters: binders with correspondence by Barba and other people who deal with the running of the theatre. These mixed binders are typical of the first years of the theatre (see also the two series Letters in Barba Fonds).
- 8) Series Miscellaneous: different types of materials, for which no other arrangement could be found.



The Odin Teatret during one of its tours for its first performance, *Ornitoflene*, 1965. From the left: Eugenio Barba, Torgeir Wethal, Anne Trine Grimnes, Tor Sannum, Else Marie Laukvik. Photographic Fonds, Paper Series, Subseries People, b. 4.

### *The Odin Teatret*

The Odin Teatret was founded on 1 October 1964 in Oslo by Eugenio Barba with Else Marie Laukvik (who to this day still works at the Odin Teatret), Torgeir Wethal (who worked at the Odin Teatret until his death in 2010) and two other young Norwegian actors; one of them, Tor Sannum, left the Odin Teatret before they moved to Denmark, the other one, Anne Trine Grimnes, stayed until they began to work for *Ferai* in 1969. They were all young aspiring actors who were not admitted (in Wethal's case, just for reasons of age) to the theatre school in Oslo.

The foundation date is symbolic. For a few months Barba had been working with a group of young people whose number gradually dwindled down to five and then to four participants. He had previously spent three years working with Jerzy Grotowski in Poland, at the Teatr 13 Rzędów (later Teatr-Laboratorium) in Opole where he spent his entire Polish apprenticeship. With his young actors he not only worked on a "training", a disconcerting and physically taxing novelty for them, but from the very beginning he also built with them small "études", and they rehearsed for their future debut performance.

During the time in Oslo, the Odin Teatret was a non-funded theatre (proclaiming itself as *amateur*); it used various rented rooms to hold workshops in, among which the most important would be an air raid shelter.

The financing of the group was ensured by money from its members who worked part-time to pay for their theatre. Besides its artistic work, the Odin Teatret started editing *Teatrets Teori og*



*Teknikk*, a journal publishing monographic issues and books (the publications would continue until 1974). In February 1966, the Odin Teatret organized the Scandinavian tour of Grotowski's *The Constant Prince*, the first tour of Teatr-Laboratorium outside of Poland. In Italy, Barba's first book was published (Barba, 1965). The Odin Teatret's first performance and Eugenio Barba's debut direction was *Ornitoflene* (1964), adapted from a pilot text of a play by Jens Bjørneboe, still unpublished at the time. The performance was taken to Sweden, Denmark and Finland. It was presented to an audience fifty-one times over a period of six months: less than the time the rehearsals had lasted.

In June of 1966, the Odin Teatret left Oslo and moved to Denmark, to Holstebro where it still resides. The Municipality of Holstebro had decided to start a cultural policy in order to relieve the greyness of the province. They bought a statue by Giacometti and placed it in the centre of a square, the effect being somewhat incongruous considering the slenderness of Giacometti's elongated figures; the municipality also decided to create a music school, a theatre and a museum. Someone recommended to the mayor the talents of this young Norwegian group who had recently taken their first performance to Copenhagen. Based on the recommendation and also on Kruuse's review, the mayor accepted the proposal; and the Odin Teatret moved to Holstebro. At first they worked in the rooms of a school, later the theatre was offered the renovated buildings of a pig-breeding farm outside the town.

In Denmark, the Odin Teatret started its new life as a partially funded theatre (the first funding was granted for activities for the promotion of culture) and had space to organize its activities. In 1966 the first Danish actress, Iben Nagel Rasmussen, joined the group.

Although the Scandinavian countries form a kind of union, even regarding funding to the arts, and to some degree there are similarities in the language, the move to Denmark however caused language problems for a group that we should imagine in some way to be much more conventional, and yet much more "different", from what its equivalent might be today. From that moment on, the Odin Teatret mostly used a mixture of different idioms for its performances, sometimes partially translated to the language of the place where the performance was being presented. But this choice was not easy, nor without its problems.

In 1968, Eugenio Barba edited the publication of *Towards a Poor Theatre* by Jerzy Grotowski (issue no. 7 of *Teatrets Teori og Teknikk [TTT]*). Since their arrival in Denmark, they began the practice of organizing "Inter-Scandinavian Seminars" dedicated to theatre professionals, these would be held every year until 1976. They were partially determined or at least favoured by the existence of specific funding for Inter-Scandinavian activities.

Among others, some of the masters who ran the seminars were: Jerzy Grotowski, Ryszard Cieślak, Étienne Decroux, Jean-Louis Barrault, Jacques Lecoq, the Colombaioni brothers, Charles Marowitz, Otomar Krejča, the masters of Balinese theatre I Made Djimat, Sardono and I Made Pasek Tempo, the masters of Indian classical dance and theatre forms Shanta Rao, Krishna Nambudiri, Sanjukta Panigrahi, Raghunath Panigrahi, Uma Sharma (later, Sanjukta Panigrahi would become one of the co-founders of ISTA). These seminars attracted a group of regular participants, as we mentioned about Kruuse, these included scholars, journalists, intellectuals and theatre-makers from all over the world, among which were very diverse international personalities, from Jens Kruuse to Dario Fo, from Harry Carlson to Stanley Rosenberg to Marc Fumaroli. These meetings were and still are considered by all to be of great importance, and habitual participants make sure to plan time for them in their schedules.

At the beginning of 1969, when the work for their third performance, *Ferai*, was about to be completed, the sudden cut of funding for the "Inter-Scandinavian cultural fund" precipitated the Odin Teatret into an economic crisis that seemed possible to solve only with termination. Numerous Danish artists and intellectuals took a stand in their favour.

*Ferai* (1969, from a text written for the Odin Teatret by Peter Seeberg) brought international fame to the Odin Teatret and its director. But Odin is not a repertoire theatre, it too has the

problem of making a living besides the funding contributions. The crisis of 1969 showed all the potential instability of this situation. During the preparations for the performance following *Ferai*, the group discussed in their weekly meetings the possibility of living in an agricultural commune. The final decision was against the idea.

The following performance, *Min Fars Hus* (1972), confirmed the group's prestige and at the same time established contact between them and (especially in Italy and France) young, innovative theatre groups as well as the "avant-garde theatre". Alternative cultural associations and theatre groups created in small towns and universities invited the Odin Teatret not only for their performances but also for conferences, work demonstrations and two- or three-day workshops. Step by step, the character of the tours changed. The Odin Teatret started presenting performances as well as the range of its very well-informed cultural policy as a "theatre enclave". Starting from 1971, they produced didactic films on the work of the actor, directed by Torgeir Wethal.

In 1974, after a period of time in Sardinia, having been invited by the young Sardinian director Pierfranco Zappareddu for a very unusual tour, the Odin Teatret decided to go and work for some time in a village in Southern Italy, in Carpignano Salentino, where they would stay for five months, from spring to autumn. The following year, they repeated the experience in Carpignano and then moved to Ollolai in Sardinia. The Odin Teatret had previously been to both Sardinia and Puglia to present their performance *Min Fars Hus* in an environment "far away from the theatre". Those tours were anomalous and were filled with consequences.

After these parentheses, the Odin Teatret began what could be called parallel performances. Besides indoor performances – for a limited number of spectators, usually created by starting from the actors' "improvisations" and later reworked by Barba – new performances came to life – for a greater number of spectators and also suitable for the outdoors: these were itinerant performances, i.e. "parades". They were all based on the montage of material belonging to the repertoire of the single actors or of the entire group (fragments of training turned into performance, clown sketches, etc.). The actors worked with masks, stilts, flashy accessories, costumes in bright colours. Starting from the autumn of 1974, the practice of "barters" was born: instead of selling their performances, sometimes the Odin Teatret exchanged them for cultural and performance events organized by their hosts (cultural associations, villages, neighbourhoods, schools, hospitals, prisons). The practice of theatre barters would also characterize the social actions of the Odin Teatret in the years to come, besides their normal tours. The most exotic and famous case was in 1976 when the Odin Teatret visited a group of Yanomami Indians with their performances, in the Venezuelan jungle.

The theatre scholar Ferdinando Taviani joined the Odin Teatret as a "literary advisor", taking over from the Dane Christian Ludvigsen.

The life of the Odin Teatret was increasingly marked by its cosmopolitan dimension and by its links with "different" theatres and theatre-makers from all over the world. *Il libro dell'Odin* was edited by Taviani and published (1975). It was the first book dedicated to the experience of the theatre from Holstebro.

Between April and May 1976 the Odin Teatret was in Caracas, where they took part in the International Theatre Festival with the performance *Come! And the Day Will Be Ours*. They organized barters and work meetings, did parades and street performances. This was the beginning of the important relationship with Latin American theatre groups.

The following autumn, some of these groups were in Belgrade where Eugenio Barba organized a Group Theatre Atelier as part of the festival of the Théâtre des Nations. On that occasion, he published the manifesto on the Third Theatre. Some meetings of group theatres, for which Barba was the reference point, were held in Bergamo, Italy in 1977; in Ayacucho, Peru in 1978 and in Madrid and Lekeitio, Spain in 1979.

In Bonn, from 1 to 31 October 1980, he organized the first session of the ISTA, the International School of Theatre Anthropology.

The fourteenth and last session of ISTA was in 2005. In these twenty-five years, a group of artists and scholars came together to form a stable working team, fully dedicated to the project. But, unfortunately, in these twenty-five years many of the artists and scholars who founded or were particularly connected to ISTA died, including I Made Pasek Tempo, Fabrizio Cruciani, Katsuko Azuma and Ingemar Lindh. In 1997 Sanjukta Panigrahi died. She was, for ISTA, something more than a founding artist or an irreplaceable work and research companion. She was – and is – a symbol, a point of reference; there is affection and admiration for her great qualities as a dancer and for her capacity to connect to Barba in such a tight and anomalous form of collaboration.

Starting from 1991, every three years the Odin Teatret organized a great “festive week” in Holstebro (Holstebro Festuge), inviting foreign groups and artists, working with the associations and cultural groups of the town, interweaving theatre, music, dance, figurative arts, conferences and debates on interculturality. For a week, it infiltrated the culture of performance in the whole territory, from great performances in the open and barters (presently named “transformances”) to the actors’ “visits” to schools, churches, administrative institutions, shopping malls and families.

The Odin Teatret of the twenty-first century continues to have a life of tours, combining performances and didactics, much longer than the time they spend in Holstebro. However, their connections to Denmark are increasingly close, as well as better recognized. In 2000, the Danish government granted Barba one of its highest awards, the Sonning Prize. In 2013, rumours started about the possibility that the Odin Teatret could not survive its first half century and Barba’s possible retirement; this awakened the concerns of the media and personalities from the world of culture. The festive week organized every three years in Holstebro is starting to be considered as a model for other festivals.

At fifty, the Odin Teatret is a hive of activity. In 2014, there were twelve actors plus the director. Although not all of them are full-time, another thirty people work regularly in the theatre, and among them is a director in residence, Pierangelo Pompa. There are also occasional collaborators for special projects.

This has always been a laboratory theatre, a producer of theatre culture beyond performances, but in recent years the number of activities that it organizes or hosts seems to be constantly on the rise: demonstrations, teaching, encounters with theatre professionals, films, books, conferences, festivals, a research centre on laboratory theatres, a publishing house, the archives and much more, from meetings to exhibitions, from a summer school for university students to poetry evenings, from the participation in didactic projects to internships for intercultural navigators, from residences for young artists to activities for the town of Holstebro.

In this book, we will deal only with a selection of these aspects and activities.

Starting from 2009, the theatre has marked the distinction between the two autonomous environments that together make up what we call “Odin”: the Odin Teatret and the Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium. In 2013 these two environments were officially separated, for accounting purposes and for their activities. They are also separate entities in the annual reports sent to the Ministry of Culture, to the Municipality of Holstebro and to all the institutions funding the Odin.

The Odin artistic director is Eugenio Barba; the administrative directors are Søren Kjems and Per Bech. There is also a new managing director, Julia Varley.

The Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium includes different groups or single artists “in residence”, permanently or occasionally: Altamira Laboratorio, the Jasonites, Divano Occidentale Orientale. All these groups are artistically independent from the Odin Teatret. Julia Varley is responsible for the Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium, together with Søren Kjems and Per Bech.

When the Odin Teatret is extinguished, this distinction should ensure, through the existence of Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium, the continuity of an artistic environment and of the local connections of the Odin Teatret, especially with the people of Holstebro, with its schools and cultural associations.

In 2014, the repertoire of the Odin Teatret consisted of performances with the whole group: *The Chronic Life*, *Inside the Skeleton of the Whale*, *Ode to Progress*, *The Great Cities Under the Moon*; performances by a single actor or one part of the group: *Judith*, *Itsi Bitsi*, *The Castle of Holstebro*, *Doña Musica's Butterflies*, *Salt*, *White as Jasmine*, *Ester's Book*, *Memoria*, *Ave Maria*, *Killing Time*; work demonstrations: *Traces in the Snow*, *The Echo of Silence*, *The Dead Brother*, *The Flying Carpet*, *The Whispering Winds in Theatre and Dance*, *Nora's Way*, *Text Actions Relations*, *Letter to the Wind*, *Quasi Orpheus*, *My Stage Children*.

As this list also reveals, the group presents an increasing tendency towards the individual work of the actors and the director, for the performances as well as for the didactic work. This Odin Teatret is very different from the one of the twentieth century. But it would be more correct to say: yet again different.



Else Marie Laukvik in 1964, at the time when the Odin Teatret was founded. Photo courtesy Else Marie.

In 2014, the theatre's balance sheet was around 14–15 million Danish crowns. Compared to the funding received by the Danish State and the Municipality of Holstebro, the earnings derived from the group's work are around 38%.

In 2010 Torgeir Wethal died. He had been an Odin actor since its foundation. In 2013 Augusto Omolú died, also an Odin actor since 2004. In 2009 Tony D'Urso, the photographer who was, for the Odin Teatret, a witness, a friend and a travel companion, died.

In 2014 the group celebrated fifty years.

## **SERIES ACTIVITIES**

Activities

Activities-B

Activities-C

Activities-D

The series Activities, containing materials about the theatre's life, including performances and numerous collateral activities, was created by us. The Odin Teatret is an extremely well-organized theatre and it also has a unique story. There has always been someone responsible for the different activities and this person generally chooses the standard with which to organize the document folders. After some time, a new person may be made responsible and this someone can choose to keep or alter the standard used to create the folders.

This produces subgroups of folders, probably following an internal coherent principle, but it is actually rather discontinuous.

The arrangement of the new order in the archives was further complicated by the retrieval of a series of folders, in rather disorderly boxes, moved from the Odin Teatret to a storage room under the Holstebro Museum. This is what is meant in this book by the reference "ex-museo". For these folders of documents, it is often impossible to reconstruct the original arrangement.

We then divided all the material into "series" or "subseries" (concerning the numerous extra-performance activities of the Odin Teatret), to simplify consultation without altering the previous order. However, the decisions about the partitions were arbitrary and difficult. The same is true for the decision to collect all the folders about publications in a separate series (often two series overlap and mix). The "binders" (the folders with documents) were delivered at different times. The ensuing order of the archives was, therefore, progressive, as it was impossible to devise a structure prior. We have done everything possible to favour the consultation and communicability of these documents.

## **Subseries Activities**

### **(Labelled: Odin-Activities)**

In the subseries Activities, we collected materials about the theatre's life and the multi-faceted activities of the Odin Teatret, which, besides the creation of performances, include seminars, films, the organization of meetings and festivals, didactic activities, the writing of books, publication of journals, organization of events and activities of affiliated independent groups born within the Odin Teatret, as for example Studio II.

### ***Odin-Activities, b. 1***

It contains a blue notebook: the book of expenses for the first two years of the Odin Teatret compiled by Torgeir Wethal, who was appointed as treasurer by Barba at the beginning in Oslo (see Fonds Wethal, b. 22). A sheet attached to the first page of the notebook has the list of places where *Ornitofilene* (the first Odin performance) went on tour. The notebook was kept by Torgeir Wethal, but it was handed over to the archives by Eugenio Barba.

When the Odin Teatret began, it had no financial support; for this reason, the notebook collects all the expenses, even the most insignificant ones (for example “food for bird”, when for a short time a bird was used in the performance): these signs indicate poverty and attention to detail. Under the title “fees for Bjørneboe”, the renowned Norwegian author of the text of *Ornitofilene*, there is the strange and insignificant sum of 213.85 kroner, most probably a taxi fare or a bar tab. The title “fees” seems particularly illogical considering the date, November 1965, about a year after the beginning of the work on Bjørneboe’s text: the definition might be ironic, although this would not seem to match with Odin’s style during those years. Actually, the writer gave the text for free and never received any royalties.

As the notebook accurately registers, the members of the theatre contributed weekly a sum of twenty Norwegian kroner to pay the rent for the rehearsal space and other expenses (carbon paper, newspapers, etc.). Apparently, they gave their contribution until November 1965, perhaps later they started to earn something with the performance.

The notebook also covers the first months of 1966. It is well ordered, but the dates of the last pages are mixed up. Perhaps there was another “first draft” notebook. According to Torgeir Wethal, the notebook was presumably stopped when the first secretary, Agnete Strøm, started working. The highest expense is probably the price for the first issue of *TTT* (about 2.000 kroner).

### ***Odin-Activities, b. 2***

It contains materials about the Tegne-Film Festival (for animation films) organized in 1990 by Paul Østergård who had previously taught animation techniques in a teaching institution.

### ***Odin-Activities, b. 3***

It contains material about Sanjukta Panigrahi: a letter addressed to E. Barba about an article by Panigrahi on her experience at the ISTA; the article has handwritten additions (it is also kept in Barba’s correspondence in Barba-Letters, binder 7); press clippings and a brochure about Panigrahi’s tour in Poland.

### ***Odin-Activities, b. 4***

These are materials about Iben Nagel Rasmussen’s performances that ran parallel to her activity with the Odin Teatret: *Den Grimme, den Grumme og den virkelig Dumme* (with Kai Bredholt, Tina Nielsen and Isabel Ubeda), letters, drawings, technical information, reviews 1994–1995, balance sheets, etc. The original label also seems to refer to materials about the performance *Ulven Denis* (directed by César Brie) but those are not contained here (see also Fonds Iben Nagel Rasmussen, series Farfa).



Torgeir Wethal, circa 1962, not long before the foundation of the Odin Teatret, in a stage photograph. Torgeir had worked as an actor with the director Erik Trummmler (in his unfinished book he calls him his “old master”) since he was nine years old. When in 1964 Eugenio Barba started asking around about possible actors for his future theatre, Trummmler mentioned Wethal’s name. Fonds Wethal, b. 3.

### ***Odin-Activities, b. 5***

Binder 5 contains copies of articles, press clippings in different languages dated between the end of the 1970s and the mid-1980s; a sketch with instructions on how to build stilts; a list of publications of the Odin Teatret’s publishing house and a basic bibliography about the Odin Teatret until 1980; a typescript of the article about Third Theatre by Eugenio Barba and other documents about performances or other Odin activities, prepared in order to answer the most frequently asked questions about the Odin Teatret. The binder was arranged by different people: whenever somebody photocopied an article to answer frequently asked questions, the document would be included in the binder. It should be read in a way to gather information about what intrigued the Odin Teatret most in its prime.

### ***Odin-Activities, b. 6***

Ex-museo. As written in the introduction to this series, the reference “ex-museo” indicates materials that the Odin Teatret had already moved to the storage room in the Holstebro Museum, in a space allocated to keep materials that were not necessary at the theatre. The documents were

kept in large boxes, without much order, and in these conditions retrieval was difficult (although technically not impossible). In fact, it was a prelude to dispersion.

This binder contains documents about the organization of seminars from 1966 to 1968 and related correspondence. It was a pivotal moment for the Odin Teatret, which had finally found a home in Holstebro, a place to work and host guests. The Inter-Scandinavian seminars of the 1960s were a way to draw from the funds for Inter-Scandinavian activities – to invite Grotowski to the Odin Teatret, to teach (didactic work has always been a strong drive of the Odin Teatret since its beginnings). The seminars were also useful to create an international network of outstanding artists and scholars, a more or less stable group of attendees for these meetings, including teaching activities as well as reflections on theatre at the highest level.

See also binder 7 and binder 10 in the series Activities. See Barba's book *Land of Ashes and Diamonds* about his apprenticeship with Grotowski (1999), Taviani, *Il libro dell'Odin* (1975) and the book *Treklång. År med the Odin Teatret, 1968–84* by Martin Berg (1986; a complete Italian translation and a partial English translation are kept in Publications, binder 17).

Binder 6 contains Barba's correspondence regarding borrowing or renting the films to be shown during the seminars. The films are about various theatrical activities (e.g. Laurence Olivier's *Othello*, the film about *Marat-Sade* by Brook, films about the Peking Opera). Apparently, the showing of very important and rare films was a significant element of these seminars. The correspondence that was required to find the films reveals a complex organization. Binder 6 also contains correspondence between Eugenio Barba and Agnete Strøm, Birgitte Jensen (the new secretary after Agnete Strøm) and, among others, the director of La MaMa Plexus, Stanley Rosenberg (an interesting and unusual letter is the one dated 3 April, the year is missing, in which Rosenberg writes about Grotowski's importance for the development of Schechner's new theatre group and his performance *Dionysus in 1969*, as well as the importance that the meeting with Grotowski and Barba had for him); correspondence with Harry Carlson (professor at Queens College, City University of New York), especially about the distribution of *Towards a Poor Theatre*, that was about to be published. Carlson actually played an important role in the distribution of Grotowski's book: he brought back suitcases full of copies of the book after attending the seminars at the Odin Teatret, and in America he practically distributed them in person.

There are letters to Irene Gysi, to Helene Weigel (who refused to participate in the seminar), to Benno Besson and Hans Reiner from Deutsches Theatre (Barba contacted them when Helene Weigel withdrew), to Stanisław Brzozowski (first actor of the Henryk Tomaszewski pantomime theatre in Wrocław), to Ryszard Cieślak, etc.; the binder also contains documents with detailed information about the lodging conditions of guests (complicated by the fact that Odin was a young and very poor theatre) and the schedule of activities.

### ***Odin-Activities, b. 7***

Ex-museo. The binder contains the correspondence and other documents about the organization of the seminars from the spring (April) to the summer of 1969.

See Barba's book about his apprenticeship with Grotowski, *Land of Ashes and Diamonds* (1999), Taviani, (1975) and Berg, *Treklång*. (1986; A complete Italian translation and a partial English translation are kept in Publications, b. 17).



As in the case of b. 6, this material is useful in order to reconstruct the activities of the Odin Teatret before its great international success, as the seminars organized by the Odin Teatret quickly gathered some international interest.

Binder 7 contains correspondence between Barba, Agnete Strøm and Birgitte Jensen and the teachers of the seminars, the participants and the aspiring participants. Similar to binder 6, these documents are useful to reconstruct Odin's activities before their international breakthrough, considering that the seminars organized by the Odin Teatret soon acquired some international notice. Binder 7 contains documents about the organization of the seminars (for example, problems with visas, bureaucratic procedures for work permits from the police), as well as letters from and to Stanisław Brzozowski (first actor of the Henryk Tomaszewski pantomime theatre in Wrocław); letters from and to Joseph Chaikin; letters from and to Grotowski and Cieślak; letters from and to Jolanda Rodio; letters from and to Giuseppe Bertolucci; letters from and to Christine Combe; letters from and to participants from different parts of the world requesting information about how to take part in the seminars; letters from and to Stanley Rosenberg; letters from and to Thomas Walker (an actor in Rosenberg's group). His letter dated 31 August with a final assessment of the seminar is particularly interesting.

There is a list of daily activities and the explanation of what should happen during the seminar (for example, in the previous year Grotowski had gone without Cieślak and so the work he proposed was that groups who worked on his "method" show their work and he comments on it); several lists of participants; letters from and to Jean-Louis Barrault; letters from and to Étienne Decroux; letters from and to Ingemar Lindh; letters from and to Marc Fumaroli; letters from and to Jacques Lecoq; letters from and to Anthony Serchio (director of The Poor Theatre Company, established in 1968 in New York); letters from and to Richard Schechner.

One of the letters is from Schechner who introduces himself to Barba and asks to take part in Grotowski's seminar with the eleven people of his group (Barba accepts but later they decided not to participate once they understood that they would not be working full-time with Grotowski, but just presenting their work and being judged by him); letters from and to Mino Vianello. There are also letters from and to Danish theatre personalities (generally, it was Ludvigsen who tried to increase the contact and establish relationships with the traditional theatre environment). Considering the level of the teachers, their letters are significant documents although the messages are not particularly relevant.

***Odin-Activities, b. 8*** ("Trening [meaning 'training' in Norwegian and Danish]. Odin-Teatret")

The binder belonged to Torgeir Wethal who gave it to the archives in September 2009. It contains a typed list of training exercises, dated 25 November 1964. There are also descriptions of plastic and pantomime exercises with explanatory pencil sketches (the sketches are not by Torgeir, perhaps they are by Anne Trine Grimnes, an Odin actress from its foundation until 1968). This list is much more detailed than private notes and at the end of the binder there are several copies, as if it was meant to be distributed to the others. The binder also contains a chapter from Barba's book *Alla ricerca del teatro perduto* (1965), with handwritten corrections by Barba (in red) and his wife Judy (in pencil).

***Odin-Activities, b. 9*** ("Bali-Itsur-Odin")

It contains materials about the Asian seminars reorganized by the Odin Teatret during the 1970s. There are contracts, letters to and from Ferruccio Marotti (a theatre scholar who collaborated on



Eugenio Barba with Kai K. Nielsen, the mayor of Holstebro, in 1966. Nielsen invited the Odin Teatret in the name of a cultural policy in order to improve the quality of life in his town. This is a turning point for the Odin Teatret. In some way, its history as a theatre-laboratory begins with the acquisition of this house. Unknown Photographer. Photographic Fonds, Series Digital, Subseries Holstebro Museum.

the project), letters to Toni Cots, memos, etc. Barba's interest for Asian theatres even pre-dates the foundation of the Odin Teatret.

### ***Odin-Activities, b. 10***

Ex-museo. It contains various types of informational material from the beginning of the 1970s: information sheets about some performances (for example, about *Johan Sebastian Bach*, the clown performance); presentations of the Odin Teatret; a photocopied booklet by Centro di Pontedera about the Odin Teatret; an issue of "La Biennale" (September 1975): *Immagini da una realtà senza teatro*; translations of an essay by F. Taviani about the Odin Teatret in Carpignano Salentino (in Spanish); a photocopied text, apparently the programme of *Ornitofilene*.

Some calendars of activities from 1966 to 1971 are especially useful because they are very detailed. Also useful and interesting are the series of translations in French of reviews of *Min Fars Hus* by Danish critics and journalists (one of the reviews is by the journalist Jørgen Anton, who later worked for Danish television and is one of the oldest friends of the Odin Teatret). There is a typescript by the Swedish sociology professor Ingvar Holm: the result of a survey on the audience of *Ferai* (for example, he stressed the difference in reactions to the same scene between habitual theatre goers and first-time spectators, as well as the way their attention is directed towards different scenes taking place simultaneously). See also b. 23.



Eugenio Barba, circa 1966, not long after the foundation of the Odin Teatret. Photo Torgeir Wethal. Photographic Fonds, Series Negatives, Subseries Torgeir Wethal, b. 6 2/2.

### ***Odin-Activities, b. 11***

Ex-museo. It contains materials about the *Min Fars Hus* tour, mainly in France and Italy, at the beginning of the 1970s. This was the performance, and the moment, in which the Odin Teatret changed and actively extended its network of contacts.

Most of the documents are letters about the preparation of the tour, when the international career of the Odin Teatret was still relatively new (for example, there is a note with useful English expressions, such as “in accordance with your agreement”, “receipt requested”, etc.). There are very interesting documents about Ruggero Bianchi: the Odin Teatret was in the Teatro Regio in Turin (Spring 1973) for some showings of the performance and some encounters. Bianchi wrote an article that was published after significant cuts but he sent the complete typescript to Barba. The article and the various letters between Barba and Bianchi describe a significant picture of the impact of the Odin Teatret in an extraneous environment during those years. This impact is documented here by an external witness who was perplexed but not hostile: he participated differently from usual. His article is also a beautiful piece of testimony about a demonstration of the “Swiss exercises” (the new training developed by Iben Nagel Rasmussen). Other interesting letters throughout the binder are the ones about organizational matters: they show the gradual concentration of Italian “brother groups” around the Odin Teatret, such as Teatro Tascabile from Bergamo (there is a letter from Barba to Renzo Vescovi, director of the group, an excellent document about the tour in Bergamo, probably the one during which Roberta Carreri, who would later join the Odin Teatret, met them). There are letters by Roberto Bacci from Pontedera Teatro and a telegram to Pierfranco Zappareddu (about Zappareddu, see Activities, binder 27; Fonds Barba, series Barba-Odin, binder 5).