
Goosun Art-illery presents

HamletZar: Dissection

A theatre research conference
8 – 9 February 2010
The Pit, Barbican Centre

PROGRAMME

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Introduction

The first phase of the HamletZar project (August 2008 through February 2010) focused on developing the structure of the project, training the associate artists and setting the initial framework for research, shaping the principal ideas of HamletZar. To conclude the first phase we are now organising a two-day conference, **HamletZar: Dissection** at the Barbican Centre that brings with it a period of reflection. In this conference three major aspects of HamletZar will be discussed: Training, Zar ceremony and the Encounter of two Worlds.

In order to illustrate the point of departure of the HamletZar project, its artistic, cultural and socio-political roots, we have invited thinkers, theatre practitioners and academics whose longstanding practice and theories have hugely influenced the ethos of and thoughts behind the HamletZar project.

The HamletZar project was formed around the idea that theatre for us is not restricted to performance-making. We are interested in theatre as a progressive cultural vocation, as a way of life. The activities of the HamletZar project such as residencies, research, exchange and seminars are not extra luxurious events about theatre. Together with training and performance-making, they are what we consider theatre to be: a constellation of various cultural activities that creates a milieu where art can become a tool to render actual social changes, rather than being a mere decorative objects.

Vahid (director)
Lene Bang (producer)
Goosun Art-illery

Programme Day One:

Training and its political implications

- 10.00: Arrival
- 10.30: Introduction by Lau H. Andreasen & Vahid
- 10.45: Eugenio Barba & Julia Varley, Odin Teatret
“What is training and why is it political?”
Lecture & work demonstration.
- 12.15: Q&A Session: Eugenio Barba & Lau H. Andreasen
- 12.45: Lunch Break
- 13.30: Julian Boal: “The ‘Arsenal’ of Theatre of the Oppressed”
- 14.10: Q&A Session: Julian Boal & Lau H. Andreasen
- 14.25: Paul Attmere, Goossun Art-illery,
work demonstration: “Bad Faith”
- 14.40: Vahid, Director of Goossun Art-illery:
“Towards Another Political Imagination”
- 15.10: Dafne Louzioti, Goossun Art-illery,
Work demonstration
“Study: An Exercise in Development”
- 15.25: Q&A Session: Vahid & Lau H. Andreasen
- 15.40: Break
- 15.50: “Training and its political implication”, a panel discussion moderated by Robert Gordon, Goldsmiths College, University of London
With Eugenio Barba, Julian Boal and Vahid
- 16.40: Conclusion by Lau H. Andreasen.
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Programme Day Two:

Zar & Encounter of two Worlds

- 10.00: Arrival
- 10.30: Introduction by Lau H. Andreasen
- 10.40: Vahid, Director, Goossun Art-illery:
“The Roots of HamletZar”
- 11.00: Professor Ioan Lewis, Emeritus Professor,
London School of Economics:
“AFRICAN SPIRIT POSSESSION (prototype Zar)”
- 11.30: Q&A Session: Ioan Lewis & Lau H. Andreasen
- 11.45: Break
- 11.55: Wind of Genie (Baad-e Jen), a documentary film
by Nasser Taqyaie
- 12.15: Lunch Break
- 13.00: Madjid Khaladj: The Music of Zar
- 14.00: Q&A Session: M. Khaladj & Lau H. Andreasen
- 14.15: Daryoush Ashouri:
“Transition from the Orient to the Third World”
- 15.00: Q&A Session: D. Ashouri & Lau H. Andreasen
- 15.15: Break
- 15.25: Open discussion, moderated by Becka McFadden,
Goossun Art-illery
Panelists: Vahid, Dafne Louzioti, Daryoush Ashouri
and Madjid Khaladj
- 16.20: Conclusion by Vahid and Lau H. Andreasen
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Speakers' Biographies and Synopses

(In order of appearance)

What is Training and why is it Political?

By Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley

Training, consisting in physical and vocal exercises, became the path of apprenticeship in the alternative culture of theatre groups after 1968. As far as they permitted the growth of a theatre culture parallel to the traditional one, training can be called "political" in the sense that was one of the tools that changed technical expression, dramaturgical devices and relationships with the spectators.

Odin Teatret was the first theatre group that in 1964 prepared its actors solely by means of exercises. After 45 years, the same actors still have a time and space within their daily activity which they call training.

The lecture will clarify the historical background and the personal motivations that made Odin Teatret become a pioneer in this field. The story and description will develop according to a double perspective: the explanations of the director/teacher who himself never trained, and the demonstration by the actor, who after years of practice, has become a teacher herself.

Eugenio Barba was born in 1936 in Italy and grew up in the village Gallipoli. In 1961 he went to Warsaw (Poland) to study theatre directing at the State Theatre School, but left one year later to join Jerzy Grotowski, who at that time was the leader of Teatr 13 Rzedow in Opole and in 1979 Eugenio Barba founded ISTA, International School of Theatre Anthropology. During the past forty-five years Eugenio Barba has directed 71 productions, with Odin Teatret and with ISTA intercultural *Theatrum Mundi* Ensemble, some of which have required up to two years of preparation. Eugenio Barba has been awarded honorary doctorates from various international Universities, as well as winning the Danish Academy Award, Mexican Theatre Critics' prize, Diego Fabbri prize, Pirandello International prize, and the Sonning Prize by the University of Copenhagen.

Julia Varley was born in 1954 in London, Great Britain and joined Odin Teatret in 1976. Apart from acting she is active in directing, teaching, organising and writing. Since 1990 she has been involved in the conception and organisation of ISTA (International School of Theatre Anthropology). Since its beginning in 1986 she has been active in the Magdalena Project, a network of women in contemporary theatre. She is also artistic director of the Transit Festival in Holstebro and editor of *The Open Page*, a journal devoted to women's work in theatre. Julia Varley has written two books: *Wind in the West* - a novel by a theatre character and *Pietre d'acqua - Taccuino di una attrice dell'Odin Teatret*. Her articles and essays have been published in journals such as *Mime Journal*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, *Teatro e Storia*, *Conjunto*, *Lapis* and *Máscara*.

“Arsenal” of Theatre of the Oppressed

By Julian Boal

“Theatre of the Oppressed” and “Games for Actors and Non-actors” are the two most celebrated books of my father, Augusto Boal. The title of the first one was a little scandal in itself: Theatre of the oppressed necessarily implies that there is a theatre that is not of the oppressed and you could even be suggesting that there exists a theatre belonging to the oppressor. Artistic expression and political emancipation are dissociated and, at the same time, rearticulated in this very title.

“Games for actors and non-actors” on the contrary seems to be open to everyone, which was also a form of attack on theatre. The actors are no longer the ones that, thanks to a thorough training, have earned the right to appear on stage. On the contrary, the ‘actor’ appears here as another figure of the monopolisation of speech, another dispossession of the words describing those that have no legitimacy. The ‘games’ are for actors and non-actors because their aim is not to specialise but to create a time and space in which the intelligence of each and everyone can be manifested and deployed.

Julian Boal worked as a freelance workshop leader alone or as his father Augusto Boal’s assistant in more than 20 countries. He is one of the founding members of the Group of Theatre of the Oppressed - Paris, group which deals mainly with the oppressions linked to salaried relationship. He has been collaborating with several groups around the world - such as Jana Sanskriti (India), Coringa (Croatia), Pa’tothom (Spain) and CTO-Rio (Brazil) - for the conception of their festivals or meetings on TO.

Training: Towards Another Political Imagination

By Vahid (director of Goossun Art-illery)

To transform means to be transformed. This is an essential principle of training at Goossun Art-illery. Training is a response to a personal quest, an urge to resist against our social conditioning. Here training is a tool to decompose the “natural” and recompose the “ideal.”

Vahid is the founder of Goossun Art-illery, a film/theatre director and a performer trainer. He began his artistic venture in Iran at the age of sixteen with an award winning short film. Today Vahid concentrates his main focus on theatre, with a special interest in training performers. The training method he has developed was initially influenced by the experiments of Stanislavski and Grotowski—through limited access to their work in post-revolutionary Iran. Vahid formed Goossun Art-illery in Tehran in 1997 but due to restrictions and censorship he left Iran for Denmark in 2001 at an invitation from Eugenio Barba to study the work of the Odin Theatre. This became a new beginning, which led to new strands of research that became the core of the HamletZar project.

Vahid’s speech will be accompanied by two work demonstrations by members of Goossun Art-illery: “Study: An Exercise in Development” by **Dafne Louzioti** and “Bad Faith” by **Paul Attmere**.

Moderators

Lau Hesselbæk Andreasen is Head of the Board of Goossun Art-illery. Based in London since 1996, Lau heads up the UK subsidiary of a Danish company that runs an international community of practice network for communication professionals in large organisations; promoting knowledge sharing among peers with similar roles. Lau did a BA in European Theatre Arts and a postgraduate in Arts Management and Cultural Policy. He has previously both performed in and directed various performance projects. Some of Lau's many areas of interest within performing arts include looking at theatre and performance practices in relation to their socio-economic contexts; performance work which uses other sources of material / points of departure than traditional dramatic texts and the theatre of the absurd. Lau is very interested in the cross-disciplinary work and the research aspects of the HamletZar project.

Robert Gordon is Professor of Drama and Director of the Pinter Centre for Research in Writing and Performance. Before joining Goldsmiths in 1990, he was Senior Lecturer at Royal Holloway College. He has taught at the University of Kent, and been Visiting Professor in Theater at Duke University, the State University of New York at Binghamton, Skidmore College, New York and at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. He was for eight years Director of the University of London International Graduate Summer School and has taught acting and performance theory for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the London Actors' Centre, the Drama Studio, the Acting Company and the Natal Playhouse, South Africa, and for directors at the British Theatre Association.

Becka McFadden leads Goossun Art-illery's research team and also works on UK development and fundraising for the HamletZar project. As a freelance theatre artist, dramaturge and development and marketing consultant, she has worked with numerous arts organizations in the US, UK and Czech Republic. She is the founder and producing artistic director of Beautiful Confusion Productions, which has performed in Philadelphia and Prague. Becka holds an MA in theatre from Villanova University and is currently pursuing her PhD in Drama at Goldsmiths College, University of London.

AFRICAN SPIRIT POSSESSION (prototype Zar)

By Ioan Lewis

“Sociologically we may conveniently distinguish two contrasting possession contexts corresponding to two different social contexts of religiosity. In one people are possessed by the spiritual agencies which sustain public morality and whose veneration constitutes mainstream religion. Call this shamanism if you like. In the second, the spirits at play do not sustain morality, but on the contrary challenge and threaten it. In the former mainline religions, male agents are typically possessed by ancestors. In the latter, women are possessed by wayward marginal spirits outside the official pantheon.” - excerpt from African Spirit Possession, on a prototype of Zar.”

Ioan Lewis is Emeritus Professor at the London School of Economics and has lectured at numerous prestigious universities and colleges across the world, including Berkely, Glasgow, Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Helsinki, Kyoto, UCL and Rome. He has conducted extensive field work amongst the Somali of the Horn of Africa in a series of visits starting in 1955 and ending in 1992, and also in Zambia and Malaysia. He has taught Social Anthropology in Africa, Asia, North America and Europe. A former Director of the African Institute, he is regarded as a world authority on Somalis and a major British social anthropologist.

The Music of Zar

By Madjid Khaladj

Zar ceremony has its own defining characteristics. The Island of Qeshm has long been the intersection of trade, the majority of which occurs between Persians and Gulf Arabs. However, European and Africans have also settled or passed through this busy Island, thus making it bustling melting pot of rich cultures. This variety has, in turn, helped to shape the musical aspects of the Zar ceremony. There are strong percussive elements in the ceremony, which help the Zarmama or Zarpapa enter a trance in order to enable their healing powers. The main instruments played include the Dohol, the Daf, and the Chuk. Participants accompany the rhythms by clapping their hands. In certain regions we also find string instruments, like the Tambire, which add a melodic element. The instruments take a central role in the ceremony and are considered sacred. The study of the musical aspects of this ritual are crucial to understanding the mystical roots of classical Persian music which are influenced by these rich regional and local traditions. The Zar ceremony is undoubtedly one of the most important spiritual rituals in Iran.

Born in Ghazvin, Iran in 1962, **Madjid Khaladj** began studying the tombak at the age of seven. As a traditional musician and skilled pedagogue in several instruments, he is unanimously recognized as a master of Iranian percussions. Highly active internationally, he has performed in festivals, concerts, and conferences around the world. He has produced various recordings and art movie soundtracks (especially with Ry Cooder and Lisa Gerrard), and has appeared in radio and television broadcasts.

“Transition from Orient to the Third World”

by Daryoush Ashouri

This talk will concentrate on the perennial, animated debates surrounding the dichotomies of the so-called “traditional” versus “modern”, “developed” versus “underdeveloped” and “Occidental” versus “Oriental”, and their complicated relationships. As the title suggests, it is an attempt to pull focus from the economic, social, and political aspects of the matter, ordinarily central in such discussions, and instead try to explore and emphasise its historical and cultural characteristics. The talk will hopefully shed light on a hitherto undeservedly overlooked aspect of the problem at hand.

Although the discussion utilizes the social, scientific and philosophical concepts as its descriptive tools and tries to be faithful to the scientific objectivity, as far as possible, within this context, it simultaneously reflects views of a “native” observer not completely detached from the phenomenon of the “transition from the Orient to the Third World”, but who has experienced it existentially with all its psychological disturbances, social and political turmoil, hopefulness and disappointments, exhilarating and horrifying events.

The talk will attempt to explore, phenomenologically, reasons for the prevalence of the “unhappy consciousness” amongst the Third World Intelligentsia in a condensed manner.

Daryoush Ashouri was born August 2, 1938 in Tehran. He is a prominent Iranian thinker, author, translator and public intellectual who studied at the Faculty of Law, Political Sciences and Economics of the University of Tehran, and has been visiting professor of Persian language and literature at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and the Oriental Institute of the Oxford University. As translator, he has translated numerous classical literary and philosophical works by Nietzsche, Machiavelli, Shakespeare and others into Persian.



HamletZar is made by:

Director: Vahid

Producer: Lene Bang

Production Manager: Maya Foa

Strategy & Development Manger: Mette Bjaerge

Administration: Alexandra Toulze

UK Fundraiser & Development: Becka McFadden

GA Board of directors: Lau Hesselbaek Andreasen,
Jesper Banzon, Kirsten Gelting

Performers & associate artists: Paul Attmere, Celia Escudero Sánchez,
Dafne Louzioti, Julia Giertz, Steven Loader, Costa Tovarnisky, Paula Siu,
Janice Im, Jessica Mackinnon, Tereza Havlickova, Monica De Ioanni,
Matt Scott, John Close, Debbie Kent, Sue Balint, Soheil Parsa,
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Media Team: Ausra Linkeviciute, Ronit Meranda,
Francisca Maria Bancalari, Sabrina Chemloul, Eirini Dermizaki

Audio-visual designer: Jens Bureau

Guest teachers: Roberta Carreri, Augusto Omolú, Tage Larsen

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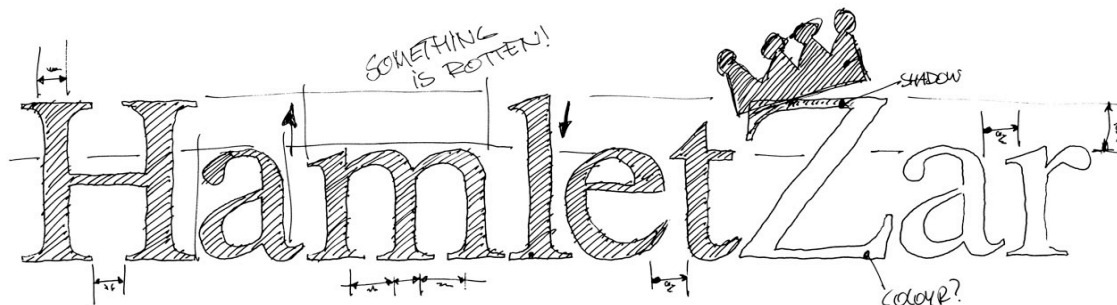
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I am interested in being kept updated on:

- Future HamletZar events and performances
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- Making a donation to Goossun Art-illery

For more details, please visit our website, www.goossun.com/hamletzar



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