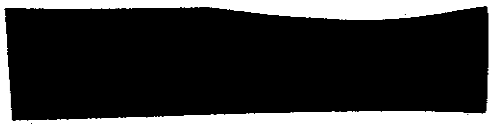
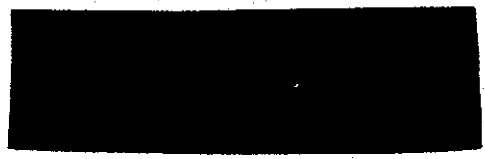




DARIO FO'S THEATRICAL TECHNIQUE AND POLITICAL CRITICISM by VALGERDUR ÞÓRSÓSSON



It's Heptasyllabic!!



DARIO FO'S THEATRICAL TECHNIQUE AND POLITICAL CRITICISM

PLATFORM PERFORMANCE SCRIPT

BY VALGERDUR THORSÐÓTTIR

TUTOR: TIM KEDGE

PERFORMANCE DATE: 09.12. 1994.

IV

MA ALTRO NON MI SEMBRA GIUSTO. PER QUESTO PROGETTO
HO PRESO IL MIGLIORE VOTO DEI TUTTI PROGETTI E NON
LO AUREI POTUTO FARE SENZA TE, QUINDI TE LO REGALO.

SONO ARRIVATA ALLA FRUTTA DI QUESTA LETTERA E
QUINDI TI SALUTO.

SPERO CHE QUESTA LETTERA TI TROVA BENE E CHE IL
SOLE BRILLA.

TANTI SALUTI

VALA ÞÓRSDÓTTIR

BÆÐRABORGARSTÍGUR 52

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Jongleur: Kind people gather around and listen. The Jongleur is here. I am the Jongleur. I leap and pirouette and make you laugh. I make fun of those in power, and I show you how puffed up and conceited are the bigshots who go around making wars in which we are the ones who get slaughtered. I reveal them for what they are. I pull out the plug and psss... they deflate.

(Mistero Buffo, p. 48, by Dario Fo).

I move from one place to the other, play on the streets and wake up the people - they like me, - but the authorities don't. Funny is it not?? The authorities prefer that the public stays sound asleep. ZZZZ

Don't think that I am new in this business - oh no, I've been around since the middle ages and the bigshots have always tried to get rid of me. They have flayed me alive, cut out my tongue, and thrown me out of the cities...but I always come back. I will introduce you to different people and show you tiny moments...

(Adapted from discussions about the Jongleur in Mistero Buffo, by Dario Fo, and from his talks on television performing Mistero Buffo - which I have on video tapes, - as well as my own words).

Now is the time and place that I begin to clown and teach you...

(Mistero Buffo, p. 48, by Dario Fo)

hocus, pocus, filiyocus...hoc est corpus fili et locus...
In nomine spiritu sancti...Amen...benedicti sacramentum....
Amen...amen...

(A mixture of sounds of magic and latin, words from religious chants and salms).

Pope Boniface: I'm in a good voice today. Hey where are you going? Where has everyone gone too?? You can't leave me like this, I'm the pope! Who's that?? Who? Who is that with the cross ??? Jesus? Ah, Christ. Jesus Christ...Look, what a terrible state he is in. Now I see why they call him "poor christ"...hahaha... Good heavens...Let's get moving...I don't like watching things like this. You say it would be better if I went over to him? So that I can show people that I'm a good person, show myself carrying the cross. Good idea.

(Adapted from Boniface VIII, Mistero Buffo by Dario Fo, p. 81/82)

Pope Boniface: Get away cripple. Out of my way.

(My own words)

Cripple: Augh, hey who do you...sorry. Who's coming? Jesus? Christ! Oh God, I better get moving...fast or I will be miracled instantly. I would have to go out and look for work so as to be able to survive. Christ I must hurry! I don't want to be healed. It is not nice of him - not at all - it is happening all the time - he does miracles like that... without asking first, would you

like to be able to move your legs ? Shall I do a miracle on you ?
No he doesn't ask for a permission..it is not fair.

(Adapted from Blind man and the cripple, Mistero Buffo by Dario Fo, and my own words).

Pope Boniface: Hello Jesus, how are you ? Don't you recognise me ? I'm Boniface. - boniface the pope....What do you mean who is the pope ??? Come take all this stuff off...and the ring. Don't let him see that I've got rings. He's got terribly fixed ideas that one. A very odd character...take my shoes. He likes people with bare feet. Quick give me something to dirty myself with. Dirty me all over. He likes people like this. What do you expect. He's crazy. Do you recognise me now? I am your son. Look I kneel before you. I who have never kneeled before anyone, I, before... Jesus, for God's sake pay attention for a moment. What is this ??? He's ignoring me. Me. Me? What did you say ?? That I have killed monks ?? Me?? Done wrong ?? It's not true. This is gossip. Lies. Told out of jealousy. I've heard a few things about you too my friend. My friend,...Jesus, Jesus, look into my eyes. I love you and I have always had nothing but good feelings for the monks. Get me a monk quickly. I love them. Where you are supposed to find monks ? Go to the prison, it is full of them. Jesus,...look, a monk, how splendid (kisses a monk) what a stink. Jesus, let me help you carry your cross, because I'm strong, I'm an ox, you know, out of the way Cyrenian (kicks someone out) I'll help you,.. that's heavy... no don't push Jesus,...don't ...Good (kicked away) Christ. Kicking me. Me Boniface. Ah right, I tell you if your father gets to hear of this...wretch... I'll have you condemned...idealistic troublemaker...paper, pen.

(Adapted from Boniface VIII, Mistero Buffo by Dario Fo, p.81-84, as well as my own words).

To Prime minister of Italy, Mr. Andreotti. The Vatican 1977, Representative for countless citizens and organisations in Rome, express pain and protest at the desecratory and anti cultural television programme, Mistero Buffo by Dario Fo, to which profound humiliation added for the inconceivable vulgarity in a public transmission which vilifies the Italian nation in front of the whole world. Cardinal Vicar Ugo Poletti.

(Direct from Dario Fo and Franca Rame by David L. Hirst, p. 27).

Jongleur: I guess the Vatican was sorry that they're not allowed to cut tongues out of people anymore...Sometimes I wish I did not have the need to tell these things, but I can't help it. I get drawn into it...I have to show, point out issues which I find important, like for example, women, their needs and points of view. Centuries ago men decided that women had no sexual desires - I don't know what gave them that idea, but they might have come to this conclusion by using the theory that Eve was made out of Adams rib,- and as we all know, ribs have no sex drive, Ergo women don't have sexual desires....no...

(My own words).

Woman: no, no, please...please...
keep still...not like that, I can't breath. Wait. Yes of course I like making love, but I'd like a bit more...well I don't know how to put it... Your're squashing me flat...Get off me... Stop that. You're slobbering all over my face...No. No, not in my ear Yes, I like it OK but your tongue is going round like an egg-beater. My God how many hands have you got ? Let me breathe will you? Christ you weigh a ton...What have you been eating today ? I said get off me. At last. I'm pouring with sweat. You think that's supposed to be the way to make love ? Actually, yes, yes I do like making love, only I'd rather do it with a bit of feeling...What do you mean I'm being sentimental? There you go, I just knew you couldn't resist that crack. I said I like making love, but I'm not a bloody pin-ball machine. just slap 50p in the slot and all the lights start flashing and zing zing zing, bang bang wham. And if you feel like it, give it a bit of a whack. I am not a pin-ball machine. If you give me a whack, my tilt light comes on, get it ??? If a woman doesn't fall flat on her back, skirt up, knickers down, legs wide open and willing the minute you snap your fingers, she's a neurotic bitch. A middle class prude carrying on like a vestal virgin all because of her repressed-reactionary-imperialist-capitalist-masonig-Austro-Hungarian-churchridden-upbringing...Smart arse aren't I. And smart arse women are just ball-breakers aren't they? You'd much rather have a bimbo with no brain and a sexy giggle. oh, go away...why don't you leave me then...You know I don't mean it...no, no I'm not upset....

(The same old story, A woman alone & other plays by Franca Rame and Dario Fo, p. 49/50).

Jongleur:Oooooooh. There is a saying in Italian that says: Fare l'amore bene fa bene all'amore - or Making love well is good for love, the relationship. I guess he has never heard that one. Neenoooooneenoooooneenoooo...there is another saying that says: Policemen are as thick as porridge...neenoooooneenoooo Do you know how policemen tie their shoelaces ? I'll show you.

(An Italian saying and my own words).

Policeman: I never touched the bastard. The whole proceedings were very even tempered. I never got near him. NO. There was no violence, no massage, no karate, nothing like that. No. We were conducting our enquiries in a very lighthearted manner. Yes. Yes. We interrogated him lightheartedly. Yes. Yes. We told jokes.just the odd joke, Your Honour, - you should see the Inspector when he's on good form. Keeps us all in stitches. Yes hahaha. You remember the one with the blondine....hahaha.

(Adapted from Accidental Death of an Anarchist, by Dario Fo, p. 39/40).

Maniac: hmmm...I see, You see all this jocular banter explains a great deal that has often worried me. For instance I was holidaying in Bergamo a couple of summers back, during the time of the notorious "Monday Gang" affair, if you recall? Practically everyone in the village was under arrest, the café proprietor, the doctor even the priest, of course in the end they all turned out to be innocent. Still, my hotel, you see, was right next to the police-station and I simply could not get a wink of sleep the whole time

I was there for the shrieks and screams and slappings and loud thuds. Naturally, I assumed as any citizen who reads the papers watches TV would, that these were the sounds of suspects being beaten up under interrogation by brutal country coppers. All too clearly now I can see how mistaken my impressions were. Those shrieks I heard were shrieks of laughter., the screams were screams of merriment and mirth accompanied by thigh slapping convulsions of humourous hysteria:Hahaha, Jesus. No. That's enough. Help. Hahaha, no more. Help. I can see it all now, the wackey witty policemen,.. what jokers... sending their suspects spinning across the floor in fits of fun, smashing their heads on the tiles at the side-splitting japes : Ha stop it. Hahaha. No Please. Mercy. I can't take it anymore. This explains why so many perfectly ordinary, bored people suddenly dress themselves up as anarchists and revolutionaries, - they are perfectly innocent, they just want to get themselves arrested so they can have a fucking good laugh for once in their lives...hahhaa

(Adapted from Accidental Death of an Anarchist, by Dario Fo, p. 41 and 42).

Policeofficer: Mr. Dario Fo,- you are under arrest.

Dario Fo:hahahaha

Policeofficer: You have the right to remain silent...

Dario Fo:hahaha. I'm going to have a brilliant time, aren't I ? This going to be fun...hahaha...Don't worry,- It is just one of their strange jokes...don't worry...I'll be back, - we always come back...

(Police statement and my own words).

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DARIO FO'S THEATRICAL TECHNIQUE AND POLITICAL CRITICISM
PLATFORM PERFORMANCE LOG

Why I chose Dario Fo.

A few years ago I saw Dario Fo on television in Italy and his way of acting, the mime, the grotesqueness of his characters amazed me. I did not speak a word of Italian at that time, but still I was able to understand so much of what was going on and be amused by it. Then, just like today, one of my dreams was to actually meet him and preferably get to work with him or have classes in which he would teach. What struck me most at first was the size of his characters; he is able to play a character much bigger than life and still act him/her truthfully. That is an amazing skill, and takes a lot of practice, technique as well as courage. When I actually started to understand what he was playing, and when I started reading his plays, I got fascinated by the subjects he chooses to address in his plays and performances. He attacks society, politics, religion, - uses irony, twists situations and morals around, takes accepted stories and gives us a different point of view. He makes us think about the world we live in, our history and who made that history; he makes us wonder about the truth in what we have been taught during the years, plants doubts about accepted values and "facts", makes the audience be critical about their surroundings. The best bit, I think, is that after his performances (his and Franca Rame's) there is a discussion, the actor/actors and the audience discuss the piece and its relevance to life, discuss Italian politics, religion, women's issues, workers issues anything that sparks off from the performance. His performances are very popular in Italy because he is an excellent performer and a very clever guy. He follows the news very closely and people expect him to come up with criticism, irony which is right up to date, which during the years he has done and got into trouble for. He has been sued by various people, arrested and put into prison because of his art. It is not strange that the authorities have often been afraid of his power, because he rattles their cage, hits them hard and everybody is watching - he might or rather his performances might instigate strikes, demonstrations and all sorts of trouble... What I also find very interesting is how he takes stories from the past, some of them that are never mentioned in historybooks, he tells them and connects them with modern times and by doing that he shows how controlled the masses have been by authorities. For example in his discussion or prologue to his performance Boniface VIII he tells a story about a monk called Segalello, who preached that the church should give its wealth to the poor, and that the land should be given to those who work it; Segalello: "Fools! Imbeciles! The land is yours; they (land-owners) took it for themselves, and then they gave it to you to work. The land belongs to those who work it, don't you see?" "Just imagine, in the Middle Ages, going round saying things like that: the land belongs to those who work it. You'd have to be raving mad to go round saying it even nowadays... Anyway they promptly arrested him and burned him at the stake, himself and his whole brotherhood of "Sackcloth" Friars".

(Mistero Buffo, p. 73/74).

"Needless to say, this history which I have briefly summarised for you, receives no mention in the history books used in our schools. This of course is quite natural. After all, who organises our education system? Who decides what is to be taught? Who has a material interest in not letting certain things be known about? The employers, the landowners and the bourgeoisie."

(Mistero Buffo, p. 76/77).

It is clear that I admire Dario Fo, I admire people who search for truth, for fairness. He might not always be right, but that is not the important thing, the importance lies in the question, - the subject has been raised.

For me as a theatre person, as an actress, it is important to have something to say. It has to be entertaining as well of course, but it has to have a point. This created a problem, that is to say; my great respect for Dario Fo, and my need for "saying" something... How can I do him justice in my platform? Can I do him justice ??? What am I going to say ?????

Choice of material.

I decided to take bits out of different plays of his which would show the variety of his works rather than focusing on one play or one issue, like religion.

I decided on "Boniface VIII" in order to show how he points out the hypocrisy within the church, and I squeezed a bit of "The blind man and the cripple" in order to show a different point of view on an established "good" thing (miracles), and also to try to show some of Dario Fo's acting techniques, where mime, size, and precision is very important. It is an example of his solo performances which take hours. Then I chose one of his pieces about women, and finally a tiny bit of "Accidental Death of an Anarchist" to show his attack on the police.

It was not easy to choose extracts to use, partly because I liked so many, but mainly because they are often made of very quick dialogues which turn and twist and become ridiculous but at the end make a very strong irony, and to do that kind of farce alone, and get the point across, - I thought was too ambitious. I tried to find chunks which were not too complicated for me as a solo performer to act out without losing the context and the situation. I also wanted to show a different way of acting, from grotesque larger than life-comedy to sinister comedy.

Then I also thought that I could use two of these extracts and connect them with reality, real events from Dario Fo's life, - which I think underline what he is saying in his plays.

It is ironic that the Vatican sent a protest to the PM of Italy because of "Mistero Buffo", for me it shows how humourless and hypocritical it is.

Links.

The three bits I had chosen out of his plays could not stand on their own if they were to make any collective picture, or sense in general so I had to find a way to link them together. I decided on the beginning, the opening bit quite early, it simply fitted the piece - I found the beginning during my research while I was reading about the Jongleurs in Italian society. The more I read about the Jongleurs, about their function within the society the more I felt I could use that kind of character to link the piece, to play the piece. These Jongleurs were people who acted like newspapers (that is to say, there were no newspapers so these people told the news, acted out news and also social criticism)- they were very important for the public which did not know how to read or write, - they spread the news and stories about how people were treated differently in different places - told jokes about the society, which were bitter truth disguised in ironic jokes and stories. The church did not like the Jongleurs, nor any other authority, because he/they informed the public about them (authorities) and "revealed them for what they are" . Dario Fo uses the Jongleur in some of his pieces and does in fact a theatre piece about how the Jongleur was born in "The birth of the Jongleur" in Mistero Buffo. The more I thought about those Jongleurs I felt Dario Fo is one of them, and I was quite happy to read later on that he himself identifies with them.

"When I relate the origin of the giullare in Mistero buffo, I'm able to tell the story in a convincing way because I believe in it, I believe in the mission which the giullare originally chose for himself as the jester of the people. I also believe in it because I've experienced what it means to be the jester of the bourgeoisie. When we put on plays for...occupied factories, our greatest joy was being able to follow our comrades' struggles from close at hand, and then to make use of them."

"Fo identifies with the giullare, and sees his role as the modern equivalent of the mediaeval giullare playing to an industrial working-class audience instead of mediaeval peasants" giullare=Jongleur (Dario Fo People's Court Jester Mitchell T. P. 21 and 22).

It became clear for me that the Jongleur was what I had to use. By using him as a "storyteller" it would naturally lead to the real events which I am going to demonstrate, and also the Jongleur changes into Dario Fo without too much struggle, it should in fact happen quite naturally.

I was able to use a chunk out of "The birth of the Jongleur" for the introduction of the Jongleur, but I had to write a lot of the rest myself which was a bit difficult because I did not want it to stand out like amateur-writing. I also was not sure what kind of things the Jongleur would say in order to link those bits of moments together. I tried to make up phrases of information which would flow easily as well as having some reference to what had previously been happening, and then take it to the next moment. Like for example in the beginning of the introduction of the Jongleur he says:"...the bigshots have always tried to get rid of me. They have flayed me alive, cut out my tongue, and thrown me out of the cities,...but I always come back".

(My platform performance script).

This fact about the Jongleurs is essential for the audience to

be able to understand why Pope Boniface turns into Cardinal Poletti and writes a telegram to Mr. Andreotti as well as in the end when the maniac turns into Dario Fo and he is being arrested and says: "...don't worry...I'll be back,- we always come back." (The end of my platform script).

I also tried to put things into historical context in perhaps a rather bizarre or clowny way, to link them more coherently together. For example straight after the telegram there is a comment from the Jongleur where he says that he is sure that the Vatican would have liked to cut Dario Fo's tongue out, like they used to do,- and then later on he starts to talk about Adams rib and uses that story to take us to the "love" scene - I think that is important, that is to say, to use something related to the moment just shown, at that point catholic stories, to take the audience smoothly further into the play.

All the links are worked in that way, or at least I tried to do them that way. The first one goes from hocus pocus into hoc est corpus (out:of:this is the body of christ...) so there magic and religion are in juxtaposition. The last link is probably the weakest link of them all,- it goes from an Italian saying about love, into a saying about how stupid policemen are and then into a joke which takes the Jongleur into the character of a policeman, and starts the final scene.

I wanted to put together, side by side Dario Fo's politics and what they led to; the reaction from the authorities which he makes fun of, in order to stress his point, his irony.

The fact that the pieces out of his plays gradually change into those "real" events is my attempt to underline the unfairness, humourlessness and fear of the authorities.

Working process.

"The actor who has the audience eating out of the palm of his hand is like the virtuoso violinist who no longer has to watch his fingers as he plays, nor ever keep an eye on the bow. He feels the notes as they leave the violin, and listens to them as they float back. You will never see a great maestro of violin or piano with his eyes fixed on the keyboard or on the instrument: the instrument has become part of him. In the same way, a skilled mime has no need to watch his own hands or to check their movement. The same should be true of a great actor with his voice or his body. (The Tricks of the Trade, by Dario Fo, p.82).

I want to achieve this control, - and I know Dario Fo has this power. When I read this paragraph, it made me think of why I never mention to anyone that I studied piano for 3 years... it is because I always compared myself during the studies, to great pianists like Ashkenazy and obviously in that comparison I was never good enough and those 3 years are so little and lousy that I have been ashamed of mentioning them... Working on this platform took me right back to my piano lessons, I found myself blocking myself because of respect for Dario Fo's great technique and for fear of never getting anywhere near him in order to be able to show what he is about. I had to stop comparing myself to "great" people, and throw myself into the work and stop scrutinizing, tearing myself a part, I had to realize that I, Vala, was showing what I think Dario Fo is about and I was not trying to be him. It took a while to realize this simple fact. - And not until then I could actually start putting my platform on its feet.

I had to play with the Jongleur, try different things out in order to find some kind of character and his way of moving. I wondered what kind of things he would do, and decided that he would be rather playful like the fools in English theatre, but perhaps a tiny bit more serious. By trying him out in front of various friends of mine, I found out that he has to have a lot of energy, charm and playfulness, especially in the beginning, even though he gets more serious later on when he takes the audience into more serious moments. Still the lightness of his character has to be there throughout. I started by using movements which had no connection with what he was saying, for example all of a sudden his leg would start going into the air and he would slam it down, but it goes up again because it has got a will of its own. This can be very pleasant and interesting to watch, a kind of Lazzi, but I found it was distracting the audience from what he was saying - what he says has to come across clearly in order to keep the piece together, so I scrapped this idea.

It became obvious that demonstrating movements worked best, so that became my task for the Jongleur, to find large demonstrative movements which were pleasant to watch.

I found myself usually starting with far too many movements, I tried to do too much, which led to sweat pouring down my face after the first 3 minutes. When I showed these "busy" sequences my audience simply became tired of all this fuss on stage, and they also became confused because I was showing too much which led to lack of clarity. I had to take the movements down to basics, choose strong gestures and use them with precision and purpose.

The words he uses or rather the text he says which I made up was created during improvisations like for example, hocus pocus the famous equivalent for acracadabra - changing into: hoc est corpus... There is a theory (according to my teacher of Icelandic in Iceland) that says that hocus pocus originates from the Sacrament ceremony in catholic mass. When the mass was conducted in latin, the public in non-latin speaking countries could not understand a word of what was being said, and had to get explanations afterwards. We can imagine what it was like for them to be told to believe that wine was the blood of Christ, and the tiny cracker was his flesh (hoc est corpus = here is body loosely translated), what a magic.... and this bit of the phrase, hoc est corpus, the magic words, changed by word of mouth into hocus pocus, used by magicians today. This I found perfect for the Jongleur to use.

Boniface VIII and the cripple.

I enjoy doing this piece very much, but during rehearsals I have found myself rushing, not taking my time in creating the situation and loosing the mimed objects, as well as focus. It is difficult to create the other characters on stage, which are not there in reality, it is difficult to create them out of air, but it is possible. Focus is very important as well as timing. When establishing for the audience that there is another character there, or even several of them, you have to give them time before you turn away from that imaginary character. You also have to remind them of that character, by looking back at him, by reacting to him as if he was there. Like when Boniface goes away from Christ to take all the stuff away, he has to be aware of Christ being there, so the audience will not forget about him, and the actor would have to reestablish Christ on stage.

There was a period during rehearsal when this moment, when the Pope takes off his coat, rings and shoes, - became very messy, I hurried so much that the mime got ruined. I was happy to realize why that was happening,...I was hurrying so much because I was afraid of Jesus Christ walking too far away, of loosing him. I thought, that since that imaginary character had become that real for me, it must be real for the audience as well. So I just had to slow down, get control, keep the agitation of the Pope knowing that Christ is walking on, and he has to hurry, but the actor myself allowing me time to mime the Pope taking off his objects, - to give me time to create that moment - because in reality Christ is not there, and he is not going anywhere. During rehearsals I found myself loosing the objects I had created like for instance I would put on 3 rings, but then later on only take off two, or the coat was very heavy in the beginning but later on I was walking about and standing as if I had only a T shirt on. I had to work a lot on this.

The change from the Pope into the cripple and vice versa is tricky. First of all the Pope is busy walking towards Christ, so the focus for him has to be in that direction, then I, the actor have to get on the floor to play the cripple. In order to make that change work, I have to make it definite that the Pope keeps walking to the direction of Christ after he has kicked the cripple, and then throw myself on the floor and rub my backside and react to the kick; "who do you think..sorry". This change has to be very slick. It is even more difficult changeing from the cripple into the Pope, because I have to get from my knees to a

standing position. I tried to do it very straight forwardly, basically leaving the cripple and stand up and then get into the Pope.- But it did not work. I found that it worked best by turning away, still on my knees, changing the focus to Christ's direction and gradually put on the Pope's gestures while I'm standing up. The cripple I play slightly smaller than the Pope, that is in scale, and the comedy in him lies very much in what he says, the fact that he does think that Christ is being cruel in doing all these miracles because he does not ask you first, - takes it for granted that everybody wants to be perfectly "healthy". The comedy lies as well in his use of the exclamation; Christ! which we use today whereas at the time of Christ's crucifixion I don't think that would have made much sense.

The same old story.

By the stage-directions the actress is supposed to use a table. I did not want to use any props, because I wanted to do my platform without any, just like Dario Fo in his "Mistero Buffo" performances, so I had to find a way of imitating making love standing up. At first I did the whole "lovemaking" sequence standing up, but it became a bit boring, so I decided to start bent over and then switch over into a different position altogether on the word "wait", which seemed perfect, and works.

This monologue starts off by being rather grotesque and funny, but then changes into a serious criticism about how women are treated and then turns again in her imitation of a 'bimbo'. It is an interesting piece because of these changes I think, and I need to concentrate on keeping it under control in order to make it work. I used to get out of breath very fast during my first runs of this monologue, because I was putting so much energy into the physical movements, but I decided later on to start off quite strongly, to establish a picture in the audience mind of a very "fast fuck", and then I would make the movements smaller. I think that works. When she starts her "speech", her focus goes into a certain point out in the auditorium, where her partner supposedly is. I tried to use the audience as the partner, but it did not work, it was too general, and I use a lot of direct address before, and I think it is better to focus on a character in this bit.

An Accidental Death of an Anarchist.

At this time in the platform the ambient is getting more serious, and the acting is less caricature-like. I had difficulties with this scene because it was more difficult for me to find the way to swap from one character to the other because they are on a smaller scale, and written for 2 - 3 actors (whereas Boniface and the cripple are written for one performer, as well as "Same old story"). I started off playing this scene quite naturalistically, but that did not fit because of the Jongleur, - he is telling these stories. The way around this problem was to play it somewhere in between, using large gestures while establishing the policeman and also while switching into the maniac playing the judge, and then play his part rather straight-forward, quite still up to the point of his sinister-grotesque 'piss-take' of what the policeman had previously said.

The changeover from the policeman into the Judge took a lot of practice, and I think it took me so long to get it right because I used to play the policeman with too high a status for it to be clear that the judge had taken over.

As soon as I started playing the policeman with lower status the switch became easier or rather clearer, because then the change for me as an actress is bigger, - a jump from low status to high status and at the same time this change becomes clearer for the audience.

I found it difficult to stay calm and still during the Judge's speech at first, probably because I am so busy up till then in the piece, and standing still feels awkward, as if I am not doing anything. That feeling changed during rehearsals because I realized that everything he says has to be taken in by the audience in order to make the end work. I think it also very important that I play him strong, calm and still at first in order to get the most out of the dramatic change, when he starts slapping his thighs and face, as well as pretending to smash his head.

I used to run this speech rather fast and not stop or have a pause before I got into the movements. That made this speech rather messy and unclear. I found that it worked best when I had a slight pause, looked at the policeman and then did the slapping, because then I give both him as a character time to register that I am about to demonstrate something, as well as the audience.

I can imagine that I play this chunk of "An Accidental Death of an Anarchist" different from how it would be played within the context of the whole play. This speech is in the middle of an act full of contradictions, status battles and ridicule, a farce.

I play it I think more serious than I would if I was doing the whole play, because within the context of my platform it works better that way, and runs smoother and more logically into the arrest of Dario Fo.

What has been a challenge in this project is the amount of different characters to play, the difference in style and the immense importance of clarity, precision, focus and control.

I remember Don Drydon asking me in my last project if I was any good at solving crosswords. I told him I have never been able to solve even one, I have trouble filling in my tax report because it gives you such a limited space and no creative choice, it is too controlled for me. He said something like this: "yes, control Vala, is important!" This little dialogue of ours has made me think a lot of me as an actress, I often let too much energy out, it gets a bit out of control - I have been very aware of this during this project, to keep me under control, precision. I know that I have achieved more control, focus and precision during this project, and since I have, I have achieved the clarity as well. Timing, obviously is very important, but the timing lies in the skills I've already mentioned.

Another challenge was to have to write this platform. To put it together. I like so many others, ^{was} a bit afraid of the fact that the platform had to have some argument, some intelligence. All of a sudden I was certain that I was utterly stupid. But I am pleased with my piece, I think it has what it needs.

Valgerdur Thórsdóttir

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Telefono DARIO

ISLANDA

BUONGIORNO DARIO FO.

26. NOV. 1995.

DA QUANDO HO SENTITO IL TUO NOME LA PRIMA VOLTA SONO PASSATI 15 ANNI E TANT'ACQUA SOTTO IL PONTE. A QUEL PUNTO ABITAVO IN UNA VALLE SCONOSCIUTA E ISOLATA IN ISLANDA, AVEVO DODICI ANNI E VOLEVO DIVENTARE ATTRICE. UNA AMICA DI MIA MADRE, ATTRICE, È VENUTA A TROVARCI CON UNA COMPAGNIA TEATRALE. LEI MI HA INVITATO DI ESSERE ASSISTENTE DURANTE GLI ULTIMI SPETTACOLI DEL GIRO CHE FACEVANO IN ZONA. ERA UNO SPETTACOLO CHE SI CHIAMAVA 'KONA' O 'DONNA' IN ITALIANO E FA PARTE DELLA COLLEZIONE 'WOMAN ALONE AND OTHER PLAYS' CHE AVETE SCRITTO VOI. - IL TITOLO ITALIANO NON SO. DURANTE IL GIRO HO IMPARATO OGNI PAROLA, OGNI MOMENTO, OGNI MOVIMENTO DELLO SPETTACOLO E MI HA FASCINATO QUESTA VITA DI TEATRO. QUESTO GIRO HA ANCHE TOLTO TANTE ILLUSSIONI CHE AVEVO SULLA 'DOLCE VITA' DEL MONDO TEATRALE. NON ERA SOLO DEI SPETTACOLI E LA GLORIA E LE ROSE, LORO, LE ATTRICE ERANO ANCHE PERSONE NORMALE CON TANTI DIVERSI PICCOLI PROBLEMI E GRANDI PROBLEMI E VARIE COSE COME TUTTI GLI ALTRI. DOPO QUESTA ESPERIENZA NON HO POTUTO FARE ALTRO CHE TEATRO. FINALMENTE MI SONO LAUREATA IN TEATRO IN INGHILTERRA L'ESTATE SCORSO. DOPO ANNI DI AVERE VOLUTO COSÌ TANTO POTERE DIRE CHE SONO ATTRICE, - MI SENTO TIMIDA QUANDO LO DICO, - È QUASI IRREALE. MI SCUSA CHE TI DO IL TU, MA FACCIÒ SEMPRE COSÌ TANTI SPAGLI QUANDO DEVO ESSERE FORMALE CHE MI VERGOGNO. MI SCUSA ANCHE CHE NON MI SONO PRESENTATA ANCORA, MI CHIAMO VALA ÞÓRSÐÓTTIR E SONO UNA ATTRICE ISLANDESE.

SONO SEDUTA IN SALONE NELLA CASA DEI MIEI A REYKJAVIK.
QUESTA CASA ERA DI MIA NONNA E IN REALTÀ TIENE UNA VITA
INDIVIDUALE. LA CASA È SEMPRE PIENA DI RUMORI E SENSASIONI
ANCHE QUANDO VUOTA. CREDO CHE SIANO TUTTI MOMENTI
GIÀ VISSUTI FRA QUESTI MURI CHE SONO RIMASTI IN ARIA
E NEI MURI. MOMENTI DI TUTTI COLORI. C'È ANCHE FANTASMA
IN QUESTA CASA COME TANTE ALTRE CASE.

SONO QUI E TI SCRIVO. HO VOLUTO FARLO PER TANTO TEMPO
E HO INFATTI PROVATO FARLO DIVERSE VOLTE. LA ULTIMA
VOLTA ERO SEDUTA FUORI. ERO IN SUD DI SPAGNA CON UNA
COMPAGNIA TEATRALE. LÌ A CALAHONDA MI SONO SEDUTA
SULLA VERANDA AL SOLE AL POMMERIGGIO TARDE. LA LUCE
QUASI DI COLORE ROSA E ODORE DI FIORI INTORNO A ME.
QUALCOSA MI HA INTERROTTO SCRIVENDOTI E NON FINIUO LA
LETTERA. ECCOMI QUA DI NUOVO, ADESSO IN ISLANDA.

CHE COSA TI VOGLIO DIRE? - IN REALTÀ TI VORREI INCONTRARE
E PARLARE CON TE. MI PIACEREBBE TANTO SE QUESTO
SAREBBE POSSIBILE ANCHE SE IN REALTÀ NON SO COSA
TI VOGLIO DIRE ~~OO~~ O DI COSA VORREI PARLARE.

ULTIMA VOLTA QUANDO ERO A MILANO SONO QUASI ANDATA
IN RICERCHA DI TE MA MI SONO FERMATA PIÙ CHE ALTRO
PERCHÉ NON SAPEVO COSA DIRE SE TI TROVASSE... SORRISO.

VADO ABBASTANZA SPESSO IN ITALIA DOVE HO TANTI AMICI
E SE TI INTERESSA INCONTRARMI BASTEREBBE DIRMICI
E VENGO - E PARLIAMO DI NON SO CHE COSA.

ADESSO MI BEVO UN DICCHIERE DI ACQUA FRESCA E POI
RICOMINCIERO.

È STRANO QUESTO MONDO. ADESSO STO QUI È SCRIVO E ORA LEGGI QUELLO CHE STO SCRIVENDO. È LA MAGIA DELLE LETTERE. IL PASSATO E IL PRESENTE AL STESSO PUNTO - FORSE ANCHE IL FUTURO IN QUALCHE SENSO PERCHÉ MENTRE SCRIVO PENSO AL FUTURO, CIÒ È IL MOMENTO QUANDO RICEVI LA LETTERA.

SONO TORNATA IN ISLANDA PER FARE UN PEZZO TEATRALE CON UNA NUOVA COMPAGNIA CHE SI CHIAMA: LA COMPAGNIA TEATRALE ISLANDESE DI LONDRA. IL PEZZO È NUOVO, APPENA SCRITTO PER NOI DA UNA BRAVA DONNA, KRISTÍN ÓMARSÐÓTTIR. LO FAREMMO A GENNAIO. POI FARÒ UNO MONOLOGO MIO CHE HO SCRITTO UN ANNO FA, CHE SI TRATTA DI UNA DONNA DIVORZIATA. PENSO CHE RESTO QUI PER QUALCHE MESE AFFINCHÉ MI TRASFERISCO A LONDRA PER RECUPARE IL LAVORO COL GRUPPO COL QUALE SONO ANDATA IN SPAGNA E CON LORO SPERO DI ANDARE DI NUOVO A PRIMAVERA O AUTUNNO. STIAMO ORGANIZZANDO UN ALTRO GIRO IN S. SPAGNA. È BELLO FARE TUTT'E DUE INSIEME, TEATRO E VIAGGI.

TI SPEDISCO UNO DEI PROGETTI CHE HO FATTO AL ULTIMO ANNO NELLA SCUOLA (QUEST'ANNO PASSATO). È UNO SOLO SPETTACOLO CHE SI TRATTA DI TE. ABBIAMO DOVUTO FARE UNO SPETTACOLO DI PIÙ O MENO 30 MINUTI CHE SI TRATTAVA DI COSE COMBINATE, CIÒ È USARE DIVERSI PEZZI E INFORMAZIONI E CREARE IN QUEL MODO UNO SPETTACOLO DIVERTENTE E INFORMATIVO. TI SPEDISCO TUTTO IL PROGETTO, CIÒ È ANCHE L'ANALISI. SONO UN POCO TIMIDA A SPEDIRLO,