

# AASEN THEATER

**Prize of Hope Speech May 28, 2011  
Joan Schirle at Aasen Theater**



Joan Schirle (left) together with Eugenio Barba (middle) and Birthe Rosenfeldt (right).

"Attention must be paid." This is a line from the American playwright Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. It is said about man on the verge of suicide because his life seems to count for nothing. "Attention must be paid!" I believe that attention must be paid to artists who have given their lives to the work, and it should come before they are dead. Tonight we pay attention to a unique artistic partnership.

A partnership begins with a recognition of *possibility* and *interdependence*.

None of us but you can know what it took for you all to realize the possibilities you saw then; none of us can fully know the love or the pain of your interdependence. We can only see the actions, read your words.

Your dream drives the actions, and we learn something of your dream from those actions. In the larger context the dream becomes a myth.

And it is the myth that guides and inspires the many who may never meet you. Your names are 'myth': Ilse-Marie, Iben, Roberta, Julia, Tage Larsen, Torgeir, Kai.....Eugenio Barba.

No theater group in the world has been such an inspiration to so many theater artists over the last half century as Odin. You are a fountainhead of the deep work of the actor, those makers of theater, those collaborators who dedicate themselves to the practice and research as well as to the transmission of the practice.

All of us at DAI take heart whenever we read Eugenio's words as they have come to us in books, papers, speeches and more. You are often quoted—probably misquoted as well—and we are inspired by your sense of internationalism, of global artists linked by dedication to practice, by your curiosity about both the unique and the universal in the techniques, the spirit and the soul of the performing artist in every culture.

Our students study the writings of Eugenio Barba. They also study the stories behind the long history of the people and center known as Odin theater. As an ensemble you are a subject of their research: how you live, how you work together, how you make decisions. Some of them have taken part in workshops or productions or worked as artists in your group. Other artists like Brasil's Lume or the late Cristina Wistari have been our mutual partners in artistic ventures in other parts of the world.

From our floating island on the other side of the world we are grateful to be linked to you today-- not just through writing or films or the journals of our students or even being an audience for an Odin production, but joining our voices with those here to honor, celebrate and thank you for all you do, the actors, technicians, the administrators, musicians, directors and everyone at Odin.

We are honored to present to you, in partnership with Aasen Theater, the 2011 Prize of Hope.

Joan Schirle  
Founding Artistic Director