

THE CENTRE FOR PERFORMANCE RESEARCH PRESENTS

PERFORMANCES EAST & WEST



MEMORIAL HALL
CHRIST COLLEGE
BRECON

SATURDAY 4th
APRIL 8.00pm
**SANJUKTA
PANIGRAHI
AND
ENSEMBLE**
*(Dance and Music
from India)*

SUNDAY 5th
APRIL 8.00pm
**MULTI-
CULTURAL
VARIETY
SHOW**

MONDAY 6th
APRIL 8.00pm
ITSI BITS!
**(ODIN
TEATRET)**

MEMORIAL HALL
CHRIST COLLEGE
BRECON

TUESDAY 7th
APRIL 8.00pm
**AN EVENING
OF BALINESE
& JAPANESE
DANCE
THEATRE**

WEDNESDAY 8th
APRIL 8.00pm
**THE CASTLE
OF
HOLSTEBRO
(ODIN
TEATRET)**

MARKET HALL
BRECON

THURSDAY 9th
APRIL 8.00pm
**GATHERING:
EXCHANGE
& BARTER**

A WORLD OF DANCE AND THEATRE COMES TO BRECON

4th-9th APRIL 1992

**A SEASON OF DANCE AND THEATRE
FROM INDIA, BALI, JAPAN AND EUROPE**

Tickets: £4.50 (£3.50 concessions)

Gathering - Exchange & Barter 9th April ticketed event free of charge

Tickets available from: FH Jones, Newsagents, Brecon and The Book & Music Shop, Brecon.

Telephone bookings: Cardiff (0222) 345174 (before 1/4/92) or Brecon (0874) 611957 (after 1/4/92)

ISTA 7, Brecon, Cardiff 1992

Performances East & West

Fictive Bodies, Dilated Minds, Hidden Dances

ISTA 7 was organised by Richard Gough and Judie Christie, Centre of Performance Research, and financed by The Welsh Arts Council, The Arts Council International Initiatives Fund, The Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation, The Royal Danish Embassy, The Development Board for Rural, Wales, Routledge UK, The French Embassy Cultural Office.

The session focused on the work of the director and, through practical work with ISTA's performing staff, explored ISTA's discoveries on pre-expressivity and extra-daily performance technique and behaviour, comparing different acting techniques, both personal and traditional, analysing common principles underlying the different styles.

SYMPOSIUM

Cardiff, 10-11 April, Centre for Performance Research, two-day symposium on "Fictive Bodies, Dilated Minds, Hidden Dances", led by Eugenio Barba, open to the public. Work demonstrations by Sanjukta Panigrahi and Julia Varley. Speakers: Fabrizio Cruciani (Italy), Patrice Pavis (France), Franco Ruffini (Italy), Nicola Savarese (Italy), Ferdinando Taviani (Italy), Julia Varley (UK/Odin Teatret).

ISTA BRECON-CARDIFF

Excerpt from 'Report on the 7th Public Session of ISTA' by Ric Allsopp, CPR

The first part of the ISTA project took the form of a practical workshop for 35 UK and international theatre directors held in Brecon in mid-Wales. Starting with the theme of "The refusnik - the individual who does not follow the norms, opinions or doctrines of authority" - Eugenio Barba led ten working sessions together with members of the ISTA research team.

The work focused on concepts of 'pre-expressivity' and the idea and practical implications of 'sub-score' - broadly defined as a network of images, associations and structures that informs the performer's patterns of behaviour and interaction in performance conditions.

The directors' workshop in Brecon included public performances each evening by the visiting artists as well as a 'barter', or exchange of performances, with local groups.



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The weekend in Cardiff presented to an assembly of 160 an 'introductory' conference on the work of ISTA with papers and demonstrations from members of the ISTA research team on dramaturgy and codes of the performer, and research in theatre histories undertaken in the light of Theatre Anthropology.

Excerpt from the paper prepared as background for the conference session

Dramaturgy of the Performance - Remembering Histories by Fabrizio Cruciani, University of Bologna; Franco Ruffini, University of Bologna; Nicola Savarese, University of Lecce; Ferdinando Taviani, University of Aquila

But what does a 'present body' mean? Gradually, we came to understand that the quality 'present' ought not to be related to space (the body present = the body which is there, in a given point in space) as much as to time: the body present = the body which is totally involved in the present, at a precise moment in time. Which implies, clearly, but as a consequence, a precise point in space.

In sum: energy = the quality of the 'body present' = the body involved in the here and now.

This is to say: the body present = the credible body; presence = credibility. Credibility, not legibility.

For example: the body of a man involved in defusing a bomb who risks death at the slightest wrong movement, is credible even if we do not know he is defusing a bomb. Stanislavski advised actors to watch pairs of lovers in the street from a window. Even if we do not understand or hear their speech, we believe their every movement. Their bodies have the quality of presence: they are in the here and now of the present.

Taviani has carried out research into the acting of Henry Irving, concentrating on his style as it appears between the received wisdom of the 19th century acting manuals and Craig's biography of him.

On the basis of the specific results of this analysis, the comparison - proposed by Craig himself - between Irving and the 'Supermarionette' is emerging as far more than merely a suggestive metaphor, or generic praise. The 'Supermarionette' is emerging as an image which indicates the actor in flesh and blood (who rarely exists, but is no less desirable for that) who is capable of exercising absolute control over the slightest of his physical functions.

The self-control of which Craig speaks and the consciousness Artaud insistently refers to can be seen, therefore, as different ways to indicate the same ideal actor, or better, the same concrete project - even if difficult to bring into being: an actor able to refrain from betraying his score or script, but, no less important, to execute it every time as if it were the first time; an actor who is able to stay within the script, but to move withing the script.

This is a first step which leads forward to a perspective which replaces the historiographical notions of 'European Theatre' and 'Asian Theatre' with the notion of a 'Eurasian Theatre'.

Richard Gough

Underscores & Subtexts

The Turbulence of Hidden Streams

Abstract: This dossier style essay offers a candid account of the proceedings (certainties and perplexities) and a detailed description of the genesis of the 7th session of ISTA held in Brecon and Cardiff in Wales, UK, 4 -11 April 1992: its modus operandi, form and function (including statements on underscore and scenarios for improvisations), extracts and summaries from the conference, and an honest appraisal of the failure to realise what was envisaged as an ambitious, longer-term, Eurasian Theatre Project. In the chronicles of ISTA an account of the 7th session has not been fully recorded, even though the ground-breaking research on sub-score and underscore has subsequently underpinned perspectives and programmes. The 7th session of ISTA was problematic on several levels especially during the practical sessions in Brecon when the predominantly British theatre directors began to question ISTA's approach and methodology, and friction arose between the 'Anglo-Saxon' artists-scholars and the Italian teatrologists.

Keywords: Subscore/Underscore, Director training, Certainties/Perplexities, Refuseniks, Hidden dances

An account of the less-chronicled 7th session of ISTA: Brecon – Cardiff, April 1992

Prologue

In a letter dated February 12, 1987, I wrote to Eugenio Barba to renew communication (there had been an unintentional breach for over a year as the major Cardiff Laboratory Theatre project on Chinese Opera had absorbed all focus and energy). Following opening remarks on recent projects, I launched the overture:

I would like to discuss with you the possibility of holding a weekend-long symposium on theatre and anthropology – a British introduction to theatre and anthropology – sometime later this year in London (September is a good month). I have also talked to Richard Schechner about this; he is very keen. I would see this as a prologue to holding a future session of ISTA within the UK (and hopefully Wales). I know the implications of this, financially and organisationally, are immense, but these days, we seem to be able to take even



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greater risks and stage larger projects and find the means to do so. Through the Peking Opera project, we have entered (infiltrated!) the establishment art world (circuits, managers, foundations, funding bodies, etc.) and got used to budgets with a few extra noughts on the end. I think in another year's time, we will be well positioned to stage a major transcultural project, and what is more, we are interested and enthusiastic to do so. (Richard Gough February 12 1987)

The letter proceeds to inaugurate a discussion about an English language edition of *The Secret Art of the Performer* which I curiously and presciently mistitle *Dictionary/Anatomy of Theatre Anthropology*. Four years later CPR would publish a revised and extended version of this work in conjunction with Routledge who insisted that it be titled *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*. The eventual compromise was the amalgam: *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: Secret Art of the Performer* (1991).

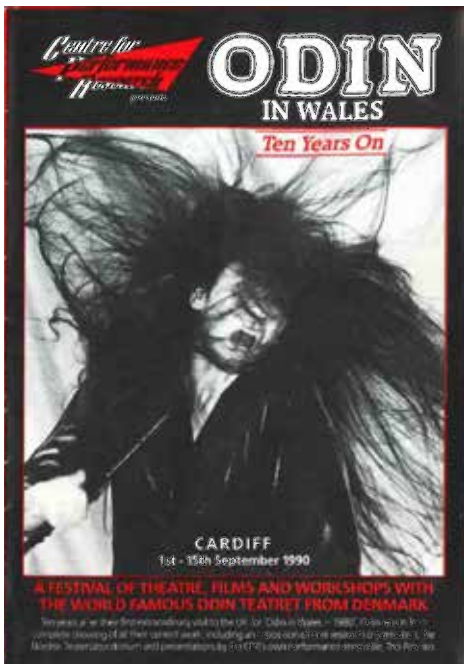
Our Centre for Performance Research is also setting up its own publications and distribution division, and I am considering a few publication projects for the following year. We have been approached on Peter Brook's behalf to publish a book on the *Mahabharata* – the text, background information, interviews, photo documentation). I continue to miss an English version of yours and Nicola's *Dictionary/Anatomy of Theatre Anthropology*, and I wonder if you have any thoughts for a new expanded edition. (Richard Gough February 12 1987)

One year after this letter, CPR was to inaugurate its ground-breaking series of international conferences, Points of Contact (1988 to 2000) with *Points of Contact: Theatre, Anthropology and Theatre Anthropology* (the comma being a crucial indication of the arc of travel). Eugenio Barba participated with ISTA's foundational scientific team, the Italian professors Nicola Savarese, Franco Ruffini, Fernando Taviani, and the Odin Teatret actor Roberta Carreri. Significantly, in terms of the dialogic ambition outlined in the 1987 letter, Richard Schechner participated, as did the British social anthropologist (and ethnomusicologist) John Blacking and other anthropologists, including Danish Mette Bovin from Denmark who had conducted extensive research into African dance and collaborated with Carreri, in Burkina Faso. The one-hundred-plus delegates at this conference were a healthy mix of dance and theatre practitioners, performance and cultural studies scholars together with anthropologists; it was a significant gathering that had repercussions for years to come. It was one of the earliest addresses Schechner made to a British audience, and it unravelled the connections between theatre, ritual and anthropology, enabling a deeper understanding of the influence of anthropologist Victor Turner on Schechner and performance studies. It was also the first time ISTA was introduced in the UK, and the emergent principles of Theatre Anthropology were advanced to a critical but appreciative audience. The whole proceedings were greatly enriched by the presence and input of 'real' anthropologists Bovin and Blacking, who brought rigorous analysis to the table.

In September 1990, CPR produced in Cardiff a comprehensive season of the entire repertoire of Odin Teatret, together with many allied events; it marked the 10th

anniversary of Odin's month-long residency in Wales held in August 1980 and was titled *Odin in Wales: Ten Years On*. In addition to presenting the primary Odin ensemble production of that time – *Talabot* – the programme included all the solo performances (*Judith* – Roberta Carreri, *Itsi Bitsi* – Iben Nagel Rasmussen, *The Castle of Holstebro* – Julia Varley), screenings of all the films and workshops led by Eugenio Barba, Torgeir Wethal, Richard Fowler and Iben Nagel Rasmussen. Most significantly, with regard to the evolution of hosting ISTA in Wales, there were two conferences and one specific workshop curated as part of the two-week-long season. A symposium with Eugenio Barba was convened under the title *Autobiography and Anthropology*. This built upon and extended the Points of Contact conference of two years previously and explored Barba's trajectory, his kathakali encounters in Kerala Kalamandalam and his observations of the young boys' training and the school's strict regime; this led to a way of looking at and seeing analytically, and the foundational perspective of ISTA. While this symposium was an intimate one-day gathering, an international conference was also realised: *Great Reckonings in Small Rooms? Visions for a New Theatre*.

Although primarily focussed on the legacy of the Polish Laboratory Theatre and the various formations of laboratory theatres and research-led theatres of the 1970s and 1980s (with a reflection on Meyerhold's and Stanislavski's studios earlier in the 20th century in Russia), given the presence of ISTA's core scientific faculty, part of the proceedings was dedicated to an investigation of ISTA. These discussions focussed on how ISTA was extending the notion of a laboratory theatre into a sustained transnational research enquiry – through the realisation of a permanent school organising annual working sessions at multiple locations.



Peter Brook (CRT, Paris); Anatoly Vasiliev (Moscow) and Włodzimierz Staniewski (Gardzienice Theatre Association). The challenge to Barba and all the director training leaders was how to transform idiosyncratic 'know-how', tried and tested methods, and their own jargon (and the practical technical equivalent) into creative strategies and techniques in the rehearsal room that could be communicated, shared and put into practice. The challenge to the participant directors was to be open, to rediscover the 'beginners' mind, and to avoid shortcuts by reverting to their own methods and techniques. For the less experienced participant directors, the vista and horizons were less bounded; they were less cynical and circumspect – this would reoccur at the ISTA Brecon. What can be learnt from a visiting 'master' ultimately depends on how open one is to being a 'pupil'. Nevertheless, the issue of being held as a 'master' and the requirement to modify positions of power and knowledge and not resort to shorthand and habitual (mystified) techniques is paramount. In the main, the Directors Training workshop as a part of *Odin in Wales: Ten Years On* was a major success, and the feedback from most of the participants was exceptionally positive; this was a motivating factor for planning for an ISTA in Wales.

ISTA in Wales

Plotting & scheming: where there is a will, there is a way

From the initial proposal to host an ISTA in Wales (made in February 1987; see extract from letter above), it took over five years to realise the project, and it mutated through various forms. Initially, a grand project comprising an ISTA, a Festival of Eurasian Theatre and an Exposition of the Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium-Odin Teatret was advanced for September 1990. This three-part goliath carried the working title *Expo Eurasia*, and its integrity and rationale were to tease out the various components of Odin/NTL/ISTA and construct a matrix of cultural and educational programmes that took advantage of bringing to the UK the various performance ensembles and associated artists. Thus, a *Festival of Eurasian Theatre* would present the Balinese, Indian, and Japanese ensembles together with the European theatre companies (Odin Teatret and others) that would be participating in ISTA's research. However, this festival would have a separate identity and would be public facing, programmed in significant theatres. Likewise, when both the Festival and ISTA were completed, a residency of Odin/NTL would be hosted, and an entire exposition of its work would be presented – as had been done in the month-long residency in August 1980. This was planned as a collaboration between the Centre for Performance Research, Cardiff, and Dartington College of the Arts, Devon, with programmes extending through South Wales, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. The project was too ambitious, and the politics of co-production too complex; it could not be realised in its composite form and had to be broken into more realisable shards. *Odin in Wales: Ten Years On* was the first component to proceed and, as described above, contained elements that explored and introduced ISTA research to a UK audience.

On a personal note, the 6th session of ISTA held in Bologna, Italy, June 28 to July 18 1990 (fully documented in *JTA*), raised numerous issues for me as Artistic Director of CPR and as a producer still committed to hosting ISTA in the UK (and now three

years on from proposing to do so). It was an extraordinary experience to participate in a three-week programme with no other responsibilities but to attend, immerse oneself, watch, reflect and respond. Having never been to university, this was my first experience of structured research-driven learning; it was enthralling. However, I had driven from Cardiff to Bologna alone. I cherished the opportunity to drive away from the Villa, escape the intense programme, visit the city, and explore Emilia Romagna late at night. I had also rented a tent to live on the edge of the Villa's grounds, declining the dormitory accommodation and distancing myself from ISTA's communal living; I was an outsider in every sense. In the second week, my car was broken into, and all my belongings from the tent (including my passport and money) were stolen; I became something of a vagrant and a recluse, longing for my wife and daughter to arrive so that I could be rescued, and we could go on holiday in Tuscany. Moreover, although I remained under the thrall of ISTA, I kept questioning some of its principles and strategies. Having been so immersed in Chinese Opera for two years (1986/87) and having organised summer schools in Chinese Opera, Balinese dance, Japanese theatre and many forms of 'classical' Indian dance, I found myself thinking more about the complexities of learning from these forms and the entangled cultural politics of place, race, identity and religion. I had also spent time with Jim Brandon and Elizabeth Wichmann and encountered the Hawaii University approach to teaching Westerners Asian dance/theatre forms without adaptation or mutation. Furthermore, since the Theatre and Anthropology conference of 1988, I had visited Richard Schechner many times and become interested in intercultural theatre, performance studies and critiques of European and North American appropriation of non-western theatre forms. All of this led, in my view, to a healthy and fully engaged questioning of some of the principles of ISTA, and I continued through the third week of Bologna ISTA as a fascinated refusenik.

In 1991, I took the opportunity to rethink the unrealised *Expo Eurasia* and wonder if placing a UK ISTA within a larger pedagogical frame would be more efficacious. In Bologna, the idea to establish The University of Eurasian Theatre had taken form, but its foundation was entirely based upon ISTA's research findings. I considered that positioning a fully-fledged session of ISTA alongside two other 'colleges' could be productive: one that took a 'traditional' approach to learning from the theatre cultures of the world and a third that took an intercultural approach. This seemed to me a fuller conception of a University of Eurasian Theatre; it would convene over a month and allow participants to construct paths across and between the three different colleges with a shared commitment to exchange and collaboration within the 'university'. Another behemoth was born.

Here is the 'executive summary' of the project (in the archived documents, it is sometimes referred to as the *University of Eurasian Theatre* or the *Eurasian Theatre Project*):

EURASIAN THEATRE PROJECT

ISTA will be one part of the UNIVERSITY OF EURASIAN THEATRE proposed to be staged at Dartington between March 29, 1992 and April 11, 1992. The following are basic facts:

The 'University' will comprise:

1/ INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY

Teaching and research staff – 50, participants – 50 Teaching and research staff will include Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret (Denmark); Sanjukta Panigrahi and ensemble (India); I Made Bandem and ensemble (Indonesia); Kanho Azuma and ensemble (Japan); Ferdinando Taviani, Franco Ruffini, Fabrizio Cruciani, Clelia Falletti, Nicola Savarese, Marco de Marinis (Italy); Exe Christoffersen (Denmark); Jean Marie Pradier, Patrice Pavis (France); Suzanne Vill (Germany); Frank Hoff, Victor Weijie Yu (USA); Clive Barker (UK).

2/ TRADITIONAL SCHOOL

Teaching and research staff – 9, participants – 48 Teaching and research staff will include Prof. James Brandon and Dr. Elizabeth Wichmann (Hawaii), Jo Riley (Germany), and masters of Chinese Peking Opera, Japanese Kabuki and Korean P'ansori Opera.

3/ INTERCULTURAL SCHOOL

Teaching and research staff – 9, participants – 48 Teaching and research staff will include Peter Brook (France) (t.b.c); Jatinder Verma (UK); Ong Keng Sen (Singapore); Nigel Watson and Taliesin Indo-Celtic Band (UK); Saburo Teshigawara (Japan).

DAILY PROGRAMME (for each school)

will comprise workshops, seminars, lectures, demonstrations, and performances.

RESEARCH THEMES (common to each school)

Vocal action/ scenic action, text, sub-text and sub-score

RESULTING DOCUMENTATION

Educational videos, publications and reports, photographic essays, and broadcast documentation

CULMINATING EVENTS

Performances from each school and collaborative performance – THEATRUM MUNDI

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

240 (including students, teaching staff and organisers)

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

£250,000 - Funding being sought from Arts Council of Great Britain; Visiting Arts; Council of Europe; Southwest Arts; Cardiff City Council; Cultural sector sponsorship; private sponsorship; foundation and trust patronage; broadcasting facility fee revenue.

ORGANISATION RESPONSIBLE: Centre for Performance Research Ltd.

This second triangulated project also proved to be too ambitious to realise, and in the same way that the Exposition of Odin Teatret had been splintered from *Expo Eurasia*, to be staged as *Odin in Wales: Ten Years On* in September 1990, now ISTA would be hosted alone in April 1992. However, the ambition to revive the *University of Eurasian Theatre* in a future year and reconstitute the three schools, where ISTA would flourish alongside two complementary research colleges/enquiries, remained very much alive for CPR as a

producer. The plan was to reconsider the appropriateness of such a significant enterprise by assessing the reception and pertinency of ISTA within a UK context (this article concludes with a reflection on the prospect of such a three-college research project).

The plan to stage the 7th ISTA in April 1992 and the continuing aspiration to realise the University of Eurasian Theatre is summarised in the following extract from a letter sent to staff at all the UK university Drama & Theatre departments and to many directors of independent theatre groups:

**Working on Performance East and West
7th International School of Theatre Anthropology
Brecon & Cardiff 4 – 11 April 1992**

We would like to draw your attention to the above project and the enclosed information. Some time ago, we gave you a copy of the *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* – which we edited and published, and which Routledge distributes worldwide. This book has received considerable acclaim and is selling well. The ideas contained within it are already significantly influencing both practical work and academic studies within the field of transcultural and multicultural dance and theatre.

You will recall it has been our ambition for some time to stage what is, in effect, the living version of this book. 'Working on Performance East & West' is the first phase of a two-part project to realise that ambition. The second phase will take place in August 1993 and will be an expanded version of what will occur in Brecon and Cardiff this year.

As we are going to be seeking your support (both financial and moral!) for the staging of the 'University of Eurasian Theatre 1993' (the second phase), we thought it would be a good opportunity for you to get first-hand experience and insight into what goes on at such an international gathering by attending, observing, or participating in at least some part of the project happening this April.

(The letter continues to introduce ISTA, the practical sessions in Brecon and the international conference in Cardiff: *Fictive Bodies, Dilated Minds, Hidden Dances*.) (Richard Gough January 1992)

Working on Performance East and West

The 7th ISTA was therefore scheduled to take place in Brecon & Cardiff 4 – 11 April 1992.

There were 35 places available for participants in the practical work in Brecon and 80 additional places for the conference in Cardiff (plus several hundred tickets for evening presentations). All delegate places were taken for both the practical sessions and the conference, and a reserve/waiting list was opened. The combined number of ISTA, CPR and the visiting ensembles was 38.

This is the full list of staff attending ISTA Brecon-Cardiff:

ISTA/Odin Director

Eugenio Barba

Odin Teatret ISTA Staff

Kai Bredholt

Jan Ferslev

Hisako Miura

Tina Nielsen

Iben Nagel Rasmussen

Leo Sykes

Isabel Ubeda

Julia Varley

Torgeir Wethal

ISTA Scientific Team

Fabrizio Cruciani

Clelia Falletti

Patrice Pavis

Jean Marie Pradier

Franco Ruffini

Nicola Savarese

Ferdinando Taviani

Susanne Vill

Indian Ensemble

Sanjukta Panigrahi (Dancer)

Ragunath Panigrahi (Musician)

Hemant Kumar Das (Musician)

Annada Prasanna Pattnaik (Musician)

Ganghadar Pradhan (Musician)

Balinese Ensemble

Desak Made Suarti Lakshmi (Dancer)

I Gusti Ayu Srinatih (Dancer)

I Ketut Partha (Musician)

I Ketut Suteja (Dancer)

Japanese Ensemble

Kanichi Hanayagi (Dancer)

Mark Oshima (Theatre scholar)

Centre for Performance Research

Richard Gough (Artistic Director)

Judie Christie (Administrative Director)

Celia Webb (Development Officer)

Howard Cooper (Company Administrator)

Ric Allsopp (Research Associate)

Joan Mills (Director of *Giving Voice Project*)

Sid Marchant (Technical Manager)

Terry Tigrato (Assistant ISTA Project)

Scott DeLahunta (Assistant ISTA Project)

CPR Guest Interlocutor

Carol Martin

Preparing for ISTA in Brecon (letter to the participants)

Several people have been ringing in, anxious to know how exactly the work will be structured. We do not mean to be evasive about this, but we neither wish to prescribe the process nor set expectations. Eugenio Barba works in a very spontaneous way and in response to the interests and needs of the assembled group. He has an aim and a method and will work in Brecon for several days before our arrival with his colleagues and the Asian guest performers. All such preparations can be modified in response to our initial gathering on Saturday afternoon.

The performers from Bali, Japan and India, together with the members of Odin Teatret, will be the core group of actors. We, therefore, have an ensemble of actors from different cultures, traditions and genres. We have a team of directors – you, the participants – and Eugenio will act as an intermediary, responding to your propositions, interventions and suggestions. He will then work with the actors at a 'pre-expressive' level, revealing how one can work at this level and seeking your understanding, participation and action. Much of the work will take place as an amalgamated assembly, being a mixture of proposition, observation and action. Facilities and opportunities exist for working in smaller groups on specific tasks.

We will be working with the theme of the 'refusenik' – an individual who does not follow the norms, opinions and doctrines of authority. This theme echoes across cultures and finds form in the figures of Inana, Antigone, Judith, Christ, Lao Tzu, Buddha, St. Francis, St. Joan, Prince Mishkin, Mata Hari, Mother Courage, Don

Juan, James Dean, Sid Vicious, Madonna ... We want you to prepare some ideas on this theme for instance, your own version, an historical account, a potential scenario, some starting points for improvisations. The more ideas and interpretations we can have on this theme, the richer will be our initial propositions from which the work can flow. (Richard Gough, March 20 1992).

The Brecon days Brecon, Brecon Beacons & Christ College

The location for the weeklong residential programme of ISTA was Brecon, one-hour drive north of Cardiff. Aberhonddu, the original Welsh name for Brecon, is an ancient rural market town situated at the confluence of two rivers, the Honddu and the Usk. It has been strategically important since Roman times, and the remains of a Norman castle tower above 'Watergate' where the two rivers meet. Brecon has a magnificent cathedral over 900 years old despite a small population of only 8,000 inhabitants (approximately). It sits at the top of the Brecon National Park and looks down (south) onto the Black Mountains and Pen Y Fan (866 metres high).

The Brecon Beacons National Park (now referred to as Bannau Brycheiniog, the ancient Welsh name having been reclaimed in 2023) lies on the border between Mid Wales and South Wales and covers an area of 520 square miles; it is a ragged rectangle in shape with Hay-on-Wye in the North East, Abergavenny in the South East, Llandovery in the North West, Llandeilo in the South West, Merthyr Tydfil the southern gateway into Bannau Brycheiniog. The town of Brecon is on the northern edge. The 'Peaks of Brychan's Kingdom' (literal translation of Bannau Brycheiniog) include four ranges of mountains: the Black Mountains, the Central Beacons, Fforest Fawr and the Black Mountain (Mynydd Du). It is an area of spectacular natural beauty and wildlife, popular with ramblers, marathon runners, extreme sports and adventure activities, and stargazers (a designated dark sky), and the British Army uses a part of the Black Mountains for endurance training.

As the ISTA sessions were scheduled during the Easter holidays (Holy Week, April 1992), CPR was able to rent Christ College, Brecon; this included studios and classrooms, a theatre, a gymnasium, the splendid grounds looking out to the Black Mountains, single and shared accommodation and all meals provided by the college kitchens, served in the serene refectory, a hall of the Dominican Friary upon which the college is built. Christ College, Brecon, was founded in 1541 by Henry VIII and is one of the UK's leading private (fee-paying) co-education schools, comprising both junior and senior schools, boarding and day pupils ranging from 7 to 18 years old. ISTA had exclusive use of the facilities and 'houses' of the Senior School. The school's motto is: *Consequuntur quia non possunt credere* (They achieve because they believe they can), which proved to be a challenge to the uncertain and questioning participants of ISTA.

Although located near the centre of Brecon, the proceedings of ISTA were confined to the premises of Christ College, and there was no opportunity, or free time, for participants to explore Brecon or the mountains that surrounded them. Theatr Brycheiniog, a multi-purpose theatre, arts centre and community venue, did not exist



Christ Church, Brecon. Photo: CPR archive

in 1992 (it opened in 1997), and the evening programme of performances was held in the theatre and grounds of Christ College. It was felt that there was a 'town and gown' separation functioning back in 1992, and it was unusual for professional theatre to take place within the college. Subsequently, public attendance at the evening events was less than CPR had hoped for, despite sustained efforts to welcome 'town folk' to the college.

Had an ISTA participant gone on a 'walkabout', crossed the bridge where the Honddu meets the river Usk, and walked a few hundred metres up Ship Street into the centre of town, they might have quaffed some good ale in The Sarah Siddons pub. Here in 1755, in the public house then known as the Shoulder of Mutton, Sarah Kemble, who went on to become the leading tragic actor of her day, was born. Sarah Siddons (née Kemble) was famous for playing Lady Macbeth, earning astronomical fees, and prominent painters clamoured to paint her portrait. A reproduction of one such painting hung in Christ College; Sarah Siddons watched over the proceedings of the next seven days.

The Practical Sessions of ISTA at Brecon

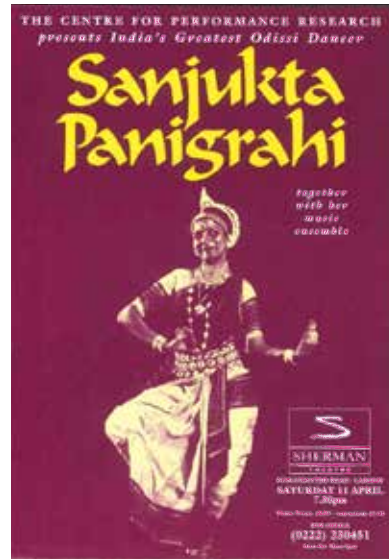
The opening session of ISTA at Brecon was scheduled for 14:30 on Saturday, April 4, 1992. Many participants assembled at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, the home of CPR, in the morning and were transferred to Brecon. All the ISTA staff and international ensembles had been hosted at Brecon several days earlier, settled in, rested, and had begun work and planning on Friday April 3. The introductory session was a generous three and a half hours and allowed for all the ISTA faculty to introduce themselves and for Eugenio Barba to deliver a framing lecture on both ISTA generally and its findings in the first fourteen years and the theme of 'subscore' to be investigated through the

practical sessions at Brecon. Following a break for supper, all participants (together with staff from Christ Church school and townsfolk of Brecon) attended a performance of Odissi dance by Sanjukta Panigrahi. This presentation was sublime, and the entire audience was entranced by her presence on stage, her dancing and the enthralling music of her ensemble. One week later, Sanjukta would close the open sessions of ISTA in Wales with a performance at the Sherman Theatre, Cardiff.

Beginning - with Elephant

In the welcome and opening remarks at Brecon, trying to introduce and encapsulate ISTA, I evoked the ancient Indian parable of the 'Blind Men touching the Elephant' where each man describes the beast standing before them from the perspective of what they touched. It was intended to encourage a multiplicity of understanding and an openness to different viewpoints. I was also trying to forewarn all gathered that there was going to be a variety of research strategies engaged during the coming days, that some work would be practical, some discursive, some observational – more akin to masterclass than in the studio exercises – that talks, shows, demonstrations and presentations would all be part of the mix and small group sessions similar to tutorials had been arranged together with full assemblies and one to one meetings. At the point of introducing all the different members/components of ISTA – Eugenio Barba, the Odin actors, French and Italian professors, the Japanese, Indian and Balinese troupes, the extended faculty – I switched from elephant to caterpillar, the many-footed ISTA. And in the very moment of making the introduction, I sensed this was going to be a difficult and challenging project to steer; both the elephant and caterpillar I evoked were already rumbling, trumpeting and tap dancing.

Below is the outline schedule for the seven days in Brecon. However, the afternoons also comprised small group working sessions in the form of 'tutorials' with the academic staff of ISTA and later in the week with performers/practitioners. There were also assemblies of the participants and general debates more in the form of town hall meetings to discuss concerns and wishes and post-performance social events and late-night conversations. The days were intense, sixteen hours long and often with writing assignments or one-to-one meetings tasked over lunch and supper breaks.



Saturday 4th April

14:30 – 08:00

18:00 – 19:30

20:00 –

Introduction & Outline of themes and work of ISTA

Supper

Performance: Sanjukta Panigrahi – Odissi Dance

Sunday 5th April

08:00 – 08:45	Breakfast
09:00 – 12:30	Working Session I
12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch
13:30 – 18:00	Working Session II
18:00 – 19:30	Supper
20:00 –	Performance: Multicultural Variety Show

Monday 6th April

08:00 – 08:45	Breakfast
09:00 – 12:30	Working Session III
12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch
13:30 – 18:00	Working Session IV
18:00 – 19:30	Supper
20:00 –	Performance: Iben Nagel Rasmussen – <i>Itsi Bitsi</i>

Tuesday 7th April

08:00 – 08:45	Breakfast
09:00 – 12:30	Working Session V
12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch
13:30 – 18:00	Working Session VI
18:00 – 19:30	Supper
20:00 –	Performance: Balinese & Japanese Dance Theatre

Wednesday 8th April

08:00 – 08:45	Breakfast
09:00 – 12:30	Working Session VII
12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch
13:30 – 18:00	Working Session VIII
18:00 – 19:30	Supper
20:00 –	Performance: Julia Varley – <i>The Castle of Holstebro</i>

Thursday 9th April

08:00 – 08:45	Breakfast
09:00 – 12:30	Working Session IX
12:30 – 13:30	*Lunch
13:30 – 18:00	Working Session X
18:00 – 19:30	Supper
20:00 –	Performance: Intercultural Gathering – Exchange & Barter

Friday 10th April

08:00 – 08:45	Breakfast
09:00 – 12:30	Final Working Session XI
13:00 – 14:00	*Lunch
15:00 –	Departure for Cardiff
17:00 – 18:30	Settle into accommodation. Tea & Refreshments
18:30 –	Conference

[* NB. All days. Lunch will be a moveable feast depending on work process. It will be a one-hour break]

As can be seen from the above, there was a three-and-a-half-hour working session scheduled in the morning and a four-and-a-half-hour session in the afternoon. These were convened in the large gymnasium of the school, and only the registered

participants took part. The evening presentations were held in the Memorial Theatre, and these were open to the public, guests and administrative staff of CPR. Following the magnificent presentation of Sanjukta Panigrahi on the opening Saturday night, a medley of performance fragments from all the ensembles (including Odin) constituted the (in hindsight) unfortunately billed 'Multicultural Variety Show'. This compendium presentation was simply intended to introduce all the forms and performance cultures to the ISTA participants and Brecon townsfolk. The Odin Teatret performance *Itsi Bitsi*, powerfully performed by Iben Nagel Rasmussen, Jan Ferslev and Kai Bredholt, was the Monday night presentation. This was followed by a mixed programme of short extracts and solos of Balinese dance and Japanese Kabuki theatre for the Tuesday night programme. Julia Varley's enigmatic solo performance, *The Castle of Holstebro*, was the Wednesday night presentation, and the final evening event in Brecon for Thursday evening was the *Intercultural Gathering – Exchange & Barter*. Kai Bredholt had been tasked to curate this programme of short and inter-spliced performances garnered from both the ISTA ensembles and participants (hurdy-gurdy and saxophone players, capoeira dancers, folk singers etc.). Early in the year, CPR had made strenuous efforts to connect with and welcome Nepalese residents of Brecon to the evening programme (over 60 Nepalese families lived in Brecon in the 1990s due to the Gurkha soldiers based in Brecon as part of the 160th Welsh Infantry Brigade). A small group of Gurkhas sang in the spirit of the 'barter', as did local Welsh folk dance troupes and a choir. Kai Bredholt arranged the evening so that a series of performance 'surprises' were staged in the town leading to Christ Church and then in the grounds of the school with performances, barter and exchanges culminating in the Memorial Hall.



Practical Session, ISTA 7, 1992.
Photo: CPR archive



I Ketut Sujteja, Balinese Topeng performance.
ISTA 7, Brecon, 1992. Photo: CPR archive

The working day began promptly at 9:00. As participants entered the gymnasium at 8:45, all the performance ensembles were present and in the process of warming up, ready to work each day. The format was an open investigation led by Eugenio Barba; it was essentially explorative. Improvisations between different performers and different performance cultures were curated, with the participants witnessing the action (and debates) being staged in front of them. Barba often invited, sometimes cajoled and occasionally demanded a practitioner to articulate and demonstrate how underscore/sub-score functioned as a part of their creative strategy or performance tradition. Some likened this to an anatomy lesson (as captured in Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*) with Barba as Dr. Tulp holding the scalpel and revealing all to the assembled onlookers. Most participants found this captivating and elucidating for the first few days, but by the third day (working sessions V and VI), many became restless. The passive, seated observer/witness role for a group mainly comprised of experienced theatre directors began to strain – they wanted to stand up, they wanted to interact. Furthermore, there was a growing unease about the status and agency of the performers, especially the non-European practitioners and the regard for the cultural, spiritual and religious context of their performance traditions. A growing complaint that universalism and 'scientism' were being expounded and that performers were being subjected to a process of reverse engineering – to prove a thesis – was unsettling to the progress of the working sessions.

There appeared to be a marked difference in approach to research and discovery emerging and disturbing the participants. ISTA's scientific team quickly characterised this as an Anglo-Saxon versus a Latin sensibility. For many ISTA faculty members, British reserve, a cold and calculated distance, and analytical tendency were becoming judgemental and driven by political correctness. Many British participants felt they were drowning in metaphor, cast as complicit witnesses, and frustrated by a lack of precise methodology and terminology. It should be noted, however, that there were Polish, Danish, Brazilian, German, French and North American participants at Brecon and not all the British participants conformed to this characterisation. Barba was sensitive to this criticism within the sessions, and through conversations held outside the working schedule, he genuinely tried to make alterations in the practical work and open the floor to more significant debate. However, the Italian professoriate within the faculty of ISTA (in both the plenary sessions and the small group discussions) attempted to foreclose any such debate and became defensive about ISTA's research strategies and mode of functioning, insisting that participants should watch and learn from the master at work. This only enflamed matters, and for a distinguished group of participants, conversant with contemporary critical theory and familiar with working across cultures, the criticism became more entrenched and the unease more destabilising.

At the same time, there was another group of participants who wanted the opportunity to work with the performers from Asia and Europe; they hoped there would be occasions when they could conduct their own practical experiments to find answers to some of the questions being asked by Barba and ISTA. They desired practical and participatory workshops to augment the anatomy-lesson-style masterclass. This was never promised

and was not how ISTA functioned in the previous nine sessions. However, Barba remained open to change and adjustment even if some of his closest academic advisors were not. In the subsequent ISTA that was held in Londrina, Brazil, the following year, practical sessions with all the guest artists were a substantive and significant component of the two-week long programme.

The ideological concerns about ISTA's methodology and research strategies are captured from an interview that Ric Allsopp (CPR staff member) recorded with David Williams (theatre scholar/dramaturg and participant at ISTA Brecon).

David Williams Interview (extract)

DW: The first problem comes out of my presuppositions about what might be happening here, partially because of the way the workshop was framed as both a pedagogic activity and a research activity. I was quite intrigued as to how that might operate. It clearly does not operate as a pedagogic activity, so, for example, the people who imagine that they are in the directors training workshop must be very frustrated. The notion of the masterclass structure is actually very misleading in this context because the processes that are being used are curtailed by the exigencies of time for example, and for a director who is looking for strategies, for ways of generating material, for ways of constructing the kind of montage that Eugenio Barba is talking about, I think it must be very confusing because we are not really seeing a process, we are seeing a version of a demonstration that is neither research nor masterclass.

RA: In what way isn't it research?

DW: I think the real research maybe happens outside the sessions. The function of ISTA has shifted from the formal gathering to the smaller groups – primarily to what actually happens outside the sessions in terms of the kinds of discussions that take place at meals or over coffee. I have found that much more fruitful than the sessions themselves. I think it clearly is a research activity for a number of people here, but I think for the directors it is inordinately misleading.

I think there is a fundamental problem in this notion of 'witnessing' – a word which several of the Italian academics have used, which implies a whole set of factors in terms of our function in that process – it's not a forum which allows very easily for a real exchange formally - the exchange shifts into other contexts outside the sessions. I have a problem with the notion of witness in this context because it compounds the mythologisation of certain kinds of processes, of certain kinds of roles in theatre making and locates Eugenio Barba not as a researcher, not a searcher, but as guru... and that the hierarchy that exists in ISTA doesn't appear to be a self-critical hierarchy it seems to be reaching towards monolithic immutability rather than - and I think this is happening around these formal gatherings – a serious self-critical appraisal that is ongoing in terms of its language, its discourse, its function. Presumably, the Italian academics are trying to take this onboard –

they are very resistant to a whole range of discussions, they deflect all kinds of conversations as being inappropriate ...

RA: Can you give an example?

DW: There does not seem to be a willingness to confront certain types of ideological discussion or apprehend a critical account of gender and the representation of gender in this context. There does not seem to be any politicisation of this debate at all, and somehow Eugenio Barba overtly deflects this as not being pertinent. It seems to me that this cannot but be pertinent in this context. I'm particularly worried by the lack of discussion from a feminist perspective because it seems to me that there are a range of conversations and possible methodologies that can feed this work and open up some of the fissures that are there, in a way that can be productive rather than destructive.

RA: It is not clear to me what the methodology is ... when you see Eugenio Barba working in practice, it is not at all clear what he is trying to get at ...

DW: I don't think he knows, and there is value in not knowing – there are so many different agendas here – Richard Gough clearly wants him to focus and to verbalise a kind of direction without foreclosing on the possibility of the unforeseen – I think understandably Richard Gough wants to give a focal point and that is why we have moved towards this obsessive re-examination of what might constitute underscore... but the real research happens subsequently maybe – there are so many different vantage points which aren't actually expressed in the forum... Patrice Pavis for example who I imagine must be frustrated with the critical language that is being used, can in some senses take some of those problems away and in his inimitable enumerative style catalogue those things in a pseudoscientific fashion and make a hypothesis out of that – similarly there are other people who will take different things away and pursue them. I think my sympathies are primarily with these directors – the younger ones are very puzzled – and with the performers – there is something very strange about the relationship of Eugenio Barba as director and the performers which grates, in terms of the gap between the rhetoric of how one might respect and feed and sustain and nourish performers and in fact what actually seems to happen.

We were talking about Richard Gough's predicament as a paradigm of the irreconcilable contradictions that seem to exist for a lot of people. He is in a position where he wants to be a facilitator – he is responsible both to Eugenio Barba and to the participants and he clearly wishes to stimulate some of those kinds of discussions that are not really taking place – and in some senses it is a 'Catch-22' predicament, he cannot possibly win in this situation because he is beholden to Eugenio Barba and yet that cannot evacuate his critical sensibility – it cannot erase the possibility of his critical intervention and yet that is, in terms of the power base, the hierarchy that exists, that is often read not as a generative and constructive interrogation, but read in terms of hostility or in terms of wishing to displace somebody's credibility or

power. I think that is a great shame. I think that Eugenio Barba is in an importunately difficult position, but for slightly different reasons. I don't know what the answer is. A lot more time would be useful to allow more space – more contact with some of the performers would be interesting,

Given more time, I think there would be a way of structuring something with practical content, with a range of different kinds of performers, without it becoming a manipulative exercise. For directors, that must be very important – effectively, we are denied real participatory access to that work beyond a purely cerebral activity, which is often muddled anyway by the nature of the discussion. That must be immensely frustrating for the directors. I find it very stimulating hearing performers talk or sometimes avoiding talking about certain kinds of processes [...]. We have had Torgeir (Wethal, Odin Teatret actor) in our small group discussions and I found that more stimulating than one of the Italian Prof's righteousness – in terms of ISTA because Torgeir has some serious misgivings, and he genuinely wants to demystify certain processes, to communicate them rather than say at a certain point, as some people do, that it is not possible for me to talk about them.

RA: What do you think of the multicultural or transcultural aspect – that seems to me to be a big difficulty. He's working with a group from very diverse cultures and trying to locate some underlying commonality. There seems to be no discussion of cultural differences between, say, Kabuki and Balinese forms.

DW: It seems to be strategically an attempt to elide or suppress certain kinds of differences in search of this commonality – for example the strategy of 'reduction' in relation to Sanjukta, Julia and Iben – there is a sense in which reduction in that context is not as originally framed a way of compressing energy to make a radical tension in terms of the nature of an internal action and its external representation – that kind of unresolved tension - but almost as a way of allowing everybody to still be Balinese etc. – but hiding it, putting a cloth around Sanjukta, taking away her arms and suppress external actions and they are all allowed to exist as what they are – but somehow, they are all the same. It seems an absurd strategy in that context, although it is an interesting idea. It's clearly more pertinent in terms of the Asian forms – for example, some of the things that Kanichi does, you can perceive the charge that that contradiction, that counterimpulse makes. This is a huge and problematic discussion, and I am surprised by the kinds of strategies that are used. There is very little hybridisation as such, only an overlay of texts; there is very little attempt to allow certain kinds of formative languages to blur within one performer. There is almost an Aryan notion that you can't mess with the purity of a particular tradition, because you will sully it and I don't think that is necessarily true at all. It would be interesting, not for Sanjukta to make a Balinese action, but for processes between performers to be shared and generative processes advanced as a way of producing a hybrid form.

Despite the multiple agendas and conflicting needs running throughout the working sessions at Brecon, indifference and disengagement did not set in. Commitment to



Practical Session, ISTA 7, Brecon, 1992.
Photo: CPR archive

the overarching enquiry into 'underscore' is evidenced in the way that almost all the participants formulated their own 'statement' about underscore. These were gathered at the midpoint of the sessions and distributed as 'Initial Statements on Underscore', before the practical work focused on interpreting a set of scenarios co-authored by seven subgroups (for the final three sessions). They are reproduced here in full and form a collective output from the research conducted at the Brecon ISTA.

Underscore First Statements (Brecon ISTA faculty & participants)

1. The underscore is a set of mental and kinaesthetic constructs, they are the preconditions that stimulate plausible responses to fictitious situations made by the performer.
2. Underscore (or underscoring – active process?): the re-gathering or re-membling of associations, affects, images, etc. which belong with the score in order to keep the score and its message alive. (NOTE: This is a holistic process; the memory is in the body/self as an organism. The underscore is the ground of the score, or perhaps more dynamically the 'grounding').
3. The personal, technical, social, metaphysical, ideological, and cultural idiosyncrasies uncovered over the period of conscious involvement in theatre in general and a process in particular. These volatile atoms of both conscious and unconscious awareness vibrate with themselves and with those of the expressive moment to create life. These vibrations are partially controllable through skill and increased awareness, but the element of spontaneity and the role of the unknown is the edge that is always necessary.
4. How to make alive a role/character in a scene: 1) To control /master oneself as a character who has already given force/energy to the whole body/soul (50%): 2) To express the story by the face and movements as well as the surroundings as communication with the action of the story; 3) To give stimulation/motivation of the pure soul to the movements of the members of the body and to the face (distribution of energy) according to the needs of acting in this character.
5. The underscore is perhaps a field of consciousness that is open in an actor. It is the result of the evaluation of the whole history of life of an actor. The five senses have

to be in a healthy and sensitive state. An actor whose five senses are not alive will not be able to find the underscore in himself. The underscore of an actor becomes very important in order to determine the following process, whether it is a dead thing or a thing alive. When the underscore is open, it will become a living thing that is able to anticipate what is happening around/outside of him. An actor that does not find his underscore will become a dead thing. The underscore becomes a sort of centre of communication from the inside to the outside and from the outside to the inside of the actor. It is of a metaphysical nature.

6. To make alive a role: 1) First of all the actor has to master the form of technique that he will use in his representation or dance; 2) To know the literature about the story that he will interpret; 3) To know very well the character of the person that he will represents; 4) The selection of the right costumes of every single character; 5) Sometimes usually, the accompanying music has a role in helping to enliven the atmosphere and the actor has to master the music; 6) Before the performance the actor already begins to concentrate on the character that he will represent, this even more during the performance, this feeling has to be fertilised, in order that the actor can transform himself (express) into the character whom he is representing; 7) The atmosphere/situation of the place of performance also helps to give support.

7. Underscore est un tempo-rythme émotionnelle basé sur un fleuve d'associations qui peuvent éveiller une action.

8. The performers understanding of the relationship of each particular action or moment to the meaning of the whole.

9. PREPARATION: 1) Selecting a theme and prepare the texts 2) Set the text to different ranges and different ways of singing according to the moods of the characters; 3) To know the essential points and definitions of the different characters that is in the text; 4) To find out how the changes from one character to another should be done; 5) Technical aspects like placements of hands, feet, eyes, neck, etc.; 6) Choreograph technically and practice; 7) Find out soft and strong aspects: B) Finally give the meanings to the technical elements. I cannot really explain what happens while performing. It is mainly feelings of the theme.

10. Performer/Dancer – The movement 'score' itself is known, remembered, and absorbed in the body, the group. There are cues along the way – pointers to emphasize maybe the start of new phrasing: dynamic/energy; rhythm change; spatial orientation; focus – others, room/stage, objects; stillness; spatial organisation within the body. Musical cues may be Vital for overall timing of the piece, sections, phrases, group meeting. The place (precise) where meeting others is to occur retine (sic). Overall: layers and layers of cues. NB – fundamentally a source of energy, focus, spirit of commitment to engage into these cues. A centre in self is kept alive – a text of pure flow/continuity, vibration.

11. The underscore is the idea behind an action, and all the images and technical devices that support the idea and create a link to the action, consciously and subconsciously. Me as I want myself to be: heroic, attractive, stupid. Struggling against the restrictions of technique, choreography, the audience (always the enemy!); to hold me in the 'here and now'. But my strategy for fighting these demons is my secret. Sometimes tactical, changing moment to moment in order to keep myself in the 'here and now' despite all unforeseen difficulties. I know when it begins – the threshold – jumping in the sea – and I know that nervousness (self-awareness, me-here-now), keeps me afloat because I have only this chance, this performance to get it right. So, it is a struggle! (perhaps the antithesis of the score: can I do it? can I succeed?)

12. Underscore:/Score – To have 3-4 actions which are simple and clear. Those actions become the points between which I can move. Those actions have a meaning, symbolic, as they create atmosphere in the room. There will be a line between these points. The underscore is the will to do these actions because this is me and I want to do this. At the same time, it expresses something of me being an individual looking for a bridge to get in contact with the outside/inside.

13. Underscore – An associational or imaginal network that evolves to feed/support/ focus/ inform those 'actions' visible externally as a score. This network may comprise e.g. textural/ textual/ kinaesthetic/ olfactory analogies, as well as a range of unconscious socio-cultural and acculturated determinants (e.g. the epistemological / perceptual implications of religious faith etc.). An intertextual /multi-textual collage in flux – "*in statu nascendi*".

14. The underscore is the totality or coalescence of visual, physical or sonic, actual or imagined stimuli which animate the total mental and biological organism of the performer. Each stimulus relates to the performer's action or reaction as it is mediated through one or more of the five senses: it may be a visual image, a rhythm or sound, a smell, a taste, or a tactile sensation that the performer has as s/he engages with an external object. Each stimulus is the internal correspondence to the external behaviour which the spectator perceives, though this is a purely theoretical distinction. In the performer's experience the internal signification and the external behaviour fuse into a single vortex of action. It is the performer's perception of this action which constitutes the underscore.

15. Underscore = ensemble of situational factors (situations of enunciation) and technical-artistic know-how techniques on which the actor/ress leans when performing his/her score.

16. I don't know if this is what is being called an 'underscore', but when I work my only possibility is to know what is essential to me in this work. Even if this thing is what you might call a 'personal obsession', and therefore a product of chance. The actor does not work on the apparent 'meaning' but on a private spring: spring that

flows as a source of life, and spring that coils and projects them into the unknown. The underscore is the text and the theme or written 'text' is the pretext for exploring this personal text. A reference point... the light that suddenly illuminates the dark.

17. What the actor leans on so as to be able to make the actions in a certain way. The actor's intelligence. The invisible body of the action. The nervous system deciding for the action. What is used consciously to build the actor's score and is then stored in the memory of the score so that at the moment of performing it can be 'forgotten'.

18. Underscore: I do not think about many things, there is only one thing in my mind: to dance. Furthermore, I have to know the contents and the story of the dance to express it more easily, through facial expressions and expression by movements.

19. The 'underscore' is a place that I have, that I create, where I go to resource my work. It is an internal space created by internal and external – from within and without. It is a juncture where the logic and the illogic meet, the image and the intuition. Once created it provides a concrete sensory reference point in my body/mind which is constantly in dialogue with my outwardness – from this I can produce in/for the audience myriad meaning.

20. UNDERSCORE – It is the process of adaptation to changes. These changes can be personal, social, or cultural; they can be climatic, due to illness or other form of stress factors. The performer has to cope with the milieu she/he evolves in, and with changing (moving) from one milieu to another. The underscore is a score made of the performers' cultural norms and conducts models. These affect the performer as a unit of an ethnic collectivity, but she/he also has her/his personal understanding of these norms and models. Then the performer must fill the gap between her/him and the spectator. The performer has an idea of the spectator's assumed knowledge. But there is the spectator's actual knowledge, the spectator's underscore.

21. A chain of images I am reacting to act, acting in in connection with. These are created in different parts of the process - have different needs as a starting point. In the moment of performing, I do not think about them, do not see them. They have become the skeleton of the now.

22. In naturalistic terms: the motivation-awareness of the actor of the subconscious or unspoken desires or hidden thoughts of the character. In performance terms: the constant kinaesthetic awareness of the actor of his/her own body-state in relation to that of fellow performers in the space and in relation to the score of the performance and the 'secret' thoughts of the performer which, based on his/her own inner thoughts, memories, feelings, desires and/or experiences prompted, created, or were the impulses for the movements in the score and now supports the score in performance and gives it life. The complex of associations which, in the mind of the performer, accompany each moment of the score.

23. UNDERSCORE: A series of mental images/memories/feelings/impulses which

link the performer's life with the life of the unfolding scenario of the theatre. A link: mental-physical (or vice versa): life-life; one world-another world; the known-the unknown (or vice versa): real-unreal (or vice versa); and so on.

24. The subtext is the creation of doing, in this I mean running standing, walking. An example, when the performers were asked to hide the books: this is what they did. But before the technique was put on: when they were simply trying to find out where to hide the books; simply doing this is what I saw the subtext to be: not trying not revelling in a technique simply doing. This for me is the third eye, the underscore.

25. Brain strategies based on genetic hardware and cultural software patterns which have been fixed during the ontogenesis. Brain strategies depend on training – mind/body memory. They determine the ways used for each individual: a) to process external/ internal information: b) to integrate/ analyse/ associate/ combine the cognitive/ sensorial/ motor/ emotional; c) to 'behave' as an actor or director, or... train strategies reflect the way individual (or/and a culture) considers his/ her/its relationship to the environment. They include rational and irrational skills, conscious and unconscious levels.

26. Definition of the Underscore. The 'underscore' is the personal and artistic energy that you bring to creative actions. It is made up of your experience as an individual and the way in which you held and use your skills as an artist. It is also your recognition of the imprints of your culture on you and the way that you interact with that culture. It operates at the intellectual, the technical and at the feeling level. It is activated by the imagination.

27. The underscore is: – The personal, emotional journey of the actor which gives life to the physical manifestation, and which may enrich what is seen and heard with contradiction and ambiguity as well as direct impulse. – A series of organic, emotional, spiritual impulses in the actor which guide her/him through the text and keep the relationship of the actor to that text constantly spontaneous and alive. – A map with enormous personal significance which the actor and the character shape.

28. UNDERSCORE: The ability to dance overscore without showing it.

29. The imagery or sensibility, whether concrete or abstract, that informs the vocal and physical actions – in improvisations, rehearsals, performances – of a performer. This imagery or sensibility is personal, but it is also social and cultural and as such is subject to being shaped by the immediate environment.

30. The liddle partiture (sic) you have to look for as an actor to fill in a personal way the score.

31. In my pre-expressive level, it is most important to find some particular part in written text which gives me strongest impression on my scene or scenario. It is mostly connected to my personal memory. Written text or music helps me to remember and

recreate vivid view for my scene – the touch, colour, smell, taste, temperature, etc. Once I've got the sensation on my body, even with some new task, for example. I can't walk quick because my legs are tired, I can continue walking in my vision with the task.

32. UNDERSCORE – INNER DIALOGUE (TO FIND SILENCE).

33. Underscore is the non-visible line which allows the actor to make the visible score surprising for the spectator, and above all for the actor himself.

34. The journey is through an unmapped land. The spectator is excited and terrified. The underscore is a series of landmarks where both performer and spectator can take breath and understanding before plunging into the landscape again. These landmarks are place both of security and danger. It is the kinetic structure which is the bone for living flesh of performance. Like meridians of Qi in the body, in maybe fire, earth, air or water, but its constant theme is movement and harmony.

35. The underscore is the work which has been done for a role or a theatre-piece before reaching the result. 'Forgotten' but invisibly present (as roots of a tree or the part of an iceberg which is under the water). During the 'acting' – the actor should not lean against anything. This leaning against nothing permits that 'something' – (under the score) can fill the actor. (The sensation of 'nothing' is why the actor often feels scared or 'seasick' before staging acting.)

36. The basis upon which any performer can 'lean' most fundamentally, is the clarity of the 'dedication' or purpose of his/her efforts, work (and success). The freedom this allows will let fly the internal systems of physical and mental 'activity' which gives 'presence' and energy – power – to the performance. The state of openness this brings permits the artist to allow the internal structures which normally hold on to the ideas and identity of the 'self' to be invaded and overcome by the vast unlimited 'ideas' of the cosmos – the rehearsal period must filter out those which fill the body and mind with force for the character needed – and find the 'beacons' of new 'identity' that can be used by the artist to inflame the character. This process is a filtering out, rather than a building upon.

37. Life learned/created out of life in specific extra-ordinary circumstances, that is learned and re-creatable. That is learned and absorbed with the aid of techniques.

38. Capability for self-remembering. Recognising the moment when it is alive for you. Awareness of a extra-daily brain-strategy which must become as familiar as recognising tiredness, hunger, etc. Feedback and the ability within an instant to do something to change, redirect, control diversions.

39. UNDERSCORE - a) Personal: a sequence of inner actions each of which has a concrete point of immediate focus (idea, image, gesture, prop, etc.) which informs the sequence of performed actions. The score must be punctuated by a sequence of

transitions (changes/adaptations of perception). The pace and rhythm of this pattern of perception (perceptible to the audience as glances, pauses, breaths, beats, commas, etc.) is essentially renewable in each performance and is never really repeated, but newly experienced each time the score (with all the variations chosen in rehearsal or presentation) is repeated.; b) Historical: I believe such age or culture has assumptions or emphases which not only determine the score, but are utilised by actors in their 'underscores' - the nature of these cultural assumptions effects the process, the style, the meaning and the effect of their performances, e.g. 18th century pattern of passions (emotive states + processes of perception = a tendency to emphasise gestures of 'starting'), Stanislavski's pattern of objectives (= tendency to emphasise seamless through-line), Odin's pattern of 'meaningless' action (= tendency to dance-like self-absorption). stories, etc. Very precise, artificially made, elaborated, with many details in which the actor/actress, the performer, can move with his/her imagination: stay, walk, run in different ways, changing path if he/she wants every time he/she performs or thinks of the performance.

40. A mental landscape – made by forms, sounds, different kinds of lights (yes, why not!?)

41. The underscore is the line of images, technical tools and strategies of how to evoke and develop the physical and spiritual capacities of the actor which s/he decided to use for the score to become – and stay – alive in performance.

42. The underscore is the distillation or detritus of all the work done in preparation or rehearsal of a role, distributed unevenly along the nervous system. This unevenness represents the rough, lateral, circuitous, painful history of this preparation/rehearsal. The asymmetrical distribution of this detritus constitutes a shape, a neurological topography. The 'points/places' (using a spatial metaphor?) where fragments of this detritus coagulate, form the 'points' of support or stepping stone for the score to stay afloat.

43. Underscore – is the performer sub-patterns, an internal code which helps the actor act and react (In a situation *inusitada*; an accident or incident during the performance - for example, the actor will use elements of this code to cope with the new situation). It is like a vocabulary sub-conscious of movements, words, sounds, feelings with which actors work. Underscore is the heritage – genetic, physiologic, psychologic, philosophic – plus the living experiences of an actor. This heritage is a *gama* of tools for the performer. The technique to achieve the 'source of underscore' and the way one translates it is what makes the presence of the actor.

44. The underscore is the fixed point from which a performer or any artist can facilitate a contact, a communication with another human being and subsequently the humanity common to us all. The underscore isn't evident consciously and in normal circumstances we do not look for it, but it exists and touches the subconscious when we experience a great performance or when we communicate on the most basic human level. It is our only opportunity to contact the spirit world while we are alive.

To create the conditions for this contact requires a mental and physical commitment which humans codify in the external forms of technique or ritual.

45. A psycho-physiological residue of encoding: to activate it is to rediscover physiological 'traces' which translate out into a patterning of movement, sounds, signs. Contact is via a precise and delicate mental and physical remembering which locates the cruces (sic) or the flow of energy.

46. Base para ser en una acción mediante el fluir y la asociación entre diferentes niveles de nuestra memoria técnica, afectiva y cognitiva.

47. The underscore is to be tuned with the inner rhythm of your own inner self and one of the group. It's just to be receptive to all impulses and let you to be a medium.

48. I believe the underscore is our kinaesthetic memory, or rather, 'body-thought'. During the rehearsal process the underscore becomes complete when translated into deeper sensual kinaesthetic impulses with strong emotional associations.

49. The secret pleasure the performer hugs to herself to keep alive the flame of presence. That which inflames the action and aligns it with another action, often carrying within it the 'memory' of previous work on the role. A mental and physical memory trace.

50. Underscore is a sort of flow of thoughts, images, or an organisation of physical patterns, which determines the directions of the body energy. The underscore is fixed and rigid at the beginning; and afterwards, while the score becomes more and more fixed and sure, the underscore may become more and more free to receive influences from the outside.

51. 'Underscore' c'est la complexité des expériences et des habilités qui font devenir possible la définition d'un 'score'. C'est une relation, une dialectique dans laquelle la définition d'un score précise chaque fois un 'underscore' (et pas l'envers). 'Underscore' c'est peut-être mémoire, activité mentale qui fait une sélection organique des expériences profondes.

52. Underscore: all the experiences (individual, cultural) that a person has acquired in his life and from which he/she is able to draw in the concrete moments of creation.

53. UNDERSCORE. The atmosphere that let the daily training in my body-mind; the physical truth of the moment; my life at that moment. Sometimes – 'The conscience of the unconscious conscious.'

[There were 53 statements in total – all included above in full]

Peter Hulton interview with Eugenio Barba, Brecon, 1992 (extract)

Barba's initial reflection on underscore was recorded in a documentary by Peter Hulton. This interview was made on the sixth day of practical sessions and before the working meetings concluded. The following is an extract transcribed verbatim from the video:

EB: No performer only uses the body in performance; s/he uses the body-mind. This means that there is a way of using the mind in performance – and by mind I do not mean only the rational aspect, I mean all the kinaesthetic apparatus. This way of using the mind we have called underscore. How does underscore function? If what the spectator sees as a character is the score – a succession of actions which are more or less the same or should be the same in each performance – then this score leans on, is animated by, is made alive for the spectator by something which, up to now, we have called underscore. This has now become the research. The ISTA workshop in Brecon attempted to map this very difficult territory. With the difficulties of terminology and the vast number of different approaches, there is always a danger of the research becoming superficial.

PH: Are you finding that, in this attempt to define the underscore, there are any particular movements of thought or practices, traditionally having nothing to do with theatre itself, that you are beginning to draw on – I am thinking particularly in the body-mind area?

EB: What is evident in the work on underscore is the way the performer, either as a young child or as an adult, is placed in their first working situation. The way s/he receives or reacts to this working situation – the way s/he has been told, through a certain silence, a certain severity, a certain atmosphere, the relationship with other partners – begins to build what I would call paradoxical thinking which characterises a performer.

This is where a performer does not think according to a normal daily life or functional way of thinking. S/he must think in a different way so that s/he can find a justification, a motivation for what s/he is doing – and this stems from the first day. We see that different traditions can have different ways of developing this way of thinking. A knowledge of how different ways of thinking determine the ways in which we build or create scenic presence, gives the performer a freedom to choose, a much richer choice where suddenly the performer has not only one possibility but many possibilities.

I feel that the importance of building a network of contacts among theatre people, is to establish what one could call an ecological system, which can resist the degradation of the theatre. An eco-system sustains the possibility of keeping in contact, of coming together, of organising research in places and situations where it might appear to be almost meaningless because it is pure research. Very often theatre research is considered to be useless if it is not directly connected to some objective application. I consider building such an eco-system to be very fundamental and very hygienic, culturally speaking...

PH: It is certainly true in this country at the moment and in the whole of Europe.

EB: ... because it provides a possibility of destroying so many prejudices concerning, for example, Asian arts, or classical forms. The ability to spend time together in a situation where there are twenty or thirty people from different countries and cultures, working together every day, with demonstrations, performances, completely shatters the usual horizons of knowledge.

This is the 'shaking' experience, which, of course, does not make us change our view but obliges us to think about our art. What is essential in my view is the confrontation with the Other. When we speak about cultural and professional identity, it is essential to confront oneself with the Other because only through this confrontation are you able to define what 'is' – that which characterises you, that which is your axis, your centre, your core, your heart, that without which you cannot be a live person. Of course, this is to do with values – I suppose in the end it is to do with values which are embodied in a policy or strategy of action which also can be a scenic action.

Final Evening in Brecon: UK General Election

On Thursday, 9 April, a General Election was held throughout the UK, some participants had made arrangements to make a postal vote in advance, others knew they had to forego their vote, and a few members of CPR made a rushed return visit to Cardiff, where they were registered to vote. For all the staff and associates of ISTA, and some non-UK based participants, it was an irrelevance. But for all, it did not go unnoticed; even though all the practical sessions during the day progressed uninterrupted, there was a tangible sense of hope and optimism in almost all the UK participants. The Conservatives had been in government continuously since Margaret Thatcher's election in 1979; in 1990, John Major won the party leadership following an internal ballot initiated by Michael Heseltine, and Thatcher resigned. Now, after thirteen years in power, polls during the run-up to the election indicated a hung parliament or a narrow victory to Labour, led by Neil Kinnock. Only after the presentation of Final Gathering in the Memorial Hall, ISTA's last night in Brecon (before departing for Cardiff), was there time to watch television. BBC announced an exit poll result as hung – 50:50 Conservative-Labour; around midnight, results were beginning to come in, and Labour was doing well; there was a jubilant atmosphere in the Common Room. Knowing an intense schedule of events was planned for Cardiff, and that the final sessions in Brecon were to commence early the next morning, most participants went to bed around one in the morning, exhausted but optimistic that thirteen years of Conservative rule in Britain was about to change.

The following day it was if a terrible malaise had inflicted most UK-based participants; the mood over breakfast was sorrowful and forlorn. The final two sessions of ISTA had to function through a fog of gloom and despondency. Overnight, the fortunes of the Conservatives had rallied; far from a narrow victory by Labour, John Major's Conservative party won the largest number of votes for a general election ever recorded in British History. The Conservatives were returned to government for a fourth term,

although Labour's earlier gains did result in more 'red' seats in Parliament. It should be noted that Cardiff and most of Wales remained Labour (and Plaid Cymru), but Brecon and Radnorshire continued as Conservative at a local level.

It was difficult to conclude the practical sessions of ISTA in a celebratory mode. The discontent, and for some disaffection, with the working process, was now made worse by a grim social and political prospect for the UK for the next four years. However, improvisations around the seven scenarios proposed by the consortium of working groups continued. Barba and the entire ISTA team valiantly remained focused on the task of offering practical investigations into each of the scenarios, now referred to as *The Seven Diamonds of Brecon*. The process of cleaving and sawing the rough diamond stone hewn by the lapidarist to 'cut' the diamond and reveal its refracting brilliance were akin to the challenge and relevant to the strategies adopted by Barba in these final sessions. At times the cleaving appeared brutal as the scenarios were split or shattered and rapidly populated ('cast') by the European, Indian, Indonesian and Japanese actor-dancers. Some participants felt that Barba fell back on old and established directorial techniques ('tricks') to gain a solution to the challenges advanced by the varied scenarios and that a masterclass *modus operandi* superseded an open exploration of how ISTA principles could be applied and an intercultural team of performers, could attempt to stage fragments of the scenarios. Time was pressing; to fully explore the multiple possibilities for interpretation and adaptation of *The Seven Diamonds of Brecon* would have taken many more days. The lapidarist's skill to cut rough stones is virtuosic and honed over decades; with unremitting commitment, Barba tirelessly offered embodied and staged performance fragments arising from the seven scenarios. Some participants found this to be highly illuminating and inspiring. Others felt it to be a form of showmanship with a compliant ensemble obediently fulfilling every wish and command.

The complete set of scenarios that formed *The Seven Diamonds of Brecon* exist in the CPR archive as handwritten texts. The members of the seven groups, self-determined by the participants, that devised and wrote them are unrecorded. This is one of the scenarios:

A STORY OF LOVE AND BOOKS **(Diamond # 3)**

Four characters: Abelard, Heloise, Aphra Behn, Ahab.

SCENE 1: LOVE AND BETRAYAL

A huge library with tables full of books. The two lovers, Abelard and Heloise, are separated by a pile of books. They read through the books in order to make a hole in the wall of books so that they can touch. Ahab, the cripple with the ivory leg, spies on the lovers and keeps piling on fresh books as an obstacle to their love. Aphra Behn is the librarian. Eventually, the lovers penetrate the wall and make love. Ahab spies on them. He loves Heloise.

SCENE 2: THE CASTRATION

Abelard sleeps in his room full of books, he wakes and finds himself castrated and pouring blood. He conceals his wound and bloody body with pages torn arbitrarily from books. He's engulfed in pages.

Time moves on... Ahab is a servant of a convent where Abelard is an important cleric. Heloise and Aphra are now nuns. Aphra is friend and confidante of Heloise. Heloise and Abelard continue to love.

SCENE 3: THE LOVE OF ABELARD AND HELOISE

Heloise and Abelard cannot speak to each other. The only way Heloise and Abelard communicate their love is through love letters that Aphra and Heloise write in the form of sermons for Abelard. These sermons which he delivers each Sunday talk about God and through that of love and revolt. Abelard returns his love to her via the confessional box.

SCENE 4: THE MEETING AND THE REVELATION

The only man Heloise is allowed to have contact with is Ahab who is a mute. Abelard disguises himself as Ahab so they can meet. Ahab discovers their secret and tries to denounce them. But he's mute. In desperation he removes his ivory leg to demonstrate Abelard's deception. The lovers are discovered. Ahab, jealous of Aphra's friendship with Heloise, tears off Aphra's habit revealing prohibited books and her unshaven head, i.e., she's not a nun in spirit.

SCENE 5: THE SACRIFICE

Abelard and Heloise are condemned to be burned at the stake. In their final hours together, they reconstruct their early lives together and the table covered with books. Enter a uniformed figure who binds them both to stake of books. Ahab is piling books around them to burn... instructed by figure. He begs to save Heloise's life but can't speak the words. In his desperation his ivory leg falls off, Aphra seizes it and in a frenzy beats him with it. He explodes into a million fragments, revealing his lack of soul. The explosion ignites the pyre. Abelard and Heloise die signalling their love through the flames. Aphra weeps.

Preparing for Cardiff: Questions Posed by ISTA Participants

In the final hour at Brecon, waiting for transfer to Cardiff, all participants were invited to wander in the grounds of Christ Church, take in the fresh mountain air, and formulate a question or two that could be carried forward into the Cardiff conference and discussions of the next two days.

(Question 6) How does East meet West without cultural denial according to the principles articulated in 'the book' re-pre-expressivity? Is the whole cultural spiritual life of the East acknowledged in the vitality, life, resonances of the performer?

(Question 7) Do you find that there is a relationship between physical work and the right thinking, imagining process, and if so, could you discuss and/or demonstrate some physical techniques you have found that promote imaginative work?

(Question 9) If what we believe in the actor is/are the neuromuscular dynamics (because they are real) then could it be possible for presence to be taught as a technique trans-culturally?... and is this what this ISTA session has been about?

(Question 11) Is pre-expressivity a matter of: a) personal qualities intrinsic to the individual, b) an attitude adopted by the performer – prior to rehearsal/performance; c) the technique of actions undertaken in the rehearsal situation in preparation for a subsequent performance?

(Question 12) In ISTA what is the purpose/function of the spectators?

(Question 18) Many actors use 'personal rituals' in order to raise a satisfactory state of concentration before performing. I would like to get feedback from the 'encultured performers' concerning these points: a) is it possible to get a training for concentration? b) is this training specific or included in a general training? c) is the ability to be concentrated linked to cultural values?

(Question 22) Are there qualities in and ways of using the VOICE in a pre-expressive state which can be identified across the different cultures, e.g. the co-ordination of breath with body movement, emotions and vocal energy?

(Question 24) Suteja [Balinese dancer] spoke about preparing his energy for performance, performers from many traditions do this. Is this an area where a director can help the performers, if so, how? What about the director's preparation for directing?

(Question 26) a) How does Sanjukta [Odissi dancer] create the other characters in the space (gods, etc.)? b) How does she create the relationship/dynamic between herself and the other (invisible) characters?

(Question 27) Is it possible for one or perhaps two of the actors to physically take us through the evolution of their scores, from initial point of departure to final score, showing and explaining to us the evolution of the piece and factors, forces, situations, etc. that influenced its development.

[There were 27 questions recorded; not all the participants posed a question]

The Cardiff Days

Fictive bodies, dilated minds, hidden dances

It was an established tradition to hold an open, public conference at the end of an ISTA, allowing scholars and practitioners, who could not participate in the extended practical sessions, the opportunity to encounter the ever-evolving principles and research insights being garnered and formulated by the ISTA faculty and Eugenio Barba. They usually took a conventional conference format: papers, lectures, demonstrations, masterclasses and performance presentations. CPR had already gained a reputation for curating more unusual conference formats and applying a dramaturgical approach to their realisation: staging, sequencing, juxtaposition and manifestation (this was to become a radical intervention and distinctive hallmark of its projects over the next twenty years). CPR was concerned to build upon the *Points of Contact: Theatre, Anthropology and Theatre*

Anthropology conference convened in 1988 and the more focussed symposium with Barba, *Autobiography and Anthropology*, hosted in 1990. CPR wished to avoid repetition and provide ISTA with a platform to advance its investigations, share its latest research findings and engage in a dialogue with a predominantly British (Anglo-Saxon!) audience. The simple format of an 'open house' was adopted by CPR as a vehicle for the conference, allowing a public to wander through the institution's rooms and to explore the corridors that connect them, and the treasures hidden within them. To this were woven three threads, intended to both entangle and plough an independent courses or streams of enquiry. One thread was comprised of young students at the start of their careers – the Beginners' Group – who were empowered to ask the naïve questions (innocent and yet cutting to the core). Another thread was a team of senior scholars and practitioners – the Elders – who could frame questions within a broader context of theatre history and critical theory. In addition they would shadow the beginners' group and act as advisors to CPR for the future of the *Eurasian Theatre Project*. And finally, the third thread comprised two independent scholars who were tasked to identify perceived certainties and perplexities about ISTA (from both the Brecon sessions and the Cardiff conference) and co-chair a concluding debate with their observations forming a foundational base for discussion.

This is how the conference was announced and advertised:

FICTIVE BODIES, DILATED MINDS, HIDDEN DANCES
A short open conference on the work of
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF THEATRE ANTHROPOLOGY
Friday April 10th — Saturday April 11th, 1992

hosted by
Centre for Performance Research, Cardiff

EUGENIO BARBA
with
Ferdinando Taviani, Nicola Savarese, Fabrizio Cruciani, Franco Ruffini, Patrice Pavis, Julia Varley, Odin Teatret, and Sanjukta Panigrahi

FICTIVE BODIES, DILATED MINDS, HIDDEN DANCES will be the first opportunity for a UK audience to observe, question and participate in the work of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA), which will be presenting aspects of its comparative research in Western and Asian theatre forms to UK theatre practitioners, students and academics in an open conference.

The Centre for Performance Research (CPR) will host a provocative and stimulating conference in which members of ISTA have been asked to present profiles of their research work – in particular, work associated with the concepts of pre-expressivity and historiography – to the general public and a group of twelve 'beginners' drawn from theatre departments throughout the UK.

This beginner's group, complemented by a shadow group of experienced

practitioners and academics, will act as a touchstone for ISTA's work. The members of ISTA will provide an 'Open House' view of their work in four main presentations:

- * Dramaturgy of the Performer – East & West: a working demonstration of the principles of pre-expressivity led by Eugenio Barba with Sanjukta Panigrahi & Julia Varley

- * Dramaturgy of Performance – Remembering Histories: four complementary presentations on Commedia dell'Arte, Stanislavsky, Artaud, and Scenic Space in the light of the recurrent principles underlying the art of the performer proposed by ISTA's research work. With Fernando Taviani, Nicola Savarese, Fabrizio Cruciani and Franco Ruffini.

- * Signs of Life – The Codes of the Performer: A dialogue between the theatre semiotician Patrice Pavis and Odin performer Julia Varley on the separate but related realities of the actor and the spectator, and the 'useful misunderstandings' arise between academic and practitioner.

- * Perplexities and Certainties: a session of provocative questions concerning ISTA's work proposed by Dr. James Brandon and Dr. Carol Martin.

The Conference will be of interest to all those who wish to encounter ISTA's work and the concepts that it has developed. It is also for those concerned with understanding theatre from the point of view of performance, and its development within multicultural and transcultural contexts. It will be accessible to academics and practitioners alike and present opportunities for open discussion and debate.

Good food, refreshments and accommodation will be available, and this will, we hope, provide a suitable milieu for informal discussion between participants and ISTA members. In addition, the renowned Odissi dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi, who has collaborated with ISTA for several years, will give a Saturday night performance with her musicians in the Sherman Theatre.

ISTA was founded in 1979 by Eugenio Barba as a research laboratory for the comparative study of the performer's art. It has become a centre for the dissemination of Asian and Western performer's experience and knowledge. The public sessions of ISTA bring together professional performers, specialists and academics from various disciplines and cultures.

[This text was followed by further description of ISTA and quotes from Eugenio Barba.]

The conference was well attended by a broad spectrum of UK-based scholars and practitioners, including senior academics, early career university lecturers, experimental theatre makers and performers from diverse cultural backgrounds. CPR invited, as guests, several key multi-cultural and intercultural arts practitioners from Cardiff, London and Manchester, and several colleagues from mainland Europe and North America, who followed the work of Odin Teatret and ISTA, made the journey to Wales to participate in the conference.

CPR took care to mix the different groups and agendas that were running through the event, so, for example, at the opening banquet, held in the Happy Gathering, a Cantonese restaurant close to Chapter Arts Centre, on each of the round tables were

participants from the preceding week in Brecon, a member of the beginners and elders' group, an ISTA faculty member or two (scholar and performer), a selection of the new arrivals to the conference and a CPR facilitator. The intention was to nurture and enable dialogue, but the problem was always lack of time: an abundance of material to be shared and a reduction in the time and space allowed to absorb, digest and respond to it.

This is a more detailed description of the conference schedule, the intended aims of the gathering and the strategies employed by forming the different groups:

ISTA UK CONFERENCE 92 INFORMATION

Content:

The main material of the conference will be a profile of ISTA's work presented by its members with a particular focus on areas of pre-expressivity and historiography. These complementary areas are concerned with the dual logics of I) process and II) results:

- I the dramaturgy of the performer – logics in the making of performance at the level of pre-expressivity.
- II the dramaturgy of the performance – logics involved in the reception, interpretation and re-construction of performance at the level of expressivity.

Session I: Logics of Process (6:30 – 9:30)

Dramaturgy of the Performer: East & West.

This opening session will be led by Eugenio Barba with Sanjukta Panigrahi and Julia Varley in a working demonstration of pre-expressivity and process involved in the formation of the performer's body and scenic presence. The session profiles ISTA's research into comparative performance techniques.

Sessions II/III Logics of Result (9:45 – 1:00)

Dramaturgy of Performance Remembering Histories

These two interrelated sessions will be presented by four theatre historians, founding members of ISTA, concerned with historiography as a way of re-constructing the fragments and written memories of theatre history. This research has been undertaken in the light of the recurrent principles underlying the art of the performer in codified traditions proposed by ISTA. Four complementary papers on Commedia dell'Arte, Stanislavsky, Artaud, and Scenic Space will be circulated prior the conference. The four ISTA members, Fernando Taviani, Nicola Savarese, Fabrizio Cruciani and Franco Ruffini, will give short (20 -30 min) audio-visual presentations that extend and amplify their research work; the session will profile ISTA's research into performance forms and theatre histories.

Session IV: Dialogues (2:00 – 3:30)

Signs of Life: The Codes of the Performer

This session will take the form of a dialogue between a theatre semiotician (Patrice Pavis) and an Odin Teatret performer (Julia Varley). This dialogue will explore the application of semiotic analysis to the pre-expressive and expressive levels of the performer's scenic presence. The separate but related 'realities' of the actor and the spectator will be discussed in relation to building meanings through performance. The 'useful misunderstandings' that arise from theatre seen as an object of analysis and theatre seen as a process of construction or composition will also be touched on. The session profiles the use of particular analytical method in ISTA's research.

Sessions I – IV will be followed by the opportunity to ask questions from participants.

Session V (5:00 – 6:30)

Perplexities & Certainties: Testing the work of ISTA

The final session will consist of a series of provocative questions posed to the ISTA members by two advocates. The series of questions will have been synthesised from questions asked or proposed during the conference and will represent the major issues that have occupied conference participants. The two advocates (James Brandon and Carol Martin) will formulate provocative questions that enable ISTA to reveal its research, methods and scope. This session is seen as providing ground from which further discussions of the application of ISTA's research can grow.

Small Group Sessions (3.30-5.00)

In addition, there will be a Small Group session. Members of ISTA and other participating groups will have the opportunity to discuss aspects of ISTA's research – in particular, practical performance issues arising from the previous week's work with the UK directors' group. This might operate in two modes: UK Directors connecting material arising from the conference with their practical work with ISTA; conference participants connecting their perceptions of the conference issues with practical responses to ISTA research from non-ISTA members.

Conference Groupings:

The form of the conference will be developed around idea of an open house or open day – a guided tour around ISTA or a works outing – for participants. In addition to the faculty members of ISTA, Asian/ Western performers associated academics (James Brandon & Carol Martin) the UK participants in the conference will be grouped as follows:

UK Directors (35) This will be the group of participants from the ISTA workshop session of the week prior to the conference (4–10 April). They will be bringing an immediate sense of the practical work of ISTA and its impact on UK approaches to bear on the conference.

Student Beginners: (12) CPR has invited twelve UK Departments of Theatre to send a student participant to the conference. Initially, an idea was for ISTA to direct the presentations of its research to a group of twelve 'beginners' starting out in their work as theatre makers or performers. Whilst this idea still has a value for the CPR research project (University of Eurasian Theatre) it was felt that an ISTA 'open house' approach should be more generally directed to participants from all 'levels' of theatre experience. The Beginners Group will still occupy a central place in the conference, but as 'fieldworkers' in the research. They will be briefed by CPR and asked to question ISTA's work as presented through dialogues, papers, practical and theoretical presentations by members of the ISTA core group and test it against their own perceptions, experiences and visions of making theatre. The student group – in some ways representing a current and future orientation of theatre – will act as a touchstone for the aims of ISTA.

CPR Advisory Group: (12) The student group will be complemented or shadowed by a group of academics and practitioners who form the CPR Advisory Panel. This shadow group will, like the 'helping chorus' of Chinese Opera, both observe and help develop questions framed by the students. As an advisory group for CPR their brief will include amongst other tasks, helping to determine the direction of The CPR Research Project and its documentation.

It is clear from this document that CPR was not functioning solely as a producer, as a neutral host of another organisation's research project, it was not a disinterested presenter, but neither was it a commercial impresario (the project was a substantial financial risk and resulted in considerable losses). CPR had its own agenda and a research project wrapped around the hosting of ISTA; this is evidenced in its commitment to a 'Beginners Group', making meaningful connections with UK universities and forming a network with the UK academy. Also, the Advisory Group that was not only contributing to the discussions of the conference, but also identifying research questions and lines of enquiry for CPR's troubled *Eurasian Theatre Project* and the even broader *Process & Documentation* research project. CPR's lack of neutrality is also evident in the multiple layers of scrutiny and questioning woven into the proceedings, it had no wish to see ISTA 'fail' but it was committed to put its research findings under rigorous analysis with transparency and inclusive discussion. This was something that the Italian professoriate of ISTA thought was quintessential British, and when put under pressure from this line of questioning, they became defensive. Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley, however, appeared to take a more benign and flexible stance; Barba put it down to a cold Anglo-Saxon characteristic (affliction) and would often joke about Anglo-Saxon reserve and a judgemental reception of ISTA for years to come.

Many of the presentations made at FICTIVE BODIES, DILATED MINDS, HIDDEN DANCES, have subsequently been published or incorporated into other

articles. Most notably Julia Varley developed the answers to the questions posed by Patrice Pavis into an article for JTA (*Score and Subscore*). However, Pavis' questions have not been published in English but were shared via rapid translation and duplication to the conference delegates. Here is a sample:

Which Stanislavsky?

When Julia Varley and Eugenio Barba use the expressions; 'building a character' and 'sub-text' they are, whether they like it or not, referring to Stanislavsky's concept of work on oneself and work on the role. Does not the expression lend itself to confusion? All her work at Bologna and Saintes, however seems to point to the fact that the actress is not pursuing a character study but rather that she finds herself in the problematical post-Stanislavskian discourse of Meyerhold not knowing any more about the apposition between the person and the role, the interior and the exterior, but now confronting the famous Meyerholdian definition of the actor: $N = A1 + A2$ (where A1 is the builder giving the orders for the completion of the project and A2 being the body of the actor, the interpreter carrying out the commission of the contractor), To be precise, it must be said that she is borrowing probably the idea of physical score from Stanislavsky - not from the classical Stanislavsky we know who spoke about affective memory but from the Stanislavsky of physical actions.

In the tradition of Meyerhold-Grotowski-Barba, Julia Varley is working simultaneously from the perspective of A1 and A2. For her, A1 is the tendency (one dare not say drive) to create a form and to control; to do this she needs to start with a megatext (narrative text of the song "A time for cherries"), which provides her with a linear narrative framework, appropriate to representation, with well-defined protagonists and, most importantly, following a well-established physical path. A2 is the drive to offer up unformed, impulsive, or intuitive material, which is best expressed in the uncontrolled spontaneity of improvisation. Her task should be to not really know too much about who is leading the dance... A1 or A2.

Can the Western actress break free from her bodily conditioning?

It is difficult to know whether a Western actress can re-acclimatise her body to the Oriental performance mode, given that her body is shaped and cultivated by a series of cultural factors which could still appear to her to be spontaneous behaviour. Apparently, this is what she does: she tries to escape the mimetic and convincing rendering of the naturalistic actress in order to formalise her movements and vocalisations according to a code and aesthetic which alienate her from daily life. However, in fact, she is quite open to common ground and to these daily habits of walking and speaking, even if it's always a parody from her improvisations pastiching different behaviours, situations and ways of speaking. Thus, she finds it difficult to re-acclimatise her body in getting rid of culturally in-bred spontaneity in order to acquire extra-daily techniques. What is missing is precisely that towards which she gravitates (and this tension is obviously the motor of her art): a vocal and choreographic training which she would have received from classical dance or singing

classes (for example). What she has gained, on the other hand, is the ability of the Western artist to always hang her art onto reality, to get to know this reality better, a perception of the oneness of external physical score and interior dimension, the knowledge and the "proof" that one cannot separate them, the conviction that the artificially-recomposed body becomes after a certain time a natural body - a 'second nature' - just as much for the actress as for the audience for whom the most arbitrary staging becomes an organic being.

Julia Varley offers the audience a double look – at form and contents, at discipline and spontaneity, a vision both segmented and organic. "The spectator is struck not by the performer's strange physical dynamic, but by the organicity which emerges from it" (Barba 1989: 313).

There are so many questions to ask Julia Varley and all actors... at Cardiff and elsewhere. At the risk of a chronicle of misunderstandings between the actress and the theorist but in the hope of a few 'signs of life'.

[Patrice Pavis text – *Questions to Julia Varley: Signs of Life – The Codes of the Performer* – is 6,200 words long and was completed by Pavis in Brecon and translated by CPR Administrator Howard Cooper for distribution to participants in Brecon and the Cardiff conference delegates. Only a part of the last two pages is reprinted here.]

Barba Concluding Remarks – Transcript (extract)

One cannot separate the dance from the dancer. One cannot separate technique from the performer; one cannot separate personal identity from technique, which is what a person is using at any given moment. I imagine that when I try to indicate a level of organisation in the performer – in the way the performer is building his scenic presence – because my identity, my nervous system and my cultural background is present, it is impossible to separate it out.

Therefore, in order to define, to discover, to trace the ground of pre-expressivity, one has to imagine as if personality or culture or religion, as if the meaning is not the most important thing; but exactly only these dances of impulses, these very precise constructions of micro-sequences, which in the end can be the channels for what are called 'emotions', what is called 'political commitment', what is called 'God'. I don't know – everyone gives personal names to it; nevertheless, it is also very important to try to separate what is my personal way of working from what I am trying to indicate outside what is called my makeup. I suppose that all performers are facing this problem: how to give life to these words; how to make the first step so that the spectators begin to look – this is the question which in the end theatre anthropology tries to focus on – this is the question that theatre anthropology is asking of performances from different cultures.

Maybe one could say that if we started analysing or studying the first step, the first day of work, how each of us need the first step in order to become what we have become, then we would again much more easily and in a much more evident way,

discover those principles which are at the basis of expressivity, of presence, of scenic bios.

These cannot be separated from what the personality or the individual is, and the culture that surrounds it; but nevertheless, only if one is able to think, for research purposes, as if these two other profiles are not present, one is able to see and watch how certain principles have been built in the different experiences of the spectators. Maybe we will not like the results or maybe the result will be very far away. I can be fascinated or repulsed but even repulsion can in the end help me to define myself; because at the end all this work is only for one purpose: how to strengthen, how to give, how to preserve our own personal identity or own way of remaining very near what is essential to us, what is holy, something which can transcend us. You can call it our commitment to give a meaning to what we are doing, and we always give meaning in relation to other people. In the end, all of this research is concerned with how to strengthen our way of being in the 'polis', of being in the town, of being in the state.

Multiple Reflections

On the Sunday morning there was a series of closed meetings garnering feedback on both the practical sessions in Brecon and the Cardiff conference. A very positive set of responses were made by the Beginners Group, who were immensely grateful for the opportunity to participate and pose their own questions. The tutorial assistance provided by CPR through Ric Allsopp was deemed crucial in understanding some of



The Balinese ensemble, ISTA 7, Brecon, 1992. Photo: CPR archive

the principles being advanced by ISTA, and they found the meetings in small groups with individuals from ISTA and the directors/scholars who had been in Brecon most illuminating. The Elders Group (and advisors to CPR) were cautious about the ambition to host an expanded version of ISTA within the frame of the *Eurasian Theatre Project*. Although they felt the conference Hidden Bodies had been most fruitful, and all the presentations rigorous and generous, they sensed that an ominous cloud had travelled down from Brecon to Cardiff and that there were unresolved tensions between CPR, ISTA and the participants. Carol Martin had many insightful observations based on participating in all the Brecon-Cardiff proceedings and on reflecting on her experiences at the previous ISTA in Bologna in 1990. To date, Prof Martin has not published an assessment of the two ISTAs.

The final session and closing event of the entire Brecon-Cardiff ISTA was a meeting between CPR and ISTA (Eugenio Barba and Julia Varley, together with Susanne Vill, Patrice Pavis, Fabrizio Cruciani, Jean-Marie Pradier, Fernando Taviani, Franco Ruffini and Nicola Savarese). It should be noted that all participants were exhausted from the previous nine days work, and it might have been better to convene such a reflection when minds and bodies had recuperated; a certain negativity pervaded the discussions. The Italian professoriate clearly felt they had been working within a hostile environment and that ISTA could only flourish in a 'safe' and supportive context where misunderstandings were allowed. Julia Varley talked about the need for 'the possibility to disagree without having to defend' and 'to disagree amongst friends', the Brecon sessions had proved to be difficult for her. Patrice Pavis, however, advanced that it had been 'great to be working within an English-speaking context' and thought the challenges that had been encountered were good for ISTA and necessary, he welcomed a structure that 'would build down the tension between the two' (criticism and defence, English and Italian). Jean-Marie Pradier added that the 'Anglo-Celtic ability to share was similar to the Latin tendency, but the Anglo-Celtic prefer to connect and interact rather than just observe'. Eugenio Barba stated that despite all the cultural differences and a strong sense of being criticised and judged, 'the research of ISTA could be done' and that there was much more to be done.

On the matter of the prospect for an ISTA within a three college *Eurasian Theatre Project* there was much disagreement, although there was an overriding sense that this would once again put ISTA in a challenging and uncomfortable context. Susanne Vill, Fabrizio Cruciani, Fernando Taviani, and Nicola Savarese were very much against the idea, whereas Franco Ruffini was positive but raised what he thought was the main problem for this future project and the one that had just taken place – lack of time. He spoke about 'architectural time' and that 'there must be the flexibility and freedom of not being oppressed by time requirements'. He felt this was a necessary condition for ISTA but recognised it was difficult for any producer or impresario to raise funds for such freedom. The distinguished university professor Fabrizio Cruciani concluded, 'I love ISTA precisely because it is not a university'. This had great resonance for CPR (and should have been taken as prophecy, given their trajectory towards being incorporated within a university) – the enthusiasm for the *Eurasian Theatre Project* was fading fast and would evaporate within days.



Christ College, 1992. Photo: CPR archive

Ending - with Elephant

After all the participants, guests, ISTA staff and Odin members had left and a clean-up of the Gym (studio) was completed, the CPR team decided to go for a walk. Fresh sea air on a late Sunday afternoon in April, with the sun already setting, was much needed; there were many cobwebs to blow out. A favoured spot for such outings, frequented over many years, was Lavernock Point, just beyond Penarth. Beside the Bristol Channel, looking towards Somerset, is a nature reserve with coastal paths and Jurassic slabs of stone and sand along a beach forever changing due to the cliff falls and rough sea. Although they had all visited this place many times, day and night, the plaque that marked Guglielmo Marconi's first successful radio transmission had peculiar significance. An Italian in Wales, research, trial and error, an invention that would change the world... Such fortitude. Marconi's first 'telegraphy without wires' was "Can you hear me".

As they walked beyond the slabs of rock, they saw in the sand an intricate outline that the incoming sea would soon wash away. At first it was indistinguishable, becoming more apparent as they advanced. It was a magnificent drawing of an elephant, skilfully marked out, no one in sight, a mystery to behold. Someone let out a cry, and another started laughing, and the tension, apprehension, and sheer exhaustion of the team was temporarily released. They crouched around the drawing at various points and, like a huddle of cave dwellers, placed a hand on a different part, pressing deeply – and then they departed.

P. 255: Eurasian Theatre University, Fara Sabina, 1993. Rehearsal of *Shakuntala*, dedicated to Fabrizio Cruciani. Photo: Fiora Bemporad