

Theatrum Mundi



Julia Varley

Theatrum Mundi: Behind the Curtain

Abstract: This article goes into the details of the process of creation of Theatrum Mundi performances, making examples from the earliest production in 1987 to the most recent in 2016. Eugenio Barba's task as a director of performers coming from different traditions is to find a coherence in the music, costumes, text, physical scores and narrative through a complex montage. Only a very close collaboration over the years allows such a process to occur resulting in performances presented in open air spaces and on traditional indoor stages.

Keywords: Theatrum Mundi, Sanjukta Panigrahi, Kanichi Hanayagi, Augusto Omolú, I Made Djimat, I Wayan Bawa, Odin Teatret

On the lake

When I think back, the Theatrum Mundi performance that most sticks in my memory is the one that we presented at the end of the 8th ISTA session in Londrina, Brazil, in 1994. To honour that session - the first and only to happen in Latin America thanks to Nitis Jacon's extraordinary daring - I will write about the experience of Theatrum Mundi in general for this issue of *JTA*, which also presents the 8th ISTA. The Theatrum Mundi performance in Londrina was decided, rehearsed and performed on the last day of the closed and open ISTA session, at the end of which, exhausted, we celebrated with a final feast by a swimming pool.

We had chosen the lake of Londrina as a venue for the performance. The grass slopes overlooking the water were perfect to accommodate the thousands of spectators that were expected to attend. Fernando Jacon, the technical director and son of Nitis Jacon, took upon himself the challenge of building a stage on the lake; in fact, not one stage but three! The stages were connected with bridges and from the shore an underwater gangway allowed some actors to reach the main stage as if miraculously walking on water while others arrived by boat. With their voluminous costumes, the elegantly made-up performers did not look at ease when boarding the small motor canoes in order to reach the stage built over floating barrels tied together. The Brazilian musicians reassured the Asian dancers who could not swim. Indian Sanjukta Panigrahi and Balinese Swasthi Bandem and I were on a boat that broke down, and the local firemen had to tow us to the stage. At the end of the performance, while the final fireworks went off, the lighting



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Torgeir Wethal and Kanichi Hanayagi in *For Poems for Sanjukta*, ISTA 11, Montemor-O-Novo and Lisbon, Portugal, 1998. Photo: Fiora Bemporad

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of the trees on the other side of the lake gave a magical effect to the last scene. The lights in different colours came from underneath, making the trees appear as if suspended, reaching for the stars shining in the dark sky above.

Ensemble and performance

In the context of ISTA, 'Theatrum Mundi' (Theatre of the World) is used both to connote an ensemble of actors, dancers and musicians belonging to different theatre traditions and genres coming from Asia, Europe, USA and Latin America, and to name the performances that bring together all these artists to present a complex montage of their scenes to the spectators.

Theatrum Mundi performances are sometimes presented as a conclusion of ISTA sessions, at other times they are autonomous productions that go on tour in different countries, or they take the form of intercultural barbers. The performers can be few or many. Sometimes they are all masters of their specific genres, or at other times the artists are joined by a chorus of younger performers who do not belong to a particular codified tradition. Everyone wants to learn and share. A lot has already been written describing the different examples of Theatrum Mundi productions. This time, I am interested in dissecting the creative process and montage practice which happens before and behind the final result, in order to understand the many procedures, events, interests, necessities, meetings, stories, challenges and fortuitous threads that are woven into the ultimate dramaturgy as if they had always belonged to each other, as if everything had been worked out beforehand. When the performance exists, it is easy to find a logic sustaining the whole, but I know that when we begin creating nothing seems clear and resolved. The support can come from a simple starting point which is then often forgotten during the rehearsals.

In the context of theatre anthropology, Theatrum Mundi performances are all directed by Eugenio Barba. I have participated in most of them as an actress and in some as a director's assistant. I am familiar with the processes of creation of Odin Teatret's performances and Eugenio's different ways of directing that have changed and developed throughout the years. Of course, this firsthand knowledge also helps me recognise the similarities and differences concerning the processes of a Theatrum Mundi creation.

To give a brief historical overview, Theatrum Mundi performances have been presented at the end of ISTA sessions in Salento (Italy) in 1987; in Bologna and Volterra (Italy) in 1990; in Londrina (Brazil) in 1994; in Umeå (Sweden) in 1995; in Lisbon (Portugal) with the title *Four Poems for Sanjukta* in 1998. Theatrum Mundi have taken the form of an intercultural barter or theatre anthologies in Bonn (Germany) in 1980; in Volterra (Italy) in 1981; in Brecon (Wales) in 1992; in Bielefeld (Germany) in 2000; in La Rinconada (Spain) in 2004; in Kryzowa (Poland) in 2005; in Albino (Italy) in 2016; and in Favignana (Italy) in 2021. Theatrum Mundi performances have been fashioned as autonomous productions with *Shakuntala* in Fara Sabina (Italy) and in Holstebro (Denmark) in 1993; with *The Jungle Book* in Holstebro (Denmark) in 1993; with *Orô de Otelô* which premiered in Londrina (Brazil) in 1994, and then was presented at all ISTA sessions until 2005, and in its own right in Holstebro (Denmark) and on tour worldwide

from 1994 until 2012; with *The Island of Labyrinths* in Copenhagen (Denmark) in 1996; with *Ego Faust* in Bologna (Italy) and Bielefeld (Germany) in 2001, and in Copenhagen (Denmark) in 2004; with *Ur-Hamlet* in Ravenna (Italy), Holstebro and at Kronborg Castle in Elsinore (Denmark) in 2006, and in Wrocław (Poland) in 2009; with *The Marriage of Medea* in Holstebro (Denmark) in 2008; and with *Anástasis* (Resurrection) in Pécsvárad and Budapest (Hungary) in 2023.



Torgeir Wethal and Kanichi Hanayagi.
Photo: Fiora Bemporad

Process and result

The process of creation of a Theatrum Mundi production includes working with already existing scenes, which include performers' scores as they belong to the codification of a tradition that has been passed down for centuries, or to a self-made codification belonging to the theatre culture of autodidactic groups that fix sequences to build performances. But the work does not only evolve from pre-existing physical or vocal scores;

it also includes working with improvisation aiming to create a completely new scene individually or collectively, or to make variations and adaptations by changing the order, volume, energy, or direction of the actions in already known sequences.

Like any theatre production, a Theatrum Mundi performance grows in collaboration with the development of the music, space, set design, lighting, costumes and props. To enhance the variation of rhythm and intensity, to give spectators time to rest after intense moments of emotional communication, to satisfy the need of references to a recognisable story, the final result usually includes battle scenes, archetypal love and death enactments, comic intermezzos, characters of different ages, theatrical effects of sudden changes, impressive surprises, exaggerations and delicate, vulnerable moments of a more human dimension.

The people involved in the process determine the future of the performance. In this sense Theatrum Mundi follows the tradition of group theatre in which the people involved suggest the stories to be told, the characters and the dramaturgical structure, rather than performers being chosen to play a piece that has already been decided upon earlier. Beside the performers and the spectators, the reality of the market in which the Theatrum Mundi is to be presented also has a huge influence on the process: requests, wishes or suggestions coming from the organisers or producers, the kind of venue that is proposed, whether performing indoors or outdoors, or if it is to be a unique event or to be repeatedly performed on tour - all of this gives guidelines to follow. The organisers guarantee the necessary financial support for such an expensive endeavour as a Theatrum Mundi to happen. Without people like Nitis Jacon in Brazil, Trevor Davies in Denmark, Jarek Fret in Poland, Siegmund Schröder in Germany, Attila Vidnyánszky in Hungary, no Theatrum Mundi would ever have taken place. If Theatrum Mundi has a

future, this depends also on other fearless dreamers appearing on the horizon ready to engage their energy in achieving what always seems like an impossible task.

Trying to give a name to the methodology and to differentiate *Theatrum Mundi* from other intercultural experiences, in the 9th film on theatre anthropology - part of Fondazione Barba Varley's Sharing Knowledge Project - Eugenio Barba says:

A performance which gathers artists from various traditions can come about in many ways. The artists can abandon the style of their own tradition and, together with the others, find a common style. Or else, they can assume the style of a foreign tradition in order to give new vigour to the work they are presenting. Greek texts can be interpreted by Japanese actors who draw on *noh*, and texts by Shakespeare can be played in French by actors who take their inspiration from the scenic skill of *kabuki*.

When working with the *Theatrum Mundi* I follow another principle: each artist faithfully preserves the characteristics specific to his/her own style, integrating them into the context of the story related by the performance.

We apply a dramaturgy that intertwines autonomous styles. The intertwining, as well as the development of the plot, are both my responsibility as director. What is created by the actors belongs to their cultural identity and is not encroached upon by the *mise en scène*. I have called this way of working, the 'romanesque method'.

Eurasian theatre does not indicate the theatres included in a geographical space. It suggests a mental reality, an active idea in modern theatre culture. By the term Eurasian Theatre, I mean the technical and theoretical dimension that enables us to consider as a unity those performances traditionally divided into the two cultural hemispheres called East and West. In reality these are connected not only by exchanges and intersections, but above all by a common professional identity.

Theatre can be thought of in terms of ethnic, national, group or even individual traditions. But if we try through this to understand our own identity, the opposite and complementary attitude is also essential: to think of our own theatre in a transcultural dimension, in the flow of a tradition of traditions. The profession is also a country to which we belong, an elective homeland, without geographical borders.

When creating a *Theatrum Mundi* performance, performers and director do not discuss the meanings to convey, but concentrate on the timing, meeting points, rhythm, actions and reactions. The collaboration is not based on what is expressed, but on the *pre-expressive* level - the effective level of stage presence - which allows a communication based on the somatic principles of the craft, transcending national and cultural boundaries.

Eugenio's motivation for the first experiences of *Theatrum Mundi* in 1980 in Bonn and in 1981 in Volterra was the pleasure of offering a vision of the multifarious, extraordinary richness of the actors' and dancers' skill, showing the best of what has been created in the many cultures of the world, the Everests of the acting craft. It was meant as an anthology of the most theatrical and impressive scenes and to celebrate the embodied technique of performers, some of whom had trained since they were children. The pleasure came from presenting I Made Pasek Tempo's magic from Bali, Sanjukta

Panigrahi's sumptuousness of details, Katsuko Azuma's striking presence and steel spine, Ingemar Lindh's symphony of body positions that he had learned from Etienne Decroux, the personal scores of Odin Teatret's Iben Nagel Rasmussen and Toni Cots permeated with vitality and commitment. The different traditions showed an extraordinary scenic presence in different shapes, rhythms and aesthetics, giving space not only to Asian but also European forms, even though we had to wait until the ISTA session in Copenhagen in 1996 to include examples from classical ballet and modern dance with Steve Paxton and Stephen Pier.

From the ISTA session in Salento (South Italy) in 1987 the theatre anthology - an independent succession of scenes - was substituted through a montage into a *Theatrum Mundi* performance with an interaction between the performers, also adapted to venue of the castle of Copertino. The structure of the performance and its montage have since developed to reach a culmination in the productions of *Ur-Hamlet* (2006-2009) and *Anástasis* (2023). The *Theatrum Mundi* in Bologna in 1990 included a choir of ISTA participants for the first time, a procedure which has been often repeated since. From the balcony on the first floor of the courtyard, the chorus joined into the Balinese *kecak* rhythms and sang *Subo al triquete*, composed by the Danish Ivan Hansen, that had been shared by all nationalities present at ISTA.

Pre-existing scores

To make a montage of pre-existing scores, it was necessary that Eugenio was familiar with all the performance 'material' that each artist could contribute. For the first sessions of ISTA (Bonn 1980, Volterra 1981, Blois 1985, Holstebro 1986, Salento 1987), Eugenio visited the artists in their countries to prepare their participation, observing classes and rehearsals in their studios for long periods. In those years Eugenio focussed on the terminology, exercises and the first forms the artists had learned during their apprenticeship. Eugenio spent hours and days repeatedly observing the same postures and sequences to discover the principles underlying their technique. He also saw their performances with the stunning costumes and masks, accompanied by live music that underlined or dialogued with the performers' impulses on stage. He could remember the scenes and characters and refer to them when asking Sanjukta Panigrahi, Katsuko Azuma or I Made Pasek Tempo to show something with a particular quality to the ISTA participants. Eugenio also had in mind the most theatrically effective sequences which could be placed one after the other for sudden changes of energy, rhythm, music, or extrovert or introvert qualities. The choice of what he included in the programmes was based on very concrete and material theatrical actions, not on their meaning, and for a sensorial communication that any spectator could appreciate despite not being familiar with the language, stories and aesthetics. Associations subsequently came, a consequence of seeing the scenes in a new context.

An important body of the scenes that composed a *Theatrum Mundi* performance came from the Asian traditions. Eugenio felt confident that their material already had a scenic life and did not need any justification or adjustment to function in his eyes and in those of the spectators.



P. 88 and 89 on top, Theatrum Mundi rehearsals, ISTA 8, Londrina, Brazil. Photo: Emidio Luisi
P. 89 (bottom) Augusto Omolú and I Wayan Bawa in *Ur-Hamlet*, Wroclaw, Poland, 2009. Photo: Francesco Galli



For example, when working on *Ur-Hamlet*, the main scenes performed by the Gambuh Pura Desa Ensemble in Bali, which Eugenio and I had been seen time and time again, were a starting point for the new structure: amongst them the fight between the delicate prince Panji and his enemy the *keras* (strong) prince Prabangsa, the feast, the stabbing of the horse, the clowns, the storyteller, the female dances presented by the princess, and the *condong* and other ladies in waiting. The fight between the two princes and their warriors in the Gambuh was the foundation on which to build the scene of the killing of Horvendil (Hamlet's father) by Fengo (Hamlet's uncle) in *Ur-Hamlet* by Saxo Gramaticus, while the feast was the basis for the presentation of Hamlet's return to Denmark from England. The Balinese women danced, carrying torches to illuminate the other main characters. The Baris, the warrior dance, was performed in a shorter version by the twelve-year-old Ni Wayan Pia Widari Eka Tana on the uneven surface of the covered well in the courtyard of Kronborg Castle in Elsinore. Even when only short extracts were used, dialogues and music accompanied the scenes as in the original versions.

Pre-existing scenes were taken also from Odin Teatret's productions. For example, in *The Island of Labyrinths*, in the Faust episode, my score in 'the scene that went mad', which visualised Gretchen's madness, was extrapolated from my solo *The Castle of Holstebro*. Eugenio only asked me to add a moment pulling up my dress over my knees before falling to the ground. Roberta Carreri's costume and movements in her dialogue with I Made Paek Tempo during the Theatrum Mundi in Bologna in 1990 came from her solo *Judith*. Iben Nagel Rasmussen's Trickster character from Odin Teatret's performance *Talabot* together with Kai Bredholt's Polar Bear Otto from *Ode to Progress* and Tina Nielsen's White Angel from *Anabasis* were transformed into the players performing for the god-couple Sanjukta Panigrahi and Augusto Omolú in the Londrina Theatrum Mundi and in *The Island of Labyrinths*.

The Japanese Buyo Kabuki ensemble with Kanichi Hanayagi, Sae Nanaogi and Shogo Fujima had brought an elaborate performance with very rich costumes to the ISTA session in Londrina. One of the scenes presented a woman with her face covered in the traditional white make-up, wearing a long black and white wig and a kimono with drawings of a spiderweb on her shoulders. After a battle the woman threw a paper spiderweb that exploded from her hands over two warriors imprisoning them. From 1994 until 2000, this scene became a central part of the Theatrum Mundi performances. For example, in *Ego Faust*, the woman in white appears like a ghost, confirmed by Torgeir Wethal's text as Faust, "What do you want? You are only the ghost of my past, stop making all those faces." Faust calls the two Buyo Kabuki warriors to his side, and they start the original sequence of their fight with the ghost spider woman. Faust had to die and be taken to hell. It could be that the Japanese female character recalled the white Gretchen who had exited in a previous scene and that spectators could imagine her as a ghost come to awaken remorse in Faust. It could be; but this is never directly exposed or explained in the performance. Perhaps these thoughts were subtexts that helped the director give indications for the scenes which already functioned in themselves theatrically, independently from the meaning that was being conveyed. Fifteen years later, noh performer Akira Matsui used the same spiderweb effect in *Ur-Hamlet* to catch

the men attacking Hamlet on his return to Denmark, before the killing of Hamlet's uncle Fengo, and the proclamation of Hamlet's harsh laws of the New Order.

Improvisation

The performers from codified traditions did not only contribute with complete scenes but also with a scenic behaviour, which revealed itself in ways of moving, walking, sitting, lying down and speaking. These could be used to improvise new scenes.

During 'The Crossing' work session at ISTA Bologna in 1990, Japanese onnagata (female impersonator) Kanichi Hanayagi and Odin Teatret actor Torgeir Wethal improvised a scene with a piece of paper that they passed to each other turning it into a letter, a fan, a screen, a baby... The improvisation was repeated and fixed in front of the ISTA participants and became a central scene in *Theatrum Mundi* from 1990 until ISTA Bielefeld in 2000. It was a delicate love scene. When the *Theatrum Mundi* used the theme of Faust, Kanichi's onnagata became a version of Gretchen. Later this role was developed further by adding Gretchen killing her child with a stone just before the *bikinuki*, a sudden change of costume from a red to a white kimono. In this scene, Odin Teatret's Death character Mr Peanut, in his white bride version on foot, was called in to give the stone to Gretchen and then to help undo the strings that allowed for the sudden change of costume that was also underlined by a change of light.

To create a counterpoint to the delicate love scene, I was asked to improvise as Mr Peanut with Balinese Tjokorda Raka Tisnu's demon queen Rangda. For the next *Theatrum Mundi* the improvisation was developed in a meeting with I Made Djimat's Cheluluk, a character that was allowed to be more humorous. We improvised various grotesque positions of seduction and courting as if inspired by the love scene we could see in front of us. The timing that kept we four performers together was given by the Portuguese song *Lagrimas* sang by Roberta Carreri as I Nyoman Budi Arta embraced her to create a third amorous couple in the background.

It is surprising to see the photographs of the rehearsals for *Faust* during the ISTA session in Salento (South Italy) in 1987. The Indian Sanjukta Panigrahi has her hair loose and is not wearing her traditional costume, beside her the Japanese Katsuko Azuma is wearing trousers. Kanichi Hanayagi is dressed in a western summer dress and hat. I have been told that during the work on the improvised scenes, Sanjukta refused to step on a book as requested by Eugenio, because it was taboo for her. A taboo also arose during a scene for the Crossing at ISTA in Bologna in which Sanjukta, Kahno, Padmini and I were protecting the flame of a candle. At the end we had to put out the flame, but as it was taboo for some of the Asians to blow the flame out, and I wanted to respect that, we waved our hands to make enough of a breeze to extinguish the fire.

Another central scene for various *Theatrum Mundi* was based on an improvisation between Sanjukta Panigrahi and Augusto Omolú. It had started with a task given by Eugenio to Sanjukta. She should teach Augusto how to pass from one of his Orixá, the god manifestations of nature, to another without interruption. Sanjukta and Augusto worked in the White Room at Odin Teatret in Denmark in 1994. Eugenio asked them to create a complete scene. To achieve the task, Sanjukta and Augusto improvised at first

by simply reacting to the quality of energy of the figures from the classical Indian Odissi and the Candomblé Orixá dances: a strong demon danced by Sanjukta could provoke in Augusto a vigorous Ogum warrior or in opposition a soft Oxum woman combing her hair, and Augusto's Oxossi hunter could incite Sanjukta to present a frightened deer running away or the attack of an enraged elephant. The improvisation developed as they added actions of gathering water, offering each other a drink, and postures of devotion and submission for which they exchanged roles. During the *Theatrum Mundi* in Umeå in 1995, after their dialogue accompanied by intermittent Indian music and Brazilian drums, the slow 'water' sequence was underlined by silence. In *The Island of Labyrinths* the source of water was an illuminated small silver square on the shining black floor.

Outstanding effects

All beauty is ephemeral and disappears. After the most splendid scenes of *Theatrum Mundi*, the most enormous figures from the different theatre genres entered the stage for a last dance to then fall and die. The Balinese Barong dragon and its companion the demon queen Rangda, Shishi the Japanese lion with a bright red wig, and Odin Teatret's polar bear, were joined by all the characters on foot for the last frenetic dance, while a peasant sowed rice on the wooden floor. Even Death, Mr Peanut on stilts, had to fall and die. But after the fall, he would shed the stilts and the long trousers to reveal a white dress under the tail jacket and then pull off his skull head to transform into a baby held in the arms of a woman. The whole transformation, a combination of different scenes from Odin Teatret's *The Castle of Holstebro*, happened during Sanjukta's *Moksha* dance, the spiritual liberation and last salute. The timing was given by Sanjukta's ankle bells and by the Indian orchestra's music. The last phase of the transformation happened as Sankukta concluded her *Moksha* by swaying slightly and showing the whites of her eyes while the singer Raghunath Panigrahi repeated the word Om. I, as the woman in white, would look up at Sanjukta standing behind me and then again at the death-child smiling in my arms. As the music stopped, the whole *Theatrum Mundi* group of performers would join us on stage to take the applause. Every time I see a photograph of this group, I am impressed by the amazing achievement of bringing all these different performers together.

At the end of a *Theatrum Mundi* performance, at the apex of the monsters' last dance, fireworks were often used to enhance the agitation, even if it was not always easy to get permission, especially in indoor venues. At the *Theatrum Mundi* in Bologna in 1990 the fireworks were exceptional. While on tour in the Marche region in Italy, we had been told about a local folkloric tradition that used the dance of a gigantic papier mâché doll figure, *la Pupa*, moved by a person inside it, which sprouted fireworks all around her. We invited a *Pupa* to end the *Theatrum Mundi* in Bologna in 1990. She entered as the last figure of the 'monster' scene while Mr Peanut on stilts still circled around her. The stage lights were turned off and the fireworks started shooting from the dancing *Pupa*. Looking at the video today, I wonder how we were allowed to have fireworks so close to the spectators. Since that evening, Mr Peanut's coat has holes in various places left by the flying sparks.

In Lisbon, the opening and closing of *Four Poems for Sanjukta* were performed by a large group of folkloric dancers of all ages that came with us to the capital from Montemor-O-Novo. In *Ur-Hamlet*, a particularly estranging effect was achieved by the appearance of a modern tractor which entered on stage to lift pallets loaded with the dead bodies of the 'Foreigners' who had invaded the castle of Elsinore. In *Anástasis* in 2023, a new 'animal' joined the Theatrum Mundi family: a bull that danced, died and resurrected. It originated from the Brazilian cavalo marinho *brincadeiras*, a traditional folkloric game-feast with masks, dance and music. Alício Amaral and Juliana Pardo of the theatre group Mundu Rodá guided the sequences with the bull, adding a colourful and impressive choreography in which all fifty ISTA participants moved large bow circles of ribbons. They invaded the whole stage with the energy of a feast.

In *The Marriage of Medea* a real Balinese wooden fishing boat accompanied the whole performance. In its itinerant version, six of the figures of Jason's family pushed the boat on wheels during the wedding procession. They can confirm that the wooden boat was very heavy. It had been bought from fishermen on a beach in Bali with the help of Cristina Wistari, the Italian performer responsible for the Gambuh Pura Desa ensemble and, after being painted again, sent by cargo to Denmark along with a film of how the side balancing supports, the rudder and the sail should be fitted.

The Marriage of Medea was conceived as a ceremony not addressed to spectators. Therefore, to function theatrically, it needed strong visual elements. Theatrum Mundi often has scenes that do not address the spectators, such as the example of the children playing with stones in *Ego Faust*, or the family with pram and plastic bags entering at the end of *Ur-Hamlet*. To be acceptable, these scenes need more theatricality as they seem not to take the spectators into account. In *The Marriage of Medea* the boat was the main spectacular element.

In that performance, Medea was the Balinese Ni Made Partini. She was accompanied by her family, the Balinese Gambuh ensemble, for the celebration. Jason was Odin Teatret's Tage Larsen, and we called his family The Jasonites: a group of fifty very young performers that Augusto Omolú guided in their dances. My role was both the nurse who helps Medea kill her children and Clotho, one of the three Parcae of destiny. For the nurse, I learned songs from the area around the Black Sea, the region Medea came from. I Wayan Bawa was Medea's father, and a wooden sculpture that could be pulled apart was Medea's brother. Medea's jealousy was represented by the scene in Balinese legong keraton in which the female role doubles in order to stage a fight. Creusa, Jason's second wife, was a metal sculpture covered in a cloth that burned.

The boat came into the picture as we considered what could happen before the ceremony: a journey. Medea could arrive from the sea by boat to Struer, the closest port to Holstebro where we should perform. Jason would wait for her on land. The imagined ship became one of the Balinese fishing boats when Eugenio and I were admiring their colours and shapes on the Balinese shores. The fishing boats immediately caught our attention and were an evident theatrical element. Yet to decide to buy one, find the people who would sell and prepare it, and have it sent to the other side of the world needed determination. Eugenio's capacity to confront all kinds of difficulties and not to give in to common sense is definitively one of his qualities as a director. In the pause between

Theatrum Mundi presentations the fishing boat would be exhibited on the roof of our theatre in Holstebro, and now it is part of the installation of the Red Room of LAFLIS, the Living Archive Floating Islands in Lecce, Italy, dedicated to the Third Theatre.

Archetypes and humour

When presenting a performance that should reach spectators who are unfamiliar with its language and codes, communication is possible by composing archetypal scenes about life and death, love and war, poverty and richness, power and submission, and victory and defeat, which all kinds of spectators can recognise. Even scenes that should generally seem funny need to build on relationships of competition, ability and possession that every human being is familiar with independently from the context they belong to.

I have already described the love scenes created for the Theatrum Mundi since Bologna in 1990. A different love scene was developed for *Ur-Hamlet* by Augusto Omolú and Mia Theil Have in its first edition and with Yalan Ling in its second. In Saxo Gramaticus' story, Hamlet's madness is tested by his uncle, who watches his behaviour with his foster sister Ophelia. To allow the love scene to occur and be coherent with Hamlet's madness, I, as Saxo Gramaticus, used a coloured cloth to hide their meeting. The position of the cloth needed to change following the couple moving in space. I had to hide what was happening, and at the same time to reveal the scene to spectators. Around us, the Balinese women danced with their torches. The feeling of love was evoked by their soft movements and by Annada Prasanna Pattnaik's mesmerising melody on the flute. When Ophelia enters again towards the end of the performance, Hamlet embraces her, then takes her head and drowns her in a big wooden bowl full of water. The spectators hear the spouting of the water and Ophelia's babbles and shouts as she fights to breathe.

Augusto had a different love and death scene with Isabel Ubeda in *The Island of the Labyrinths*. Isabel was a kind of Caliban with the whole body and face covered by a big, dark brown fur coat. During the dancing 'monster' scene, Isabel got rid of the fur and appeared leaping wildly in a red dress. Augusto, as a kind of Mephistopheles, embraced her, and then suddenly hit her on her neck. She slid down on Torgeir, a kind of Faust, and both lay dead on the ground holding hands.

The dance of three women, first Balinese, then Japanese, then from Odin Teatret, each accompanied by their music, also showed the force of seduction in various Theatrum Mundi. In *Four Poems for Sanjukta*, these dances were the frame for the signing of the contract in blood between Faust and Mephistopheles, again anticipating the theme of the next Theatrum Mundi, *Ego Faust*.

I Made Djimat, with the clown monkey mask, had a competition in trying to seduce Jutaiichiro Hanayagi's Japanese clown, and wanted to separate her from Roberta Carreri's Geronimo character. The Japanese clown, dressed as a kind of housewife, had a hilarious way of falling to the ground, while the monkey stroked her hair whilst forming amorous poses, and Geronimo used his duck whistle to frighten away his competitor. In describing the scene, I realise it is difficult to divide exactly the characters and the performers' genre. Notions of 'female' and 'male' don't always correspond, and it is also not clear for spectators who is seducing who.

The Balinese performers are clown experts. The 2009 version of *Ur-Hamlet* started with a grotesque version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The ghost wore a sheet that he tripped over all the time, and Ophelia was played by a man who whilst 'drowning' behind a screen threw female underwear up in the air. Hamlet's uncle limped comically when poisoning Hamlet's father by putting a very big funnel in the ear of the sleeping brother. Only the Balinese ensemble could be allowed to make such fun of a Western classic. All the spectators laughed, while at the same time Augusto introduced the character of Hamlet as a vagabond covered in ropes, wandering and sleeping on cardboard boxes at the side of the stage.

Battle scenes are also recurrent in *Theatrum Mundi*. In Copertino, in South Italy, the Balinese Barong dragon fought with the Japanese Shishi lion; in Bologna Kanichi Hanayagi fought with the kecak of the whole Balinese group; and in Londrina the Japanese warriors fought with the spider woman. *Ur-Hamlet's* most dramatic battle was between I Wayan Bawa as Fengo (Shakespeare's Claudius) and Augusto Omolú as Hamlet, and between Akira Matsui with his long Japanese sword and I Made Suteja's Balinese *kris*. The fight's intensity was underlined by music and screams. Once the passion got out of control, and one of Augusto's teeth was broken. Nevertheless, in private, I Wayan Bawa and Augusto remained friends. In *Ur-Hamlet*, Akira Matsui brought the plague, which killed the Foreigners who had invaded the castle, starting with the bride at the marriage feast, played by Greek Christina Kyriazidi. The groom, Wout van Tongeren, carried the bride in his arms dancing slowly all over the space for the last thirty minutes of the performance, showing another example of love and devotion in connection with death.

Death has always been present through Mr Peanut in all his different versions and costumes. In *Ur-Hamlet* he did not appear as a character, but in the bones that the historian Saxo Gramaticus dug out of the ground to decipher what had happened in the past and to narrate the story in Latin, and in the skull on the plate brought by Saxo to Hamlet as he dressed the child for the warrior dance. Hamlet places the child's hand on the skull, giving a sign for the Balinese music to start. In this way, *Ur-Hamlet* anticipates the theme of the most recent Odin Teatret ensemble production, *Hamlet's Clouds* when asking what we leave in inheritance. One could say that Odin Teatret and *Theatrum Mundi* are always making the same performance, or that the themes are passed along from one production to the next, finding different forms to ask the same questions to ourselves and to the spectators.

Artists

Various generations of artists have contributed to ISTA's research and have performed as part of the *Theatrum Mundi* ensemble. The first to take part in the adventure of performing on the same stage - and with performers who could not communicate with each other through spoken language - were Sanjukta Panigrahi (Odissi dance, India), Katsuko Azuma (Nihon Buyo, Japan) and I Made Pasek Tempo (Balinese dance-theatre). Later I Made Bandem and his wife Swasthi Widjaja Bandem participated in ISTA Salento (South Italy), taking part in the *Theatrum Mundi* in the castle of Copertino.

Kanichi Hanayagi came for the first time to ISTA on The Female Role in Holstebro in 1986 as an onnagata and then became one of the main Japanese performers when Katsuko Azuma died. Accompanied by Mark Oshima as interpreter and organiser, Kanichi took the artistic initiative and the economic responsibility of bringing a full Nihon Buyo performance to Londrina in 1994 giving a strong new impulse to the Theatrum Mundi composition.

I Made Djimat, Cristina Wistari, I Wayan Bawa and Ni Wayan Sekarini came for the first time to ISTA in Umeå (Sweden) in 1995 and demonstrated that only four people could present a whole calonarang with its dances and music. The desire to help Cristina Wistari and I Wayan Bawa to keep alive the oldest form of Balinese theatre gambuh, as well as their ensemble, was the main reason for accepting Trevor Davies' invitation to perform a version of *Hamlet* in Kronborg Castle in Elsinore in 2006.

Japanese Kanho Azuma and Akira Matsui, Chinese Pei Yanling, American Tom Leabhart (the Decroux tradition), Afro-Brazilian Augusto Omolú (Candomblé orixá dance) and Yalan Ling from Taiwan (Nanguan opera) also joined at different stages. All of them contributed with changes of direction to the Theatrum Mundi composition. We got to know Augusto Omolú when having to satisfy the organiser Nitis Jacon's wish for a Brazilian contribution to the ISTA session in Londrina in 1994, and we met Yalan Ling



Theatrum Mundi final scene, ISTA 8, Londrina, Brazil. Photo: Emidio Luisi

in Taiwan in 2007 when working with Gang A Tsui theatre on theatre anthropology in combination with Nanguan opera. Yalan was also involved as an ISTA teacher years later in Hungary, after a slow introduction through performing in different Theatrum Mundi. Her role in *Anástasis* as a mother mourning the death of her child touched many spectators.

For the ISTA session in Albino, Italy, in 2016 all teachers except for I Wayan Bawa and Odin Teatret actors were new. Some were introduced to ISTA after participating in The Magdalena Project activities (a network of women in contemporary theatre): these included the Japanese Keiin Yoshimura (kamigata-mai), the Indian Parvathy Baul (baul storytelling) and the Argentinian Ana Woolf. Kathakali, odissi and flamenco were represented by actors of Teatro tascabile di Bergamo, by now recognised as masters of these forms in their countries of origin. They were also a strong presence at the ISTA sessions in Favignana in 2021 and in Hungary in 2023. Alessandro Rigoletti's kathakali demon appeared from the depths of the stage with terrifying screams in *Anástasis* while in a previous scene Caterina Scotti had waltzed behind a light curtain in her fairylike white gown on stilts. The Brazilian group Mundu Rodá (cavalo marinho) joined the ISTA artistic staff for the session in Favignana, Italy. Consequently, the structure of the next big production of Theatrum Mundi, *Anástasis*, at the end of the ISTA session in Hungary in 2023 changed completely and many new scenes were created. The traditional 'love' and 'monster' scenes were no longer included. Only Death's transformation into a child remained.

The death of Sanjukta Panigrahi in 1997 made us think that a new Theatrum Mundi without her would be impossible. But a contract had already been agreed to present a Theatrum Mundi in Portugal in 1998. It was painful to realise not only that it was possible to make the performance, but that in having to substitute such a strong and beautiful presence forced us to find unexpected solutions that improved the outcome. We dedicated the performance to Sanjukta. At the end of the Theatrum Mundi the back curtain opened to show a park behind the back wall window of the Gulbenkian Theatre where an odissi performer danced at a great distance, thereby visualising the ghost of our memory.

I Wayan Bawa took over the direction of the Gambuh Ensemble when Cristina Wistari died in 2008 but did not have the same headstrong obsession that might overcome all organisational difficulties. In 2014 we invited a group of children from Bali to celebrate Odin Teatret's 50th anniversary with other young ensembles from Kenya, Italy and Brazil. Our collaboration with the Balinese ensemble did not continue after *The Marriage of Medea* but instead we have maintained a more frequent continuity with I Wayan Bawa who also performed in the last Theatrum Mundi in 2023, *Anástasis*.

Odin Teatret actor Torgeir Wethal died of cancer in 2010, and he last performed in *Ur-Hamlet* in 2009. On top of that the sudden death of Augusto Omolú, who was killed in 2013, left us in a state of dejection. There is a pause of eleven years between the ISTA session in Poland in 2005 and the next session in Albino, Italy, in 2016, and a pause of fourteen years between the last *Ur-Hamlet* in 2009 and *Anástasis* in 2023: a long time during which to keep the Theatrum Mundi fire alive. The energy of the younger artists helped us: the smile born from a musical improvisation in Favignana between Brazilian Alício Amaral and Indian Parvathy Baul sowed the first seed for possible future scenes.

Chorus

The Balinese ensemble in the *Theatrum Mundi* consisted of thirty-two people in *Ur-Hamlet*. Many of them were musicians, since we needed to have drum and flute players for the gambuh sections and different drum and gamelan players for the baris and topeng dances. These were also powerful means for an effective *kecak*, a soundscape based on a repeated texture of spoken rhythms made with the same hand movements performed by the whole group. One nice consequence of the large Balinese group was that it was cheaper to rehearse in Bali, where we could concentrate totally on the process without having to deal with other everyday questions.

Another regular grouping in the *Theatrum Mundi* was a chorus, either in connection with an ISTA session or collected exclusively for the performance. The first experience of a chorus happened in Bologna in 1990, led by a group of 'elders', which included the well-known Cuban director Vicente Revuelta, the Colombian Santiago García and the opera singer Susanne Vill. They did not have a physical participation on stage but were present through their voices. In *The Island of Labyrinths* and *Ego Faust* a local choir helped expand the vocal musicality of the performances. But it was for *Ur-Hamlet* that a deep structural change took place. It included a workshop for participants to train with all the international artists, participating in the creation of the performance, having daily meetings with Eugenio and finally performing together with all the Asian artists and Odin Teatret actors. The workshop participants were asked to bring one black, one white and one elegant costume. They were always reminded that a costume includes shoes, accessories and hairdo.

With the workshop participants, Augusto Omolú created a choreography of combined Orixá dances with scenes of a mass of people on the attack. Akira Matsui taught a Japanese chant with particular accents on the words, which became the proclamation of the laws of the New Order once Hamlet had achieved power, while I sang over the chorus with very high tones. For the second edition of *Ur-Hamlet* in Wrocław in 2009, the participants had time to develop individual scores or scenes between two or three people. They started from a composition that recreated the positions of painting reproductions and then developed the relationships to create small sketches with a story: a couple of lovers, a family walking in the streets, a fight between friends, a banquet at a wedding... It was interesting for the chorus participants to experience how the pre-expressive principles from the training contributed in building an expressive result without aiming at it directly.

The same workshop format was used for *The Marriage of Medea*. We accepted only actors under twenty-five and dressed them in hip-hop clothes. Augusto Omolú worked on an itinerant version of the dances with the help of Cleber da Paixão's drums and songs. Here the party mood was used to create scenes of the wedding feast. Augusto had a great ability in working with numerous groups, giving energy to the choreographies he created so that every individual gave their maximum. For *Anástasis* this task was taken over by Ana Woolf who based her compositions on Tadashi Suzuki's Grammar of the Feet training, and by Mundu Rodá who guided the feast choreographies with ribbons through a technical knowledge of the impulses necessary to maintain the rhythm of the steps and their captivating energy. Parvathy Baul took over the task of sharing songs so

that all the participants of the chorus could sing together whilst sharing simple dance steps.

Set

The courtyard of the monastery in Bologna and of the military museum in Wrocław, the castles of Copertino and Kronborg, Londrina's lake, the palace in Bologna's park and in the field near Ravenna, the church in Kryzowa, the streets of Holstebro, the theatres in Bielefeld, Lisbon, Copenhagen and Budapest each gave natural settings to the *Theatrum Mundi* performances. This had consequences on the scenes in the performances. We had to decide whether to underline or oppose the symmetry of the space, to use or defy the different levels and heights, or to open or close down the space through lightings. The first question has always been where to place the different orchestras and whether they should create a background or different counterpoints to the action. The second question has always been how to transform the space during a performance.

The National Theatre in Budapest offered many possibilities for *Anástasis*. The stage could be divided into sections and had parts of the stage that could rise or descend. The depth of the stage clearly changed by using just the proscenium, adding sections through transparent and non-transparent curtains, or opening the backstage doors. The digital designer Stefano Di Buduo was given the task of visually transforming the whole theatre space, including the audience, into a garden of blossoming cherry trees that finally wither and die. For *Anástasis* (Resurrection), Eugenio needed nature (the Japanese cherry trees), animals (the Brazilian bull) and humans (the child) to live, die and resurrect. Overall the projections, the curtains and the lights combined to create these transformations. After Death turned into a child held in a woman's arms and all the performers joined for a last acknowledgement on stage, the whole group disappeared on a descending lift platform to reappear twice to take applause, maintaining the same tableau, while clown characters juggled and danced at the sides.

The architect and set designer Luca Ruzza worked for *Ur-Hamlet* in the courtyard of Hamlet's castle in Elsinore. Performing in the open air at dusk, the lighting changed slowly by adding electric projections to the glass bowls filled with water, which reflected and widened the beam of light, as was done in ancient Rome. The stage needed also to be circular to accommodate six-hundred spectators closely enough to see the details of the action. Eight golden *umbul-umbul*, long and thin Balinese flags, blew in the wind and marked out a background, together with two orchestra groups placed symmetrically on the two sides of an entrance. The orchestra banks at the back closed the circle created in part by the spectators' seating. The Foreigners invaded the castle by climbing up from behind or crawling underneath the seating. Only the other characters used the 'official' entrances.

The Danish set designer Jan de Neergaard collaborated for *The Island of Labyrinths* and *Ego Faust*. At first, he offered his propositions in small maquettes but soon realised that Eugenio needed to see the special arrangement in actual size so as to be able to take decisions, even if it meant throwing everything away. Characteristic of *The Island of Labyrinths* and then for *Ego Faust*, were the different stage planes that appeared with the

rising of successive silk curtains, the shiny black and silver geometric floor that defined the space with rectangular squares and stripes, the podium for the main characters at the back, the five orchestra sections distributed at the two sides, and a gangway that rose from the stage front up in between the spectators, which was used for some performers' entrances and exits. A follow spot illuminated both Gretchen's exit with Death as a bride following on behind, and the entrance of the child who ran on stage to where her mother beat her with a leather belt. Faust's table was a white tablecloth stretched by two performers holding it at the sides while the polar bear Otto lay down in front to become a carpet.

Costumes

Sanjukta Panigrahi had a range of brightly coloured saris, which she adorned with golden bracelets, flowers, a complex hairdo and ankle bells. She always asked Eugenio which colour she should choose for the Theatrum Mundi. Eugenio mostly preferred the white or bright pink ones. The Balinese ensemble took hours to prepare their make up and to put on the several layers of their costumes painted with decorative patterns in gold. The characters had different crowns and earpieces always adorned with fresh flowers. The Japanese buyo kabuki costumes also had many layers, hiding various precious kimonos underneath the top one. Their make-up made the skin white and underlined the eyes with red colour and black lines. The Japanese performers travelled with special boxes to transport the very expensive different male and female wigs made of real hair. To dress they placed paper carpets on the floor. Everything in their changing rooms had to be spotlessly clean.

How could the western costumes live up to the extraordinary Asian coloured golden ones? The men wore tails or tailored jackets over elegant black or white trousers. Roberta Carreri in *The Island of Labyrinths* wore a Spanish flamenco dress. It was changed for *Ego Faust* for which she first appeared in a black overcoat and hat with long gloves, which she removed when starting the dance to seduce I Nyoman Budi Arta, revealing a shining grey costume with a pleated long skirt that could be lifted over her head in various positions. To play Hamlet's mother Gertrud in *Ur-Hamlet*, Roberta used this same costume though adding a regal-looking jacket with long sleeves and a double pointed cloth crown bought in Bali. For Saxo Gramaticus in *Ur-Hamlet*, I had a bald head and wore a long, multicoloured silk coat. In other Theatrum Mundi, if I was not in one of Mr Peanut's costumes, I used the Mexican embroidered dresses with very wide skirts in a red, black and white version, adorned by Colombian shawls and high heeled handmade Italian leather shoes.

Music

In the first years, the succession of scenes were simply accompanied by the music that belonged to the tradition being presented in the anthology. Then, when the Theatrum Mundi performances began to build a montage that allowed the different genres to interact, it became more complex to determine the merging of the music with their different melodies, tuning, rhythms and volumes. The pace of the Balinese gamelan was

in total contrast with the sparseness of the Japanese beats. The Japanese instruments and songs emerged from an outline of silence, while the European accordion and guitar created a continuous base on which to place melodies or rhythmical accents. Raghunath Panigrahi's delicate halftone vocal variations, Annada Prasanna's range of ragas when playing the flute, Gangadhar Pradhan's ability to make the *tablas* speak as well as give a rhythm, each at times had to fight with the direct vehemence of the Brazilian *atabaque* drums played by Ory Sacramento, Bira Monteiro and Jorge Paim.

Often in the Asian traditions the musicians have a higher status than the dancers. This could complicate the relationship with them if Eugenio needed to prioritise the visual effectiveness of the action, or when he demanded that the musical instruments should have an expression that could awaken associations, or when – in pure Odin Teatret custom – screams, texts or parallel melodies were added to break the harmony and interrupt the music before reaching its conclusion. Various musicians have collaborated to contribute an essential quality to the live music in the Theatrum Mundi, always a fundamental partner for the credibility of the different scenes. Amongst the musicians I would like to mention Ivan Hansen, Frans Winther and Annada Prasanna Pattnaik.

Danish Ivan Hansen had spent a long time in Bali studying its classical music and finding ways of dialoguing with Western musical tonalities. When he came to the ISTA session in Bologna in 1990, he worked on the tuning of the different instruments, making us all aware of the importance of the choice of a gong to accompany a guitar.

Frans Winther worked on his compositions to include Western choirs in dialogue with the Asian melodies, and to take advantage of the vocal capacities of Odin Teatret's actors and of the theatrical effect of particular instruments like horns and trumpets. When I listen to the recordings of *Ur-Hamlet*, I am always impressed by the music Frans Winther composed for this performance.

Annada Prasanna Pattnaik's amazing musical ear helped find solutions in the most complex montage of contrasting melodies. We really appreciated his capacity of combining actors with little musical training and classical professional musicians in *Don Giovanni all'Inferno*, an opera with Odin Teatret and Ensemble MidtVest.

In *Anástasis*, the musical experience of Brazilian Alício Amaral who played a kind of violin called a *rebecca* and of Parvathy Baul's songs and *ektara* were confronted with Mirto Baliani's contemporary soundscape achieved through the distortion of recordings to find a new Theatrum Mundi musicality. Brigitte Cirla was a singer for *Ur-Hamlet*. Apart from accompanying Gertrud's mourning song at the death of her two husbands and singing Frans' compositions, during rehearsals Brigitte taught me possible variations in very high tones and trained Augusto Omolú in the sound of cock cries.

One composition based on Bob Dylan's song *Tomorrow is a Long Time* was recurrent in many Theatrum Mundi and with the participation of each orchestra. Its origin goes back to an improvisation during a session of The University of Eurasian Theatre in Fara Sabina, Italy, in 1993. Eugenio asked Sanjukta to share examples of how she improvised variations over the text that the singer repeated. Her movements commented or presented different possible interpretations of the situation described by the song. To understand the relationship better between the text and movement, Eugenio asked Jan Ferslev to sing a song by Bob Dylan, repeating the verses while

Sanjukta performed the variations of her interpretation. The repetitions of the verses of the song were fixed to allow the time Sanjukta needed for her movements. For example, when the song says 'I can hear the heart so softly pounding', Sanjukta first put her hand to her ear and marked the pounding with the eyes, then her hand gesture near the chest moved in the rhythm of a heartbeat, then the other hand went to her ear and her hand gesture was repeated.

In *The Island of Labyrinths*, Bob Dylan's song first accompanied Sanjukta alone, and then through her dialogue with Augusto, at which point the Balinese gamelan entered to mark a change in the situation when other performers joined the scene, until the Brazilian drums and Annada Prasanna Pattnaik's flute increased the intensity, before suddenly stopping to hear the sound of sitar strings. The music held all the individual scenes together and gave a common ground to the different performers.

Bob Dylan's song was also used as a base for an improvisation between Akira Matsui, Augusto Omolú and myself in Wrocław, in Poland, in 2005. It is interesting to compare the slow movements of Akira's fan, his steps and turns, to notice how he follows the music to give a completely different perception to the viewer than that of Sanjukta's action. Akira seemed to respond with a continuous flow that opposed the music's intention and creating an association of longing that the song speaks of even if Akira did not understand its language. It is the music combined with the dance that gives the real information.

Narration and simultaneity

The narrative thread in a *Theatrum Mundi* tends to be simple in contrast to the complexity of images, the succession and simultaneity of actions happening at the same time and in the same space, even if belonging to situations that have nothing directly to do with each other. Characters that move close to each other does not mean that they have a relationship.

In a *Theatrum Mundi*, the outline of the story that helps the spectators orientate themselves is usually given by the title, the summary of scenes, the presentation of the characters in the written programme, or with short sentences during the performance itself. When the texts are in a language that the spectators understand, they are informative. For example, in *Ur-Hamlet*, standing behind or beside them, Saxo Grammaticus introduced the characters as they entered: Horvendil, the governor of Jutland, Hamlet's father; Fengo, the governor of Jutland's brother, Hamlet's uncle; Gertrud, Hamlet's mother, cries for her slaughtered husband; Hamlet, who plans to revenge his father and pretends to be mad.

As Saxo, I did not introduce Akira Matsui who brought the plague to the castle. It was the change of lights and music that made evident to spectators that a complete transformation was taking place, marking a turning point in the story. The space had emptied so the spectators could concentrate on Akira approaching the table where the Foreigners who had invaded the castle were celebrating a wedding. The drums and gong underlined how his stick and the waving of his fan hit the guests as well as the bride from a distance, and how they immediately fell to the ground.

Later Saxo continued to explain the story: Hamlet returns with a faithful warrior to take power; Hamlet proclaims the law of a new order; and, tomorrow instead of birds, dogs will wake us. When the other texts said by Saxo Gramaticus did not need to be understood and could consist just in vocal musicality, he spoke Latin. The texts had a meaning and referred to Hamlet's story, but it was not necessary for the spectators to understand them. This was equivalent to the kawi ancient language, spoken by the Balinese in their gambuh scenes.

In *Four Poems for Sanjukta*, Iben Nagel Rasmussen was a storyteller who informed the spectators of what was happening with reference to the characters of Faust and Mephistopheles. In *Ego Faust*, the classical story was followed quite literally through the succession of scenes, helping the spectators relate to what they might already know, even though the power of the performance as it touched the spectators was enabled by a montage of attractions that is often not understood. Eugenio leads the spectators to consider what they are seeing by including empty black frames in the 'film strip' of the performance, which allows for a mental change. For example, this facilitated the acceptance that Mephistopheles was played by two performers, Augusto Omolú and Roberta Carreri, instead of one.

Simultaneity is the base of the dramaturgical structure in a Theatrum Mundi. In *Ur-Hamlet*, it seems as if two performances are taking place independently from each other. The Court presenting the story of Hamlet has no relationship with the Foreigners who invade the castle. Their acting codes are dissimilar, one formalised and the other as if every-day. The costumes come from different worlds: the characters of Hamlet's story are elaborated through rich garments while the Foreigners wear contemporary, perhaps more insignificant clothes. Different scenes presented at the same time make a dissection of reality at different levels: while Hamlet stands holding a skull in his hands, the chorus sings the laws of the New Order, a child carries out a warrior dance on top of a covered well, the two king brothers present again the fight in which they kill each other and fall to the ground, the gravediggers cover the bodies of the dead Foreigners with sheets, the tractor truck continues to load the corpses, Saxo says his last text and a family of immigrants enters talking to each other without noticing the spectators.

In *Ego Faust*, while Gretchen kills the baby with a stone brought by Death, a group of young Balinese girls play with pebbles in the other corner, singing a kind of nursery rhyme and giggling. Here the connection is given by the stones, and not by meaning. Connections can be indicated by props, words, music, space, time, costumes, actions, or positions. During the process of creation, our task as performers and director is to understand the cues that lead us along the path that the Theatrum Mundi is showing us, not the other way round.

The Theatrum Mundi performances decide themselves what they want to be and how to live in the minds of spectators. We can just be witnesses of the process. The future is to be discovered every time, hidden behind the curtain.