

Lauritzen Prize 2009

Ditte Hansen

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Ditte Hansen, winner of the Lauritzen Prize 2009

One immediately noted this year's female winner of the Lauritzen Prize 2009. She is noteworthy. A fun, almost exotic personality in what is often a very uniform stage scene. She looked almost overgrown, coltish. A tall, jointless girl with her long, long legs and those long arms – one almost wondered whether she could actually move them. She could easily be from a girl's book from the turn of the last century if someone had just dressed her in a knee length white dress and a bow in her beautiful red hair. But what would happen to her on stage - in the long term that is.

Lots has happened to her. There is no doubt about that today. And no, this is not the story of ugly duckling that becomes a beautiful swan; but more about a young actress who had something girlish about her but has now become a real woman. There is often something negative about the word 'maturity', especially for women, but when one is an actress aged more than 35, it is a compliment.

Ditte Hansen has a special ability to carry heavy, factual stuff through so it sticks, so you remember it, not just because it was fun but actually with an absolutely unique ability to get us to remember it because it is important. Recently I attended a conference in Vejle. In the evening, Ditte Hansen gave a rendition of her brief but very down to earth and surely performed sketch on the Danish stage scene. When she had delivered her speech with Golden Age painting, a 'Mester Jakel' puppet and flipover, the conference might just as well have packed up. Because from then on that was what we talked about. Because it was fun but also because people suddenly actually understood some of the dimensions in Danish theatre politics which undoubtedly had been more gritty before the poor Mester Jakel puppet became in Ditte Hansen's long arms a tragic picture of the talented actor and his career opportunities.

But she demonstrated this for sure in the autumn when she had everybody, and especially the male critics, at her feet with her bubbling monolog "Bitterfissen" at Nørrebro Theatre. A stand-up show that she had done most of the work on as the original was a book about a Swedish feminist is a slightly different style.

Here she mimed EU salary statistics so that her audience could not just ignore them afterwards. She hit on an equality debate from a generation back and made it new and very differently thought-provoking and interesting in her green, fashionable boiler overalls which showed off the previously gangly girl in the fashionable style she now has. And as someone who can be raging, bitter, frustrated and fantastic on the same

stage and with the sharp precision and audience contact that are essential to be able to carry such a show through.

Ditte Hansen is not just a really clever actress, she is also a piece of unique art. As is becoming more and more clear.

While the major decisive step in her career was probably also the most suitable, it was not actually what had been expected that she would take, but rather others. Namely to call for Hamas whether she would like to be Lisbeth Dahl's co-star in the Circus Revue. For years, actresses o Gone backwards and forwards up and down the stage in the ten. With more less success. But seeing Ditte Hansen's Name on the poster gave a form of relief. Because they're actually: former pollster did otherwise be? Who else had the format at a relatively young age to pack with the big names, who had the talent, who had the abilities to switch in record time between personalities and styles and who had the ability to create the dynamics between the stage and the audience needed to make this a really fantastic evening that the audience almost demand from the Circus Revue. Maybe the team cannot guarantee laughter for the audience demanded anyway when they buy their tickets.

Ditte Hansen belongs here. Unconditionally. She was a natural on the stage from the moment James Price played the first notes and the opening number came on stage back in 2006, which still stands as one of the best for the Revue in recent years.

She was and is simply the crown princess one feared the Revue would never find. For while all things being equal it may be easy to find the great, dramatic actresses, it is correspondingly difficult to find really good revue actresses.

But she is one of them. She is an extravaganza of types of women, from the intellectual, servile mother in curlers to the activist in Ungeren (Youth Centre) via the elegant, top-tuned Helle Thorning-Schmidt to herself in a terrible, disturbing performance with Lisbeth Dahl as the victim of XXXX. All of it hitting the spot, fun and acute in equal measure. In real life there are few of these women one would want to meet. They are actually people who see their greatest task is to make life so difficult and awful for others as they possibly can. – because they know best naturally. No doubt about it. And when Ditte Hansen perches her half glasses on the end of her nose, , tightens her lips and ponytail a shade, you quake with fear and fatigue in recognizing this far too true-to-life prototype of a real terror, someone we have all of us had to capitulate to at least once in our lives.

We also capitulate to Ditte Hansen. So even if it sounds really boring for an actress was not yet reached 40 years, there are many others who really hope that she will stay in the tent every summer. As a guarantee that the classic, good, wonderful, happy Summer Revue continues for decades to come.

On You Tube, there is a clip of Ditte Hansen from the show "Gu'ske lov du kom" (Thank goodness you're here) on TV3, in which various well-known actors dress up and pass a door into an unknown universe in which they have to improvise the story with a colleague right here and now. Ditte Hansen is a cook and has to be a judge in a cookery competition. And when she herself is being judged later, the judges (Hella Joof and Sebastian Dorset) point precisely to what it is she masters so perfectly: Creating a

character in a few seconds, a story, and a tragedy. From the moment she says her name is Miss Jensen, her language changes, picking up those notes from the finer places of the 1950s, whilst Miss Jensen unfolds behind the façade. Answering to the question of the most positive experience of her career, she says it was right back when she was a trainee, when the chef at Hotel d'Angleterre pinched her cheeks and said "That was fine". The audience rolled about with laughter. Because it is an amazingly funny moment but also terribly sad.

It may sound a bit of overkill to emphasize seven minutes on YouTube as something significant for an actress but nowadays just how you appear on YouTube can be important. And the sketch also touches on something lying absolutely at the core of Ditte Hansen's acting skills.

She is amusing. No doubt about it. But in her humour, she has the very sensitive nerve. You get the impression that these women are always verging on a breakdown. It appears as a vibration of tense energy in the body, of suppressed feelings that burst out as rage or as a sense of resignation that makes the soul close more and more round the feeling. And suddenly, you are about to burst with tender affection for her. For a brief moment in the midst of the laughter, you get a glimpse of a dark empty space. These classic women are not so easy to get hold of or get close to; they are too nit-picking or over-friendly and it puts you off. They always laugh or talk a little too loud. They are a bit too much for one to want to really get to know them.

Already in her first Copenhagen debut at Dr Dante's Avenue in 1998 in Line Knutzon's "Først blir' man jo født" (First, you are born) two years after graduating from Odense Theatre's acting school, She appeared as the tens, nervous, very pitiable Lis. Whose life could only become even more anxious Soon she was so tall that she could not by the way from all the strange and terrible things that could be in the outside world. She was so exposed. Ditte Hansen here leavened Line Knutzon's drama with the dash of tragedy That is so vital to give Knutzon's Humor the death that is the strength of her work. If this week, it was fun and it was a shame for Lis.

It was in her role as Blanche in Tennessee Williams' "Mr. Paradise" here at the Royal Theatre in 2006 that she was at her strongest and brightest. The performance was not quite as perfect as was Ditte Hansen in the leading role, when she created such a poetic, such a lovable Blanche that you accepted the rest without a murmur. Here was a woman who was so far out in life that she was lost. She could possibly have been saved but she was unable to make those around her to understand that deep within, it was love, tenderness, security, warmth and calm that she longed for. And we the audience saw it. We were in no doubt but on the other hand we were amazed that no one else saw it. This beautiful woman deserved not to be lost. But she was, not just by Ditte Hansen who created a Blanche that is impossible to forget. She was perfect in the role.

And let us hope there will be more of them in coming years. Roles that will do more for Ditte Hansen than only humour. Because she can do so much that it would be a shame if it were not fully exploited the whole time, everywhere, in every which way.

In the Prize Committee, we all agreed that you have already now become such a major actress with such a wealth of talent for the stage - classical, humour and modern reality, so it was also easy for us to agree that you should be awarded the Lauritzen Prize 2009.