

LAURITZEN PRIZE 2007

Bodil Jørgensen.

Motivation speech

”Even though I constantly endeavour to become wiser in some areas, it is never at the expense of idealism” said Bodil Jørgensen when she made her breakthrough in 1992 with Jean Cocteau’s ”The Human Voice”. Speaking later about her idealism, she added: ”As an actress, I cannot go further than giving my all. If I don’t do so, I don’t feel I can reach out to my audience” – and it has to be said that today’s female winner of the Lauritzen Prize 2007 very much lives up to giving her all and reaching out to her audience.

The wish, the will and the talent to achieve something in a part was especially expressed in the major film role which many associate her with, that of the sorrowing Karen in Lars von Trier’s ”The Idiots”.

During filming, her part literally meant blood, sweat and tears in addition to the ringing slaps she got, even though the same scene also involved her in a split eyebrow ”which I naturally immediately made a rush for at the end of the scene” explained Lars von Trier afterwards, and continued ”so, well, it's the only way we at Dogme Film get bloodied. Genuine Dogme blood, that is real blood that ran down over her clothes. It was dramatic but it cost us two hours because she had to go to casualty and get two stitches”.

You have to admit that offering your own blood to your artistic altar is slightly over the top. But Bodil Jørgensen often goes right to the limit, right to her fingertips in her parts. On the other hand, this really gets her performances to burn all the way through without in anyway appearing over-acted. Quite the opposite.

For Bodil Jørgensen very much makes use of understatement, the introspective, the unspoken – and indeed she does it so wonderfully.

Not least because she is one of the few to play the intermediate notes, on doubt, uncertainty and denial.

Her last offering was as the egoistic, non-confrontational land-owner in Chekhov’s ”The Cherry Orchard” which she played here at the Royal Theatre a few months ago. Another example was her performance as Bente in the classic film ”The Lady of Hamre”, in which Bodil Jørgensen succeeded in turning the bucolic Morten Korch idyll on its head. Even in minor roles, she understands how to colour the character to remove any element of doubt. For example as Ida’s mother in the TV series ”Krøniken” (The Chronicle), in which she almost strikingly let the unspoken and hinted at speak for itself.

Again, it was a performance that built on Bodil Jørgensen's major strength: To unravel the human psyche to reveal the ambiguity and unspoken desperation at the centre and direct it at the audience as a kind of mirror.

She shares this format with no lesser a person than Clara Pontoppidan and the characterisation and linkage between the two is striking. Both actually understand and contrive to play on what is sweet, subjugated, lovable but above all charismatic and deeply fascinating in the midst of all the distortions, such as in Kjell Abell's "Anne Sofie Hedvig", in which both excelled.

But there is also much in common with another of the great divas of the stage, namely Bodil Ipsen. Like the old actress, today's winner gives staggeringly intense interpretations of Holberg, as evidenced by the way she acted in Holberg's "The Waverer". And I do not doubt that Bodil Jørgensen too would be brilliant if she ever got the chance to play another of Bodil Ipsen's star roles, that of "The Mad Woman of Chailot".

Now, mention of Pontoppidan and Ipsen might sound as if Bodil Jørgensen's acting is decidedly old-fashioned.

But that is very much not so!

Bodil Jørgensen actually understands as few others do how to summarise, distil but above all how to fix a role in an age that constantly surprises the audience, and she always understands, discreetly but craftily, how to amaze her audience without in anyway being judgmental about the choices she addresses with her striking interpretations.

That is the essence of Bodil Jørgensen's strength, therein lies her ability to surprise and seduce her audience and that is the reason she is getting the Lauritzen Prize 2007.

Dear Bodil, the Prize Committee is proud to present this well-deserved prize. Well done.