

LAURITZEN PRIZEN 2007

DEJAN CUKIC.

Motivation speech

It is remarkable that today's male winner of the Lauritzen Prize 2007 is so amazingly good at acting individualistic parts.

One of the answers is that he is one, too – an individualist on the Danish stage.

Like practically no one here in Denmark, Dejan Cukic really understands how to evoke intensity in a part.

Gone is the Danish, compromising, consumer mentality where what counts is making everyone happy – he just cannot bring himself to do it. Instead there is a nerve-jangling closeness which can get the audience and critics right on the edge of their seats.

The danger is in over-acting but Dejan Cukic has a supreme sense for knowing precisely when to change track – so he constantly manages to take his interpretations to quite another ending than one had expected.

With Dejan Cukic, "the angry young man" has returned to the stage but where this used to mean aggression, in his case it is desperation, often the one against the many – and praise be for that!

In this, Dejan Cukic is not merely an amazingly good interpreter, he also gives a sense of renewal. With him, there has come a breath of fresh air on the Danish stage and films. A welcome, demanding but also strongly challenging actor who has also aroused great international interest. But there is also a reverse side to all this. "I have always felt like a stranger. I never feel I belong", as he put it some years ago.

But you would have to go a long way to find a more intense, passionate actor. Perhaps because in his performances, Dejan Cukic understands how to create a tough mix of emotions from being an outsider, his talent and recognizable heart-searching.

Dejan Cukic grew up in Montenegro, which is both good and bad. The good thing is that he came here as an eleven year-old and was educated at the National Theatre School from 1983-93, so we here have been able to benefit from his talent.

The bad thing about it is that nobody can pronounce his name properly.

Everyone thinks they know how it should be pronounced and several reviews and interviews actually give a phonetic guide to pronunciation. The problem is that no-one can agree and no-one has really dared ask.

On the other hand, what everybody does agree on is that today's male prize winner really understands how to take his audience with him.

Recently it was in the Per Fly TV series "Forestillinger" (Performances) from DR TV Drama. Before that, he shook everyone and everything in his role as the hit man Vuk in the TV play "The Serbian Dane". Before that again, he was at the other end of the dagger in Shakespeare's "Othello" at Østre Gasværk – even though his performance sparkled with danger.

On the other hand, when danger turns inward, it becomes unpleasant – as very much evidenced in Dejan Cukic's interpretation of the conferencier in the frightening play "The Marathon Dance", whilst he let the danger be more outward-facing in his in everyway multifaceted interpretation of the painter Asger Jorn in the play "Jorn".

At the lighter end of the scale, we find his performance as the advertising consultant Phillip in the TV series "Nikolai and Julie" and in an even more unrestrained part, he charmed everyone as the innocent and slightly foolish Arvid in the film "In China, they eat dogs".

All in all, Dejan Cukic is simply unable to limit his choice of roles. Neither should he! Because with his amazing talent, he almost has a duty to play the full artistic range.

But before you do so, the Prize Committee for the Lauritzen Prize would like to thank you for the super experiences we have already had. Thanks – good luck in future and congratulations on the Lauritzen Prize 2007.