

LAURITZEN PRIZE 2008. TRAVEL BURSARY TO ACTOR JOHN MARTINUS.  
AWARD SPEECH.

If anybody can be called a faithful squire of the TV, stage and screen, it is John Martinus.

Since his debut at Det Ny Teater at the early age of 14, John Martinus has faithfully made thousands of people stop racing around and instead settle down in front of the TV, in the cinema or the plush seats of the theatre.

For many years, John Martinus was pseudonymous with comedy, whilst also having a career as an interpreter of Hostrup, for example.

But in recent years, John Martinus has managed to realign his artistic abilities so that his humour is now somewhat sarcastic or ironic. Something that admirably fits with a world also peopled for example by absurd dramatists.

It was here that John Martinus excelled last year in Harold Pinter's "The Homecoming" – in great interaction with Jørgen Reenberg, even though John Martinus also again and again plays a part in Kaj Munk's ambiguous world in his play "The Word".

The first performance was at the Betty Nansen Theatre in 1991 and last time, it was in a still topical performance here at the National, this time in Lars Norén's production. Villainously good teamwork between John Martinus and Henning Jensen held the audience spellbound. This time as a scouring, duplicitous and sometimes almost threatening Peter Skrædder.

Even though on the outside John Martinus may give the impression of warmth and of being good natured, do not be deceived. He can also be a wolf in sheep's clothing, as demonstrated in Juliane Preisler's uncomfortable play "Vild Hverdag".

John Martinus has had a long and active life behind him, also as a revue artiste. A genre he cannot leave alone. Which is why he has now turned to telling the story of the genre in a whole series of publications. A giant task which definitely deserves respect.

Dear John Martinus, thank you for many fine performances and good luck for the future. Neither I nor the rest of the Prize Committee are expecting you to retire from the stage or screen soon but by way of a change and inspiration, we feel that in the midst of the proceedings, you deserve a little trip. Congratulations on the bursary. We are pleased that you wish to accept it.

Lars Wredstrøm, theatre critic, Børsen