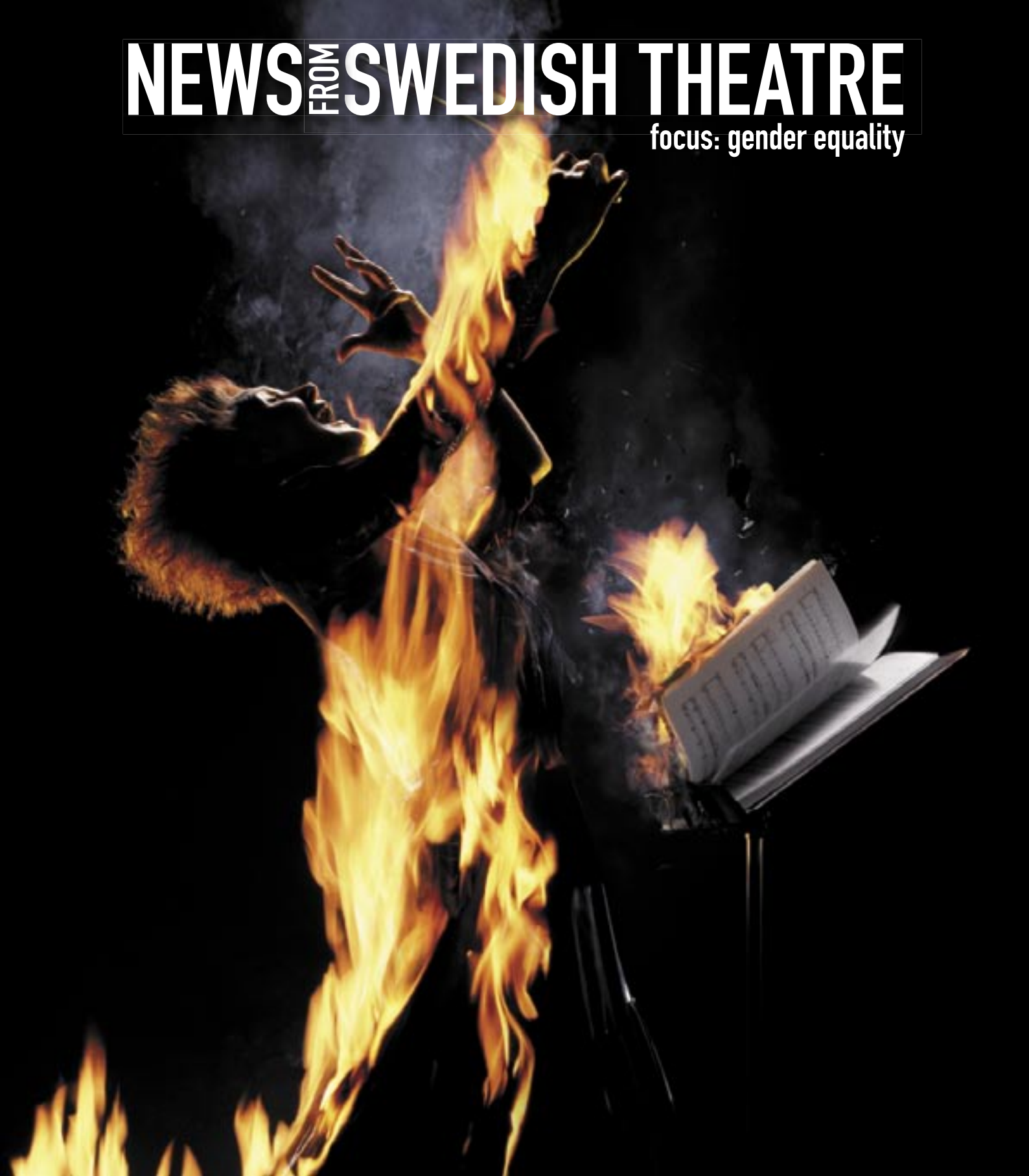


# NEWS FROM SWEDISH THEATRE

focus: gender equality



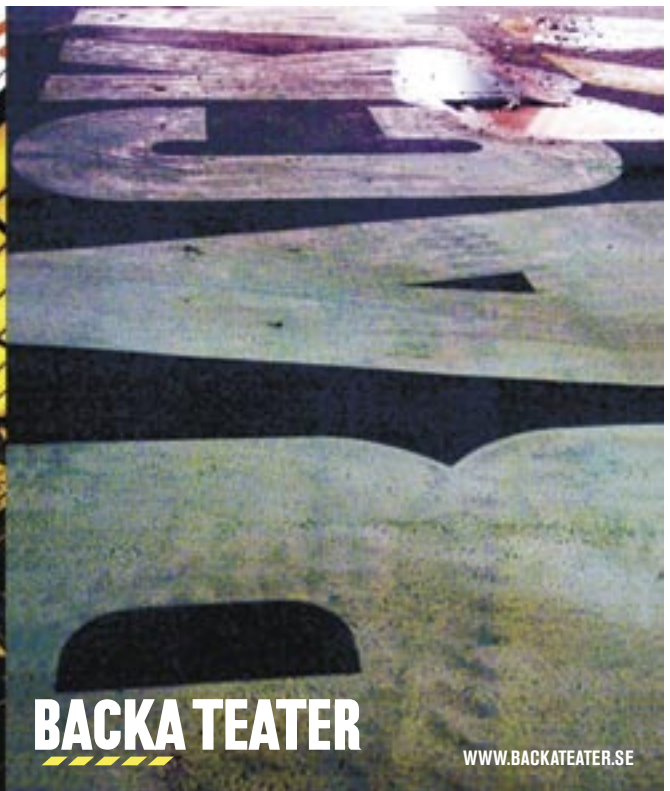
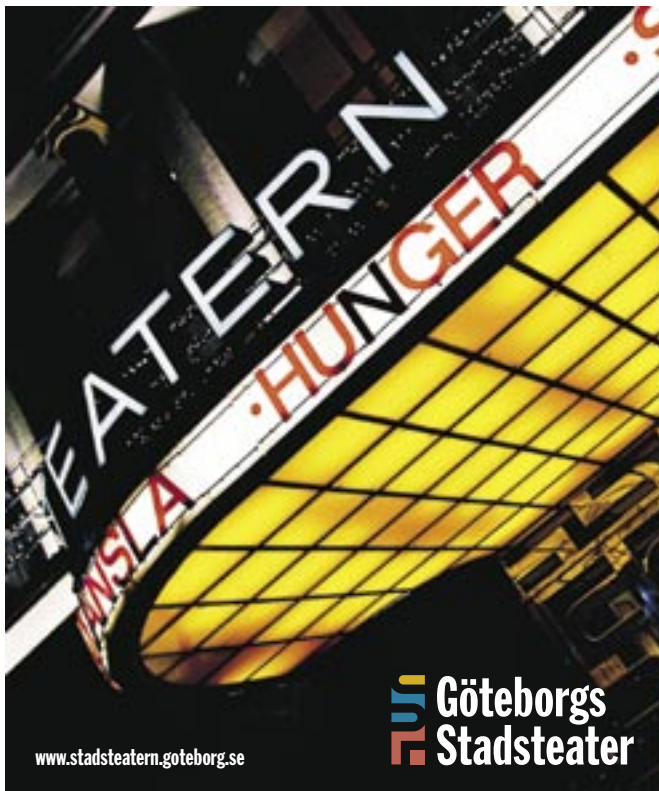
# LASTING IMPRESSIONS AT A TEMPORARY ADDRESS

*c/o Stockholms stadsteater is an international platform introducing artists and companies from all over the world to a Swedish audience. Since opening August 2009 the repertoire has mixed genres; dance, theatre, circus, mime, spoken word and seminars.*

TEATER VIIRUS/BLAUE FRAU (FINLAND) JAUNAIS RIGAS TEATRIS (LATVIA) RIKSTEATERN (SWEDEN) CIRKUS CIRKÖR, CIRKÖRLAB, DANSHÖGSKOLAN (USA/France/SWEDEN) JOEY ARIAS OCH BASIL TWIST (USA) SLOVENSKO MLADINSKO GLEDALIŠČE (SLOVENIA) SPOKEN WORD (ENGLAND/BOTSWANA/USA) "TEATRET" (DENMARK) GUNILLA HEILBORN (SWEDEN) SUPERAMAS (AUSTRIA/France) ROSAS (BELGIUM/ENGLAND/JAPAN) TEATRO CHAPITÔ (PORTUGAL) DIE BÜHNE (SWEDEN) VARIETÉTEATERN BARBÉS (SWEDEN) TEATER GALEASEN (SWEDEN) TEATR WEIMAR (SWEDEN) JO STRÖMGREN KOMPANI (NORWAY) SALAR THEATRE, (IRAQI KURDISTAN) REGIONTEATER VÄST (SWEDEN) NIE COMPANY (NORWAY/CHECH REPUBLIC/ENGLAND/France) SKÅNES DANSTEATER (SWEDEN) HARLEM HEAT, (SWEDEN) SPINNING JENNY (SWEDEN)

CONTACT: +46 8 506 20 100 WWW.STADSTEATERN.STOCKHOLM.SE/CO

# stockholms stadsteater



# In search of gender equality

**T**HERE IS IN SWEDEN a rich and varied theatrical life that extends over the whole of the country. There exist over thirty municipal and regional theatres performing, both for children and grown-ups, works of theatre, musical theatre and dance. The national stages; The Royal Dramatic Theatre (known widely as Dramaten) and The Royal Swedish Opera (Operan) are located in Stockholm as is a mobile national theatre, Riksteatern, which tours throughout the country. There are also independent theatres in numbers exceeding two hundred, either with their own stages, playing in borrowed venues, or touring for example to schools. Theatre for children and youth has a strong position and is the source of important artistic development. The total audience in Sweden is over six million per annum, within a total population of nine million.

## Gender equality in focus

The theatre is a part of the civil society and often at the center of public discussion. The past years have seen the theatre itself and its structures, often as the subject of animated debate. One issue that has greatly influenced theatre life in the new millennium has been the question of gender equality, through an increasing awareness of gender related issues.

In Sweden, questions of gender equality are central to society. In some areas great progress has been made, for example in lawmaking. In Sweden's governing Parliament, half the delegates are women.

But there are still unmotivated differences in salary as well as some surviving patriarchal structures.

In the beginning of the 2000's it became increasingly clear that even in the theatre, the balance between the sexes often placed power in the hands of men. This affected not only the work within the theatres themselves, but to a large degree also what our stages offered in terms of repertory and the manner in which it was presented. In 2006, the government appointed a committee to investigate gender equality in the performing arts. This resulted in a 650 page long document entitled *Plats på scen (Places, please)*. The document outlined many problems and indicated a variety of ways forward.

## A program for change

Since the initiation of a serious discussion in the theatre branch, a lot of things have happened: theatres have created conscious programs to effect change and to highlight inequalities. Employers and Unions have joined together to develop courses, including one for women aspiring to leadership positions as artistic and/or managing directors.

The theatre academies have grouped together behind a two-year

by Ann Mari Engel

Director

Svensk Teaterunion

Swedish Centre of the ITI

Illustration:

Sina Eidem

"Female dominance in make-up and costume departments"







Illustration:  
Stina Eidem  
"In search of gender  
equality"

study, *Att gestalta kön* (*Portraying Gender*) that in no small way has affected teachers, students and their relationships.

Dramaturges have rummaged through archives in search of "forgotten" woman dramatists and played their works successfully. Other productions have utilized "gender blind" casting or switched the roles of men and women to give the audience new perspectives.

### Hard numbers

Since 2006, we at Svensk Teaterunion, Swedish Centre of the ITI have documented in our database, all professional stage productions. Here we note the gender of all creative artists and performers involved in any production. From the data stored, we published in 2007 and 2008, gender related statistics related to those working on stage, backstage, in the boardrooms and in the workshops. We can see that a lot has been done and that a lot is left to do. These statistics have been given a great degree of attention and have led to important discussions at theatres across the country.

### Gender and power

In this issue of News we present a number of facts of concern to men and women in Swedish performing arts. We describe some of the artistic and pedagogical projects that have risen from a growing consciousness regarding gender on stage and the need for gender equality. We also provide some glimpses of current theatrical production with focus on portraying a gender perspective.

We have long been aware that the majority of theatre audiences are women. Still, the majority of theatre creators, here we refer to directors, playwrights, composers and conductors, are still men. This reality is, however, changing and we are moving towards a theatre that is relevant to everyone. The gender discussions have led to exciting artistic choices and a further development of theatre in Sweden. We hope that this issue will outline some of the questions concerning gender equality in the performing arts and will stimulate further discussion.



# Definition Gender

## The Gender Concept

Gender denotes the way in which we socially, culturally and historically understand the meaning of woman and man, male and female. This understanding varies.

## Feminism

Feminism, both as a theoretical direction and as a political ideology, is based on the thought that women in all known societies have been subordinate to men in the so-called sexual hierarchy. Feminism concerns social justice between the sexes, but also extends to the gender related repression of other groups because of sexual orientation, ethnicity or class.

## Gender Equality

Means that women and men have equal power to shape society and their own lives. This implies the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.

In Sweden, *gender equality* is usually limited to defining the relationship between men and women. However, *equality* is a somewhat wider concept. It refers to parity in relations among all individuals and groups in society. Underlying this notion is the belief that all people are of equal value, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion, social class, etc. Gender equality is one of the cornerstones of equality.

*Quantitative gender equality* implies an equal distribution between women and men in all spheres of society, such as in education, work, recreation and positions

of power. A group is woman-dominated if women make up more than 60 % of a group. If men make up more than 60 % of a group it is man-dominated.

*Qualitative gender equality* implies that the knowledge, experiences and values of both women and men are given equal weight and are used to enrich and direct all spheres of society.

Illustration:  
Stina Eidem

”Dance is dominated by women – female composers are few”



# Ups and downs in Swedish gender equality

Regarding gender equality in the Swedish performing arts; successes line up alongside failures. The year 2009 brings us joy when we see the percentage of women as artistic director, while the acute shortage of women conductors causes us worry.

by *Vanja Hermele*  
Journalist and  
Gender Studies specialist

Illustration:  
*Stina Eidem*  
"A sex change rather than  
an education?"

**I**N SWEDEN WE ARE accustomed to hearing that we live in the world's most "equal" nation. Unfortunately this isn't entirely true. The World Economic Forum, the organization that measures gender equality in the nations of the world, passed the title "world champion" already three years ago to neighboring Norway. And since then we've been sliding steadily, year after year: in 2008 we took third place and in 2009, fourth.

Scendatabasen (The Stage Arts Data Base) is a living archive that documents theatre, dance, opera and performance in Sweden. We took a look at gender equality there.

Measured in numbers, Swedish performers are divided almost equally between men and women during the years 2007–2009. Large, demanding roles for women, central to the development of the plot, are still sought after by our actresses. The American cartoonist, Alison Bechdel, hits the problem elegantly on the head in her Bechdel Test. She asks: Are there women on the stage? Do they speak to each other? About something other than men? She underlines the fact that an equal number of women and men on the stage doesn't necessarily mean that the production is "equal".

We observe the same pattern when examining the number of employees at the Sweden's thirty-four performing arts institutions during 2007. The percentage of women to men employed is exactly 50–50. If you look closer, you can see that men and women occupied different positions in the hierarchical structure. The administration was 71 % women while roughly the same percentage – but this time for men – applied to artistic or managing directors. One hardly needs to mention the ocean of difference between these two categories when it comes to honor, praise, prestige, and – paychecks.

## Ups

The male dominance of directorships at national and regional performing arts houses has been questioned and discussed. Collaborative action has been taken by The Swedish Union for Theatre, Artists and Media and the employers' organization, Swedish Performing Arts. This has had visible effect. They started a leadership education for women that not only changed attitudes and raised competence, but actually created a situation in 2008–2009 in which women were not only accepted as directors of these institutions but were also welcomed. From

69 % men in 2007 to exact equality 2009. 19 male directors and 19 female.

### Worlds apart

Unfortunately there are still a large number of occupations in theatre houses categorically divided into either female occupations or male. It happens, but rarely, that you would encounter a man in the make-up department. Here the dominance of women is expressed as at least 80 % during the years 2007 to 2009. The same three years showed a female dominance in costume workshops of 73 % women.

One is led to suspect the existence of a glass ceiling between the positions of assistant director and director. What else could account for a relative absence of women from the director's chair? In 2009, 73 % of director's assistants were women, but only 39 % of directors. This constitutes a drop from the years 2007 and 2008.

Light design seems to be an occupation reserved for men. Men designed the lighting in 77 % of all stage productions in 2009, a percentage that has remained roughly equal since 2007.

Worst of all is the field of sound design where male dominance was 88 % in 2007, 84 % in 2008 and a whopping 90 % in 2009.

### Downs

The largest problems with male domination can be found in musical theatre and opera. And it has only been getting worse as years go by. Since 2007, women have been disappearing from leading positions.

In 2007 and 2008 a little over one hundred musical theatre or opera productions were produced in Sweden. Of these productions, 10 % were in 2007, composed by women, while 8 % had woman conductors. In 2008 only 4 % were composed by women and the number conducted by women had also decreased to 4 %.

In 2009 eighty-five musical theatre productions were produced. Women composers did at least account for some of these works, making up 17 % of the total, but not a single work was conducted by a woman.

Such broad divergences are always detrimental to gender equality, no matter which sex is favored. The whole idea of gender equality is that an individual's talent, desire and vision should determine his/her choice of occupation and possibility to advance in the field.



*Note:* The statistics for 2009 were taken from Scendatabasen in March 2010. Vanja Hermele has previously investigated equality in the fields of professional culture in the books *Konsten så funkar det (inte)*, (*Art, The way things (don't) work*), 2009, *På spaning efter jämställdhet (In Search of Gender Equality)*, 2008 and *I väntan på vadå (Waiting for Who Knows)* 2007.

The illustrations were first published in *In Search of Gender Equality*, 2008.



# Swedish theatre has come out

by Tiina Rosenberg, Professor in Gender Studies and Theatre Scholar

**I**T'S A FAR DISTANCE that separates Europe and the USA", wrote one critic in a review of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* when it played Stockholm's Stadsteater in 1995/6. The play was considered difficult in Sweden because in the tolerant and open Swedish society there was no stigmatization of homosexuality or people with aids. *Angels in America* was however, in line with a major national coming-out process for homosexuals in Sweden. In the year 1998 photographer Elisabeth Ohlsson's photo exhibit *Ecce Homo*, portraying Jesus in a queer environment, started an unprecedented debate focused on homosexuality at the same time that Lucas Moodysson's film *Fucking Åmål – Show Me Love* with teenage Agnes and Elin, gave Swedish film its first teenage lesbian couple.

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since *Angels in America*, *Ecce Homo* and *Fucking Åmål* still, there is room to reflect over the historic development. Even August Strindberg was conscious of the existence of homosexuality and his ambivalence to it is mirrored in several of his works. This appears mostly in the form of a triangle as in *The Confession of a Fool – En dåres försvarstal*, *Creditors – Fodringsägare*, *Play with Fire – Leka med elden*, *Married I–II – Giftas I–II*, *There are Crimes and Crimes – Brott och brott*, *The Dance of Death – Dödsdansen* and *To Damascus – Till Damaskus*. For Strindberg the lesbian woman was a Tribade to be feared, a product of the modern decadence, a vampire like invader who crept into good families, seducing the wife and marginalizing the husband. This theme was taken up in P.O. Enqvist's drama about Strindberg's own marriage, called *The Night of the Tribades – Tribadernas natt*.

The de-criminalization of homosexuality in 1944 did not immediately lead to a less homophobic society. Instead, a wave of homophobic panic spread across the western world during the 1950's. It was this ambience that gave rise to the so-called closet dramas of playwrights such as Tennessee Williams,





Edward Albee and Harold Pinter. These were often played on Swedish stages. The banner of sexual freedom was hoisted in the sixties, but the gay plays that were being produced in the Anglo-American theatres were seldom played in Sweden. One exception was the Mart Crowley play, *The Boys in the Band* (1968), produced by Malmö Stadsteater in 1970. In this production, several openly homosexual actors took part under the supervision of a physician. The 1970's saw both the women's movement and the gay movement become increasingly political with their own cultural content, including poetry, songs and even some dramatic texts. During the aids crisis in the 1980's plays dealing with the disease were being played throughout Europe and the United States, while Malmö Stadsteater in 1985 played Harvey Fierstein's *Torch Song Trilogy*, followed shortly afterwards by a production at Stockholms Stadsteater of the same play. At roughly the same time, a homosexual son turned up in Lars Norén's drama *Natten är dagens mor – Night is the Mother of Day* (1983) and the same happened in Staffan Göthe's play *En uppstoppad hund – A Stuffed Dog* (1986), both of which are among Sweden's most often produced plays. More or less openly gay actors and artists start to become popular media profiles during the 1980's. Actor and singer Rikard Wolff is one example. And from



author and showman Jonas Gardell's first happenings in 1984/5 to his latest show *Trafikplats Glädjen* (2009/10) one can trace dramatic changes in laws and attitudes concerning hbt persons in Sweden.

The 2000's present an entirely different picture. Queer-cultural events, festivals, meeting places, alternative queer stages, have enriched the queer scene in Sweden with artists such as Malin Hellkvist Sellén, Dorte Olesen, Maya Hald, Robert Fux and Helena Sandström, to name but a few. The current season has brought us the drama documentary *All We Need Is Love* at Malmö Stadsteater in which director Ronny Danielsson has collected the life stories of a group of non-heterosexual men from Malmö. At the same time, Riksteatern has since September 2009 toured *No Tears for Queers*, another example of documentary theatre, this time aimed towards crimes of hate and performed chiefly in schools to counter homophobia and violence against gays. This marks the start of a new era in which the 2000's more open attitudes towards homosexuality are beginning to be visible in the repertories of Swedish theatres. The previously all too chained doors might not have burst their hinges, but doors are at least open.

Photo page 8:  
Peter Westrup  
All we need is love  
Malmö Stadsteater

Photo page 9:  
Åse Bengtsson Helin  
Rosa löften  
Tony Friede  
Salong Giraff  
Orienteatern



# Female leadership at a popular opera house

by Ann Mari Engel, Director of Svensk Teaterunion – Swedish Centre of the ITI

**S**TOCKHOLM IS THE HOME of independent institution Folkoperan. Founded in 1976 the group's aim was to develop and renew the art of opera and help it to reach new audiences.

Folkoperan has produced a long list of successful productions both of modern works and of re-worked or modernized classics. They have reached a wide audience and are today the country's largest employer of freelance singers and musicians. The operas are always performed in the Swedish language and attention is given works for children and youth. The latest production, widely praised, was *Silversjön (The Silver Lake: a Winter's Fairy Tale)* by Kurt Weill directed by Lithuanian director Oskaras Korsunovas.

One of the founders of Folkoperan is Kerstin Nerbe, one of our few woman conductors of musical theatre. Kerstin Nerbe is a composer and professor of music and has been guest conductor on stages all over the world. She has recently initiated a network of woman conductors. Joakim Unander, who has taken over the musical leadership from Kerstin, has opened for new conductors, both men and women, by allowing them to test conduct at daily orchestra rehearsals. Folkoperan hopes in this way to discover new talent which otherwise might remain hidden.

Folkoperan's leadership is today shared between two women with Pia Kronqvist as managing director and Mira Bartov as artistic director. Internationally it is quite unique to see two women at the helm of an opera house, and it is even unusual to see any kind of shared leadership. Pia Kronqvist has the final word and responsibility, but the two work together closely. What makes the relationship work is their trust in each other and their ability to put their egos to the side. The apparent division between administration and art often blurs, demanding a large quantum of giving and taking. Each needs to respect the other's expertise when engaging in dialogue about the whole picture. That these are two women makes no difference in this respect, but they are very conscious of the patriarchal structures in the music field, something that demands attention. Musical theatre is the most male dominated field in the

performing arts, especially in regard to composers and conductors. The field is dominated by classical works written by men and during times marked by patriarchal values. The old stories are often re-worked at Folkoperan to bring forth genius aspects, as in the last production of *Glada Änkan* (*The Merry Widow*).

Leadership, according to Pia and Mira, is all about operating on a human level. Artists are a vulnerable group in that they are constantly opening themselves up publically in their work on stage. The leaders of an opera house need to support them and to be aware of any discriminatory structures. It's really all about how people treat each other at work. It is imperative to make an analysis of who has power and what this means for the artistic work created.



Photo page 10:  
*Mats Bäcker*  
Mira Bartov &  
Pia Kronqvist

Photo page 11:  
*Mats Bäcker*  
Silversjön  
Folkoperan



# WOMEN'S THEATRE LIVES ON —

## What happened to the women and to the theatre after Jösses flickor? Was liberation, as they said in 1974, just around the corner?

by Sara Granath  
Theatre Critic and Lecturer  
at Södertörn University

Article published in  
Swedish Daily  
*Svenska Dagbladet*  
February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2006

**ONE MILESTONE PRODUCTION** in theatre history is *Jösses flickor, befrielsen är nära* (*Jaysus girls, liberation is coming*) that opened in 1974 at Stockholms Stadsteater and ran for 140 performances. The play, written by Suzanne Osten and Margareta Garpe, directed by Osten, portrayed women pioneers and their political as well as private struggles between the years 1924–1974. The play's remounting in 2006 should be mentioned, and the added sequel by the young playwright Malin Axelsson.

But what happened to the women and to the theatre after Jösses flickor? Was liberation, as was

maintained in 1974, just around the corner? An exhaustive answer would require an entire season at Dramaten's main stage; where Gunnel Lindblom, as one of few woman directors, mounted an interesting production of Henrik Ibsen's *Frauen fra havet* (*The Lady from the Sea*) in 1985. On Dramaten's smallest stage, Lejonkulan, she directed in 1988 *Sanna Kvinnor* (*True Women*) the feminist classic penned by Ann Charlotte Leffler in 1885.

In the theatre, women are primarily found in the audience. Many times the number of women than men apply for acceptance at the theatre academies, though the number accepted by each school is equal. The great roles are by tradition reserved for men. But some things have indeed changed, even if the women's movement, enmeshed in the theatre in the 1970's, gave up its place in favor of other types of initiative. And although we live in the age of the individual, woman from time to time gather together to break the male hegemony. Education at Dramatiska Institutet (University College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre) has without a doubt contributed to the growing number of women playwrights and directors who, through apprenticeships, find their way into the theatres. Suzanne Osten, the director of *Jösses flickor*, was, for several years, professor of directing as well as the artistic director of Unga Klara at Stockholms Stadsteater. It was at Unga Klara that Anna Takanen received her training, before taking over as artistic director of Göteborgs Stadsteater. And so it goes on!

Vivica Bandler, who managed Stockholms Stadsteater, was in her day an important source of support for Suzanne Osten, but even male ar-







tistic directors have allotted space to women. Stefan Böhm, the leader at Uppsala Stadsteater following years in an independent group, opened the doors of the main stage to women directors. Voula Kerekliou mounted some years ago, a feminist version of Schiller's *Maria Stuart* and in 2005 on the same stage a major production concerning the life of the 18<sup>th</sup> century British feminist, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, written by Margareta Garpe, Mia Törnqvist, Gunilla Boëthius, Sofia Fredén and Gertrud Larsson was produced. All these are descendants of "Jösses"; Margareta Garpe has gone on to direct many of her own plays both at Stockholms Stadsteater and at Dramaten. Anneli Norberg, the director of *Wollstonecraft*, among other deeds has mounted a play about rapists in which women played all the roles. It was at Uppsala Stadsteater that Birgitta Englin first started along a path that would lead her to the CEO position at

Riksteatern (Swedish National Touring Theatre). Her ticket to success was the feministic production of Sophocles' *Electra*. *Jösses flickor, befrielsen är nära* brought up everything: class and gender, sexuality and working life. A whole chain of plays has followed allowing concentration on particular aspects of being a woman. Here, independent theatre companies still play an important role: Kia Berglund and Teater Giljotin with productions of Inger Edelfeldt's *Ur askan* (*Out of the Ashes*) and *Den perfekta mannen* (*The Perfect Man*). Teater Scenarion was a long standing home for Daniella Kullman, and a place where we could experience Lotti Törnros in her own *Mitt liv som tjock* (*My Life as a Fatty*) and Isabell Sollman in Sara Stenström's *Jag var en beauty* (*I Was a Beauty*). Sisela Lindblom has pursued her feministic project in a variety of places but most successfully at Boulevardteatern with *Flickor* (*Girls*). Hilda Hellwig, contributing important works concerning sexual politics in her days at Teater Aurora, mounted an at once faithful and critical production of Strindberg's "battle between the sexes" drama *Kamraterna* (*Comrades*) at Dramaten. Maria Blom reached a large and young audience at Stockholms Stadsteater's Backstage, where her productions always turned gender clichés inside out. Carin Mannheimer wrote a sharply critical play about women's position in the employment market, *Rika barn leka bäst* (*Rich Children Play Best*) but is best known to audiences through television.

Kristina Lugn, who made her debut as a poet, grows ever in prominence as a personage in the Swedish Theatre. She now runs her own theatre in Stockholm; Teater Brunnsgratan Fyra. Åsa Kalmér has established herself as the foremost interpreter of Lugn's plays in which the world is observed with a keen feminine eye. Lugn's portrayals of feminine submission and the all-powerful, all-charming, male, are a hard act to top.

*Translator's note:* The translations in parenthesis of many of the titles of new dramatic works described in these articles are the translator's own, provided to give the reader exactly that: a translation of the title.

Photo page 12:

*Lesley Leslie-Spinks*

*Jösses flickor – återkomsten*  
Stockholms Stadsteater

Photo page 13:

*Mats Bäcker*

*Mary Wollstonecraft*  
Uppsala Stadsteater

# Blurring the boundaries

by *Kristian Hallberg*  
Dramaturge

Photo page 15:  
*Linus Meyer*  
Drottning Kristina  
Uppsala Stadsteater

**W**HILE I WAS WORKING on the play *Drottning Kristina (Queen Christina)* at Uppsala Stadsteater, my mind was constantly occupied with the idea of blurring the boundaries. It was what we were concerned with, blurring the lines between our working roles; as I who in my daily life am a dramaturge, become actor and set designer. We allowed our discussions of Christina's sexual orientation to collide with the debate concerning the South African athlete Caster Semenya. We adapted a feminist approach to writing history by giving as much credence to Britney Spears and Depeche Mode as we allowed August Strindberg and Lars Forssell. We created our own classic, and with that, a new world-view. We wanted to blur the boundaries between all the creators of this opus. And suddenly it hit me: blurring the boundaries is exactly what *Queen Christina* has always been about. Was she a man, a woman, a hermaphrodite? She really crossed borders. She did things that were unheard of. But she didn't blur. She was crystal clear.

I am writing at a time when the subject of sexual harassment in our theatre and film world is being hotly debated. It is impossible not to mention it.

This survey has, in percentages and direct quotations, provided a clear picture of the theatre worker's experience. I read article after article, interview after interview, in which the reality is blurred. Artistic Directors say that nothing of the sort has ever happened at their theatres. They dismiss the whole subject as some bizarre expression of Stockholm's syndrome. The theatre artist who can't in her wildest imagination believe that the survey could in any way reflect the truth.

We live in a patriarchal society where male power is the norm. It seems to us natural that men might abuse this position. I've known this from childhood. I've learned that as a man it was okay for me to interrupt others when they were speaking, I learned how look at and how speak to men in contrast to women. Power is something that was handed to me at no cost.

Men who paw women in the elevators or on the sofa; they don't cross boundaries concerning what is permissible in a work place. They only blur them. Artistic directors who deny the existence of any such behavior at their theatre, they don't cross boundaries, they merely blur the paw prints on the map.



In a scene in our *Queen Christina*, the actors had invited Strindberg to come and talk about the play. The discussion gets out of hand, ending up in a bloody assault on the playwright. The actors reasoned that they would gain nothing by merely portraying Strindberg as a misogynist. People would just shrug it off. But they felt that should force Strindberg to face charges, for turning Christina into a fawning, silly, sex obsessed and irresponsible Queen, reflecting the dissolution of his own marriage to Harriet Bosse. So when we got to the scene we felt that we needed to cross a line. We suggested something, we said; "this is another way in which we can use August Strindberg". And in doing so, we generated a discussion. Likewise, in regard to our work environment, to blur the issue would be a cowardly act. We have to ask the questions, just as we do when we rehearse a play. What is the problem and how can it be solved? What happens when we remove the text on the day of the first read through? What happens when we separate the lines from the characters assigned to them? What happens when we take the power from the hands of the men? We need to abdicate our birthright.



# Gender equality





# begins in the brain

**C**HOREOGRAPHER MALIN HELLKVIST SELLÉN must be one of the leading figures in Swedish dance. Ever since her debut with *Solo* her work has consistently undermined all conventional bias concerning gender identity.

Gender equality is an easy thing to support in words but hard to realize, since it forces us to question habitual ways of thinking, our own or those in our surroundings. When one does ask questions it isn't unusual to meet a reaction such as the one I met upon asking a Swedish dance heavyweight why all the female dancers were so naked in contrast to the male dancers who were so dressed. It was nothing to get excited about and I was the only one who had a problem with it, was the answer I received.

That Malin Hellkvist Sellén in performance after performance is able to question all our unconsciously ingrained gender conventions demands both courage and tenacity. Whatever theme she approaches in a new work, she gives her audience the opportunity to see the arbitrary in accepted social conventions defining masculine and feminine. Already during her education as a choreographer at the National Academy of Dance she created a work entitled *Project: a gender-neutral army on the march* (2000). Costume and choreography are both free from gender demarcation, a demonstration in Hellkvist Sellén's early development of an ability to analyze, deconstruct and to reconstruct movements from a gender perspective.

This courage and competence in seeing how gender conventions affect all of us at very basic levels, how we move our bodies for example, is the base of all gender related work. But one also needs

to understand gender related power structures, otherwise well-intended equality initiatives might lead to prolonged inequality. One of the basic elements of this power structure is the objectification of the female body. Which is to say the acceptance by both sexes of the masculine gaze's hegemony. A direct attack against the masculine gaze's hegemony was launched by *De ger tanken kropp* (2003) (*They Give Body to Thought*), a work in which dancers used their bodies in ways that forced the spectators to see them, dressed or undressed, as active subjects. Despite the skepticism of many before the opening, the performance was a tremendous success.

Hellkvist Sellén is a skilled choreographer who creates performances that are rich in content and both thought provoking and entertaining. Her work, despite the power of the message, is never reduced to agit-prop. Instead, thanks to their non-verbal content, her performances become as Trojan horses, slipping past the defenses of the audience and infiltrating their modes of thought.

Equality is created in the brain, born of thoughts and attitudes that only afterwards make a mark on reality. Through her work, Hellkvist Sellén invites her audience to think along new lines, which in the long run can lead to a conscious redefinition of attitudes and ideas.

Malin Hellkvist Sellén's newest work, *Inom rimliga gränser* (*Within the Boundary of the Reasonable*), a dance piece about unreasonable notions, will be performing during the spring of 2010. The performance opened at Pusterviksteatern in Göteborg and will tour throughout the country.

by Lena Andréén  
Theatre Critic

Photo:  
Åse Bengtsson Helin  
Inom rimliga gränser

# Portraying gender

An excerpt from the study *Att gestalta kön* (*Portraying Gender*) published by Teaterhögskolan i Stockholm (Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts).  
Project manager:  
*Gunilla Edemo*,  
November 2009

**W**ITH REGARD TO THE increasingly intensive debate concerning gender roles in the theatre and the way in which these roles are set during the course of the aspiring actor's vocational education, the four theatre academies in Sweden initiated in 2006 a multi-year artistic and educational project investigating the gender perspective in the education, primarily, of actors. Teacher and researcher Kent Sjöström formulates here one of the guiding principles;

During an actors vocational training one is constantly engaged in reflection over human behavior. Students and instructors dissect every character; their actions, their feelings, and the choices they make. These are things discussed, but primarily acted out. Actors proceed from different perspectives, testing the dramatic material and investigating the life of the character down to the slightest twitch.

The project facing our actor's education today, *Portraying Gender*, turns the torch of investigation inwards, towards our selves. With the same sharp and curious eye we use to investigate the lives and relationships of our characters, we will now gaze at our own habits, choices and the power relationships existing in our daily work at the academy. It is challenge of the highest degree and one could even ask if it is at all possible. Who will investigate whom? Perhaps the more poignant question is "how will we who work with the education of actors, deal with knowledge and insights that criticize us?"

This project culminated in 2009 with a seminar series and the publication of a book called *Att gestalta kön: Berättelser om scenkonst, makt och med-*

*vetna val* (*Portraying Gender: Stories about theatre arts, power and conscious choice*). It contains the personal experiences of students and teachers, records some conversations and presents some strategies for the future.

## Objectives for the future

In the final stage of the project, the group of student and faculty chairs formulated a number of objectives for the future, based on the steering committee's articulation of goals for the project's implementation phase. First off, the project's two overarching objectives concerning the desired learning outcomes of participating students and instructors are as follows:

Students will be educated toward making active and conscious creative choices, in regard to gender perspectives.

Students will develop their ability to describe these choices verbally, as well as reflect critically upon their own and others' artistic choice.

Instructors shall develop their ability to make active and conscious teaching choices. These choices shall serve to establish an educational context of equal opportunity and full integrity for male and female students alike. Instructors will also develop their ability to describe these choices verbally, and reflect critically upon their own and others' teaching choices from a gender and gender equality perspective.

In addition to this, a number of detailed objectives regarding course planning, admission procedures and criteria and other subjects were formulated. These can be found at [www.teaterhogskolan.se](http://www.teaterhogskolan.se).

# The empowerment of women in opera

by *Stefan Johansson*, Chief Dramaturge at the Royal Swedish Opera

**W**OMEN AS PERFORMERS can easily be said to have dominated the international opera stage – with their voices and their acting – during the art form’s entire history. Only the castratos of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – emasculated men singing in the female range – provided serious competition. Many female singers also had considerable influence on the composition of the works they appeared in – or as operatic lingo has it, “created” – and so also on the construction of an operatic canon. Sometimes great earners in a time when only women of the servant class had incomes of their own, they were also pioneers for the emancipation of women as working and economically self-sufficient beings. Yet the female singer’s role as “a public woman” was always ambiguous, liable to disrepute as well as fame. In all other professions of the opera business, women were barred from competing with men. There were a few female managers already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but apart from Cosima, Wagner’s widow and artistic leader of the Bayreuth festival 1883–1906, there are no well known female opera directors until after the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war.

Since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century women composers have written operas. But they are few and far between. Louise Bertin, Augusta Holmès, Ethel Smyth and Thea Musgrave had works premiered in some of the world’s most prestigious opera houses, as have Judith Weir, Kaia Saariaho and Olga Neuwirth today. (A far larger number of women have written librettos for male composers.) But not one opera by a female composer has, to this day, entered the operatic canon. At the Royal Swedish Opera only seven operatic works by women composers were premiered in the years 1772 to 2010. Works by Sophie Gail (France) and Helena Munktell (Sweden) were performed in 1831 and 1889–92 respectively, by Beatrice Laufer (US) and Inger Wickström (Sweden) in 1958 and 1995, the latter a co-production with another company. (A short piece by soprano cum composer Margareta Hallin, *The Stronger* after Strindberg, was performed in but not produced by the Royal Opera.) In the new millennium things have speeded up considerably with new works by Catharina Backman (*Stackars mej*, 2003), Carin Edström-Bartosch (*Guldringen*, 2008) and Paula af Malmborg-Ward (*Triumf och tragedi*, 2010), all world-premiers commissioned by the Royal Swedish Opera. In addition, new works have been commissioned from Karin Rehnqvist and Viktoria Borisova-Ollas while Catharina Backman recently completed *Faustine*, her second piece



Photo page 19:  
Anders Västlund  
Paula af Malmborg Ward

for the Royal Swedish Opera. This will not change the dominance of male composers in the repertory, yet in less than a decade more has been achieved than during the preceding 230 years and not by policy of allocation by quota or affirmative action. That one of two commissions was given to women in competition with men is due to their qualities as composers and the appeal of their projects.

Ann-Margret Pettersson was from 1968 and for over forty years, permanently employed as a director at the Royal Swedish Opera, presenting at least one new production a year. Otherwise, even in progressive Scandinavia, directing opera was for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century an exclusively male occupation. Well into the 90s, Pettersson was the only woman who regularly directed opera in Sweden. Beginning in the year 2000 or thereabouts, several prestigious female directors have followed in her footsteps – Gunnel Lindblom, Hilda Hellwig, Åsa Melldal, Johanna Garpe – and others will follow. But apart from Pettersson, none have been asked to direct repertory pieces from the canon, which means that even successful productions by these directors tend to disappear quickly. Other than a few Pettersson productions, only Hellwig's *Rigoletto* from 2001 has remained in the repertory.

For many spectators, though, the central artistic force in an opera performance is the conductor. Here women are conspicuously absent. Female conductors have been active in Sweden since the 50's. Kerstin Nerbe was co-founder and musical director of the Folkoperan. Cecilia Rydinger-Alin has conducted opera at the Royal Opera and elsewhere

and from 2007 is professor of conducting at the Royal College of Music. But 99 % of all opera and ballet performances as well as symphony concerts are conducted by men. Sometimes the blame is put on international agencies which allegedly do not want to work with women conductors. The problem is of course a more general one and requires a change of attitude in the whole of the classical music field as well as in music education. Talent is not an issue of gender. There are as many women as men who could become good conductors or interesting composers. Obviously there is a lack of role models for any sufficient number of musically talented young women to make these career choices. There is also a lack of imagination in those men and women who decide what is performed and by whom. A musical canon of works mainly composed by men and enjoyed by audiences all over the world – paradoxically, audiences consisting of more women than men – will probably be with us now and forever after, because wide audiences continue to ask for it. But this is no reason not to give equal place to women as managers, directors, composers and conductors. Achieving this is a matter of positive identification and empowerment – with active support of educators and mentors at all stages – which must be dealt with from an early age. Otherwise our art forms and the whole field of classical music will gradually become of less interest to large segments of the public, who see the arts less as events or entertainment, but rather as a true reflection of our lives.



# Leadership education for women

Teaterförbundet (The Swedish Union for Theatre, Artists and Media) and the employer organization Svensk Scenkonst (Swedish Performing Arts) joined together to provide in 2005–6 a course in leadership for women who aspired to lead artistic institutions in Sweden. The background was the small proportion of theatres led by women. The course attracted a large number of applicants.

The course stretched over one year with students meeting two full days every month. The twelve applicants chosen were from the fields of theatre, dance and music and had different experiences and backgrounds. The contents of the course reflected specific needs of the branch as well as general competence building in leadership. Each participant was appointed a mentor, who followed their work throughout the year.

The education was considered a great success and a majority of the participating women had attained leading positions in the years following its completion.

## A course in gender equality for leaders of artistic institutions

Teaterförbundet, Svensk Scenkonst and Symf (an organization for professional musicians) grouped together in 2009–10 to arrange an education in gender equality for 12 leading directors of per-

forming arts institutions in Sweden. The education was aimed at "the integration of gender equality and gender perspective in leadership, organization and programming".

The aim of the course was to give these directors and artistic leaders tools that would enable them to integrate sexual equality with their fields of artistic endeavor. The Swedish Arts Council funded the program. A second edition of the education starting autumn 2010 will involve another twelve leaders.

## The gender equality checklist

Teaterförbundet created a checklist for places of employment that wished to work concretely with gender equality issues. There is a checklist for theatre and one for film production.

The idea is that one should use the checklist, a two-page questionnaire when, for example, one is planning the coming season. The checklist contains questions that pertain to the artistic portrayal itself but also to gender perspective applied to employment policies, repertory and marketing.

The checklist will be updated by Teaterförbundet during 2010 together with Svensk Scenkonst, the goal being a document that is supported by both organizations.

by *Nina Stone*  
Teaterförbundet

# Working for gender equality at Göteborgs Stadsteater

The leadership at Göteborgs Stadsteater is since 2006 divided between Managing Director/CEO Ronnie Hallgren and Artistic Director Anna Takanen. In the following article, they present their work for gender equality at their theatre.

by Anna Takanen and  
Ronnie Hallgren

**O**UR THEATRE HAS, DURING the past four years, strived actively to implement structures and raise consciousness in both leading positions and among employees regarding equality and gender. We have arranged seminars, group projects, discussions, and an intensive competence building that have made large changes in our activities on all levels.

We have paid special attention to gender aspects in the artistic work, particularly regarding what we chose to play on our stages. As leaders of the theatre we have set goals concerning gender and equality, and this can be seen clearly in our repertory. During 2009, the number of works by women playwrights has increased and women directors are employed to a much greater degree than previous years. If one examines the "creative teams" engaged by the theatre in 2009, and by this we mean playwrights, directors, set and costume designers; you will find that 28 men and 35 women have been employed in these capacities, 6 men and 12 women on the main stage. This is the first time in the theatre's history that women in creative teams have outnumbered men. The change is especially significant in regard to playwrights. In this area, largely dominated by men in past years, we performed in 2009 the works of 12 men and 9 women.

The total number of women and men employed at the theatre is, in general, quite even. Of the 148 employees at the theatre, 79 are women and 69 are men. Among department heads, 5 are women and 6 are men.

The theatre also does a yearly follow-up on how our funds for employee's personal development are distributed between men and women. In 2009 women received 59 % and men 41 % of the personal development budget.

In an employee survey taken by all municipal organizations and departments in The City of Göteborg in 2009, we scored 72 points in diversity/gender equality. The median for all organizations in Göteborg was 59 points. Göteborgs Stadsteater is a model for other artistic institutions in Sweden and for municipal departments in our own city. During 2010 our theatre will focus on diversity issues in accordance with the theatre's new plan for cultural diversity, using the experiences of our gender equality program in the process. Guest directors at the theatre are, at an early point in their process, involved in casting and in discussions concerning the portrayal of roles and themes. We make it clear that the gender aspects are always in focus, and that engaged discussions around gender are part of the artistic process.

Two important venues for these discussions are the artistic council at the theatre, a body composed of 10–12 employees, and the creative department, to which all creative team members working at the theatre at any given time are attached.

In the artistic process we find that constant reflection on gender related topics inspires the work on stage. Through these discussions we are not looking for absolute answers concerning the portrayal of a certain character, but we search for the



right questions, in order to mark the issue as one of the parameters in an actors work, regardless of who the director is or what play we are doing.

A crucial ingredient in our work is the commissioning of new plays. Göteborgs Stadsteater has commissioned 28 plays in the years 2006–2009, 17 written by women, and 11 by men. This is a conscious strategy designed to transform the canon and focus on leading roles for women actors.

The theatre also weighs heavily the importance of a role in a play, that women characters are driv-

ing the plot and taking as much space on stage as the men. We believe that it does make a difference in whose company the audience spends their three hours, during an evening at the theatre. So, who is the subject? And who takes up most space during a rehearsal process? Because often the division of power and allotment of space in the rehearsal room is mirrored when the play meets the audience.

Photo:  
*Ola Kjelbye*  
Ronnie Hallgren &  
Anna Takanen

*Ola Kjelbye*  
Publiken  
Göteborgs Stadsteater



# Forgotten plays by women



by Mireille Bergenström  
Riksteatern

Photo page 24:  
Anders Kratz  
Räddad  
Spetsprojektet

Photo page 25:  
Mikael Silkeberg  
Sanna kvinnor  
Fria Teatern  
Anders Kratz  
Nära livet  
Spetsprojektet  
Börje Gustavsson  
Syskonbädd  
Spetsprojektet

”*Nära livet* documents a time that explodes right into our present with its baby boom, its latte mothers and its ‘sympathy pregnant’ fathers. It brings the Spets Project another step along the way, not only by bringing us into contact with the modern welfare state of the 1950’s, but also by staging a theme that, I am embarrassed to say, has been previously has been ignored by our theatres” says director Jenny Andreasson.

Ulla Isaksson’s dramatic text, also the basis of a film by Ingmar Bergman, will be touring the country during the spring of 2010. The production marks the completion of the Spets Project, which spotlighted once immensely popular but now forgotten plays by women playwrights.

Jenny Andreasson is the initiator of the Spets Project, which opened in 2007 by producing the work of woman playwrights from the 1880’s; Alf-hild Agrell, Anne Charlotte Leffler, Frida Stéenhoff

and Victoria Benedictsson. The project continued with a production of 1930’s playwright Stina Aronsson’s play, *Syskonbädd*. The project was conceived as a three-year collaboration between Riksteatern, Östgötateatern, and Länsteatern in Örebro.

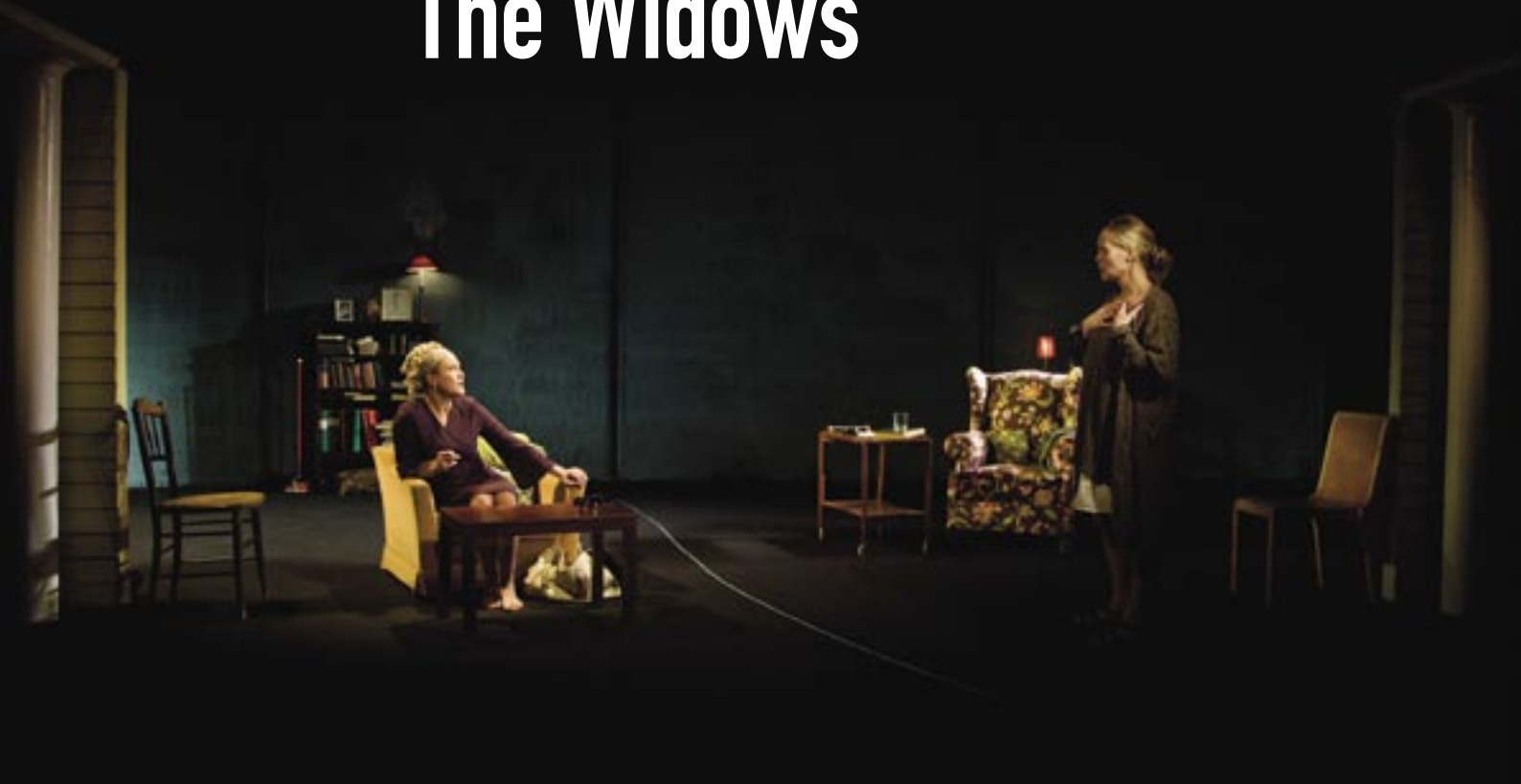
Three of these plays, Alf-hild Agrell’s *Räddad (Saved)*, *Syskonbädd* by Stina Aronsson and Ulla Isaksson’s *Nära Livet (The Brink of Life)* are available in English translation.

The spring 2010 also saw a production of Anna Charlotte Leffler’s play *Sanna Kvinnor (True Women)* by the independent theatre company Fria Teatern in Högdalen in Stockholm. The play was written in 1883 and in its day was produced with greater frequency than any play by contemporary August Strindberg. It is about a married woman’s right to money of her own. Fria Teatern’s production has garnered much critical praise.





# The Widows



by Katharina Lind  
Producer  
Strindberg's Intima Teater

Photo:  
Petra Hellberg  
The Widows  
Strindbergs Intima Teater

On the tenth of February 2010, Joyce Carol Oates' play *The Widows* had its world's premiere at Strindberg's Intima Teater in Stockholm. The theatre, together with the ensemble and the director decided to produce the play and play it in its original language, English. Productions in English have drawn younger audiences to Strindberg's Intima in the past. Joyce Carol Oates is a popular storyteller whose work often portrays life from a woman's perspective. *The Widows* was written in the 1980's for actress Meryl Streep but has never until now been produced. The play is about finding a way out of deep sorrow. Beatrice and Moira are two grieving women played by Bo Corre and Cecilia Nilsson. Their sorrow and their different strategies for survival are at the centre of the drama. Hedwig Claesson directed the piece.

Alongside performances, students have had the opportunity to meet two of the artists close

up. Cecilia Nilsson and Hedwig Claesson visited schools to talk about Joyce Carol Oates, her world, her writing and her play *The Widows*. Themes drawn from the play were also discussed; working through grief after the loss of a loved one, the search for identity, friendship, and rivalry. Before the visit, students received a scene from the play that they were to analyze and discuss. The ensemble could see that the classes who had taken part in the school visits came prepared to take in the performance and participated actively in discussions with the actors afterwards.

It is the producer's experience that an individual teacher's enthusiasm for this mixture of education and performance is crucial in stimulating an interest in the class. The integration of Joyce Carol Oates' dramatic writing into this form of educational project was a success both from the school's perspective and from the theatre's.

# Current productions at the Royal Dramatic Theatre

"A play about gender, class and language", stresses director Margareta Garpe, who clearly saw the particular relevance of George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* to present times in which "right language" is the key to social acceptance. The play is a major success on the main stage with Alexandra Rapaport in the role of Eliza Doolittle and Johan Ulvesson as Professor Henry Higgins.

On the smaller Lilla Scenen Ellen Lamm directs Martina Montelius' dramatization of the classic *Jane Eyre*. The young governess's anger and revolt is attracting a large and young audience, with Julia Dufvenius in the title role and Michael Nyqvist as Rochester.

In the studio, Målarsalen, Lars Noren's play *Om kärlek (About Love)* had its world premiere. This was a meeting between Norén's world and the young director Sara Giese leading a young ensemble in her debut at The Royal Dramatic Theatre.

Another first time director at Dramaten is Jenny Andreasson who mounts Françoise Sagan's forgotten play from 1960, *Slott i Sverige (Palaces in Sweden)*. Jenny Andreasson, fresh from her Spetsprojektet (*the Spets Project*), bringing forgotten plays by women back into the limelight, directed Rebecka Hemse in the role of melancholic female dandy Sagan, who made her breakthrough with *Bonjour Tristess*.

by Magnus Florin  
Chief Dramaturge at  
The Royal Dramatic Theatre

Photo:  
Roger Stenberg  
Slott i Sverige  
Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern



# All we need is love



Photo:  
*Peter Westrup*  
All we need is love  
Malmö Stadsteater

How do I know if I'm in love? Who falls in love, and why? How forbidden is it to fall in love with another man? How do I relate to sexuality, fidelity and infidelity? What will my family say if I choose to live with someone of the same sex? Can I be married to a woman and at the same time have sexual relationships with men? Am I living in a homophobic environment?

Over the past few years Ronnie Danielsson has led theatre projects in which the inhabitants of Malmö have been asked to tell stories from

their lives. Many of these stories have moved him strongly, in particular stories in which the facts of life are tested, questioned or denied. *All We Need Is Love* collects six stories from six men, all of different ages, all unacquainted with each other. Each story addresses questions of sexuality and love.

*All We Need Is Love* by Klas Abrahamsson, Ronny Danielsson and Roger Lybeck in close collaboration with the ensemble opened at Malmö Stadsteater's Intiman in March 2010.



# Drottning Kristina (Queen Christina) at Stockholms Stadsteater

Photo: *Karolina Henke*, Drottning Kristina, Stockholms Stadsteater

"Poff! Suddenly she stands there with the crown in her hands. She wants to give it back. Reared as man and a monarch. And – for the good of the nation – expected to be the woman, the wife and the baby maker. Neither, nor or both. Chosen, but an outcast all the same. Respected and obeyed. Loved?"

Queen? No thank you. Christina prefers to be a human being. Is it possible? *Drottning Kristina* is a modern play about identity and power, about being a man, a woman, a human being.

Director Farnaz Arbabi directs Pamela Gems play about the legendary Queen Christina who at the mere age of 28 years chose to abdicate the throne in exchange for another life.

*Queen Christina* opened at Stockholms Stadsteater in April, 2010.



# Norén and Josephsson to lead Folkteatern i Göteborg over the coming four years!

Photo: *Patrik Gunnar Helin*, Orestien, Folkteatern i Göteborg

Folkteatern's new managing director Ulrika Josephsson and its new artistic director, Lars Norén, took their places at the helm of the theatre on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. They opened the newly renovated theatre with Lars Norén's *Orestien* (*The Oresteia*) based on Greek myths concerning the House of Atreus.

Lars Norén's *Orestien* based on Aeschylus, premiered in March, 2010.



# The Rock Blaster's Daughters



Photo:  
Urban Jörén  
Bergsprängardöttrar  
Riksteatern

Rosanna, Angelica, Helena and Mia are three prisoners and a prison guard in a play about the harsh and often inhumane consequences of incarceration. *The Rock Blaster's Daughters* describes a world where mental and physical care is downsized into veritable non-existence, a world of endless frustration over pointless restrictions, and the inmate's struggle to maintain contact with children and loved ones. This documentary drama features absurd humor, a driven dialogue and strong electronic music beats.

Lo Kauppi, wrote and performed *Bergsprängardottern som exploderade* in 2004–2006 about her childhood with an alcoholic father; eating disor-

ders, drug addiction and, at the age of seventeen, custody in accordance with the law that allows Swedish authorities to intervene if they consider a young person to be a threat to him or herself. When the play toured with Riksteatern, Lo had the opportunity to visit three of Sweden's high security penitentiaries. The performances were well received and many of the inmates wanted to tell her their own stories. The play has single political message, that care in the long term is cheaper than punishment.

*The Rock Blaster's Daughters* opened in March, 2010.

# Women playwrights international 2012 in Stockholm, Sweden

Every three years, Women Playwrights International (WPIC) holds a conference gathering women playwrights from around the world. The first conference was in Buffalo, New York in 1988. Last autumn the venue was Mumbai, India. Riksteatern (The Swedish National Touring Theatre) is proud to organize the 2012 conference, themed

The Democratic Stage, and taking place at Södra Teatern in Stockholm, 15–21 August. The preparations are already underway as our global network grows.

Information: [www.riksteatern.se/WPIC](http://www.riksteatern.se/WPIC) or [www.wpinternational.net](http://www.wpinternational.net)

Contact: [wpic@riksteatern.se](mailto:wpic@riksteatern.se)

## Borås Stadsteater

Borås Stadsteater will undertake, during 2010, an initiative focused on investigating gender and gender equality. The objective is the examination of the working process and the rehearsal process and to make gender related social norms visible to the audience. The entire work force at the theatre will be involved in the formulation of ideas. Lectures and theme days will augment our research into the formation of a long-term, gender conscious direction for the theatre's future.

The project will culminate with the production of a play entitled *His and Hers*, for high school stu-

dents and adults, with performances at Borås Art Museum. This playful collage will test at the deepest levels, conscious and unconscious ideas about the nature of masculine or feminine. Blue or pink? To look or to be looked at? How are we influenced by the social norms, by class and power? Surrounded by the collections at the museum, three actors will examine our conditioned responses. The project will also look at the norms and structures present in artistic processes, both internally in the theatre and as work is presented for the community.

# Projekt: ID – A project for young people focusing on gender and identity at Regionteater Väst

Photo:  
Ola Kjelbye  
No tears for queers



**Projekt:ID** is an active collaboration between the theatre and the schools, an in depth engagement involving reference groups, participating groups and generating five productions for young people to be performed throughout the region. The project will run for two years and focus on gender and identity and will be led by actors at the theatre: Mattias Brunn, Cilla Jelf and Peter Lorentzon.

## Skolgårdens Parlament (A Schoolyard Parliament)

About power and hierarchies. *Skolgårdens Parlament* introduced the project and was played during the spring of 2009 in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms.

## No Tears for Queers

A stage performance on masculinity and crimes of hate. The performance was based on John Hilton's well received book, *No Tears for Queers* published by Atlas. It's a book about gays, homophobia, and brutal violence targeting homosexual men.

A co-production between Regionteater Väst, Riksteatern, RFSL Ungdom and The Forum for Living History, it toured throughout Sweden during the autumn of 2009 and the Spring of 2010.

## Vikarien (The Substitute Teacher)

Classroom theatre on young people's relationships to adults and other figures of authority.

Plays Spring 2010 for classes in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

## Från 0 (From Zero)

With breakneck speed, mad whims and a deadly seriousness we stage young people's own stories concerning gender and identity. What things have we seen and heard during this project's two-year duration? We start with an empty page and aim to fill it with stories. We are starting from Zero.

A co-production with Stockholms Stadsteater, Skärholmen.

Performing in Autumn 2010 for students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and upwards.

## Bruce/Brenda/David

Brenda grows up with a secret without knowing it herself. She was born a boy. Like Bruce. The play is based on a true story.

Playing Spring 2011 for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and high school.

## Fetto (Fatty)

A stage performance about the body.

Bodies collide in a collage of dance, theatre and stories from our own experiences of the body. Who decides what is normal?

Performing Autumn 2011 for 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.



# Heterofil – a heterosexual cabaret



Language has the power to normalize or to marginalize behaviour, appearance, and action, and it can direct our feelings and control the way we view our world. Through language we can marginalize the normative or normalize the marginal. The words black, woman and homosexual will from this moment be replaced with the words white, male and heterosexual.

*Heterofil* premiered in September 2008 at Teatr Weimar in Malmö. The performance was one of the jury's choices for the theatre biennial in Borås 2008 and it has toured successfully, both in Sweden and abroad.

The performance was produced in collaboration with Helsingborgs Stadsteater and is still in Teatr Weimar's touring repertoire.

Photo:  
Jörgen Dahlqvist  
Heterofil  
Teatr Weimar

# The 2009 Critics Awards from the Association of Swedish Theatre Critics

Photo page 35:

Mats Bäcker

Knutby

Uppsala Stadsteater

Ola Kjelbye

Lille kung Mattias

Backa Teater

Göteborgs Stadsteater

Hans Bjurling

Virpi Pahkinen

**For work created during 2009 The Critics Award goes to:**

## UPPSALA STADSTEATER

for artistic risk taking that paid off. Linus Tunström and his skilled collaborators have managed to join historical stories with artistic daring and new dramatic writing with theatrical work of the highest quality in productions such as *Knutby*, *Palme*, *Drottning Kristina* and *7/3 Återbesöket*. In *Lång dags färd mot natt (A Long Day's Journey Into Night)* they offered the audience first class acting, while the performance festival TUPP became the international feather in the cap that makes Uppsala Stadsteater the year's most dynamic theatre.

**The Critics children and youth award for 2009 goes to:**

## The production LILLE KUNG MATTIAS

in which Backa Teater mixes artistic daring with pedagogical fantasy and transforms Janusz Korczak's tale into a compelling and exciting vision of the future. Set designer Ulla Kassius and the theatre's skilled technicians stage with extreme precision the upheaval between acts that creates the space for an interactive, political theatre that holds the rights of children in sharp and constant focus. All children should have the right to see theatre such as this.

**The Critics Award for Dance 2009 goes to:**

## Choreographer and dancer VIRPI PAHKINEN

Virpi Pahkinen is one of Swedish dance's most unique artists. In her solo work she creates her own universe through her vibrant musicality and sense of form. Her distinct and extremely flexible gestalt seems at times to have crawled out from the dry waves of a vast desert, at other times to be a transparent membrane for cosmic power. Dansmuseet is one of her regular platforms, where this autumn she has allowed us to enjoy *Bön (Prayer)* as well as her new solo *Sagittarius A*, dance like distilled meditation, a well of energy... Even Pahkinen's background as an ice princess from Jyväskylä came stylishly to the fore in Moderna Dansteatern's production, *Contemporary on Ice*.



# Welcome to *DramaDirectory*

## What is DramaDirectory?

DramaDirectory is Sweden's largest internet based play collection and contains in excess of 1 093 plays from over 400 playwrights and translators. DramaDirectory has existed under the auspices of Sveriges Dramatikerförbund (The Swedish Playwrights Union) since 1997, and is financed through funding from Statens Kulturråd (The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs) and the theatres attached to Svensk Scenkonst (Swedish Performing Arts). DramaDirectory aims to increase the availability and distribution of Swedish dramatic writing.

In Sweden, where plays are rarely published, playwrights find it difficult to distribute their work. At the same time, theatres and professional independent groups have a hard time finding modern Swedish drama that they can produce. Our hope is to fill the breach, and that DramaDirectory can function as a link between playwrights, publisher/agents, theatre groups and theatres. Even private citizens are able to search through titles and read plays from our play library. This enables more people to read dramatic literature and may encourage more people to go out and see theatre.

We have chosen to start with modern dramatic literature, plays that are already available to us digitally, and work backwards in time. We have recently begun to scan older plays, plays which until now have only existed as paper manuscripts. In this way, some of the most often asked for classical Swedish texts will be available digitally on DramaDirectory. The website also contains some Swedish translations of foreign work.

Besides its plays, DramaDirectory has compiled an overview of Swedish contemporary playwrights and their work. These presentations of playwrights with synopses of their plays are available in several languages. Playwright presentations are updated constantly. DramaDirectory has initiated a co-operation with Swedish theatres in order to present, on the top of the page, a collage of photographs from current productions.

## How does DramaDirectory operate?

The user can both look for plays in the play library, and read about playwrights and their work under Playwright/Translator.

He/she can also find agents, publishers and other information pertaining to the theatre world.

Searches in the play library can utilize a variety of criteria; titles, authors, languages available, number of actors or genre. Once you have located the play you can read a synopsis. If you desire then to read the whole play, there are two possibilities to do so. You can either download the entire play text, or you can order a print-on-demand paperback version. A large number of translations of Swedish plays are available on the site.

## Reading plays directly on the screen

Theatres and theatre professionals are eligible to apply for an access code. With this access code they are able to read entire playscripts directly on their screens, or print them out themselves. Each time a play is downloaded, the user is registered and this information sent to the playwright and the agent/publisher. Thus, the playwrights and their agents can see who is showing interest in their work.

## Author's rights

All work included in the play library is protected by laws governing copyright. Permission from the playwright is mandatory before performing any of the plays represented on the site. Permission can be granted by the playwright him/herself or through their publisher/agent. In the case of translation, permission must be granted both by the original playwright and by the translator or the publisher/agent.



[www.dramadirectory.com](http://www.dramadirectory.com)



# The Swedish Theatre Biennial –

[www.teaterbiennalen.se](http://www.teaterbiennalen.se)



May 11<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Held every second year, this festival for Swedish Theatre features performances, seminars, master classes etc. A jury of critics chooses the best Swedish productions from the past two years, which are presented during the festival. The Biennial is both a meeting place for theatre professionals and a public festival. The first Swedish Theatre Biennial was arranged in Stockholm 1993.

The next Swedish Theatre Biennial will take place in Gävle, May 11<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> 2011. It will be

arranged by Svensk Teaterunion – Swedish ITI in co-operation with Folkteatern i Gävleborg, Gävle Teater, Skottes Musikteater and Riksteatern Gävleborg. The centre for the biennial will be the area known as "Atlasområdet" with its two monumental gas cisterns housing six different stages. Approximately 1 500 people will visit the host town during the festival's 5 days.

Photo:  
*Lasse Halvarsson*  
Atlasområdet in Gävle

# Svensk Teaterunion – the Swedish Centre of the ITI

Svensk Teaterunion is the forum for co-operation and information within Swedish theatre and dance and also a centre for contact and exchange across borders. The Centre is a member organization for 94 Swedish theatre and dance institutions, organizations and groups.

Svensk Teaterunion represents Sweden in the Nordic Theatre Union (NTU), which includes unions in the five Nordic countries, and in the International Theatre Institute (ITI), with national centers in almost a hundred countries around the world. The ITI is an international non-government organization, founded in 1948 by UNESCO and members of the international theatre community. Their main objective is to promote international exchange of knowledge and practice in the domain of the performing arts.

Svensk Teaterunion arranges national and international seminars, conferences and festivals. It is responsible for organizing the Swedish Theatre Biennial, a national festival and theatre meeting organized in different cities in Sweden, in close collaboration with local theatres and organizations.

Svensk Teaterunion has an Education Committee, a Cultural Politics Committee and addi-

tional committees and working groups committed to issues concerning Swedish performing arts. The Dance Committee will be reorganized during 2010.

Svensk Teaterunion plays an active role in many national and international theatre projects, for example the recently completed five-year project to develop children's theatre in South and South-East Asia, Children's Voice, financed by Sida.

Svensk Teaterunion continues to develop and operate [www.scendatabasen.se](http://www.scendatabasen.se), a database documenting all Swedish theatre and dance performances and making the information accessible to the public.

Svensk Teaterunion regularly publishes information regarding Swedish theatre: national and international newsletters as well as information in other languages on Swedish theatre and Swedish dramatic writing.

You are welcome to visit our office, situated in the heart of Stockholm.

For more information please visit:  
[www.teaterunionen.se](http://www.teaterunionen.se)

## News from Swedish Theatre

published by Svensk Teaterunion • Swedish Centre of the ITI, 2010  
Printed with financial support from The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs  
Editorial office: *Ann Mari Engel, Ammy Kjellsdotter & Ann Sofie Nilsson*  
Graphic design: *Johannes Linde*  
Translation: *Edward Buffalo Bromberg*  
Printed by: Katarina Tryck AB, Stockholm 2010  
ISSN 1653-7637

Cover Photo:  
*Stefan Jellheden*  
Kerstin Nerbe  
Conductor  
Former Musical Director  
at Folkoperan

# Kom ta min hand (Come take my hand)

Photo: *Mats Bäcker*, Kom ta min hand, Folkteatern i Gävleborg

A dance theatre performance by Birgitta Egerbladh with texts by William Shakespeare. Birgitta Egerbladh is an explorer. She moves fluidly between theatre and dance. In her works the seemingly trivial is transformed into masterful art. Everything is possible.

Texts from the 16<sup>th</sup> century collide here with the optimism of the 1960's, a time when the future loomed bright. Blending humor and depth Birgitta Egerbladh gives us a dance theatre tragicomedy about love and death.

*Come take my hand* premiered in February, 2010.



FOLKTEATERN IN GÄVLEBORG, IS A THEATRE IN THE NORTH OF SWEDEN.  
WE ARE HAPPY TO WELCOME YOU TO THE NEXT SWEDISH THEATRE BIENNIAL  
IN GÄVLE, MAY 11TH–15TH 2011  
FOR MANY YEARS PETER OSKARSON WAS THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE THEATRE.  
FROM 2007 THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR IS MICHAEL COCKE.  
VISIT US AT [WWW.GAVLEFOLKTEATER.SE](http://WWW.GAVLEFOLKTEATER.SE)  
OR FOR INFORMATION IN ENGLISH CONTACT US AT [INFO@GAVLEFOLKTEATER.SE](mailto:INFO@GAVLEFOLKTEATER.SE)



 **FOLKTEATERN**  
gavlefolkteater.se



Svensk Teaterunion • Swedish Centre of the ITI  
Kaplansbacken 2 • SE-112 24 Stockholm  
Tel: +46 8 462 25 30 • Fax: +46 8 462 25 35  
[info@teaterunionen.se](mailto:info@teaterunionen.se) • [www.teaterunionen.se](http://www.teaterunionen.se)