

# Editorial

Cherifa Kersit, a Berber from Morocco, appeared suddenly. She was singing. Her strong voice brought a landscape of mountains and deserts into the room. She was joined by Ni Nyoman Candri, who entered from the opposite side, introducing the Balinese sounds that accompany the temple dances of her lush tropical island. Then Luisa Calcumil, a Mapuche Indian from Argentina, came in. Dressed in her ritual costume, she carried a seed in her hand as a good omen that she wanted to share. Meanwhile, smiling and confident, she directed her **song** to everyone present. I added my introductory speech to their voices. This was the opening of the Transit 4 Festival in Denmark in 2004. The songs communicated beyond borders, language, cultural references and tradition, generating an emotional tie between listeners and performers.

Songs bring people together. A song remembers; it gives access to a place some call spiritual, others psychical or personal, and others still historical or social. **Song** is a poetic structure, a melodic expression, the music of everyday life. Song is rhyme, rhythm, composition and voice. Song belongs to the private sphere and to the space around us: it connects the intimate being to the outside world. Song belongs to that basic level of theatre that conveys energy, imposes presence, attracts or generates distance, creates space and evokes images, reveals and conceals personalities and feelings.

Many grandmothers and some mothers emerge in the articles of this issue, as if to indicate that songs had a stronger influence on our lives in the past. This is perhaps true in the personal sphere but at the same time the articles reveal how connected singing and speaking are and how strong is the impact of **song** in our craft. Two articles concentrate on dance as the song of the body in theatre. Other articles remind us how the dramaturgy of meaning depends on intonation as well as on words. Music is everywhere: in the sound of life, of instruments, of voices; material to be inspired by and an artefact to offer. The mythical sirens of literature and the seductive and dangerous sirens of our contemporary world continue to cry out against injustice and discrimination.

The Editorial Board of *The Open Page* decided to accompany this issue with a compilation CD of excerpts provided by the authors, to complement the written word with the aural sensation of the vibration of the voices and music. And while listening, we start working on an Open Page Publication under the title Theatre - Women - Letters, digging out from the past words exchanged on paper which mix personal and professional experiences and plans. Much of women's testimony in theatre history comes from letters, and up until ten or so years ago, when we all began to use e-mail for communication, these were still an important form of exchange for many of us working in international theatre projects. We would like to discover the secrets in these letters, secrets that might be useful for our future activities, in the same way as we have done with the **songs** which accompany, inspire, organise and reveal a sense of our work as women in theatre: an emotion-filled tide flying over the clouds to reach people in other continents and eras.

Julia Varley  
Holstebro, June 2007