

Between Tradition and Innovation – A Talk with Andrei Şerban¹

DOI : 10.46522/S.2023.S1.3

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Abstract:

Abstract: *In this talk, renowned theatre director Andrei Şerban reflects on his experiences and philosophy in the world of theatre. He discusses the importance of reaching high artistic quality and the need for preparation, technique, and deep study in creating meaningful theatrical experiences. Şerban emphasizes the significance of theatre as an art form that can deepen our understanding of life and evoke intense emotions. Drawing from personal experiences, he highlights the transformative power of theatre and the need for individual exploration and expression. He also touches upon the challenges faced by contemporary theatre, including the dominance of technology and the need to balance tradition with innovation. Throughout the conversation, Şerban's passion for theatre and its potential to communicate universal truths shines through.*

Key words: *Andrei Şerban, artistic expression, theatricality, Peter Brook, Romanian theatre.*

Mária Albert: We welcome in our circle someone who has had a very colorful and vast experience of Romanian and international theatre: Andrei Şerban. I don't think I have to present all the awards and the wonderful performances that he had directed. Just a few important points, maybe this: in the middle of the 1960s, when Romanian theatre was probably at the most flourishing period, as a young director, he was experimenting with various ways of expression, and through his creations in

¹ The talk was an online public event part of the International Conference Celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the Doctoral School of UAT. Andrei Şerban's dialogue partner on behalf of the UAT was Mária Albert. Transcribed and edited by István Kovács J. Notes by Mária Albert.



Romanian theatres such as Teatrul Mic and Teatrul Tineretului Piatra Neamț, he got the attention of the international theatre scene.

Namely, one of the most important representatives of experimental theatre, Ellen Stewart of the *La Mama* in New York, and, later on, of Peter Brook, cooperated with him, and he took the fame of Romanian theatre abroad. He then brought back to Romania all that experience to share it with the Romanians, spectators, and the theatre creators. Consequently, he also became one of the well-known names of European theatre, not just of the American theatre, but of European theatres, directing not just theatre, but also opera in various capitals of Europe.

I would like to start our conversation with your experiences as a spectator, as a member of the audience. In your autobiography, we can read that theatre was a means for you to get away from what was happening in real life, and at a very early age, you not just enjoyed theatre, but also started to do it at a very young age. What was so fascinating about that? What was a rewarding experience of your early spectatorship?

Andrei Șerban: As you said, from an early age, I was trying to express my emotions through marionettes and puppets. Many children do that, but somehow for me, it became an obsession. Because life in those years of growing up under heavy Stalinist influences was very grey, and Romania was very gray, and the only places where we could find refuge were in the church or going to the theatre.

Both were opening different realities: the reality of another world that is not only this world, which is not the only important one; there is always another world, another life. And it puzzled me that we are so little in touch with the other life, the other world that is in us all the time and we are indifferent, and we don't care about it. We only care about this life, this world, this reality. And in fact, what is there, but we don't see it is the mystery, is the other life. We have another life.

I feel that going to the theatre means opening up the curtain. I mean, Brecht and the modern theatre killed the idea of the curtain. We don't have curtains anymore in the theatre, and I regret that very much, because as a child, when the curtain was down, I was, always—before the show started—asking my parents: what is behind the curtain? What's that on the other side of the curtain? And when the curtain opened like the wall, the other wall, the mystery was revealed. And somehow in that grey life of the streets of Bucharest, where everything was grey and fearful, and there was no sense of any joy at all, the joy in the child, that I was, the creative side in the child, that I was, as we all were, is something that I remember until today. So, until today, I have that feeling that the real place of creativity is inside oneself, in relation to what the theatre can offer.



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Then I went to the theatre, to Bulandra Theatre, where I saw all the plays of Ciulei.² He was the author of what your conference is about: theatricality. So, the new theatricality is coming out of a dreadful regime of social realism, which was the 1950s. In the beginning of the '60s, Liviu Ciulei³ was the first one to offer productions that were filled with the force, the force of theatricality, to go away from life as it was on the streets, the terrible, dreadful, sad reality of communism, and to explode into another universe.

The production of *As You Like It* by Shakespeare, directed by Ciulei, is something that I'd seen maybe 10-20 times. I'm always referring to *As You Like It* because it was, maybe from everything I've seen in the Romanian theatre, the most explosive example of what it means to have imagination in every single gesture of every single actor, of every single change of scenery. So suddenly, the muscles of my imagination were getting strong, just as you go to the gym, but not for the body, but for the imagination. The imagination got exercised, and that was extraordinary.

Now, after Ciulei, I would mention also Lucian Pintilie,⁴ who had a more fantastic imagination, which was going towards the dream, but at the same time towards the kind of reality that was seen almost with a kind of grotesque, sarcastic view. Because he was out of all the directors of the time, the most courageous in terms of being in touch with the political situation, and kind of like attacking with courage what was going on in the country politically.

The third one was David Esrig.⁵ Esrig did these productions like *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Nephew of Rameau*, which were brilliant, they were really very good, in terms of giving courage to the young generation. And I was a student at the time. It was saying: young people, you must have courage; you must try things that you don't know. Try to take risks. Try to do differently than the tradition. Go away from the tradition, and at the same time have respect for tradition, so both free yourself from tradition and still have respect. That prepared me to go to the drama school, where I started as an actor. Then I became a director because I don't think I was very successful as an actor.

² The Bulandra Theatre in Bucharest, Romania was founded in 1947 as Teatrul Municipal; its first director was Lucia Sturdza Bulandra, one of the leading Romanian stage actresses of her generation. Liviu Ciulei was director between 1963 and 1972.

³ Liviu Ciulei (1923–2011) was a Romanian theatre and film director, film writer, actor, architect, educator, costume and set designer. He is considered one of the most innovative theatre creators of his time.

⁴ Lucian Pintilie (1933–2018) was a Romanian theatre, film and opera director as well as screenwriter. His career in theatre, opera, film and television has gained him international recognition.

⁵ David Esrig (1935–) Romanian theatre director and educator. Founder of Athanor Academy of Performin Arts.



I went to the class of Radu Penciulescu⁶ and Mihai Dimiu,⁷ and they were extraordinary teachers. I was very lucky to have the best because both of them were so carefully attentive to each one of us, each one of the students. There were only 6-7 students in the class. It wasn't like today, where students are much more numerous, and it's somehow more difficult for the teacher to give all care and attention to one student individually. But Penciulescu would just do that, and so did Dimiu.

Therefore, by the time when I left for America—I was 26—invited by, as you mentioned, La MaMa Theatre to work on my first production in New York, I was very equipped. I owned the equipment I needed because I had the very good school of the Romanian theatre, which is unfortunately no longer as good today, but then it was really the best. One could learn both, the rigorous Stanislavsky system, and Meyerhold, who was almost like Picasso in painting, the whole set was abstract and formalistic and ritualistic, and somehow very courageous in trying to go into the unconscious, the unknown. Stanislavsky was much closer to reality, to the life as we live it, inside us, so they're both equally important.

For me, discovering America was discovering the world of democracy, of freedom, of courage, of risk-taking, of lack of censorship. But if I hadn't had a very good preparation when I left Romania, I would have never been able to work in America. Because it was a place where one needed both: imagination and technique. By technique I mean a very strong sense of professionalism, a very strong sense of learning. Those things are very concrete, it's like playing the piano. You cannot play the piano unless you exercise, exercise, exercise. You cannot play melody unless you exercise a lot. Melody comes much later. It had been the same with me: I could not become a real director before I did a lot of exercise, a lot of practice. To finish this long answer to your question, it has to be practice on one side and freedom on the other side. Discipline and improvisation. Two words which are going against each other, and they complement each other.

Mária Albert: Speaking about complementary things, or things which go against each other but work together, the general perception in this process of Romanian theatricality⁸ is that Ciulei and David Esrig were very strongly into this new form of expression, whereas Radu Penciulescu, your mentor and teacher, was a bit more traditional. Is this true? What is your perception? Was he really working more with the means of expression of realism?

⁶ Radu Penciulescu (1930–2019) Famous Romanian theatre director and educator. He emigrated to Sweden.

⁷ Mihai Dimiu (1932–) Romanian director, actor and educator.

⁸ Re-theatricalization see Runcan, Miruna, 2003.



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Andrei Șerban: No, Penciulescu, as a director, was maybe not as eccentric, not as shocking as, let's say, Pintilie. Pintilie was very shocking. Everything Pintilie did was a real shock and was really an awakening. We went to the theatre to be awakened, to be awake, to be interested, to be touched every second. Penciulescu was calmer as an artist. But as a professor, he was extremely useful in telling us to think. You had to think before doing anything. Think about the intention. Why do you want to do theatre? Why do you want to be an actor? Why do you want to be a director? And that was very important. So, he developed our critical mind. In that way, he was really an avant-gardist.

Mária Albert: You were speaking about tradition and innovation, and very many of your directions are of classical texts, and even your first student performance the Caragiale's *Năpasta*⁹ was presented in your own vision. But there is another text, Marin Sorescu's *Iona*,¹⁰ that you chose and directed, and I would like you to tell us a few words about why you choose that text. Because when we speak about the means of self-expression, the new dramatic text or the choice of the dramatic text is also important.

Andrei Șerban: You know, it was a very special situation because Marin Sorescu just wrote the play, and I was the first one to do the play. *Iona* has been done many-many times since, but that was the world premiere. I was working with George Constantin,¹¹ one of the best actors in Romanian theatre in the last part of the 20th century. The whole story of *Iona* was of this fisherman finding himself inside the belly of this great whale. He's trying to cut himself out with the knife and when he gets out of the first fish, he realizes he's inside the prison of an even bigger fish. Slowly, slowly, he goes and cuts that fish too, hoping to free himself for good. Then, at the end, he thinks that he's free because he no longer sees any limitation. He believes he can see the sky and the stars. He feels free, but there is no sense of oxygen, or the wind, or the breeze of the sea. So, he's wondering, "Where am I? Because I think I'm outside." Just to realize the big joke, kind of a bitter joke, that he's inside the biggest fish that ever lived. What he thinks to be freedom is the biggest

⁹ *Năpasta (Scourge)* tragedy written by I. L. Caragiale (1852–1912), playwright, short story writer, poet, theatre manager, political commentator and journalist. First published in 1890, see Caragiale, 1890.

¹⁰ Marin Sorescu (1936–1996) was a Romanian poet, playwright, and novelist. *Iona (Jonah)*, the play written by Marin Sorescu and first published in 1968 is widely considered a true masterpiece. It is based on the biblical myth of the prophet *Jonah*. Andrei Șerban directed it at Teatrul Mic, Bucharest in 1969.

¹¹ George Constantin (1933–1994) was a Romanian actor. He appeared in more than fifty films and numerous theatre performances from 1960 to 1994.



prison. The conclusion of the play, which is very, very true even to us today, is that none of us can find freedom outside.

You may go to any society, you may live in Romania or in America—I live in both, because I have both American and Romanian citizenship by now, after being in America for half a century—but I must tell you, this freedom does not exist completely on either of those continents. Because even America, with what’s happening today, is far from being a free country. It’s a country that is divided politically, divided by a lot of hate, a lot of frustration, and there is even a danger of a civil war. In art also there is censorship. So, when I left Romania many years back, when I was a young man, and I went to America and I thought, “I’m going to find freedom to run away from communism”, that was freedom. That was really freedom because I met The Beatles, I met The Rolling Stones, I met downtown New York, the village, I was smoking marijuana. Everything was wonderful at that time, but then, today things have changed.

I’m saying this, thinking of the image of Jonah, he’s up in the air only to realize that, in fact, the freedom that exists is the biggest prison in the world. And to see that, at the very end of the play, as disappointed as he is, he sees that the road is in the opposite direction, it is inward. Inside. Only inside one can find freedom, inside oneself, inside one’s own soul, inside one’s own heart. Not outside. Outside is never freedom, outside we’re always in conflict with society. Doesn’t matter where, there’s always a problem.

That play to me, it was like a prelude to what my life will be for the rest of my life. I didn’t know that, but that’s how I lived my life from that play onwards because I had to leave Romania in the moment when the play was censored. Radu Penciulescu was the director of the Teatru Mic when he invited me to direct at that theatre. I was still a student in the school, I was still 23 when I directed that play, and it was an enormous success, but the censorship stopped the play. After three performances, it was cancelled. Penciulescu decided to leave Teatrul Mic, and then he left Romania as well, and I also left Romania for America, because of that play. In a way it was a very painful thing for us, but it was also the reason why we went to the West, and we had an extraordinary experience in another part of the world.

Mária Albert: It was a world beyond another curtain. The Iron Curtain at that time. You began this conversation with this image of a curtain that reveals another world behind it and helps us go inside. Maybe that’s what the theatre does to us, people. An American critic, Mike Steele (Modreanu, 2020), writing about famous Romanian directors like Liviu Ciulei, Pintilie, and yourself, discovered in these three phases, that he calls them, at ten years’ distance—because that’s how far you are from each other—Ciulei, Pintilie, and Șerban, that theatre was a social force, and there was something typically Romanian about it. What do you think about the social force of theatre and how theatre is an important part of society?



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Andrei Şerban: If we speak of the theatre as it is in the present moment, right now, because we can only speak in terms of the concrete that is practical, the right now, I would not say that theatre is a social force anywhere. The theatre is not doing very well right now. The theatre in Romania and not only here, is at the margin of society, it is not in the center. Don't you see that the Ministry of Culture receives a ridiculous budget for culture? Isn't that telling us enough what the politicians think what theatre deserves right now? We also live in a world right now of extraordinary turmoil, like there's such confusion everywhere, in terms of what is the right guidance that we want to receive.

I think, all of us, especially the young, are much more in search of what has meaning. If they go to the theatre and they see plays that are done in a way that doesn't interest them at all, and that happens a lot, then they would go to another direction, and that is true for even older generations. If you go to the theatre, and if you don't find something that you are hungry for, that you are thirsty to receive for your life, then you are kind of lost.

I want to say something here at this moment about the real great mentor in my life. Because Penciulescu was my mentor when I was young, in the school, but my mentor in life, the one that was my guide in life, was Peter Brook. After I worked with Peter Brook for the first time, I stayed in touch with him until he died a few months ago at the age of 97. This man, who was the greatest director of Shakespeare of the 20th century, was a man who really helped me understand something that was impossible to understand, unless you met somebody like him. He was always talking about that the purpose of theatre must be to increase the understanding of life. We go to the theatre in order to understand our life better. Now, this is a very, very deep wish. Because if it increases understanding, consequently it increases also the participation in the intensity of life, which means we go back to life from theatre and we live life with more intensity, with more passion.

We know life is not easy for anybody, at any age. It is difficult, it is painful, it is confusing. It is without any kind of clarity: "What's going to happen in my life, and why?" But at the same time, life can be lived with great intensity. Usually, if I'm depressed, if I'm feeling low, if I'm feeling like things are not working out for me, I go through a day and my day is flat. I'm flat. I'm grey. I'm like the grey color of communism. That's how my soul is. I feel grey today, and when I feel a day to be grey, what do I miss? I miss living life with intensity. Every day should be lived with intensity, with joy, even pain should be lived with joy, because we don't know when we're going to die. None of us. We don't know when death is coming. So, I go to the theatre, and I'm injected with energy, with understanding about my life, and I go out to life, and I live with more passion. That's how it should be.

That's what Peter Brook told me, and that's exactly what I'm trying to do when I work in the theatre. As if I saw the moments of life through a microscope. It's a microscope that shows me how I should live my life. But the social aspect that you



mentioned these critics said, I don't see it that way. I disagree because I don't think that theatre makes us all feel different socially. I think it makes me the individual, just me, feel different. So, if art or theatre can make each one of you have a feeling that is concretely nourishing you, then that's all it can do. You personally should feel that. If we asked now every single person who was listening to me speak, everybody would have a different idea. There wouldn't be two people with the same idea. Everybody feels, thinks and acts differently, so we cannot reach to a mass of people. The social aspect is a mass of people. I don't believe in that. I believe in the individual. Every single one of us should try to work for one's inner journey. As I was saying before, inner freedom can be obtained. Outer freedom, never.

Măria Albert: I'm so happy that you mentioned Peter Brook because the time of re-theatricalization in Romania, at least in the beginning, was a time of opening, when foreign companies would come to Bucharest, and artists from Romania could go to international festivals, like you went to Zagreb for instance, and then Ellen Stewart came to Romania (Șerban, 2006). So, tell me a little bit about those times and the influences that you experienced from visiting performances in Bucharest. And about your experiences at a very young age, going abroad with your performances.

Andrei Șerban: You see, I'm going to answer a little bit indirectly because to me, what I learned at that age, and what I learned seeing other directors work and other people work, all wonderful artists here or even abroad and even in America and all over, is that instead of doing something ordinary, banal, trivial, one always has to ask the group, if we work with a group, how we can work all together, so the best of us can be achieved, the very best.

That was so important at that age, and I feel now the lack of the sense of quality. To reach quality is no longer fashionable. Right now, nobody speaks about quality. We all speak about political theatre, social theatre, self-expression, about how to express oneself. But nobody speaks about the fact that this is the domain of art, theatre is the domain of art and as art, one has to reach high quality, the way a ballet dancer does, a pianist, and all sorts of musicians. As a poet does, so does an actor, it's the same. I feel that there should be this collective challenge, when I want to do the best I can do, and for that I find you, and I find a whole group of you, who we can reach that best with.

In my time, at that age, the word masterpiece (*capodoperă* in Romanian), it was an important word for us, in the sense that we were asking how we can make masterpieces. How can we make things that really teach excellence as art? Nobody speaks about that anymore. I can understand why. It is because masterpieces can become very easily false statues. False statues meaning, that you go and take a masterpiece and you try to put it on a pedestal, like a statue, and then that becomes dead. It dies. So, how can you keep that alive? Something is always alive in this



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quality, what is called theatre. Theatre lives, you know. The opposite of this is very much what's happening now, which is, that there is no meaning. No meaning. You see a production, you see a performance, and it doesn't mean anything. I come out the way I went in, I'm coming out just as confused, as confused I was going in. Because my life is confusing, so I go to the theatre trying to find clarity or to find understanding, and then I get nothing. That happens so many times. In my youth that was different. We were all reaching for the best in ourselves. Can you see the difference?

Mária Albert: Yes, I think I understand what you mean. That there was very strict discipline. Is this what you mean, in your work, that everybody was trying to reach perfection?

Andrei Şerban: No, I mean, that sounds like the army. You're not in the army. No, no. It was in a sense of what my responsibility as an artist was, towards myself. To reach the best in myself and to work hard to get there, to be as good as possible in order to reach quality, and also to find a group of people that are looking for the same.

There is another thing that I want to say. Today at universities we talk a lot about theatre research. It's a big word now. But how to do theatre research? It is done by the academicians, the professors, the PhD students, the doctoral students and also even by the students in drama school and so on. I worked with Peter Brook for one year, concentrating entirely on one subject. Which was the study of the voice.

Mária Albert: Yes, *Orghast*.¹²

Andrei Şerban: That was one year until we got to do *Orghast*. It was a study about the possibilities of the vocal resonances in the voice, and how the voice communicates beyond language, beyond geography. To communicate in a universal language, as theatre is universal and is accepted anywhere on the globe. So, you can take a plane and go to Africa, and it speaks the same way to an African audience as to a Romanian audience. That means, theatre is universal, it goes beyond borders. That extraordinary question we studied for a year, without finding a final result, but that was theatre research.

Peter Brook kept telling me all the time, and I'm telling this to you – some of you are academicians now and you are part of the university – be careful about theory, about theoretical response. There is no such thing. There is nothing to be conducted in

¹² *Orghast* was an experimental play based on the myth of Prometheus, written by Peter Brook and the poet Ted Hughes, and performed in 1971 at the Festival of Arts of Shiraz-Persepolis, which was held annually from 1967 to 1977. Andrei Şerban participated in the project. See Smith, 1972.



theory. You see smart academicians or smart professors and smart students, who are very intelligent, sitting here around at the table and writing articles about theatre research and experiments. That's not going to work because they don't know what it means to be practical. The practical aspect is the fact, that research means creativity. Research means to be in the heat of doing it. You have to do it first. Research is an event, a living event.

The following happened when we were beginning with Peter Brook. We were many nationalities, as I was coming from America, but still I was Romanian, then there were other people coming from South America, there were African actors and Japanese actors and there were actors coming from Australia. It was a mixture of actors and directors and stage designers with different cultures, different nationalities, different sources and we hardly knew each other. We had nothing in common at the beginning, absolutely nothing, we were totally different. We couldn't even speak the same language. And suddenly we found ourselves, in the first moment of working with Brook, in front of a group of children. He asked us to perform for children. Children from a school, ten-twelve years old, came to our place, where we were working in Paris, to receive a performance from us. It was not prepared. We didn't prepare anything. So, what do we do, how to do, how to present ourselves in front of children? They had very hungry, thirsty faces, these children, they wanted something from us. They were told by the teachers that they'd go to see a group of international actors doing something, but we didn't know what we were going to do. What do you do? These faces of children, I remember, expecting something from us. They were curious. They're ready to give their attention to us much more than a grown-up audience. They were very pure, very needy. They needed something. What did they want? They expected the story from us, to tell them a story. Maybe they expected an emotion from us. The expected entertainment, to be entertained by us. What did they want from the theatre? These children, who they didn't even know what theatre was. They wanted something, some big energy, that we would do something with big energy... they didn't know, but we didn't know either, what to do. So, we're just looking at them asking what they want. Maybe a provocation to their mind, because although they were twelve years old, you know, their mind was very smart. Should we relate to their mind? Should we relate to their body? Should we relate to their emotion? Which part should we relate to? We did not know. We did not know each other, we could not speak the same language, and we were there responsible to do... what? So, this to me was such an opening question of what theatre was.

Mária Albert: You probably always have to reinvent whenever you meet an audience.

Andrei Şerban: Exactly. What is to be communicated through the theatre? And being not prepared, I must tell you that the result was a disaster, a total disaster. What happened? We had some sticks, some bamboo sticks. We were trying to create a kind



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of war-like situation, inventing a war, but we just didn't know what to do, because we didn't speak, so we improvised. The children, when they saw these bamboo sticks, they got the point: "Uh, here we are!" They jumped to us. They took the bamboo sticks, and they started beating us up. They started to beat us, like "you dumb actors, you don't know what you're doing!" And they really meant to hurt us. I mean, the children had become like cruel beasts, like cruel little beasts, you know.

Mária Albert: The best audience ever.

Andrei Şerban: But it hurt. What do you mean, the best audience? The best of the worst! I mean, some people were bleeding. They were not joking. They were coming for us, because the actors didn't give them anything, they were punishing the actors, and they were right because we deserved to be punished. We deserved it because we didn't know what to do. And that was it.

Mária Albert: Because you were not ready. Do you agree with what Hamlet says: readiness is all, you have to be ready? That you have to be there for the audience. You have to be prepared.

Andrei Şerban: We learned that line from Hamlet after the show. We wondered, how come Hamlet knew readiness is all? We didn't know. We learned that. So, what happened was that after that, we started to learn what it means to prepare. That's what I was talking about at the beginning of this. The preparation, the discipline, the study, the technique is important and then throw it all that out and improvise. Be free, but be free the way a great pianist is free to improvise. A great jazz musician is free because he knows, he has his lesson learned, and he knows how to play. A dancer who knows how to dance can be free to do anything.

But much of the young generation of today doesn't know the technique. They're not made aware of how important the technique is. For example, you cannot play abstract music unless you learn Bach and Mozart. You cannot do abstract music. That's the same thing. Unless you learn, unless you do classical work, unless you learn Shakespeare and Chekhov, you cannot do abstract theatre or modern theatre. You have to start with the fundamentals.

So, I want to say that improvisation is the big word, many people love to improvise today. "Say, well, what do you do? I'll improvise the show. OK, fine." But starting from zero, it's a very poor, very primitive way, if you compare it with the great masterpieces of the past. Because considering the known creation, the big art of the past, it is naive to believe that a group of actors improvising can suddenly reach to the greatness of the Sphinx. We cannot reach to the Sphinx with improvisation. We reach to the Sphinx, by which I mean to the mystery, by a deep investigation and deep learning and deep study and deep questioning.



Slowly-slowly these collective creations (*creațiuni colective* in Romanian) are spread all over Romania and over everywhere. It's a good thing and I must say, they have their own charm, their own fascination. But they never touch. They never touch the deep feeling of the human experience of what it means to be human. They remain on the surface. Great work of art, let's take Michelangelo's, let's take Van Gogh's, these great works of art when you see them after centuries, they reach us, they touch us greatly. The same is true for theatre.

Combining deep tradition with improvisation and avant-garde of today will make a good mix, of what theatre can do. I think, theatre can speak today, in the present moment, about our life, using the whole arsenal of human experience. That's why if an actor is a rich human being, if an actor has a lot of questions inside oneself, if an actor wants to go on stage to express on stage things that he or she can't express in their own life, that he or she cannot speak about with their wife, husband, brother, sister, mother, father, cannot speak intimately about what's going on inside oneself, then he can speak on the stage. On the stage, you can be more free. That character is the closest person in your life. I believe in that.

But to get to that level of sincerity, and to that level of really exposing yourself in your most intimate way with sincerity, you have to prepare yourself. You have to learn to have courage. You have to learn that every second counts, every second matters, and when you are on the stage, you have to know that this might be the only chance, so you have to speak truly about what's going on inside you through the characters. Because you don't know if you'll have another chance tomorrow. You don't know if tomorrow theatre will disappear, because it might, eaten up by technology, and by the video and installations and all that, that are no longer theatre in the way as Shakespeare said: theatre is two boards and the passion. That is no longer, so you don't know, when you are on a stage, if you'll have another chance to say something that is true about yourself and to communicate that truth via the character you play.

Măria Albert: Thank you very much for being here with us, in this present moment.

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