

## Wall of Fame – HamletScenen at The Court Theatre

Address at the opening reception

Thursday, June 26, 2014

Peter Christensen Teilmann

**A warm welcome to you all at the opening of  
the exhibition Wall of Fame – HamletScenen at The Court Theatre**

My name is Peter Christensen Teilmann. It is a pleasure to welcome you all to this little photo exhibition which represents a wide range of the many internationally renowned actors which over the recent four to five generations have been involved in Shakespeare productions at HamletScenen at Kronborg Castle in Elsinore.

Danish theatre has an international outlook. Foreign drama, the classics and brand new drama, is performed on stages all over the country. Danish actors perform intermittently on stages abroad and appear increasingly in foreign movies. In Denmark you find a handful of internationally influenced theatre groups as for example The Odin Theatre in Holstebro and HamletScenen in Elsinore

Shakespeare and Hamlet have been performed at Kronborg since 1816, when the bicentenary of the death of the dramatist was celebrated. However, it was not until 1937 that Shakespeare at Kronborg became a recurring event. In 1937 Laurence Olivier portrayed Hamlet and Vivien Leigh was Ophelia.

**PHOTOMONTAGE 1**

The pictures have been taken from the archives of The Theatre Museum at The Court Theatre. We have much other good stuff in our archives and at present we are in the process of finding resources with which to retrieve it and put it into play in our exhibitions.

**FOTOMONTAGE 2** for example has the international star Sarah Bernhardt painted by P.S. Krøyer as the story goes – and painted on a palette, which also served as an oversized cigarette case containing the lady's own merchandise, i.e. her own initialled cigarettes.

It was Tietgen who while Sarah Bernhardt was in Copenhagen performing at The Royal Theatre who took her on a cruise to Elsinore in order to show her what one was

beginning to think of as Hamlet's grave. On the palette as in real life she was surrounded only by men.

We also have pictures with quite a different context – namely **FOTOMONTAGE 3: Staatliches Schauspielhaus, 1938.**

In 1938 the National Open Air theatre arranged for German actor Gustav Gründgens to be in charge of the summer season at Kronborg. This production was a modern one compared to earlier productions. Gustaf **Gründgens**, who was known for his Nazi sympathies portrayed Hamlet.

Among many prominent guests at the Festival was German Reichsmarschall Herman Göring, who was a close friend of Gustaf Gründgens. His arrival at Elsinore caused much commotion, but in a hurry a reception committee was formed. **Herman Göring** can be seen in the white suit in the front row.

**So quite a bit of cultural history is hidden in the theatre records. Cultural history is also found in the incredibly expressive portraits from HamletScenen seen in the exhibition.** Most of the photographs have been taken by **Arne Magnussen** – we could call him court photographer to HamletScenen.

But the exhibition is exclusively made up of pictures from HamletScenen. It is called Wall of Fame – and it was a title which I almost regretted for a moment when yesterday morning in my local fitness centre I found the same title on the notice board with a list of the local heroes. On the other hand then it only goes to show that there is a public interest in making images which has probably changed over time, but which is still alive and kicking.

With Wall of Fame – HamletScenen at The Court Theatre yet a new collaboration with one of Denmark's many and widely different – living theatre groups, HamletScenen at Kronborg Castle. The collaboration between the two institutions will be widened coming up to the celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare at Kronborg Castle in 2016.

And now it would be appropriate to call upon Lars Roman Engel, artistic director of HamletScenen to speak.