

Kari from Finland:

Miss Stefa the Sekretariat called again and asked if I would come down to the theatre to translate to an English speaking Finnish director. The Polish Cultural Minister had sent Kari here ( Kari is on a two month grant studying the theatre in Poland- he travels all around the country) to watch Grotowski's work. Grotowski is his own boss it would seem, for he is out of town- in France. No plays to see for Kari. He held on hoping to see an exercise session and finally Cynkuntis was called and since he is in charge allowed Kari to sit in on one session. I had lunch with Kari ( my new schedule to eat anytime and everytime I can) and he has been everywhere in Europe. He has seen almost all the important theatres. He runs his own in a small ( 50,000) town. He said the government pays half the fees the theatre accumulates. So in order to make half of the money and make the theatre go he has to " do poor theatre"..He means commercial. He struck me as being intelligent and knowledgeable about the theatre. He said I must see DRACHE in East Berlin directed by Brecht's friend Beno Besson. He also said the Berliner Ensemble is a museum- that Helen Weigel will allow no works but Brecht and this is limiting a fine company. But they play Brecht brilliantly, yet he said if there would have to be a choice between Berliner Ensemble and DRACHE, I should choose the later! Kari is balding, married ( his wife is a scene designer in his theatre- they have a three year old daughter) and works on a play a short time= only six weeks!! Rehearsals are daily from 10 in the morning until 2 and then again from six in the evening until ten at night----8 hours daily---Except when they play 4 nights a week. Then the morning rehearsals only. The theatre also tours in nearby smaller towns. He told me of Ingmar Bergmans smashing the nose of a critic he didn't like: " It was a scandal for two weeks." Kari will be allowed to exercise with the group for a couple of sessions.