

Queen Margaret University confers honorary degrees at Usher Hall ceremony



Former BBC international affairs journalist, Kate Adie, joined influential theatre director, Eugenio Barba at the ceremony where they both received an honorary degree from Queen Margaret University, yesterday at the Usher Hall.



Katie Adie was awarded an honorary doctorate in recognition of her contribution to news reporting and our understanding of world events. The former BBC international affairs journalist was joined by Eugenio Barba, a theatre practitioner who has significantly influenced practice and critical thinking within the art form. Eugenio is director of Odin Teatret, a theatre company which he founded in 1964, and founder of the International School of Theatre Anthropology, both of which are based in Denmark. Both honorary graduates were acknowledged for the relevance of their work to society at large, reflecting the university's own commitment to enhancing lives in the communities it serves.

The University was delighted to award **Kate Adie**, one of the UK highest profile journalists, with a Degree of Doctors of Letters at the graduation ceremony held in Edinburgh's Usher Hall. Dressed in flak jacket, helmet and holding a microphone whilst crouching on front-lines, Kate Adie became an iconic figure associated with breaking news from some of the world's most dangerous conflict zones. She is particularly well known for her reporting of significant international events including the student uprising in China when she received a gun-shot wound to her elbow whilst reporting events in Tiananmen Square. She has also reported on turbulence and conflicts across the world such as in Northern Ireland, the Lockerbie bombing in 1988, the first Gulf War, the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the 1997 uprising in Albania and the civil war in Sierra Leone in 2000.

Kate hung up her flak jacket and helmet in 2003 to become a freelance journalist. Since then she has written five books, been a regular presenter on BBC Radio 4's 'From Our Own Correspondent', and won numerous awards including three Royal Television Society awards, the Richard

Dimbleby Award from BAFTA in 1990, the Broadcasting Press Guild's Award for Outstanding Contribution to Broadcasting, and an OBE in 1993.

As a leader in education for allied health professionals and the only provider of audiology education in Scotland, Queen Margaret University (QMU) was particularly keen to honour Kate given her work with the charity Hearing Link. Kate is a patron of Hearing Link which supports people with hearing impairment and deafness.

The University, which has areas of expertise in creativity and culture, also bestowed a Degree of Doctor of Letters on **Eugenio Barba**, an influential theatre practitioner, researcher and theorist who has enjoyed a 50 year career in the arts. Eugenio Barba has directed 76 productions, mostly with his theatre company Odin Teatret. The honorary degree recognises his influence on how we see and understand theatre and on the way drama is taught in universities and colleges.

Born in Italy in 1936, but emigrating to Norway in 1954, Eugenio began his working life as a welder and a sailor, whilst studying for a degree in French, Norwegian Literature and History of Religions at Oslo University. He went to Poland to learn directing at the State Theatre School in Warsaw, but left one year later to work with Jerzy Grotowski, a leading contemporary experimental theatre director. Eugenio also spent time in India studying Kathakali, a dance-theatre art form, which uses hand gestures, expressions and rhythmic dancing instead of dialogue and which was unknown in the west at that time.

Since 1974, Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret have developed a unique style of working – one which trains actors who help communities discover their cultural voice, creating social interaction and breaking down barriers. Eugenio has also written over 20 books, contributes to academic publications and education, and has won numerous awards.

Professor Alan Gilloran, Deputy Principal of Queen Margaret University, presented the orations for both Eugenio Barba and Kate Adie. He said: "Among contemporary artists who have made a mark on the history of theatre, Eugenio Barba is the only one who has worked in such innovative ways across all fields of theatre, ranging from artistic creation to theoretical reflection, and to the use of theatre in a social context as a trans-cultural tool to activate relations between different social and ethnic groups. Eugenio Barba's influence reaches across all our performing arts programmes, and for that reason, all of our graduating drama and performance students and graduates owe a debt of gratitude to him."

Professor Gilloran continued: "Kate Adie's inspirational and gutsy style of reporting has shed light on some of the world's most significant events and has touched the lives of millions of people, both in the UK

and around the globe. She also has expertise in areas of speech and communication which are aligned with the work carried out by Queen Margaret University's speech researchers – the impact of vocal quality, accent and non-verbal communication in conveying information in different contexts.”



The Principal of Queen Margaret University, Professor Petra Wend, paid tribute to both Kate Adie and Eugenio Barba. She concluded: “It is entirely appropriate that the University honours both these highly influential professionals – Kate Adie for her work with the media, across societies affected by conflict and in support of people with hearing loss, and Eugenio Barba for his ground-breaking development of contemporary theatre and his ability to create performance which unites communities. Both Kate’s and Eugenio’s achievements in their specialist areas reflect the relevance of the university’s work and its aim of serving communities and improving quality of life.”

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