

Preface

Our colleague and friend Mitsuya Mori, who celebrated his seventieth birthday on December 3, 2007, will retire at the end of the academic year in March 2008 from his professorship at Seijo University. The Department of Art Studies wishes to mark this occasion with a collection of essays in his honor to thank him for his outstanding contributions not only to the university but also to his field. As an inspiring teacher, Mori introduced theatre studies to generations of students at Seijo and nurtured hundreds of them as they explored how to interpret and write about theatre. As an energetic administrator, he served the university in a variety of capacities such as Chair of the Department of Art Studies and Director of the University Library; most notably, as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Literature from 1998 to 2000, he vigorously promoted institutional reform. As a serious scholar, Mori has been active in academic societies nationally and internationally. In Japan, he served as the president of the Japanese Society for Theatre Research from 1996 to 2006 and was instrumental to the development of theatre scholarship in this country; abroad, he played an important role in expanding the horizons of theatre studies as a member of the Executive Committee of the International Federation for Theatre Research. Furthermore, his election to the Norwegian Academy of Science in 1997 indicates how highly his contributions to his field are regarded internationally.

Mori's remarkable career is characterized by the fact that he is both a scholar and a stage director: what he researches and theorizes about as a teacher and scholar is put into practice in the plays he directs. The selected bibliography of Mori's publications appended to the end of this volume indicates the breadth and depth of Mori's research interests in the following three fields: theatre aesthetics, Henrik Ibsen and Scandinavian drama, and comparative theatre history, especially the processes of modernization in Japanese theatre. The list of his major stage productions (also in the bibliography) demonstrates that Ibsen lies at the heart of his creative work as well. Mori's coupling of comparative drama theory with his Ibsen research, for in-

stance, has resulted in innovative productions such as *Double Nora* (2005), a contemporary noh adaptation of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.

The essays in this volume address issues in comparative theatre and modern theatre history, both fields to which Mori is committed in his research, teaching, and directing. The authors represented in this volume, all personal friends of Mori, are leading theatre scholars affiliated with academic institutions around the world. I wish to express my appreciation to the contributors for their essays; taken together, they constitute a thought-provoking conversation on the nature and context of theatre studies. To reflect Mori's commitment to global theatre studies, the essays (listed in alphabetical order according to the authors' last names) are in different languages, though most are in English.

The editing of this collection would not have been possible without the help of my colleague Eske Tsugami and so I thank him for his generous support. Many thanks also go to Hiroyuki Naito and the Chuokoron Jigyō Shuppan. INC., for their expertise in the production of this publication, and to Hiroko Uchino, one of our former graduate students, for designing the cover for this volume.

When Mitsuya Mori retires, we will lose a valued and much admired colleague. Nonetheless, we are happy for him because retirement will liberate him from university responsibilities so he will be free to concentrate on his research and stage direction projects. Therefore, we celebrate the beginning of his new life with the publication of this Festschrift and wish him all the best for the future.

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