

LIFE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

DAME HELEN MIRREN: Well, lifetime achievement. Lifetime achievement sounds so grand. I suppose, you know, I am still alive. So, by that measure, I'm eligible.

But, honestly, any achievement that I have succeeded in is the result of my mantra, which is basically "be on time and don't be an ass."

Thank you, thank you, S-A-G so much for this. I hate to say the word "sag," at this age. It's always S-A-G for me.

I am simultaneously enormously proud, and, yet, I'm driven. I'm riven with the understanding that I absolutely do not deserve this, and there, there is the conflict that I believe you all understand. Insecurity versus ego. Hmm?

That cocktail that I believe most actors sip on in the evening as they contemplate the wonderful gift they receive the moment they've decided to become an actor.

So, anyway, I've been angsty about what to say tonight, and I waited for an inspiration and then it came. It came to me. To all those people with whom I have shared my professional life: The actors. I will talk about actors. Oh, my God. What a brilliant idea. So original. I mean, I like to think inside the box.

So, of course, of course, we know it takes a myriad of talented people to make a drama. In fact, four of them are sitting at my table. A writer, two directors, and an agent, and I thank them for their participation in my life, but now it is the actors I address.

From following my dream of following in the footsteps of [Eleonora Duse](#) through the inspiration of Anna Magnani and Monica Vitti, and on to Winslet, Riley, Bea Carter, Cuma (phonetic), Colon, Cole, and [Kirby](#) -- and you lot can work that out.

I joined our tribe of roads and vagabonds a long time ago, and it is you, you, actors that I want to thank for your wit and your humor, all the giggles, all the laughter. I've

laughed my whole life, honestly. Your perception, your emotional generosity, your great intelligence, and your incredible energy, and your hopeless dedication to our chosen profession.

You know, I get ready P'd off when I read or hear about actors being maligned as a group. It's so easy, isn't it? That lazy and false assumption of vanity when, in my experience, which by now is considerable, the opposite is true. We love and admire each others' work. Together, we laugh, we weep, we worry, we change clothes, we throw up, and we suffer diarrhea. Don't you? I mean, I do.

A few years ago, I had the fearsome and wonderful challenge of performing Phaedra at the ancient Greek theater at Epidaurus. It seats, like, 4,000 or something, and standing in that 2,000-year-old space I felt the ghosts of all of those ancient Greeks and vagabonds. I felt their fear, and I felt their sweat, their elation, and I felt at one with them: Actors.

I'm sorry, you are a magnificent tribe stretching across culture, history, and time. This is for the actors, thank you.