

ASSITEJ INFORMATION



Newsletter 37

September/October 2004

www.assitej.org

This Newsletter is also posted on <www.assitej.org>
All ASSITEJ centres are free to copy this guide at will

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

‡ The next Executive Committee Meeting will take place in Adelaide, Australia, March 6 - 12, 2005. If your centre wants to put an item on the agenda, please contact the General Secretariat.

‡ Macedonia was accepted as a full member and Botswana was accepted as a corresponding member on the last Executive Committee Meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, in September. ASSITEJ International now has 78 membership centres.

‡ The Catalogue of scripts is under way and will shortly be published on the website: <www.assitej.org>. Unfortunately only a few countries or centres have submitted information for the catalogue.

So far information have been submitted from Australia, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Russia, Sweden and United Kingdom.

As many centres not yet have submitted information you are kindly asked to do so. Please, contact the General Secretariat if you have any questions or if you need the fill-in-form.

‡ Information about the ASSITEJ Congress in Montréal, Canada, next September can be found on <www.montreal-2005.com>

‡ ASSITEJ-Archives - Your chance for posterity. The Archives of ASSITEJ International live from what they get from the various centers. The material to be sent should contain activities of the centers and of the theatres represented by the centers. It could be flyer, programmes, books, poster and photos.

It should be sent by post to:
ASSITEJ Archives
Schützenstrasse 12
D-60311 Frankfurt am Main
Germany

ASSITEJ International Project, June 2004:

Welcome to the EURO- PEAN UNION a network for children's and young people's theatre

The bringing together of people from the ten new member countries working in the field of theatre for children and young people had the following aims:

- ① To remember the roots of our cultural heritage in Europe.
- ① To point out the cultural identity of the European Community.
- ① To support Article 151 of the treaty of Amsterdam about the necessity of an European cultural policy.
- ① In respect of the forthcoming European constitution, where culture will be mentioned as one of the foundations for creating the future of Europe.
- ① To push the realization of article 31 laying down the Declaration of the Rights for children to take care of the participation of children in the arts.

The participants of the European conference during "Triangle", a festival celebrating theatre for children and young people in Constance, St. Gallen, Bregenz and Lindau at the Lake of Constance from the 10th to the 14th June 2004 will promote the following demands for the members of the European Union:

1. Theatre for children and young people must be part of the policy for culture, education and youth.
2. Theatre for children and young people must be supported by the municipalities, regional authorities and states, also by private foundations and primarily through the European Union.
3. Theatre for children and young people must ensure that every child of the population attends more than one performance per year.
4. Theatre for children and young people must be a part of the school curriculum in order to play a role in cultural, creative and aesthetic education.
5. Theatre for children and young people must be integrated in the projects of the foreign cultural policy of the members of the European Union to promote exchange of artists, plays and performances to further the quality of the theatre arts.

Stephan Rabl - Austria
Xenakis Kyriakides - Cyprus
Cathrine Beger - Cyprus
Katerina Cejkova - Czeck Republic
Katrin Nielsen - Estonia
Jutta M. Staerk - Germany
Eckhard Mittelstädt - Germany
Dr. Manfred Jahnke - Germany
Andrea Gronemeyer - Germany
Janos Novac - Hungaria
Baiba Cesniece-Valante - Latvia
Georg Biedermann- Liechtenstein
Violeta Podolskaite - Lithuania
Halina Machulska - Poland
Istok Valic - Slovenia
Mojca Kreft - Slovenia
Petra Fischer - Switzerland
Peter Rinderknecht - Switzerland
Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schneider -
 President of the International
 Association of Theatre for Children
 and Young People

Designation of "ASSITEJ International Project"

① Directors Seminar in connection with the Milk Tooth, The Fourth International Theatre Festival for Children and Young People, Zagreb, Croatia, October 19 - 23, 2004.

After Playwrights Forum held in Opatija last spring, Epicentre is organizing The First DIRECTOR'S SEMINAR! This Unique event will be held in the framework of MILK TOOTH - ASSITEJ International Festival. Seminar will be led by prominent European directors who will give their Master Classes on different themes under the topic "Storytelling and storytellers".

More information:

ASSITEJ Croatia: <assitej@zg.htnet.hr>
 Ivica Simic: <isimic@inet.hr>

Designation of "ASSITEJ International Festival"

① Milk Tooth, The Fourth International Theatre Festival for Children and Young People, Zagreb, Croatia, October 19 - 23, 2004.

More information:

ASSITEJ Croatia: <assitej@zg.htnet.hr>
 Ivica Simic: <isimic@inet.hr>

① Festival Africain de Théâtre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse, Yaoundé, Cameroun, November 9th - 14th, 2004.

More information:

Etoundi Zeyang,
 E-mail: theatrechoco@comic.com
 Web-site: www.multimania.com/fatej

See also <www.assitej.org> for more information.



IN MEMORIAM

ZVJEZDANA LADIKA (Croatia) was born in Karlovac in 1922, and graduated at the University of Zagreb.

After graduation, she spent a short while teaching at a secondary school, but dropped the job in order to study direction at the Film Studio, which she completed in 1950. In addition to that, she graduated in staging from the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb.

After her second graduation she found employment at the Zagreb Theatre for Young People as both a director and theatrical educator.

In the year 1956 she went on a study tour to Prague, and in 1960 to France where theatre for children developed as theatrical creativity of children and young people.

Zvezdana Ladika published a large number of writings on children's dramatic creativity - in her own book *The Child and the Dramatic Art*, and as a co-author of the books *Theatrical Plays; The child and Creativity; I'm Bored, I Don't Know What to Do*. She published her writings in professional periodicals and publications in Croatia and abroad.

She was a long-standing member of the ASSITEJ Executive Committee, where she left an indelible imprint through her activity and influenced the development of the world's theatre for children and young people, which brought her honorary membership in the ASSITEJ International.

Zvezdana Ladika received numerous rewards for her artistic work and she was an Honorary Member of ASSITEJ International.

She died on 17th August 2004, aged 82.

TISA CHIFUNYISE (Zimbabwe) passed away on Monday 19th July 2004.

It was a totally unexpected and devastating shock for all. She had contracted what seemed like malaria in Zambia and continued to suffer from various complications.

All those who knew the beloved, ever-cheerful, ever-willing, ever-compassionate and ever-active Tisa will mourn with us her passing and sympathise deeply with her husband, Steve, her son, David, and her daughters, Chipu and Martha. Not to mention all her family in Zambia, her many vazukuru (grand-children) to whom she was just Gogo.

Tisa will be remembered by many in many different lands, many different cities and above all villages, where her dedicated life inspired and assisted so many. She was, among so many other things, the first Programme Officer of the Zimbabwe Association of Theatre for Children and Young People - ZATCYP (ASSITEJ/IATA). She was a vice-president of ASSITEJ International. Also founder of the women's theatre group, Chembira. She was working for Save the Children (UK) at her death.

LOWELL SWORTZELL (USA) received his BA in 1952 and M.A. in 1954, from The George Washington University in Washington, DC, and his Ph.D. in 1963 from New York University.

In 1966, he established the Program in Educational Theatre at NYU with his wife, Nancy, and helped it become a top-rated center for the training of scholars, administrators, performers, and designers committed to advancing theater as an educational art form. He remained on the faculty at NYU until his death in 2004, and was one of the school's most beloved faculty members.

Author of seven books and twenty plays, he was the recipient of the New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year Award for *All the World's a Stage: Modern Plays for Young People*; the Choice Award; and two Distinguished Book of the Year Awards from the American Alliance for Theatre and Education. A Fulbright Scholar, he was inducted into the College of Fellows of the American Theatre at the Kennedy Center in 1993. He was the Founder and Artistic Director of the New Plays for Young Audiences series, held every summer at the Provincetown Playhouse.

ZINOVY KOROGODSKY (Russia), an outstanding theater figure who passionately dedicated all his time and efforts to the Youth and Children Theater, passed away in May 2004.

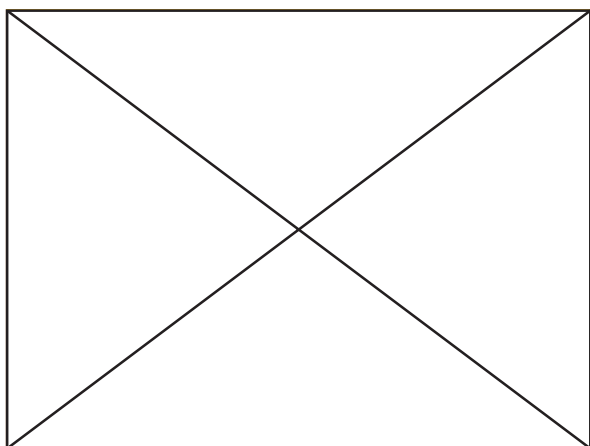
Being a director of St.Petersburg TSUZ he staged more than 100 plays many of which became classics of the Russian theater; Korogodsky continued to develop original principles Brjanzew and promoted these ideas further thus creating a currently widely accepted framework of theater house.

Korogodsky is known not only as a theatre director but also as founder of the field of theatre pedagogy that is about building close relationships between theatre and spectators of different ages.

Korogodsky as it is written in the just published in Germany book "Kinder- und Jugendtheater in Russland" has showed us the way to the future of Children's and Young People's Theatre.



To find out about the 2005
World ASSITEJ Congress:
Go to: <www.montreal-2005.com>



Peter Rinderknecht, Hagit Rehavi Nikolayevski and Wolfgang Schneider at the opening of the IBBY Congress in Cape Town, September 2004.

FROM THE CENTRES

BELGIUM

Noel au theatre - Christmas at the Theatre in Bruxelles on December 26 - 30 2005.

More info: ASSITEJ Belgium - CTEJ
<ctej@planetinternet.be>

DENMARK

The Singing Rabbits - Theatre for Children at Home and Abroad

by Søren Ovesen, playwright, director, actor, board member of ASSITEJ-DK.

“You don’t have a lot of singing rabbits in your shows”, my Turkish colleagues say when asked to describe the difference between their theatre and Danish theatre for children. “In our shows there are usually a couple of singing rabbits with pink ribbons. In fact we can hardly do without them. The parents want them, preferably wearing aprons and bonnets, and the children have no idea that there can be theatre without them.”

There are, however, only a limited number of rabbits, as professional theatre, or culture for children in general, is scarce in Turkey. Not to mention for children in India, El Salvador, Tunisia, Latvia, Brazil, Ukraine, Russia, and similar countries, where miserable economies and more or less undemocratic societies set the agenda, and where the greatest task for schools, childcare workers and parents in relation to the children is to consciously improve their chances of survival.

In these countries theatre for children is a rare luxury that remains outside the public sphere. Normally theatres are run as private enterprises, where quantity obviously outweighs quality, and frequently sponsors are involved, who blatantly use the shows for advertising purposes.

Theatre for children is restricted to the wealthy few. And these parents and teachers prefer cute shows with rabbits that sing, as opposed to intruding and disturbing plays about death, poverty, racial discrimination, incest, and class struggle. There is more than enough brutal reality just outside their door.

Denmark - the Land of Theatre for Children.

Every year theatre people from all over the world congregate at the big Danish children’s theatre festivals. The “small” one, which takes place yearly in the provincial town of Horsens, comprises approximately 50 performing theatres, and the “big” one that moves about the country with approximately 90 theatres. This year about 100 international guests (and 20.000 Danes) visited the “big” one, and their admiration and respect cannot be mistaken. We have a rare, even exotic commodity to sell. Only very few singing rabbits, then again, a lot of “serious” ones (that may easily be funny); shows about more or less anything a person between 1 and 16 years of age could be interested in.

Two important things are characteristic of Danish theatre for children that distinguish it from most children’s theatre in the rest of the world: The concept and the view of humanity in the shows.

The typical Danish show is itinerant, meaning that it is performed where children move about on a daily basis. In their nursery, day-care centre, school, or at the local library. The theatres are specialised in set design solutions that look great when erected, yet are easily packed into a van. Most often the two to five actors, who, of course, also act in the performance, do the practical work of setting up and dismantling the set, perhaps aided by a single technician.

Life as a touring children’s theatre actor is pretty unglamorous, with absolutely no prospects of fame in sight. The work is relatively strenuous physically, and wages range somewhere between “average” and lousy. Nonetheless, most people in this line of work are happy with their job. The meetings with the audience, the intimate atmosphere (from 30-150 spectators in a relatively small space), the close contact, the mutual journey into the universe of the show, affords, when it succeeds - which it fortunately often does -, great satisfaction. In fact very few outside the

circle, i.e. the children, the actors, and the teachers and childcare workers present, have first-hand knowledge of the miracles that unfold on regular mornings in regular schools and day-care institutions all over the country. Children and actors meet in fantastic moments, when a common breath and a vivid power of imagination elevates the crowd to a point where reality and theatre melt together, and from where no-one returns unaffected.

Does this sound pathetic? I suppose it does. But it is great, when it happens, almost solemn, one might say. Maybe this is one of the reasons why people in the business go on year after year. Some have even been in the game ever since the childhood of "modern" theatre for children, thirty years ago.

So this is the concept in Denmark: performing for the children in their everyday environment. There are, of course, several small permanent children's theatres with a fine atmosphere and excellent physical surroundings, but the rule is that the theatres go to the children, and not the other way around. This way of meeting the children is closely related to the view of humanity that permeates the shows. Here too, we strive to "meet" the children. Somebody, using a very adequate figure of speech, deemed it "Eye-Level Theatre".

Children are considered to be real people, not just individuals waiting to grow up, and this is the point of departure for the shows. That is why there are so few cute and cuddly singing rabbits in Danish children's theatre. On the other hand, much creativity and artistic drive is put into handling the big questions and "stories" of life in ways that avoid reducing them to silly trivialities. Children have a right to proper answers to their heartfelt questions. The philosophy behind the Danish shows is that no subject is too dangerous or difficult for its audience. Providing, of course, that the theatrical language, the form, is carefully and

accurately chosen in accordance with the age and development of the child. Ideally, it should be the child's questions about life that determine the repertoire.

It is an enormous artistic challenge to work according to this philosophy. Very few have any idea of how difficult it can be to carry out the task. Children are neither polite nor intellectual. A well-chosen quotation from world literature or a clever linguistic reference, which, in adult theatre, would put the whole story in its proper place, most often soars over the heads of an audience of children. Theatre for children needs very much to be action, something happening. Fewer words and more intelligent, meaningful, living, and, of course, entertaining images.

Workshop in Ankara

So in Denmark we have some experiences that others would like to benefit from.

I have just returned from a two-week stay in Ankara, where it was my privilege to conduct a workshop at one of Turkey's state universities. The subject was simply "Theatre for Children". The participants - 25 in all - were student actors, dramaturgs, directors, and playwrights. They were all acquainted with the original Turkish theatre, which in part comprises a rich and colourful popular musical tradition, and in part a classical one that is equally colourful and musical, and was performed at the palaces for an exquisite and discerning audience. Their studies, however, are mainly directed towards European and American theatre's classical and more recent repertoire. For adults. Of course!

My job was to show the students that theatre for children affords substantial challenges. That the theatrical expression that can be used with children makes equal demands for originality and precision on the part of writers, directors, and actors as any type of adult theatre.

It was not difficult to arouse the students' interest and their desire to explore this field. The exercises I gave to

them appeared simple, but turned out to be more difficult than they had thought at first, which precisely reflected theatre for children's crucial balance between clarity and complexity. They encountered the difficulty of showing instead of telling. Allowing things to happen on stage, letting the scenic action tell the story, and leaving it to the story to convey the message was a completely new way for the students of thinking about theatre.

Moreover I told them to use music as a co-narrator in the performance/exercise. This is not a decidedly Danish speciality, although it is becoming more common, but I have personally worked a great deal with integrating music into theatre. Knowing Turkey, the task may seem absurd in that it should not represent a challenge. The Turks are an extremely music-loving people. Rich and poor, city people and villagers, young and old are joined in an incredibly extensive and sophisticated music and dance tradition. The Turks meet, and sing. For hours on end. Beautiful and emotional songs that they unblushingly sing to each other or together, and gladly in the company of strangers. A culture we Danes might well envy.

Nonetheless they had difficulties. Using music as a co-narrator and a sophisticated part of the scenic expression is not in the curriculum for daily teaching at the university, even though it seems obvious, vis-à-vis their own "theatre roots". Theatre is one thing - something educated, having to do with speaking the way they do in Europe and USA. Music is a different thing altogether. Still, the students took the assignment seriously and soon began discovering the possibilities of the combination. And uncovered great personal and cultural potential.

The workshop convinced the students that theatre for children is a serious professional challenge! The organisers - active members of ASSITEJ-Turkey - had achieved what they had set out to, and were satisfied with the way things had

gone.

The students were frustrated!

Because in real life, theatre for children does not exist in any Turkish context. Apart from the above-mentioned singing rabbit theatre. And who wants to take a university degree in order to dress up in a rabbit costume and sing silly songs for a meagre wage, lose one's credibility as an actor, writer, or director in the process, and thereby rule out a future career in theatre and TV?

Naturally, no-one with any amount of self-respect.

Because, unfortunately, a workshop has no impact on the fact that Turkish society cannot afford much more than rabbit theatre. Children's theatre without rabbits is not saleable, which means, of course, that it does not exist.

Single festivals like the ones organised by the Turkish pioneers (ASSITEJ-Turkey) in the face of great difficulties, the international contacts that are made, and workshops like the one I have described mark the beginning of a change. But the road is long.

Economy and Politics

Unfortunately art for children greatly reflects the economy of the surrounding society. And the political reality even more so.

Will, originality, and talent? Certainly, but there has to be an economy in order for children's theatre to exist. To a certain extent the practical framework needs financial support. Production, actors, transport, technical equipment, and suitable venues are not free of costs.

And there has to be a sufficiently large market, someone to play for.

This is where politics enter the field. What condition is the particular country's democratic "state of mind" in? Who is regarded as a valid individual in need of theatre, for instance? A wealthy man? A poor one? A woman? A poor woman? A child?

The precondition for children's theatre to

be considered at all relevant is that a given society has adequate surplus to see children as equals whose desire to understand and life is justified.

We do to some extent in Denmark. But we have the appropriate economy. And a state that assumes financial and political responsibility for giving children a qualified theatre offer. With a population of 5 million we have a total of 100 professional children's theatres. Compared to 70 million Turks being served by 30 theatres of which only 10 can be regarded as professional in the usual sense of the word. Figures that speak their own language.

We can justifiably be proud of our tradition of theatre for children. But let us not become too big for our boots. It is immensely easier for us in our cosy little democratic corner of the world than it is for other nations. No language barriers, no old ethnic or racial conflicts, no crazy borders drawn by autocratic great powers, etc.

Of course there are countries, for example, USA, that have the money - and plenty of it - but who nevertheless, despite loving their children as much as we love ours, do not have a view of children that is a precondition for good children's theatre. Perhaps this is due to a society led by Christianity in an almost fundamental form, and a more or less purified type of capitalism. As a consequence we encounter a view of children (not to mention adults) as respectively sinners and consumers. Sinners need salvation, which does not amount to very much good theatre. As for the consumers, they need to be lured into buying. And as parents are the buyers, rabbit theatre is usually the result! The same model as in a poor country like Turkey.

Quite thought-provoking!

What Are They Singing About?

ASSITEJ International creates links between children's theatre people all over the world. The Danish branch, which

comprises approximately half of the local professional theatres, plays an important part in this network. Our shows are in high esteem and much in demand for international festivals. Yearly about 20 theatres take 25-30 shows and a total of about 300 performances abroad.

In this way we participate in setting new standards of good theatre for children, simultaneously putting the productions of other countries in a different light. There is a great positive effect in this.

And an unintentional risk. The first point is obvious: inspiration and encouragement for the professional practitioners, and a demonstration of the possibilities for the official subsidising bodies in the respective countries, thus improving the status of "theatre for children" as a concept.

The risk, then, lies in the repetition of those tendencies that may be seen in theatre for adults. It is evident that European and American theatre is uncritically copied throughout the world, and is elevated to a position of being the most distinguished cultural education, even though this may seem pointless in, for instance, a Turkish social and cultural reality.

The poor have always been subservient to the rich and powerful, no matter which values they represent. And we Danes belong to the rich and powerful. Without actually intending to, we might become didactic instead of inspiring, as we have so many eager "pupils" all over the world. Therefore we have a great responsibility.

We must put our sometimes overconfident judgements in the proper context. Because art - and also art created for an audience of children - is far from objective, detached from time and space.

If we clean our glasses we may now and again perceive dramatic and radical developments in a seemingly ordinary and trite rabbit show. All of a sudden those rabbits may be singing about something important. And they are no longer brightly coloured but the colour of real rabbits. If we miss such crucial changes by habitually

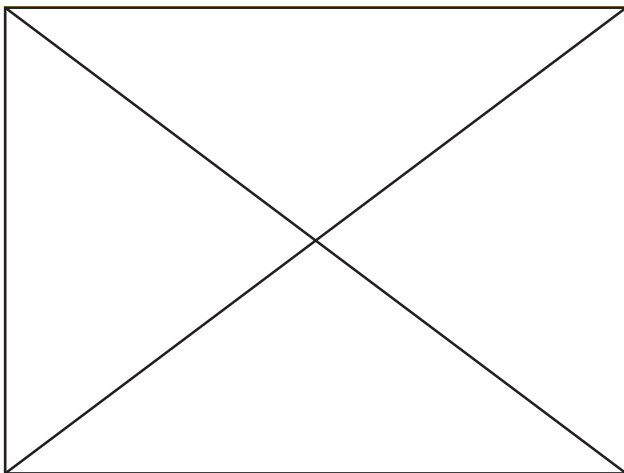
shooting the rabbits to the ground, we may kill, in our ignorance, a positive and perhaps revolutionary development. And - unfortunately - we do so in far too many cases.

ASSITEJ is an international children's theatre organisation. The compilation of the body of members reflects the world we live in. From the enthusiastic third world pioneers fighting a prolonged and unequal battle for the dignity of children, to distinguished ladies from the very "best" of worlds, with various places in between, like the one to which ASSITEJ-DK belongs. A motley crew. Yet still a priceless network that enables people committed to creating the best possible theatre for children to meet and discuss. A movement has been created, and ASSITEJ plays a positive part.

One day the rabbits will sing their final song.

English translation: Peter Jankovic.

More info: <info@assitej.dk>



Members of the Executive Committee and Regional African delegates at Cape Point, South Africa, September 2004.

GERMANY

The Political in the Children's and Young People's Theatre - Frankfurt Playwright's Forum for Children's and Young People's Theatre

From 3-5 December 2004 the Frankfurt Playwright's Forum for Children's and

Young People's Theatre will take place. This year's thematic focus are the political aspects of Children's and Young People's Theatre as the National Centre for Children's and Young People's Theatre intends to open up an absolutely essential discussion about the societal relevance of dramatic writing and acting in the theatre for young people.

12 authors, among them Simon Stephens (UK), Andreas Sauter (Germany) and Katharina Schlender (Germany), will present and discuss their new plays.

As part of the Playwright's Forum, the winners of the German Children's Theatre Award and the German Young People's Theatre Award will be announce.

More info: Henning Fangauf
h.fangauf@kjtz.de or www.kjtz.de.

INDIA

Since the Assitej India was inducted to the family of ASSITEJ International, we are trying to make the Centre one of the biggest Centres in the World. In the month of July, 2004 our President H.Chhawntluanga visited Seoul, Korea to attend the Asian Theatre Festival and Meeting.

More info: chhawna@rediffmail.com

IRAN

10th International Puppet Theatre Festival was organised in the summer of 2004 in Tehran by UNIMA Iran.

National Children Puppet Theatre Festival is organised in autumn 2004 by the Foundation of Preserving Iran-Iraq War Memoirs.

Theatre Mobile performances:

"Hey, Iranian Kids, 35 performances during summer 2004 in Kordestan Province and 45

performances in Kermanshah & Tribes Province.

Workshops and miscellaneous:

- Educational courses during 10th International Puppet Theatre Festival,
- Attendance of UNIMA President in Iran,
- Opening of the first specific saloon for puppet opera named "Rostam & Sohrab" (the Iranian characters in Shanameh of Ferdosi).

More info: intl_affairs@jamejam.net

JORDAN

The Performing Arts Center of The Noor Al Hussein Foundation

Motion - Unmasking - Dilemma

A bilingual theater production produced by The Performing Arts Center (PAC) of The Noor Al Hussein Foundation as part of "Contacting the World Theatre Project.

Premiered in Amman on 10 July 2004 at The Royal cultural Center

Performed in Manchester on 31 August 2004 at Contact Theater

Performed in Amman on 16 September 2004 as part of Souk Ukaz 2004; an international Cultural Market in Amman at The Royal cultural Center.

The History of Dance

Under the Patronage of H. M. Queen Noor Al Hussein the Dance Department at The Performing Arts Center of The Noor Al Hussein Foundation will be holding the annual graduation performance of the Dance Department entitled "The History of Dance", with the participation of 110 students.

The History of Dance traces the dance movement since the beginning of time till present ... the performance will include a variety of dance styles; Andalusian,

Baroque, Ballet, Modern, Contemporary, the Musicals Annie & Grease, Hip Hop in addition to folk dances.

It's an informative and educational performance that includes visual media (on screen) and displays the history of dance and related events during that era.

Matinee & Evening performances on 30 September 2004 at Al Hussein Cultural Center, matinee & evening performances on 1 October 2004 at Al Hussein Cultural Center.

"Drama in Education, Participatory Theater and Directing plays for children" , September 6 - 25 2004

Under the patronage of the Jordanian Minister of Education, H. E. Dr. Khlaed Toukan, The Performing Arts Center in cooperation with The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia held a workshop for 40 specialists from the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia on the methodology and practice of participatory theater and how to use drama as a creative effective teaching method in the class room in addition to directing plays for children.

More info: pac@nets.com.jo

KOREA

Winter Festival 2004, December 21 2004 - January 2, 2005 in Seoul

From this year ASSITEJ KOREA will host the festival in winter. The festival is just for local productions this year. Eventually the festival will invite productions from abroad.

Seoul Performing Arts Festival for Young Audiences, July 16 - 24 2005 in Seoul Theatre Training Workshop for Youth, November 22 - December 4 in Seoul

Workshop for senior and junior high school students.

More info: assitej@unitel.co.kr

LITHUANIA

NATIONAL ASSITEJ FESTIVAL, October 21 -24 in Vilnius and Alytus.

A workshop on the theme "How to make a small performance in a short time?" with workshop leaders from ASSITEJ on October 21-22 in Alytus.

More info: violeta@jaunimoteatras.lt

NIGERIA

Workshop: Re-introduction of theatre for children and young people in Nigeria, February 5th, 2005 in Lagos.

MTV Children and Youth Competition, May 13 - 16, 2005, Lagos.

Dream festival, October 13 - 20 2006 in Lagos.

More info: planetofthegenii@hotmail.com

NORWAY

Den norske Barne og Ungdomsteaterfestivalen - The Norwegian Festival for Children and Young People, October 10 - 14, Kristiansand

More info: assitej-norge@online.no or www.assitej.no

PERU

2. Meeting of Theater - Education of Latin America - Caribbean & Latin Performances of Theater for Children & Young 2005, 24 - 29 June 2005 in Lima

The meeting include workshops, seminars,

keynotes speeches about theatre for children & young people and theater-education.

More info: Myriam Reategui and Rebecca Raez <assitej_peru@yahoo.es> or <mmreategui@yahoo.com>.

POLAND

There was the VIII International Festival of Theatres for Children and Youth "Korczak 2004", 13 - 18 September 2004 in Warsaw

"KORCZAK 2004" was the eighth International Festival of Theatres for Children and Young People organised in Warsaw (annually since the year 2000).

The Festival "KORCZAK 2004" included:

- 4 spectacles of theatres from abroad (Theater Uberzweg - Saarbrucken, Germany, Zenith Production - Austria, Hyundai Puppet Theatre - South Korea, The Flying Gorillas - England).

- 5 spectacles of Polish theatres outside Warsaw.

- 7 spectacles of Warsaw theatres.

- 6 spectacles of children and young people theatre groups.

- The Awards for laureates of the Xth Contest for Young Playwrights "Looking for the Polish Shakespeare" in reference to the final of Xth Contest for Young Playwrights "Looking for the Polish Shakespeare". This included the presentation of fragments of plays awarded in this Contest.

- The handing out of the Polish Centre of ASSITEJ Awards - the Jan Dorman Award for 2003 to the best creator in the field of theatre for children and young people (Polish Award for Krzysztof Dzierma, foreign Award for Alexei Leliavski).

- The Award for the Polish theatre critic of theatre for children and young people Hanna Baltyn.

- Conferring Attests on Polish theatres, Certificates of the Highest Quality and

Artistic Standard for the most interesting spectacles.

The Festival was directed to children and young people, parents, teachers, pedagogues, drama specialists, journalists, critics, playwrights, the inhabitants of Warsaw and environs, foreign visitors.

The VIII Festival "KORCZAK 2004" included:

- Actor's training in the Theatre for Children and Young People - theatre workshops led by Bob Ziegenbalg, theater überzweg, Saarbrücken (Germany).
- Something About Casper - drama project about Human Rights Foundation for Culture and Science Development - One World (Fundacja Rozwoju Kultury i Nauki-Jedenwiat), led by - Maria Depta, Warsaw.

More info: assitej@poczta.onet.pl

UNITED KINGDOM

ASSITEJ UK is now co-operating with the Independent Theatre Council (ITC) on some initiatives. To see information about ITC's work for Young People's Theatre and to see its newsletter go to www.itc-arts.org and click on YPT.

ASSITEJ UK is currently co-operating with ASSITEJ Germany to publish a book about the development of children's theatre in the UK. The book is being edited by Prof. Wolfgang Schneider, the President of ASSITEJ and is being compiled for ASSITEJ UK by Stuart Bennett, who has years of experience in this work. ASSITEJ UK welcomes the support of ASSITEJ Germany in this venture.

Wales

Welsh members of ASSITEJ are currently co-operating to publish two volumes of plays which have been commissioned by Welsh companies. The first Volume, *Playing Out*, will be published soon.

There are now nine fulltime theatre companies in Wales which are fully funded by the Arts Council of Wales. They are Cwmni Theatr Arad Goch, Spectacle Theatre, Theatr Iolo, Theatr Gwent, Theatr Powys, Theatre Clwyd Cwmni'r Frân Wen, Theatr na 'Og and the Sherman Theatre. Information about theatre in general in Wales, including children's theatre, can be found on www.theatre-wales.co.uk.

The Arts Council of Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government have continued their increased financial support for theatre for young audiences. Welsh companies continue to work with the Arts Council of Wales to create more opportunities for young audiences of every age to see more live, contemporary theatre. Much of the new money being spent on theatre for young audiences in Wales is being invested in commissioning new plays and training new directors.

Wales' next international festival AGOR DRYSAU - OPENING DOORS will take place in March 25-29 2005. The festival will contain work from Wales, Denmark, Germany, Austria + Hungary, Belgium and Australia; the programme will soon be published on <http://www.agordrysau-openingdoors.org> Please contact Jeremy Turner for information. jeremy@aradgoch.org

A young Welsh director, Gareth Potter, is currently directing at the Theatre Centre in Pristina, Kosova.

England

England's next international festival, TAKE-OFF takes place on October 10-14, 2004. . International Exchange is the focus of Takeoff 2004 in Darlington. Visitors from Germany, Holland, France, Belgium, Italy, Denmark, Canada, Australia, Korea and South Africa will watch 12 plays from all parts of the UK. The event is supported by

UK Trade and Investment. (See the programme at www.ctctheatre.org.uk). Please contact Paul Harman for information: paul@ctctheatre.org.uk

Polka Theatre's PLAYGROUNDING project continues. This year-long project exploring how to write plays for children and young people is aimed at both new and experienced writers. See <http://www.polkatheatre.com/content/Playgrounding.htm>

Nottingham Playhouse (Roundabout) is creating new classroom play with Thalia Theatre, Hamburg. Entitled MIA and written by Nottingham writer Nick Wood, both productions will be played in UK and Germany. The Playhouse is also hosting a young Belgian Director to shadow productions for a two month placement under the European Leonardo funding programme and is developing an application with four other European theatres to create a Young Actors Workshop. Contact Andrew Breakwell: andrewb@nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk

Quicksilver Theatre recently performed at the Galway Arts Festival in July with *Upstairs in the Sky* by Carey English and Guy Holland, for 3-5 year olds. See www.galwayartsfestival.com or www.quicksilvertheatre.org

Euro-trip - Tony Graham

A group of nine directors, writers, and a designer visited Belgium, Sweden and Denmark 19th - 25th April courtesy of the Arts Council England (ACE) initiative grew out of the well-attended ACE Birmingham Conference 2002 (The Quality of Children's Theatre). In witnessing European work of excellence, the visit was seen as a catalyst to encourage English practitioners to think again about the ways in which we create work in our own companies. The group met the Laika company in Antwerp and saw a dress rehearsal of a site-specific show in a disused hotel; in Brussels, we visited La Montagne Magique, saw an inspiring Russ-

ian submarine show by Agora, and with the support of the Vlaams Theatre Institute we visited the ABC creative arts education project at Bozar; in Stockholm, Niclas Malcroma accompanied us to see shows at Teater Tre, Mittiprickteatern, then to meet Joakim Stenshäll, a dramaturg at Unga Riks, based at Riksteatern. The following day we saw shows at Teater Pero and the Dockteatern Långa Näsan at the Kulturhuset, where we also had a fascinating meeting with Suzanne Osten of Unga Klara. Finally, in Denmark we visited the Children's Theatre Festival for three days and saw a range of shows and met numerous companies, including another visiting group from the UK.

The welcome and generosity of our hosts left an indelible impression on the participants. We have met once since at the Arts Council to record our impressions and talk about where this initiative might lead. It is anticipated that a follow-up initiative will happen in 2005 with a view to sharing our findings and seeing what changes have been effected.

Tokyo Trip - Tony Graham

I was invited to attend an International Theatre Festival (Japan-Australia-Canada) this July in Tokyo. Organised by Kazeno-ko Theatre Company, the festival of theatre for children featured work from all three countries as well as an impressive trilingual symposium at the end of the festival. Apart from seeing some beautiful work by Kazeno-ko and other Japanese companies, the festival featured the spirit of internationalism and the need to share experience. What struck me most forcibly were the mutual points of reference despite the cultural differences. Once again (see above), the issue of quality arose and the need for creating the conditions of work that can support innovation and excellence over a longer period of time. And secondly, there was a common reaction to the changing role and

identity of children in our respective cultures. I, like many of the guests and participants, was lost in admiration for the generosity of our hosts. To replay the compliment, I'm intending to host a Japanese Festival in 2007 in our new Unicorn theatre.

Scotland

Scotland now has five companies on full time funding from the Scottish Arts Council: Wee Stories, Visible Fictions, Catherine Wheels, Giant Productions and TAG. Imagine is presenting WYSIWYG, the 6th showcase of performing arts for children and young people by Scottish Companies. This will take place at the Byre Theatre, St Andrews from 29 September - 1 October and will allow promoters, producers and artists to meet, watch and talk about work.

Training: Development Director based at Imagine

Imagine's Development Programme was launched in October 2002. Two year's on, the Programme continues to support and develop the children and young people's performing arts sector through a series of successful initiatives.

The Development Programme has focused on five key areas to help improve;

- standards in provision and presentation
- communications and networking
- access
- audience development
- profile and status

This has been achieved through a number of specific projects including;

- A Communications Network - Keeping each other up to date with all relevant information and opportunities.
- Cultural Co-ordinators Training Programme - A series of training initiatives for teachers and cultural co-

ordinators.

- Family Friendly Initiative - An annual programme of workshops and seminars to improve children's and families access to arts events.

- Skills Development Programme - range of tailored skills development activities for students; professionals and new talent.

- Literature Review into successful audience development initiatives world-wide - Seeking the best audience development projects with a view to applying them in Scotland.

- Advocacy & Research - Promoting the children and young people's sector to relevant agencies and audiences.

The Development Programme has involved a huge variety of individuals and organisations working in the children and young peoples performing arts sector. Venue managers; promoters; artists and producers; education officers; cultural co-ordinators and teachers; education providers and arts development managers have all benefited.

Our most recent training and development work has included the setting up of a family friendly website www.family-friendly.net and a conference, ongoing training and material called A Stage Further, a guide for teachers and cultural coordinators on getting the best from the performing arts in education.

For more information on developments and training in Scotland call Tony Reekie on tony@imagine.or.uk

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is gearing up for a busy Autumn with numerous exciting projects happening for young audiences. The following are a few highlights:

The Young at Art Festival under its new director Ali FitzGibbon has settled under the wing of the Belfast Festival at Queen's for this year only. The festival will be returning to its regular time of year in late

May for the 2005 festival. The theme this year is Journeys and will see a number of international and local companies combining to create an invigorating and imaginative week of events and activities.

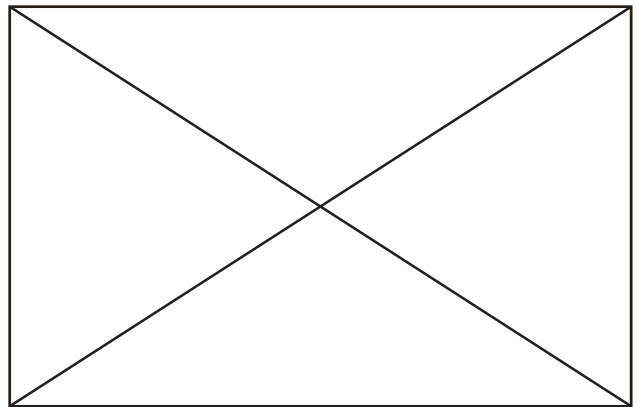
After a very successful tour to Seoul with the Magic Hat, Cahoots NI are about to launch their latest project 'Bedside Theatre' which will see the company taking a delightful flea-circus style performance to sick children's bedsides around a number of hospitals in the province .

Replay Productions are about to start a tour of Philip Ridley's 'Fairytaleheart'.

This charming piece of theatre will tour secondary schools and arts centres in Northern Ireland and visit the Take Off Festival in Darlington. Replay will also see their much awaited 'Theatre Squad' project kick-off in October, a series of interactive theatrical workshops exploring a variety of issues affecting young people today.

The ASSITEJ UK trip Explore Germany has prompted 4 of the participants in the North and South of Ireland to link up across the border to promote/share info/resources etc about their companies. It is hoped this initiative will link up all the theatre companies working with children and young people across the divide of Ireland.

ASSITEJ UK's International representative is Jeremy Turner: jeremy@aradgoch.org
ASSITEJ UK's Chairman is Paul Harman: paul@ctctheatre.org.uk
ASSITEJ UK's new website is www.assitejuk.org



Misaki Semakula (Uganda), George Mumbuna (Zambia), Henri Favory (Mauritius), Manuela Soeiro (Moçambique) and Etoundi Zeyang (Cameroon) during seminar work in Cape Town, September 2004.



For a full address-list to all ASSITEJ centres, visit <www.assitej.org>