



Report for TYA UK Executive Committee meeting of ASSITEJ, Baku, Azerbaijan February 20 - 26th, 2012

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is at a real intersection; bordered by the Caspian Sea, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Turkey and Iran, it is apparently one of the most tolerant and secular of Islamic states. Baku, it's capital, is listed in the Lonely Planet guide as one of the top ten party cities in the world. "Since the 1990s, when it started taking off as a hub for Caspian Sea oil and gas, Baku has been transformed. It's left its former existence as communist backwater to become a buzzing hive of Western capitalism – all without forsaking the indigenous delights of its Turkic traditions."

Azerbaijan State Theatre for Young Spectators and ASSITEJ Azerbaijan (the newest ASSITEJ centre) with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism hosted a week long series of meeting of the ASSITEJ Executive Committee from February 20th - 26th. Workshops also took place, lead by members of the Executive Committee on 'Marketing & PR', 'Modern Interpretation of Fairy tales' and 'Development of Dance in Children's Theatre' for local artists and practitioners. A press conference was held due to be attended by Mr. Adalet Veliyev, Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism who sent his apologies but which was well attended with local and national media. As part of the formal opening of the meetings, a brief history of children and youth theatre in Azerbaijan was given by Mr. Aydin Talybzade, theatre critic.

Azerbaijan State Theatre of Young Spectator is the main theatre in Baku making mid-scale work for young audiences. http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_208_en.html

Azerbaijan State Puppet Theatre makes work for adults and children. http://www.azerbaijans.com/content_946_en.html

Yug Theatre is the only 'studio' theatre of its type, the theatre is a purpose built space in an old Hamam (turkish baths). The company describes it's work as avant-garde and experimental.

http://www.eepap.org/web/english/institution-full-page/-/asset_publisher/hNg6/content/yug-theatre-baku-azerbaijan

'ASSITEJ is moving in the direction of greater professionalisation, greater representation, greater activity, greater engagement with artists directly and generally a more vibrant and responsive association' - Yvette Hardie, President of ASSITEJ and Chair of ASSITEJ South Africa which has just received significant funding to support two ASSITEJ offices and staffing in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Protocols and policies have been created not only around all forms of membership (now being piloted for the first time) but also around the Congress, International Meetings, and other aspects of the organisation. This means that things are now much clearer and transparent, not based so much on 'past practice' or mutually understood, hidden rules, but rather on actual policy documents which are available to all.



Meeting of the Executive Committee of ASSITEJ, in discussion - the role of international meetings

Disability Arts

Over the next 3 years ASSITEJ will continue to promote discussion around the subject of disability arts in relation to children's theatre, this will be done through the magazine, through related events (including indirectly, through a convening of specialists and interested people in Washington this year organised by the Kennedy Centre), a Symposium at the Kijimuna Festival in Okinawa and with further activity in Linz 2013 and at the World Congress in 2014. One of the possible outcomes in 2014 could be a new international ASSITEJ network which brings disability arts specialists together from different countries to further the disability art agenda and discussion within ASSITEJ and outside of it. The World Congress in Poland in 2014 will conclude the Disability Arts work for the 3 year period. Disability Arts specialist are already part of the organizing committee for ASSITEJ Poland

The next stage will be an article written by Kim Peter Kovac of the Kenendy Centre (which will include a contribution from a UK specialist in an article which presents different artistic and cultural perspectives). TYA UK will volunteer a UK speaker for the Symposium event at Kijimuna which will also enable further discussions and partnership working.

TYA UK are encouraged to play a leading role working with international partners in order to identify the activities between now and the next Congress. Vicky Ireland will continue to lead the UK working group. Diana Krzanic-Tepava EC member and president of ASSITEJ Serbia leads the working group on the EC. Vicky will attend the Polish Children's Theatre Showcase on the 25th March and continue talks.

Next Generation Programme

Discussion around the Next Generation Programme and the New Faces initiative was ongoing with a formal decision being made that the NG programme will be part of what ASSITEJ offers as a core part of its work, this incorporates the ideas behind the New Faces initiative.

The possibility of an NG network will also be discussed in Okinawa where over 20 artists will be brought together for the 1st time from countries all over the world for the **Kijimuna Next Generation Programme**. This includes participants from the UK and Ireland. The Next Generation Programme will be ongoing for new members and includes group residencies and individual placement opportunities.

Mechanisms for artistic placements within the international community have been proposed and ASSITEJ hopes to be able to launch this at Kijimuna. It will be an online mechanism making it easy for people to access international offers, and for theatre companies/festivals and other organizations to make these offers.

Festivals

Feedback from the TYA UK board suggested that the scrapping of ASSITEJ festival 'designations' for festivals which met the relevant 'international criteria' might have a negative impact on some smaller festivals. This was discussed and the proposal is that an official letter of support and endorsement from ASSITEJ via the Secretary General be offered to those festivals who might find this helpful for funding and political purposes.

An updated list of festivals worldwide is now on the ASSITEJ website.

World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People - March 20th

The central new campaign around World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People on March 20th is -

'Take a Child to the Theatre Today'

For 2012 the World Day message is from renowned Canadian playwright Suzanne Lebeau, download the message and world day logo here -

<http://www.assitej-international.org/about/world-day/>

The promotional video for world day can be seen here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVwinAilYIE&context=C49ee941ADvjVQa1PpcFM8AJqF63S6J9O-KUnagnE0d9QoaXHDdlc%3D>

Please promote and share!

Communications

The idea of creating an ASSITEJ encyclopedia where the artistic history of Theatre for Children and Young People worldwide is in discussion for ASSITEJ's 50th Birthday in 2015.

Content and new ideas for the annual ASSITEJ Magazine is being developed and adverts are being sold at reduced prices for those able to take out ads over the next 3 issues. More info on this to come.

KIJIMUNA 2012

1st ASSITEJ International Meeting in Okinawa, Japan 'THEATRE AS MEDICINE' - 'NUCHI - GUSURI'

The Focus of the Kijimuna Festival taking place in Okinawa, Japan in July 2012 is the 'role of artists in times of disaster'

ASSITEJ will run forums, symposiums and panel discussions. All National Centres will be invited to an international meeting for the 1st time. The focus of the meeting is networking and artistic discussion and nothing to do with the formal business of the General Assembly

There will be 70 performances over 7 days in 12 -14 venues around Okinawa City. There will be an Art Market – for companies to present their work to other colleagues in the form of DVD's, publications using Booths/stalls. The opportunity exists for TYA UK to send a delegation and number of artists to promote UK work. Producers and artists from Korea, Japan and China will have a strong presence. Partnership opportunities exist.

<http://www.assitej-international.org/kijimuna-festa>

SCHAXPIR Festival, Linz

The confirmed dates for the 2nd ASSITEJ International Meeting at the SCHAXPIR Festival are **20 - 30th of June 2013.**



As this festival and International meeting is close to home, TYA UK could think about a strong British presence to engage with the international community.

WARSAW 2014

18TH ASSITEJ World Congress and Performing Arts Festival

'More than theatre, more than now, more than here' is the theme for the World Congress and Festival in Poland 2014

The Festival will draw from activities and focus areas at Kijimuna Festival, 2012 and The SCHAXPIR Festival, Linz 2013 the second international meeting of ASSITEJ

Programming criteria for international performances:

- Performances made from 1.01.2010 to 31.05.2013
- Interactive performances using new forms of theatre language
- Performances concerning the motto of the festival (changing role of the audience in theatre/the changing role of theatre for audiences)

There will be 16 international performances & 12 middle-European performances

The festival will be the special edition of International Theatre for Young Audiences Festival 'KORCZAK'

TYA UK

On our agenda! -

- British delegations to ASSITEJ Festivals in Okinawa, Linz and Poland
- New newsletter is imminent, and further website development and relaunch of international travel bursary
- Development of disability arts work with ASSITEJ and ASSITEJ Poland
- Threads of Silk, international project with artists from Central Asia, incorporating placements of Asian artists with UK companies, promotion of UK work to those countries, culminating in an international performance in 2014/2015
- Developing links with Rose Bruford College and continuing partnership work around a biennial international actors seminar. Pilot project this Autumn (2012)
- Exploring the idea of TYA UK pitching for 2015 ASSITEJ meeting
- Promoting and engaging with TAKE OFF, The Gathering, Imagine, Belfast Children's Festival, Agor Drysau - Opening Doors - making the most of our festivals and work.
- Partnership projects with other ASSITEJ National Centres
- TYA award – creating a new arts award connected to arts award organizations.
- Engagement with other networks - ITC, Small Size and Earlyarts
- International Travel fund for artists (new from ACE)



http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/artists-international-development-fund-opens-appli/?dm_i=SM1,PV7F,5RZBY7,23363,1

Please join TYA UK on facebook to hear regular news <https://www.facebook.com/pages/TYA-UK/148704541816474>

The next TYA UK board meeting will be at AGOR DRYSAU - OPENING DOORS, MARCH 19TH, Aberystwyth.

Nina Hajjiyanni, Chair TYA UK/ International Representative, 8th March 2012