

The City Theatre, Makiivka, 20 miles from Donetsk, Ukraine

Report for TYA UK Executive Committee meeting of ASSITEJ, Makiivka, Ukraine September 26 - October 1, 2011

Donetsk Regional Russian Youth Theatre/ Third Ukrainian Festival of Youth 2011

The 1st meeting of the recently elected Executive Committee of ASSITEJ took place in Makiivka, Ukraine on September 26 – October 1st 2011. Makiivka, is an industrial city located in eastern Ukraine within the Donetsk Oblast region.

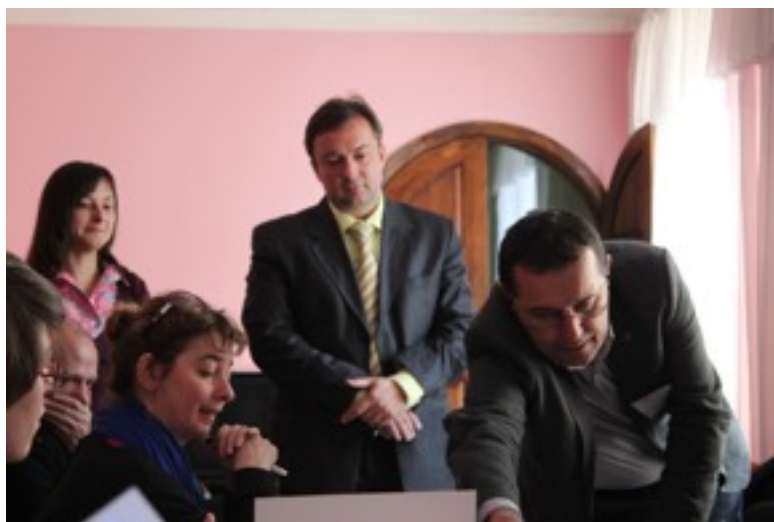
The meeting took place at the City Theatre Makiivka hosted by The Donetsk Regional Russian Youth Theatre, in the context of the Third Ukrainian Festival of Youth, supported by Ministry of Culture and Tourism

The festival saw a week of performances by professional companies from across Ukraine who make work for children. The participating companies were state funded regional theatres attached to their own regional/city venue. Each company produces work for both adults and children in their venues and operate on a repertory theatre basis, with a large resident acting company, supported by in-house managing and technical departments. These particular companies were drawn from across the Ukraine and participated because of their particular focus on work for children and young audiences.

Local schools packed out the City Theatre Makiivka daily for the festival performances, the City Theatre is home to the Donetsk Regional Theatre of Young Spectator and is a traditional theatre space with Proscenium Arch. Each company also presented a show for adult audiences in the evening either a 'psychological drama', 'comedy' or 'tragicomedy'

The work for children and young audiences was predominantly text based, involving larger casts (5 – 10 actors), designed for their larger stages. Each performance was introduced by a 'glamorous' compere and had an interval. There was a sense of occasion, which the children seemed to enjoy. Women in red uniforms policed the auditorium during the performances and would intervene if children made too much noise which happened regularly.

Children's theatre in Ukraine is supported through state funding of each municipality's regional theatre. There is a sense that ASSITEJ Ukraine will reignite its involvement with ASSITEJ. There is also a sense that some regional theatres with a particular interest in the artistic development of work for young audiences could form meaningful partnerships with international artists working in the TYA field.



Artistic Director of Donetsk Regional Theatre of Young Spectator , Vladislav Sluhaenko at the 1st session of the Executive Committee meeting

Presenting companies –

Sumy Regional Theatre for Children and Youth

Donetsk Regional Theatre of Young Spectator

Odessa Theatre of Young Spectator

Kharkiv Regional Theatre of Young Spectator

First Ukrainian Theatre for Children and Young

People (L vov)

Zaporizhzhya Regional Theatre of Young Spectator

Sevastopol Theatre for Children and Young People

Executive Meeting of ASSITEJ

The first Executive Meeting of the new EC took place over the 6 days of the festival and prioritized the 3 year working plan adopted at that last congress. 4 working groups have been formed - Publications/ Promotions/ Projects/ Policy to further the work of the association.

News from some of the National Centres

- 1st China Children National Art's Theatre Festival in Beijing, organized by ASSITEJ China took place in July 2011 attended by Ivica Simic.
- ASSITEJ India held its 1st children's theatre conference. 8 South Asian countries (ASSITEJ centres) are forming a network. There has been a week long story telling festival in partnership with ASSITEJ Germany. http://www.assitejindia.org/tya_conference_2011/tya_conference_report
- ASSITEJ Australia have a national symposium on Youth Arts planned for 2012 http://www.ypaa.net/newsblog/ypaas_2nd_national_youth_arts_symposium_july_2012
- In development is a South Slavic reader project (Slovenia to Bulgaria) incorporating the different languages. Book of 7 plays from 7 countries. Possible connection with Theatre Café – Company of Angels and promotion of book
- A Nordic Network is being developed. There was an Informal gathering at the 17th ASSITEJ Festival in Denmark with representation from Iceland, Denmark and Norway. The aim is to have a Nordic Children's Theatre Festival which would be a rotating festival across the Nordic Countries. First one will be in Denmark next year.
- ASSITEJ Germany is to support more regional festivals in the Eastern region of Germany. 2012 will see a continuation of the International Directors Seminar. A new initiative in development with Berlin based medical doctors is a campaign around– 'to be healthy you must go to the theatre' piloted by Grips Theatre, Berlin <http://www.grips-theater.de/>

- New publication on the history of Mexican theatre is in development. The children's theatre festival which took place in 2011 is in question for 2012 due to financial constraints.
- New visions, New voices, The Kennedy Centre international script workshop programme (TYA USA) is receiving more applications than ever. IPAY the American international showcase of work for young audience will take place January 2012. ASSITEJ Germany is working with TYA USA on a play translation project (supported by the Goethe Institute)

There are currently over 80 National Centres worldwide with interest in joining from Tunisia (Association of Theatre for children and young audiences) and also from individuals working in Guatemala. The French centre of ASSITEJ is rejoining after a period of change.

Discussion took place about strengthening and supporting the role of the National Centre. Including ideas around promoting home-grown work abroad.

In development is the idea for an ASSITEJ Tool kit for advocacy, and fundraising purposes using a similar model to the one created by the Arterial Network. This would support centres with minimal resources and undeveloped infrastructures. Arterial is the African Cultural Sector network <http://www.arterialnetwork.org/>

Role of ASSITEJ and Role of the Congress and World Festival

Discussion took place around the clarity of what ASSITEJ is, its purpose and the aim is to carry on this discussion and to promote a central ambition of ASSITEJ

The aim being to articulate a central premise which promoted clearly, then connects to a strategic vision for the yearly gatherings and the Congress and Festival which happens every 3 years.

TYA UK offered collective feedback in the form of a report to the organisers of the 17th World Congress about some of the elements of the Festival and Congress drawing from individual experiences of being at the festival and also from individual programming perspectives. This was fed into the discussion.

The following was discussed, as a basis by which the role of the association could be strengthened. -

ASSITEJ -

'Brings together artists from across the world in the field of children and young people's theatre'.

And -

'Creates opportunities for international exchange and artistic development'

The job of the association is to build on it's current activities which connects to this primary aim and to develop strategies for increased engagement and opportunity in relation to this.

The role of yearly gatherings would be to further projects, explore particular themes and ideas from an international perspective, to strengthen networking and collaboration opportunities which then build towards the Congress and Festival which brings projects to a culmination and evaluates the work of the association.



ASSITEJ President Yvette Hardie being interviewed about the work of ASSITEJ following a festival performance.

THE 17TH ASSITEJ CONGRESS AND PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL ACHIEVEMENTS -

Congress and Performing Arts festival took place in Malmö and Copenhagen May 20th -29th 2011

In total 1460 persons attended. 375 came from participating theatres. The others participants came from 57 countries.

Total number of visitors 16000

The Festival contained 29 foreign productions from 26 countries representing all continents. In addition the 29 international productions the Swedish-Danish Cavalcade included another 20 productions (10 Swedish, 10 Danish)

Total of 240 performances, 68 workshops/seminars/lectures, 29 social events.

The Nordic and Baltic countries were each represented in a special 'department' of the festival

The three pillars of the festival were:

- Children and Young People – their cultural experience and cultural identity
- Performing Art – new inspiration, quality enhancement and diversity
- International cooperation – exchange of experiences and inspiration over borders.

Registration

Formal registration of ASSITEJ is ongoing. Paul Harman has offered information on becoming registered in the UK as a cooperative community interest company limited by shares. This is being explored

International Theatre Institute (ITI)

Discussions are taking place between representatives of ASSITEJ and representatives of ITI the world organisation for performing arts, (UNESCO affiliated) to explore partnership working, potentially via it's 'Academy' where Theatre for young audiences could be represented. <http://www.iti-worldwide.org/>

Membership

New policy has been created in relation to membership. For the first time professional networks and individuals can become members of ASSITEJ, the aim being to strengthen networking and artistic dialogue.

Write Local Play Global, the playwrights network has become the first network member of ASSITEJ <http://writelocalplayglobal.org>

ASSITEJ new membership rules - <http://www.assitej-international.org/english/documents/membership-policy-and-protocols.aspx>



Other Networks and Activities:

New Faces - Policy is being developed for the international placement programme 'New Faces'. There will now be an annual call out for placements and a coordinated application process which will happen through ASSITEJ and the National Centres. More up to date info will follow soon, for recent placement opportunities click - <http://www.assitej-international.org/english/networking/new-faces.aspx>

Next Generation Network - following the culmination of a 3 year project. The Next Generation Network will be an open network enabling younger artists to communicate with others from across the world online. The opportunity exists for network members to meet at international meetings and festivals as an evolving group. More info on this soon

ITYARN – The ASSITEJ research network regularly calls for papers and hosts conferences on subject areas which will continue to be connected to yearly meetings and the World Congress. <http://www.ityarn.org/>

Festivals

International festivals will host ASSITEJ meetings yearly in the framework of a 3 year cycle of the World Festival and Congress.

There will no longer be ASSITEJ festival 'designations' for those festivals who historically may have had this status (in relation to set criteria). ASSITEJ will work towards supporting all theatre festivals for children and young people worldwide and focus on the yearly ASSITEJ meetings for opportunities for project work, exchange and development.

An overhaul of the current website will result in an updated and comprehensive list of festivals worldwide.

ASSITEJ Script Catalogue

The decision was made to discontinue work on the creation of a global script catalogue due to the complexities to do with copyright and also management. ASSITEJ through its network member Write Local Play Global will serve as an international play resource and point to play databases and catalogues in existence within each member country. Thus the development of the catalogue idea is based on bringing current resources together in a central space.

In relation to this, TYA UK within it's website has the capability to create a catalogue for UK plays and texts in possible partnership with TYA Ireland. A TYA UK & TYA Ireland catalogue could serve as a resource for international colleagues as well as a national one.

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

The central new campaign around the World Day of Theatre for Children and Young People on March 20th will be to **'Take a child to the theatre today'**

The opportunity exists for all national centres and members to get behind this idea through a collectively owned message.

A simplified and focused approach to World Day will strengthen opportunities for advocacy internationally. This will continue to be supported by a message by prominent personality or celebrity, For 2012 the message will be from renowned Canadian playwright Suzanne Lebeau



Writer, Suzanne Lebeau

<http://987321654.canadacouncil.net/en/archives/Authors/Suzanne%20Lebeau.aspx>

Communications

There will be an overhaul of the current ASSITEJ website with the focus on projects and activity. Longer-term communication plans will be based on forum spaces (similar in model to the Future Playground site) which offers a dynamic and active space for dialogue, where members can communicate pro actively and individually.

Policy around the use of social media and digital technology is being developed. New ideas for The ASSITEJ Award and possible creation of other awards is also being discussed

The idea of creating an ASSITEJ encyclopedia where the artistic history of Theatre for Children and Young People worldwide is in discussion

ASSITEJ Magazine - the publications working group have begun work on the next ASSITEJ magazine which hopes to include an in-depth article on Disability Arts - from an international perspective. This will build on the work of UK artists/ TYA UK's Disability Arts Event 'Whose Theatre Is It Anyway.' which took place at the 17th World Congress and Festival. ASSITEJ is formulating a 3-year strategy around Disability Arts which includes the programming of an inclusive production at the next World Congress and Festival



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 and crisis' in relation to children and young people.

Keynotes will be given by child psychologists and artists specialising in this area. ASSITEJ will run forums, symposiums and panel discussions with some of it's network members contributing - ITYARN, WLPG and The Next Generation Network.

Within the festival programme, there will be a focus on presenting the work of Asian companies to the wider world. 20 companies from Asia will present their work as well as 20 companies from other countries.

The opportunity exists for members to propose workshops and forums connected to the festival theme -

<http://www.assitej-international.org/adorletter/newsletter.aspx?i=20A3415>

<http://www.kijimunafesta.com/>



The purpose of the World Congress and Festival (revisited) -

The World Congress and Festival is the premiere meeting of all members of ASSITEJ in each three year term of its Executive Committee. It is the culmination of the working life of the association for that three year period, reflecting on the last three years of activity and creating a vision collectively with its members for the future. The Congress is the potential driver of change and growth in the association as it is the only space within which constitutional changes may be tabled and approved by members.

Further the Congress celebrates and examines the work of the association and its members, by giving space to the principle artistic questions and concerns that have pre-occupied it for the previous 3 year term. These may be explored through the ASSITEJ Forums and through the Workshops, Seminars and Conference programme. Members may propose new artistic questions and concerns at the World Congress. Professional networks may present their activities and projects over the last three years, and all members, including National centres, may use the Congress to seek opportunities for regional and global exchange, and to inspire and reflect on their own practice in the pursuit of artistic development.

The World Congress is accompanied by a Festival, which celebrates the global nature of the association, by giving a snapshot of theatre for young audiences as it exists at this point in history across the world. Ideally, the Festival represents theatre from all continents and a wide variety of countries. Particular focus may be given to the country or region in which the Congress is taking place, through either a side-festival (at times called a Cavalcade) or within the overall festival programme. While it is always the aim of the Festival to present work of quality, ASSITEJ recognizes that 'quality' can be viewed as contextual, and all efforts should be made to contextualise the work presented, so that members of the association are given a deeper understanding of why the work has been made, and how it communicates with its audiences. Wherever possible, the Festival should be able to reflect both established practices and new trends within the field. Active reflection on the performances should be encouraged within the Festival programme.

WARSAW 2014

Preparations for the 18TH ASSITEJ World Congress and Performing Arts Festival



Representatives of the Next World Congress in Warsaw, Poland, Liliana Bardijewska and Magdalena Szpak.

The KORCZAK Festival is one of the building blocks for the 18th ASSITEJ World Congress and Festival which will take place in May 2014 in Warsaw, Poland. The event will be organised by ASSITEJ Poland in partnership with The Theatre Institute and Polish Theatre Companies.

<http://www.korczak-festiwal.pl/index.htm>

The Executive Committee are working closely with ASSITEJ Poland and the festival organisers to deliver a festival of strategic and artistic value which consolidates the 3 year period of activity and builds on the ambitions, successes and failures of past festivals.

The Festival will take place in central Warsaw, in the heart of city and include between 20 to 30 performances in addition to a Cavalcade with an Eastern and/or central European focus.

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

More info on the application and selection process for productions soon.

TYA UK

TYA UK held a visioning day recently which was attended by representatives from all 4 countries.

The role of TYA UK was the main point of discussion and it's relationship to each country subgroup. It is felt that in principal the role of TYA UK is to -



- 1) Open up a dialogue between the 4 countries, to share info and to plan and promote activities back to members through the newsletter, website and other mediums.
- 2) To Engage with the wider international community through ASSITEJ.

The three pillars of the organistaion will continue to be - advocacy, networking and professional development with the activities and interests of each country subgroup generating the bulk of activity reflecting members needs.

The Gathering 2011 hosted by TYA Ireland was attended by members of the TYA UK board. Possible partnership opportunities exist between the two countries.

UK festivals - Agor Drysau- Opening Doors, Takeoff Festival 2012 , Spark, Imagine will continue to be promoted to the international community.

In addition to Nina Hajjianni attending the Executive Meeting in Ukraine, ASSITEJ Honorary Member Paul Harman represented the ASSITEJ Executive Committee at a Conference in Uzbekistan in October 2011

The Next Executive Committee meeting of ASSITEJ will be in Azerbaijan, February 2012. If you wish to comment or respond to any item for discussion at the EC meeting, please email nina@actiontransporttheatre.org

The Next Meeting of the board of TYA UK will be in January 2012

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TYA-UK/148704541816474>