

Young critics' seminar, Riga, Latvia, November 18-24, 2011

The International Association of Theatre Critics (IATC) is pleased to announce a young critics' seminar to be held in conjunction with the Baltic Drama Festival in the Latvian capital, Riga, November 18-24, 2011 (details of the festival programme follow below this invitation). Our hosts invite us to hold one seminar group, working in the English language. The seminar will be open to a maximum of 10 participants. Applications are invited from English-speaking professional theatre critics who are aged between 18 and 35 years of age; please attach to your application a brief (one page) CV, two or three examples of your writing as a professional critic and a letter of recommendation from your national section of IATC.

Successful applicants will be responsible for both the cost of travel to and from Riga and the cost of any visa required for entry to Latvia. However, the Baltic Theatre Festival generously offers participants free hotel accommodation, meals and tickets for performances.

The seminar will be led by Mark Brown, an experienced theatre critic from Scotland.

Applications are requested by **September 10, 2011** to be sent by email to IATC

Adjunct Director of Seminars, Mark Brown: markbrown.teatro@gmail.com.

Successful applicants will be contacted as soon as possible in order that participants can make arrangements for travel and, where applicable, visas.



Performance Night/SIGHT 2011

Between November 19th and 23rd Latvian theatre life anticipates a huge theatre festival, which, for the very first time will combine two events of the theatre life - the annual professional theatre show “Spēlmaņu nakts”(Performance Night) that evaluates the best Latvian Theatres of the previous season, followed by the show of the best plays and the closing ceremony of “Performance Night”, and - the Baltic Contemporary Drama Festival “Skats”(Sight), which involves two of the best original plays from each of the participating countries. Combining them together – “**Spēlmaņu nakts/Skats 2011**” (**Performance Night/SIGHT 2011**).

The plays of the “**Performance Night**” will be performed on the **19th and 20th of November** in Riga, offering the best nominated plays of Latvian literature and productions that will be announced by the jury just before the Midsummer festival.

November 20th will be The Performance Night/Sight **day of Latvian** performances:

“**Aija After Jaunsudrabinš**” (**Aija pēc Jaunsudrabiņa, The Daile’s Theatre**, duration – 2h 30 min.). Director Regnars Vaivars . Performance has based on well-known novel of Latvian classic , Janis Jaunsudrabinš’ s, story about main heroine Aija, a passionate woman in Latvian countryside, and two men of her life. Regnars Vaivars has turned it into the story and message about eternal search for love and happiness revealing the crisis and transformation of the traditional model of society’s system of values, institution of family, etc. Three people – Aija, her husband and lover - are trying to begin a new life but find themselves in fully desperate, hopeless situation.

“**Ziedonis and the Universe**”(**Ziedonis un Visums, The New Riga Theatre**, duration ~ 2 h 45 min.). Director Alvis Hermanis. This is the middle part of Hermanis’ latest research program of national mentality and experience - a trilogy consisting of performances *Black Milk*, *Ziedonis and the Universe* and *Grave-Yard Party* (all in 2010). This project is distinguished from the previous search for Latvian identity by the nostalgic intonation, since it is conceived as a requiem to the retreating, fading Latvian countryside lifestyle, and to the cultural and life values, relationships and practices endangered by the reality of new, expanded European Union.

All three performances are created in theatre’s customary style – as compositions of separate scenes based on etudes and actors’ stories. *Ziedonis and the Universe* has the figure of outstanding Latvian poet Imants Ziedonis in its center skillfully embodied by Kaspars Znotiņš (*The Prize for The Best Actor of the Year, 2010*) and prompting everyone in the audience to revalue the code of national identity in themselves, solving a serious and at the same time playful discussion about the relationship of artist, society and power, and the past, present and future of Latvians.

The Estonian and Lithuanian performance days, accordingly, will be the following **21st and 22nd** of November, when the plays from the range of Estonian and Lithuanian original scripts will be offered.

Estonia

“IRD.K” (Tartu New Theatre, duration – 3 h). Author – director - Ivar Pollu.

"Ird, K." is the second production of the trilogy of 20th century Estonian theatre.

The main character of the second production (IRD, K., 2010 in GenClub) is director Kaarel Ird, who was the leader of Theatre Vanemuine almost the entire Soviet time (with short breaks from 1940-1986). Kaarel Ird (1909 - 1986) is one of the most contradictory man in Estonian history of theatre. Scoundrel and communist, director and theatre establisher, without whom the city of Tartu and Vanemuine Theatre wouldn't be as we know them today.

“The End” (Von Krahl Theatre, duration – 1 h 44 min.)*The End* is a production authored by 6 people who have formed the Von Krahl Theatre drama troupe for about ten years. The play talks about the end of one world. *...I exist, because I remember. There are two of us here, me and my memory, alone in the middle of this dark town. My memory must fit onto the 8 gigabytes the state has allocated to me. Bodies have been declared utilities – mine is currently peeing in the toilet. Every day I bring a bucket of water from the gas station. Something is going on there. People are standing still, hugging each other in silence. Some have no clothes on. A few more days and then it's the end.*

Authors and Cast: Mari Abel, Tiina Tauraite, Riina Maidre, Erki Laur, Taavi Eelmaa, Juhan Ulfsak.

Lithuania

“Stork’s Gift” (Table Theatre, duration – 50 min.). Group of creators: Algirdas Mikutis, Saulė Degutytė, Snieguolė Dikčiūtė, Darius Rakauskas, Valdas Narkevičius, Jokūbas Vilius Tūras. Cast: Saulė Degutytė, Valdas Narkevičius, Jokūbas Vilius Tūras.

This is a musical ethnological performance for the family, the idea of which is based on "the tree of life", which meant the universal conception of the world to ancient Lithuanians. The tree of life grows in the middle of the world. Its branches embrace all the world, its top reaches the sky. The tree of life helps to relate the opposites of the world such as up and down, good and bad. It also symbolises the earth's joining the sky and the underworld, the everlasting existence of the universe and never-ending life on earth. Birds are the mediators between earth and sky. Stork, a bird bringing good luck, is a holy bird which originated from man.

The play won the "Gold Stage Cross" award for the best work in the theatre season of 2010.

“ The Girl of Whom God Was Afraid” (Klaipeda State Drama Theatre, duration – 3 h).[This annotation has been sent in a separate attachment].

The **parallel festival program** will consist of events for theatre practitioners, this time playwrights of all three Baltic States, as well as theoreticians:

19 – 21 November, 10.00 – 14.00 (and free timetable in the afternoon in accordance with activities of The Baltic Drama festival) – **international seminars for the young theatre critics**. One seminar is organized by the International Association of Theatre Critics in cooperation with the Latvian Section of the IACT, the second – by the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia, in cooperation with the Research Centre of the Latvian Academy of Culture and Latvian Section of the IACT. The both of seminar groups are working in English.

21 and 22 November - 10.00 – 15.00 - The informative seminar on the contemporary national drama in the Baltic States, its current situation and future prospects in the Baltic region (The New Hall of the Latvian National Theatre). Public readings of play excerpts and authors' performances are

intended. The audience of the seminar will include workers of Latvian theatres, theoreticians, as well as the foreign visitors of the annual Latvian Theatre show.

22 November from 10.30 – 14.30, 23 November from 10.30 – 16.30 – "Text in the Contemporary Theatre: the Baltic in the World Context" - an international scientific conference, organized by the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia, in cooperation with the Research Centre of the Latvian Academy of Culture and Latvian Section of the International Association of Theatre Critics.

Organizer of the **Performance Night/SIGHT 2011: Latvian Theatre Union**