

# Minutes of the Online Meeting of the IATC Executive Committee

October 17, 2020

## First part:

Margareta welcomes the attendees to the online meeting.

### 1. Presences and absences

Margareta Sörenson (President), Michel Vaïs (Secretary General), Octavian Saiu (Adjunct Secretary General), Stéphane Gilbert (treasurer), Peng Tao (China), Jean-Pierre Han (France), Irina Gogoberidze (Georgia), Deepa Punjani (India), Mariko Anazawa (Japan), Savas Patsalidis (*Critical Stages/Scènes critiques*), Zuzana Uličianska (Slovakia), Ivan Medenica (Serbia), Ragip Ertugrul (Turkey), Jeffrey Eric Jenkins (USA), Emmanuel Dandaura (Nigeria), Natalia Tvalchrelidze (Adjunct to Ragip Ertugrul)

### 2. Formal approval of the decisions taken by the Cabinet during the past period:

#### 2.1 Postponement of 2020 Congress

Initially postponed to autumn 2020, the congress has been further postponed until May 2021, as a result of the second postponing of the hosting Slovak festival. This second postponing was decided by the Cabinet. The decision is approved.

2.2 Suspension of ExCom meetings since October 2019, replaced by e-mails sent to ExCom members.

No opposition. The decision is approved.

#### 2.3 Approval of website activity/changes around the pandemic

The new section on the IATC website, Corona Special, is unanimously approved.

#### 2.4 Nomination of Natalia Tvalchrelidze as adjunct to Ragip Ertugrul for social media

The decision is approved.

#### 2.5 Digital meeting of ExCom

The decision of holding the current meeting online, via Zoom, is accepted.

### 3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda is adopted unanimously.

### 4. Adoption of the minutes of the Excom meeting in Chicago, USA, October 24, 2019

The minutes, available on the IATC website, are adopted.

Matters arising from these minutes (and not included in this agenda) None.

## 5. Reports:

### 5.1 President

See attached documents at the end of these minutes.

### 5.2 General Secretariat: Michel & Octavian

See attached documents at the end of these minutes.

### 5.3 Treasurer

A question arises with regard to the collection of dues from members: how to make the payment easy and without many additional costs?

Stephane explains that many of the late payers normally choose to pay him directly at the congress. Other channels must be found. Emmanuel says that it is difficult for African citizens to send money via a bank transfer, and that other associations have special rates for underdeveloped economy. He proposes some special measures. Margareta suggests that the Cabinet should discuss these issues. Stephane argues for reason rather than emotions in analyzing the possibility of different tariffs. Jeffrey explains the method of the ATCA: “pay what you can”.

Deepa also mentions the issue of fees for bank transfers. Ivan intervenes, claiming that the discussion of this topic is taking too long, and should be sorted out separately.

## 6. Other Excom members

See their reports at the end of these minutes.

### 6.1 Online conferences

Ivan apologizes for not preparing a report, and presents things orally, mentioning the two online conferences. Both were on a small scale, with few participants. He also suggests different chairs, rather than him, for the upcoming conferences.

Margareta thanks Savas for hosting the conferences through the Critical Stages platform, and proposes that more languages could be considered.

Octavian insists that the announcements about any conference must be made early and not a couple of days before the event itself.

Ivan agrees that the announcements were terribly late. ExCom members are asked if they agree with the new themes – repertory theatre and independent theatre – for two conferences to be held in both English and French.

Octavian proposes that there be one conference with two sessions: repertory theatre and independent theatre, respectively. Ivan agrees.

### 6.2 Online Young critics workshops

A much delayed programme for this autumn is being prepared. Mariko suggests online video materials as the starting point. Jean-Pierre responds that the critics should write on live shows.

Octavian replies that the workshops are mainly about global communication, exchanging ideas, and professional networking.

Zuzana agrees with Octavian on this topic, and explains that online workshops are already taking place in Slovakia. She will report on this separately.

Irina gives the example of an online festival, Mooz-Art, which facilitated access to multiple performances through streaming.

Jeffrey adds that the O’Neill Theatre Centre in the US organized an online workshop for critics via zoom.

Ivan agrees with Jean-Pierre, and mentions that the issue was part of the topic of the first conference. He also agrees with Octavian about the deep meaning of these workshops.

### 6.3 *Critical Stages/Scènes critiques* (Savas)

Savas is preparing the next issue, noting that the previous one – with the special topic, “Theatricality of Music, the Musicality of Theatre” – was the most substantial one in the history of the journal. The topic of the pandemic was also included in a separate special section. The next special topic is “criticism for young audiences”, and young critics, some even teenagers, have been invited to contribute. As a consequence, some articles need rewriting more than once. The issue of not paying the contributors is still a delicate one. However, the readership is increasing in all countries.

Savas also addresses the issue of “Scopus” database, which requires abstracts and keywords for each article. Such features are lacking the first ten issues of CS. The possibility of advertising from various departments is also discussed.

## **Second part:**

### 7. Congress

#### 7.1 Report from Bratislava (Zuzana)

Zuzana summarizes the very dire and disquieting situation in Slovak theatre, due to which the prospect of still trying to hold the congress there is very weak.

#### 7.2 Study of possibilities for a congress online in May 2021.

Vice-presidents Jeffrey and Emmanuel, together with Michel and Stéphane, have already explored some possibilities.

Zuzana adds that the lockdown will most likely continue in Slovakia. The pandemic is devastating the country, which is in a state of crisis. She does not think that big events will be possible, particularly considering the budgetary predicaments of the cultural sector.

The online option raises many questions: how, when, and via what platform?

Octavian insists that the ExCom does not have the moral right to further postpone the congress by rejecting the online option, without the entire membership being consulted. Jeffrey supports this perspective, and explains the options for voting online, which are safe and reliable.

Stéphane says it is not merely about asking a question, but about preparing a *modus operandi* for the Online Congress. It is decided that the Cabinet and the Vice-Presidents Jeffrey and Emmanuel will work on that plan and present it to the ExCom in due course.

Emmanuel says it's a delicate situation, and he agrees with Octavian about consulting the national sections if an online congress is to be rejected by the ExCom. Deepa adds that despite the lack of ‘force majeure’ in the statutes, a question should be asked in a letter if that situation occurs.

A long discussion follows as to what sections can vote at the Congress, according to the good standing or not.

The decision is not taken now, but postponed. The Cabinet and the vice-presidents will decide.

#### 7.3 Thalia Award: Suzuki and Future Laureates

Margareta says we should wait until we see what is happening and the plans for an online congress are in place. She thanks Mariko for her involvement with the Thalia Prize project.

## 8. Other proposals

Octavian presents two of the proposals included in his report.

The writing competition for young critics is not thoroughly discussed, as Margareta argues that the process would be very complicated.

The proposal for an 'IATC Help Fund' is debated, and Octavian details the plan. Jeffrey replies that, although laudable, it falls outside the scope of the association. Michel agrees that it is a very difficult plan to implement. Emmanuel says everyone is helpless, so the proposal should not be discounted. Jean-Pierre adds that the French critics have already tried something similar.

9. The next online meeting will take place in approximately 2 months.

10. End of the meeting.

**Michel Vaïs**  
Secretary General

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**Octavian Saiu**  
Adjunct Secretary General

## **R E P O R T S**

## **R A P P O R T S**

### **President's Report**

### **Margareta Sörenson for the Zoom board meeting of IATC, October 17th**

The board of the IATC met in October last year in Chicago, in a productive meeting framed by a generous theatre city and the ATCA colleagues. Next Excom meeting was planned, as usual, to take place just before the planned congress in May 2020 in Bratislava. Little did we know.

In November 2019, I represented the IATC at the ITI (International Theatre Institute) Partner Organization Meeting in Shanghai. The IATC and the ITI signed an agreement on cooperation with ITI/UNESCO which gives us the right to use the UNESCO name and logo as "Official Partner Organization" ..."whenever needed and appropriate". This memorandum of understanding was signed December 30, 2019, after I have consulted the excom.

### **2020 and the pandemic**

#### **Postponing the congress**

Already at the shift of the year the pandemic of Covid 19 started to get the world worried. In January and February, the global crisis was evident and the first days of March it was clear that, from the IATC perspective, postponing our next congress might be necessary. Giving the Excom members full information and a possibility to react by mail felt important, and the decision to postpone the congress was taken "by mail"; at first aiming at October 2020. (decision by the excom by mail March 6th). By late March the director of the Slovakian New Drama Festival in Bratislava, Vladislava Fekete, informed us that the festival was postponed to May 2021 and we

were invited to have our congress, just the same, but one year later. All excom and cabinet members elected by the congress stay at their post until then. The cabinet accepted the invitation for 2021 with gratitude.

#### **The IATC and its national associations**

By this time it was obvious that all normal IATC activities were going to be impossible: we had to adapt to the situation and work with already existing platforms on internet and social media. Luckily, Critical Stages could work as before, and invited critics to report on the situation in their respective countries for the next (now published) issue.

After asking the excom members for their support, a "Corona Special" section was created on the web site, showing the activities of national associations of the IATC; many of them inventive and active in difficult times. The section was online by the end of April (cabinet online meeting April 22nd). To publish the posts of this special section on Facebook and Twitter was included in the decision, and for a more intense visibility on Facebook, Natalia Tvalchrelidze was accepted through e-mail-voting in the excom as an adjunct of excom member Ragip Ertugrul.

#### **International Activities**

Two conferences on line has been organized, both on line through Critical Stages and linked with Facebook. I thank Ivan and Savas for the smooth cooperation for this, to the organisation, new event. At least two online workshops for young critics are to take place during the last two months of the year; Mariko will work with this together with Deepa.

#### **Winter Season 20-21**

The last six months have been extremely rich in work and in contacts, where the number of mails and calls has given the cabinet more to do than ever. Instead of resigning, the pandemic forced me to reconsider and develop our work, which also without the pandemic could be better updated with social media and internet. Whether we choose to postpone the congress yet another year or find it more appropriate to organize an online congress, we have a fairly long period in front of us where we need to protect the profession of the critics, to "foster" young generations and to develop more contemporary forms for meeting, exchanging views, finding a deeper understanding of the many aspects of criticism. At the same time "old media" is meeting new difficulties, both ideologically and economically, and we should sharpen our pen better than ever. The art forms of the stage and its artists are suffering from the lockdown, and there are many tasks for us to take up.

It is my conviction that we should have on line board meetings more often, approx every third month and that maybe more adjuncts should be invited to share the work to make our profile and visibility stronger.

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### **Secretary General's report** **Zoom IATC Excom meeting – October 17, 2020**

In the past year, since our Chicago meeting, the Cabinet ("Bureau" in French), which comprises Margareta, Stéphane, Octavian and I had to take more initiatives than usual, in accordance with our Articles of Association. We had several virtual discussions, and Zoom, Skype or FaceTime meetings.

Most importantly, we have decided to postpone all Excom meetings and our 30<sup>th</sup> congress, and to ask Natalia Tvalchrelidze, a member of our Georgian National Section who speaks fluently French and English, to become Ragip Ertugrul's adjunct, in charge of social media. Both seem to cooperate well since then. This is why Natalia was invited to this Excom meeting. However, she has another important encounter in her university at the same time, so she is supposed to join us before the end of this meeting.

Following are essentially the other tasks I have personally done for the IATC:

- Translating and circulating news, invitations, calls for papers, announcements of conferences and publications, statements from our national sections in India, Czech Republic (about the situation in Hungary), Poland (regarding the SIBMAS Congress), etc.
- Circulating to the membership a questionnaire which has been designed by the Cabinet, to find out who and how many are our members, what they do, how they work, etc. We have received a number of replies, which Stéphane and Margareta were to compile for the 30<sup>th</sup> Congress.
- Dealing with Mr. Osho Ognevovskiy, from Northern Macedonia who wished to join the IATC but not the Northern Macedonian Section.
- In September 2020, I discovered that TWELVE addresses had disappeared from my IATC contact list (but were still in my computer), and that THIRTEEN more addresses of IATC contacts had completely disappeared from my computer! This was very frustrating... So, I had to correct this problem with Apple, and finally, to complete my lists with the help of our website. I wrote to all those members and some of them asked me to send them the messages they had missed (from Poland, the Arab countries, Thailand, Ecuador, France, Great Britain), which I did immediately.
- With Stéphane, I am now preparing a message to our members for the renewal of membership cards. There again, there are sensitive issues to deal with.

While some **35 national sections are paid up for 2020** and must now receive an invoice for their dues for 2021, **6 sections have not paid their fee for 2020**. Some are represented on the Excom. We know that some of them had made personal agreements with our treasurer, and were supposed to pay him the euros in cash at the Bratislava Congress in May 2020:

Argentina  
Azerbaijan  
Greece (Hellenic Association of Theatre and Performing Arts Critics)  
India  
Northern Macedonia  
Romania (Romanian Section of AICT/IATC.Ro Group)

**More troubling, 7 other sections have not paid for 2019 and 2020:**

South Africa (have never paid)  
Arab regional section  
Bulgaria (Society)  
China  
Egypt  
Italy  
Romania (Romanian Section of AICT/IATC – Theatre Studies Group)

We **really** have to find ways for all sections and individual or associate members to pay their dues regularly. Ever since I was first elected on the Excom, 26 years ago, this question has been raised time and time again! Receiving dues should not cost anything to the IATC in bank commissions, transfer costs and others. As we always mentioned, all costs must be paid by the member sending the fee. Some pay through banks, others using Western Union, wepay.com, etc. None of these options is fully acceptable and practical

worldwide. So, I think all Excom members should suggest ways for all our members to pay easily, in time, and without any costs for the IATC. **I therefore ask our Excom members, including, of course, our treasurer Stéphane, Savas, and our adjuncts Octavian and Natalia, to propose a system – or two or three options – that would be acceptable for all.**

- On September 24, I have received (by e-mail and by regular post) a complaint from the society PicRights International Inc. (picrights.com), on behalf of Reuters News and Media Inc., for the use of a photo without authorization on the IATC website. This image, of Kirill Serebrennikov behind bars – as well as other photos – was illustrating a statement denouncing the fact that the Russian director was put under house arrest in St. Petersburg. We had received a statement from our Russian Section, and we, at IATC had also issued another statement, with another photo of Serebrennikov, about the fact that the Russian director could not come to receive his Europe Prize for New Theatre Realities. Apparently, only the photo of the director behind bars was protected by a copyright. For this, we were first asked to withdraw the photo from our website – which was done immediately –, then pay a fine of Can.\$425 (in Canadian dollars because the company PicRights Inc. is based in Toronto, Canada).

I wrote a response, saying that we are a not-for-profit organization, receiving no grants for its operations and relying only on its membership dues. Then I received another e-mail saying that in that case, the fine would be \$Can.255, but the amount was to be paid no later than October 12, 2020. After consulting the IATC Cabinet, I paid the amount, which our treasurer reimbursed me. Of course, I also warned Octavian Saiu, in charge of our website, and Savas Patsalidis, editor-in-chief of our webjournal, to be very careful not to publish any image protected by a copyright.

**Michel Vaïs**

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## **Report of Adjunct Secretary General**

### **1. IATC Cabinet and Website Activities**

I have constantly been in touch with Michel, as well as Margareta and Stephane, with regard to the various changes and challenges face by IATC and by its members during this period. I would like to commend all three of them, as well as Savas, for their dedication and constant involvement in everything that we discussed.

I have asked the IATC Cabinet for the two online meetings that we actually had. They were held via Skype in April and October, respectively. During the April meeting, I proposed a special programme for helping colleagues in need during the current crisis. I will mention this during our online meeting, and I refer to it below as the **IATC Help Fund**, because no consensus was reached then. Also during the April meeting, I suggested we strongly consider holding an online ExCom meeting. At that stage, the proposal was rejected due to the time difference between the locations of various members.

As an outcome of the April Cabinet meeting, I asked the webmaster to create a new section on the website, titled Corona Special, which required a lot of work and the conversion of an old one. In total, including the changes and updates regarding leadership and mailing details for certain national sections, more than 300 changes were operated on the website during this period.

## 2. Online Events<sup>1</sup>

I have been involved in a series of online conferences, dialogues and debates, amongst which:

*Series of Dialogues* with Robert Wilson, Thomas Ostermeier, Akram Khan, Shasha Waltz, Declan Donnellan, Silviu Purcarete, Tompa Gabor (President of The Union of Theatres of Europe), Constantin Chiriac (President of Sibiu International Theatre Festival), Gianina Carbutariu, and other artists.

<sup>1</sup> For practical reasons, this list includes only the online events held from March to the present, and not the publications, the launch of my new book, the meetings with the board of the Romanian Section (Theatre Studies), and other similar activities carried out during this period or before.

*The Spring of Hope and the Day of Dance* – dialogue with Jaroslaw Fret (Grotowski Institute / Teatr Zar), Tobias Biancone (Director General of ITI – UNESCO), Noah Wertheim (Vertigo Dance Company)

*Theatre: the Art of Suffering and the Rediscovery of Humanity* – talk given in the “While we are apart” Series, organised by Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)

*Theatre, Humanity and Hope* – Academic Conference of Sibiu International Theatre Festival; Chair of this Conference with fifty-six participants, a lot of them being IATC members, from thirty-two countries.

*The Future of Arts Festivals* – talk given during the international webinar organised by IATC Hong Kong and CUHK

*Series of Dialogues* for Tokyo Festival with international artists like Hideki Noda, Thomas Ostermeier, and Ivo van Hove (forthcoming)

## 3. Proposals

Considering the prolonged global crisis and lack of theatre activities, I propose the following new online **Series**, all related to the **IATC Website**:

### **The memory bank of theatre critics: sharing memories and experiences from IATC**

Each month, a senior member of IATC could be invited to share a story reflecting a particular moment in the history of the association. Featured on the website, this will lead to a collection of such accounts, reflecting the history of our association.

### **Why theatre critics matter: artists about us**

Each month, the website could feature a major theatre artist talking about their encounter with, and appreciation for a certain critic. This will highlight the values and the deep implications of criticism insofar as artists and their creative journey are concerned.

### **Critics and contexts: a presentation of a nation’s or a region’s theatrical highlights**

Each month the website can host a short presentation of a region’s theatrical highlights. What is happening? How is it happening? Starting with the ExCom members, critics will have the chance to present what is taking place in their respective countries/regions. These insights will



contribute towards a general overview of this period, which will complement the brief posts in Corona Special.

### **Young Critics' Writing Competition: articles to be submitted and rewarded**

The IATC in partnership with Critical Stages could launch a Writing Competition for Young Critics, whereby critics up to a certain age can submit short essays, the most interesting of which to be published in CS. Also, the three most well-written ones could be rewarded with a small amount of money from our budget.

**I also would like to ask all ExCom members to consider the following plan for our colleagues in need:**

### **The IATC Help Fund**

This initiative can allow members facing severe financial hardship because of the pandemic to apply for some support. A small committee led by Stephane or even Stephane alone could assess the applications with maximum discretion and tact, and decide who can be supported and to what amount. I'm sure even a small gesture could mean something to some colleagues, symbolically and materially at the same time.

### **Octavian Saiu**

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## **Report to the Executive Committee International Association of Theatre Critics (AICT-IATC)**

=====16 October 2020=====

Jeffrey Eric Jenkins (American Theatre Critics Association, USA)

- 1) **ATCA Excom.** Meets monthly on Zoom, dealing with a range of issues related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) through the formation of a new committee to survey membership and make recommendations. Plans are underway for a series of virtual meetings based in New York that will engage more fully with critics of color. The USA section had embarked on this work prior to the terrible events of this past summer and has felt an urgent need to respond fully.
- 2) **We See You White American Theatre.** This is a 30-plus-page manifesto from more than 300 members of a caucus of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Many of the signatories are successful members of the theatre community, including Lin-Manuel Miranda (*Hamilton* author) and many others. The document makes demands that publications hire critics of color and argues (or implies), in places, that only BIPOC critics should review certain types of work. It also makes important points about work-life balance and appropriate compensation for theatre workers, while criticizing the practice of unpaid internships. Here is the link to the document: <https://www.weseeyouwat.com/>
- 3) **USA Covid-19 Report.** The USA section's contribution to the Covid-19 report in *Critical Stages/Scènes critiques* was contributed by Chris Jones of the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Daily News*. There was considerable speculation within the theatre industry that we would be back in production by the current fall. At this point, the Broadway community has finally seen reality and cancelled the 2020-2021 season. The monumental failure of Federal

government leadership has led us to this place, though unconventional performance spaces (i.e., non-fixed seating) are beginning to plan for potential productions in the coming months. At Illinois Theatre, we are filming our stage work using Covid Protocols created by the USA theatre unions, and planning to distribute the completed work via streaming platforms. Illinois Theatre is also engaged in regular performances of readings using the Zoom meeting platform.

- 4) **Henry Hewes Design Awards.** This week Illinois Theatre hosted the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Henry Hewes Design Awards, named for the key founder of the American Theatre Critics Association. The awards celebrate theatre across Broadway, Off Broadway, and Off-Off Broadway in equal measure. No Broadway shows were honored for the 2019-2020 season, which was the second year in recent memory that the design awards' focus was solely Off and Off-Off Broadway. Six artists were honored with awards in scenic design, costume design, lighting design, sound design, media design, and notable effects. There were also six Special Citations for a superb design collaboration on Maria Irene Fornes' *Fefu and Her Friends*. The Ming Cho Lee Award for Lifetime Achievement in Design was given to Allen Lee Hughes. This was accomplished live via Zoom webinar, which split the group into "attendees" and "participants." When the video version becomes available, we will bring it to your attention. The feedback from theatre leaders who attended has been overwhelmingly positive and that was due to our production supervisor who kept participants aware of what was happening. More than 100 persons viewed the awards.
- 5) **Next World Congress.** USA Section was asked to work with others on a plan for the next World Congress. Due to teaching schedules and the Hewes Awards planning, I was unable to meet. There are certainly possibilities for using Zoom as a platform for the General Assembly, for panels on a conference topic, and for the Thalia Prize festivities. We would need to hire interpreters, as my Illinois colleague who heads Translation Studies refers to them, and that will require some budgetary consideration. (How many needed? How many hours? How many days?) A virtual Congress certainly raises the prospect of more inclusion throughout the globe. It is my understanding from Zoom managers (at Illinois) that we have no restrictions in connecting with any countries at this time. There are several voting systems available that are secure. The one with which I am most familiar is [Poll Everywhere](#). Others we have used in my department when voting on sensitive, highly confidential matters include [easypolls.net](#) and [adoodle.org](#). Some systems limit numbers of participants and types of questions. We need a system that allows transparency to the election auditors and allows for a "vote for ten on a slate" model. For other positions, such as president and secretary general, the voting is more simple.
- 6) **Postpone Until 2022?** It is my understanding that there is a possibility of pushing our Congress until 2022. From my perspective, given the nature of human interaction, and our own study, analysis, and critique of "presence" and "absence," we would not harm the organization by continuing to meet as an Excom via Zoom, and by hosting/leading conversations among critics as the economies of the world get back on their feet.
- 7) **Translation Assistance.** USA section has provided assistance with English-language translations and edited as requested.

=====END OF REPORT=====

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RAPPORT DE JEAN-PIERRE HAN (FRANCE)

Chers amis,

Je ne serai pas très original en vous disant qu'ici en France la situation a été très compliquée, et elle l'est encore plus depuis l'allocution de notre président de la République il y a deux jours.

Les théâtres qui avaient commencé à rouvrir vont devoir ou changer leurs horaires à cause d'un couvre-feu établi à 21 heures, ou carrément fermer. Lors de cette allocution, il a été annoncé que la pandémie risquait de durer jusqu'à l'été 2021. Ce qui me fait dire que l'on ferait bien d'envisager une alternative au report de notre Congrès à Bratislava en mai 2021.

Concernant notre Association, et plus précisément la question des stages pour jeunes critiques, je ne vois pas bien comment nous pourrions procéder. Le faire par Internet, peut-être, mais à partir de quel spectacle vivant, et non pas enregistré ? À partir de là, je pense qu'il faudrait trouver une autre formule faisant intervenir de grands metteurs en scène, un peu ce qu'a proposé Mariko qui pensait faire intervenir le metteur en scène Miyagi... on s'approche avec cette formule d'un travail proche d'un travail universitaire, ce dont nous étions toujours défiés jusqu'à présent (en ce qui concerne les stages).

En septembre-début octobre dernier j'ai tout de même pu aller au Festival des francophonies à Limoges (c'est le seul festival de théâtre qui n'a pas été annulé !). Son nouveau directeur m'a demandé de réfléchir à mettre sur pieds un stage pour jeunes journalistes africains, pour le moment, bien sûr, en langue française. Je vais faire un projet dans ce sens, d'autant que j'avais déjà eu des demandes de jeunes journalistes africains, et que j'étais intervenu dans ce sens au Festival de Bejaia en Algérie, il y trois ou quatre ans. Affaire à suivre donc. Pour le reste je ne peux que maintenir des contacts, comme avec la Suisse, mais sans plus.

Notre section nationale est à l'heure actuelle, pour ainsi dire, à l'arrêt et n'a avec le confinement pas pu même organiser sa remise de prix annuelle, pour lequel j'ai obtenu le prix du meilleur livre sur le théâtre (pour *30 éditos + 1*).

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## **REPORT FROM IATC-NIGERIA TO THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF IATC EXCOM HELD ON 17th OCTOBER 2020**

The Corona pandemic cause a major disruption to all the activities IATC-Nigeria planned for 2020. All theatres in Nigeria that were closed from 18th March are only being reopened with the gradual easing of the lockdown. Effective 3rd October 2020, Government directive which permitted the reopening of theatres allows for accommodation of a maximum of 35% of the normal audience carrying capacity of all event venues including theatre. This means that no theatre can operate profitably so many are still closed to date.

### **Palliative**

There was an attempt by the Government to provide some form of palliative to the artists to ameliorate the negative impact of the lockdown on their sustenance but this has remained a drop in the ocean. No theatre critic enjoyed any form of support from Government. Therefore, most critics had to look for alternative sources of income to survive the lockdown.

### **Meetings**

The IATC national section could not convene its usual face-to-face meeting for seven months because of the lockdown so we had to resort to online engagements. Most theatre activities moved online as

well with exception of the few drive-in theatres some theatre makers experimented with in Abuja and Lagos.

### **Corona Chronicles**

One of the key activities IATC-Nigeria engaged in during the lockdown was the Corona Chronicles which was a joint project with Flint productions. The project had the following objectives :

1. Telling the stories of humanity as we grapple with the real-time realities of COVID-19
2. Giving theatre makers a platform to practice and engage with audiences online despite the restrictions imposed by the fight against coronavirus

This project which was advertised on the IATC social media platform and website featured entries from performing artists from over 26 countries across the globe. We are grateful to the excom for providing us the avenue which further exposed the call to more countries.

IATC-Nigeria provided the adjudicators for the Corona Chronicles project and is currently editing the entries to be published in a special anthology which the United States Embassy in Nigeria has expressed willingness to support.

### **Online Festivals and Trainings**

Our members participated as adjudicators in many online festivals that were organised in the last eight months. Also, the performing arts community in Nigeria dedicated the lockdown to hosting series of online trainings. These helped in capacity building and kept the artists busy and abreast with developments in other climes. Personally, I facilitated many trainings in my capacity as president of IATC-Nigeria. Most critics earned some stipends through such activities during the lockdown.

### **Online Student video contests and playwriting competition**

Since our educational theatres have been closed since March to date, IATC-Nigeria introduced an online student solo performance contest and playwriting competition to keep the students positively engaged during the lockdown. This has yielded very positive results as it kept the theatre spirit alive and provided the needed positive entertainment for the participants.

### **CONCLUSION**

With the easing of the lockdown in Nigeria, our members look forward to returning once more to their normal professional lives and, of course, reconnecting more with the larger IATC family. However this aspiration will surely take a longer time to realise as we all try to adjust to the new normal.



**Prof. E.S. Dandaura**  
President, IATC-Nigeria

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### **Report of IATC Chinese Section**

Since last our excom meeting in Chicago, a sudden outbreak of Covid-19 disrupted our lives. Despite the difficulties and challenges, IATC Chinese section is actively promoting the revival of theatre in China.

1: From April 16 to May 5, 2020, an online theatre festival named “wild Imagination” was held, co-sponsored by 10 Chinese theatre companies. IATC Chinese section actively participated in the festival activities. During the festival, “Waiting for Godot” which is directed by Wang Chong became a phenomenal work. I and the director Wang Chong

had an online conversation on the topic “When the theatre is showed online” 18/April, 2020. The online conversation attracted a large number of audience to participate.

Some words about “Waiting for Godot”: The cast and production team of “Waiting for Godot” came from four different cities: Beijing, Datong, Guangzhou and Wuhan. After more than two months of online rehearsals, they finally chose to release the performance before the "unlock" in Wuhan. The wasteland in Beckett's play becomes living rooms in the home of the two leading actors in isolation. Vladimir and Estragon, two vagabonds, are portrayed as a couple who are isolated from the epidemic and can only maintain their relationship through smart phone videos.

Chong's “Waiting for Godot “is a timely response to the reality of COVID-19, especially the daily lives of people living in isolation.

2. From September to December “Nan Luo Gu Xiang Theatre Festival” was held. Nan Luo Gu Xiang, a famous street in downtown Beijing, where the central academy of drama is located. The theme of this year’s festival is: Theatre warms the city. During the festival, on 12 September, IATC Chinese section cooperating with Beijing Performance Company jointly held a forum on “The Place where theatre dreams Begin”. Famous director Mr. Luo Jin Lin and actress Ms. Chen Hao were invited to the forum. I am the moderator of the forum. How will theatre survive in the post-epidemic era? How do we cope with the challenge? Is theatre an integral part of our lives? We discussed these issues on the forum and shared our opinions with the audience.

3. Since 2018, IATC Chinese section has established a strategic partnership with the Beijing Laoshe Theatre Festival. This year, the IATC Chinese section and Laoshe theater festival will hold three foreign performances in the form of theater live in HD at Beijing Tianqiao art center from November 20, to November 22. [We will invite critics to conduct guided Lectures to help the audience better understand the performances from Europe.](#)

At present, the IATC Chinese section has established good cooperative relationship with Wuzhen Theatre Festival, Beijing Laoshe Theatre Festival and a series of Chinese theatre festivals. We will hold more related activities next year to promote the communication between Chinese critics and international colleagues.

## **Report For IATC Excom Online Meeting (On Zoom) on 17 October 2020**

### **Deepa Punjani**

India is slowly opening up but a more cautious approach has been adopted for densely populated cities like Mumbai. Auditoriums and other performance venues remain closed. The Maharashtra State Government has plans to open up in phases. Perhaps, before the end of the year, these venues could be functional. Meanwhile, performances and theatre workshops continue to be attempted online and some theatre artists and companies have been able to creatively use the virtual platforms and even challenge its limitations. Yet serious concerns remain and not least of these is the economic situation, which is pretty dire. In the near absence of any institutional and government support, most artists in India are left to fend for themselves. Fund-raising campaigns, well-meaning as these are, have been ad hoc and sporadic.

More critically, in the seventy-three-year-old history of the Indian nation state, this is the worst time for art and culture in India, or at least it is for all those artists who believe in freedom of creativity and expression without fear. Even the emergency of the mid 1970s appears milder in comparison. Artists who have stood up in protest or who have dissented against the policies and the laws of the present-day central government have been targeted and imprisoned during the pandemic along with academics, lawyers, and other civil rights’ activists. Under the cover of the pandemic and with the courts of law practically shuttered down, the executive has gone on the offensive with reprisals. It’s a very fraught and a dangerous time for the world’s largest democracy.

As a representative of the Indian National Section of the IATC and as its Excom member, I would be remiss not to underline the serious violations of human and civil rights that are ongoing in India

in these times. But my colleagues and I have hope that all is not lost. In our own ways, we do what we can. The Indian National Section stays committed to upholding fundamental rights as envisaged by the Constitution of India. Its principles and policies will always be guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international covenants such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In June 2020 I had assisted in organising the IATC online conference and had participated in it. One of the important aspects of that discussion revolved around live theatre's innate ability to bring together a group of people as immediate observers and commentators, a shared mechanism that is totally alien to virtual performances. In the upcoming edition of *Critical Stages* I will be elaborating more on this aspect from an Indian perspective.

President Margareta Sorenson has been in touch with me and Mariko Anazawa, Adjunct Director of the Young Critics' workshops. We have been contemplating online workshops for young theatre critics and I have sent my suggestions to Margareta and to Mariko. Mariko has also shared her suggestions. The formats could explore pre-decided performances that can be viewed and discussed or which can be selected by the participant in the final review. The mentoring can happen over three sessions and the outcome in the form of full-fledged written reviews may be considered for publication in *Critical Stages*.

I had also made another suggestion about getting wider participation from our general membership to host online performances that are curated and introduced by critics. I had shared a plan about this initiative and I believe it is something that the Excom can still explore. Given the nature of the initiative, it can serve as a first-person critical introduction to select performances and can provide a platform as well to different theatre companies and artists. In a way it would also showcase the symbiotic relationship that a critic has with an artiste and a theatre company. There are other ways too, by which the IATC platform can be meaningfully channeled online. The pandemic has given an opportunity to make these exercises relevant and sustainable even as things get better.

In July 2020 my article on the pandemic and the theatre scene in India was published by the *Kød* journal, a monthly journal that is published by The Theatre Institute in Slovakia.

In September 2020 I curated and chaired an online discussion on censorship and self-censorship in theatre and the arts in India. This discussion was part of the events leading to the award ceremony of the Mahindra Excellence In Theatre Awards (META), which too had to move online this year. Ordinarily, the main festival and the award ceremony would have taken place in March and in fact had things not been disrupted owing to the pandemic, the IATC Established Theatre Critics' Conference would have been held in Delhi in association with META. I also took part in the online award ceremony and presented the award for the best sound design.

Finally, I just want to say to all my colleagues and friends in the Excom, and in the larger family, which is the IATC, to take care and be well. I extend these wishes to your loved ones and my prayers are with those amongst us who have been less fortunate.

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## **Japanese Section Report**

Mariko ANAZAWA

After our last meeting in Chicago, the Japanese section held our second bi-annual general meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2020. According to custom, we looked back upon the 2019-2020 period in Japanese theatre and our activities surrounding it. In this meeting, we received several reports on our recent activities, such as, from our web magazine "Theatre Arts", our open lecture from the IATC (where a time schedule and contents were presented) our financial report and also

the news that we had received a grant from the city of Tokyo, in order to realise the 2020 AICT/IATC ExCom meeting in Japan!!

It was the first year of the new season for us with Kenichi Yamamoto as our new president and also for Sachiko Oda, our new general secretary. They realized their idea of a series of “open café-lectures” to open up our activities more in public. They started this series with their own specialties - Noh theater and the emperor system of Japan. They successfully held two lectures, although the third one was cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation. Not only the open café-lectures, but also all the open lectures of the AICT were abandoned for this reason.

Our second bi-annual general meeting of the summer was cancelled for the same reason and for the first time, the general meeting report, with a letter from the president, was posted to all members. In general, after this meeting, an award ceremony must be held, for both the AICT prize for the best theatre book of the year and also for the Theatre Arts prize, for the most talented and promising young critic. We also conducted a symposium for the book that won the AICT prize. We chose Tamotsu Watanabe for his “Tadashi Suzuki, the Director, his thought and works” as the winner of the AICT prize. Unfortunately, we were not able to choose the winner for the Theatre Arts prize. One particularly good news for us was the annual paper publication of “Theatre Arts”.

In this very special period, the Japanese section wants to restart all of our activities as normal, as soon as reasonably possible.

Personally, I gave an online lecture on a drama of Maeterlinck of my specialized field for the Association of Japan and French drama and wrote some articles about a drama to tell by an online class.

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**Association Internationale des Critiques de Théâtre – Géorgie  
International Association of Theatre Critics – Georgia**

თეატრის კრიტიკოსთა საერთაშორისო ასოციაცია – საქართველო

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***Rapport de la Section Georgienne de l'AICT, 2020***

***Par Irina Gogoberidzé  
Présidente de la Section géorgienne***

Dès le début de la pandémie, les activités de la section géorgienne se sont essentiellement dirigées contre les problèmes dans le domaine des arts du spectacle et vers l'adaptation de nos obligations en fonction des circonstances. Malgré l'arrivée de la deuxième vague du COVID-19, la situation en Géorgie reste plus ou moins stable et pour le moment, le gouvernement ne discute pas de mesures restrictives à grande échelle, au moins pour Tbilissi. Mais les théâtres ne sont pas encore ouverts et les spectacles, performances, festivals, expositions ou autres manifestations culturelles se déroulent en plein air ou en ligne. Il est aussi à noter que malgré la fermeture des salles de théâtres, aucun festival ou première n'était ni annulé ni reporté.

La section géorgienne de l'AICT était une des premières à s'être approprié les différents formats en ligne.

1/ Début mars, sous l'initiative de notre membre Lasha Chkartishvili, la section a mis en œuvre le projet "Théâtre en quarantaine", une série de 20 discussions en ligne avec des critiques, artistes,

metteurs en scène de renommée ou débutants. Une série d'articles réalisés par nos critiques dans le cadre du même projet "Théâtre en quarantaine" a été publiée sur les blogs des organisateurs et participants, ainsi que dans la revue *Théâtre*.

2/ Les membres de l'AICT-Géorgie ont assuré la gestion et la mise en marche du « Guide en ligne des Théâtres Régionaux », qui a rassemblé toutes les informations sur les théâtres (contacts, répertoire, histoire, salles, paramètres techniques, etc.) ; et, à l'initiative de la secrétaire générale de notre association Marina Vasadze, a été lancé et mis en œuvre le projet, Bibliothèque électronique de la dramaturgie mondiale''.

3/ Les autres activités très importantes de l'AICT-Géorgie étaient :

- la co-organisation et participation à la conférence internationale – « Théâtre Online, 2020 » organisée par nos collègues de Kazakhstan
- deux livres ("Géorgien Théâtre 2015-2019" & "Géorgien Théâtre 2020") publiés en partenariat avec la maison d'édition Centaure
- 8 émissions en ligne « Mon Shakespeare, avec et par les metteurs en scène géorgiens contemporains »
- À partir du 18 octobre, lancement du projet en ligne « Prose interprétée et commentée par les réalisateurs géorgiens contemporains ».

À part cela, en période de confinement, nos critiques remplissaient leurs fonctions de :

- membres du Conseil consultatif du Ministère de la Culture;
- membres du conseil d'administration et du comité de sélection pour le Show case du Festival international de Tbilissi qui sera en ligne en décembre;
- membres du Jury Prix Tsinandali pour les Jeunes créateurs et Grand Prix National de Théâtre
- membre de la Commission des projets de théâtre à la Mairie de Tbilissi

Je voudrais également vous signaler l'arrivée de deux nouveaux membres dans les rangs de l'Association. Il s'agit de Shorena Tsitsagi (parfaitement francophone, maîtrisant l'anglais aussi, master en arts du spectacle de la Sorbonne) et Kethy Kvantaliani, également francophone, avec une expérience de travail au théâtre Rustaveli, traductrice, journaliste d'Art.

Moi, personnellement, j'ai participé aux discussions sur le théâtre et la quarantaine, à la création d'une bibliothèque électronique de la dramaturgie mondiale et collaboré activement avec l'institut français dans le programme « écrivains et livres à lire ».

Je tiens également à noter que dans toutes les manifestations en ligne, notre Association, son importance et ses activités étaient toujours et tout particulièrement mentionnées.

*Faite à Tbilissi, le 15 octobre, 2020*

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**Comex 17 octobre 2020**

**Trésorerie**

**Stéphane Gilbert**

**Situation au 15 octobre 20**



<b>Compte général / General account</b>	29 800 € (je dois recevoir / I have to receive 2100 €)
<b>Compte Critical Stages / CS account</b>	3 300 €
<b>Compte d'épargne / Savings account</b>	5 500 €

\*

### **Coûts pour CS costs**

Editing Mark Brown	1000 €
Editing Michel Vaïs	1000 €
CS Webmaster – Grèce	3000 €
CS Assistant - Grèce	1000 €
Total:	6000 €

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 Site Webmaster – Roumanie 1200 €  
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### **Report for the EXCOM meeting, October 2020 Zuzana Uličianska, member, Slovakia**

Since the EXCOM meeting in Chicago (which, I believe, still remains a very nice memory to most of us), the situation in the world has changed so dramatically that it's almost impossible to cover all the events that took place, or better to say, all the events that did not take place during this turbulent year.

Theatres in Slovakia did not to present their shows live from March till June 2020 (in most cases), and have stopped showing their performances to the public again since October 15th. It was really an immense chance that during the summer time I could participate in a couple of inspiring theatre events, including the festival in Salzburg, Bregenz (Austria) and Pilsen, Czech Republic.

#### **Congress in Bratislava**

From October till the beginning of March, both the Slovak centre of the AICT and the Theatre Institute worked hard to make the organisation of the AICT/IATC congress in Bratislava possible. The programme of the festival New Drama and the Showcase of the Slovak Theatre was selected, the hotel accommodation and the places for the accompanying events were booked. The call for the AICT/IATC Conference was answered by a number of our colleagues from all over the world, the selection of the abstracts was almost finished by the time the decision to cancel the congress came after discussion with the EXCOM. The financial support from the Slovak Arts Council linked to the congress has been in consequence declined. The new deadlines for the funding programmes of the Slovak Arts Council are not announced yet, but it is predictable that SC AICT should send the application by the end of November or December at the latest. Some other support agencies can have their deadlines by the end of the year as well.

#### **Slovak Centre of the AICT**

Fortunately, the Slovak centre of the AICT membership is growing, we do have at the moment almost 80 active members and in some aspect, our activities are still business as usual. Our members and collaborators are trying to cover the shows that “happen to happen” and put the reviews on our online portal: [www.monitoringdivadiel.sk](http://www.monitoringdivadiel.sk). We are even going to launch the new online project for teenagers called SMARTheatre. The AICT prize for contribution to the theatre has been given to two laureates and attracted even the attention of the national TV main news. The

present national board is about to finish its term; the next national congress of the SC AICT should take place by February 2021.

### **General Covid-19 situation in Slovakia**

Slovakia was among the safest countries during the first wave of Covid-19 pandemic, at the moment, however, belongs to the worst, taking almost the „Czech“ path. The Slovak government reintroduced strict measures (masks even outdoors, no mass events, no gathering over 6 persons, closed secondary school and universities) except for the total lockdown we were experiencing during the spring.

For more information about the covid-19 situation and situation in Slovakia in general, you can consult this site:

<https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22365153/slovakia-coronavirus-disease-statistics-number-of-patients.html>

The big difference is, however, that Slovaks are not so patient with the governmental measures, especially the artists are at the moment very angry, as the cultural sector was not helped enough during the first wave and now, music clubs, independent theatres, individual artists, etc. are mostly on the brink of financial disaster.

<https://spectator.sme.sk/c/22503460/cultural-organisations-will-protest-to-draw-attention-to-problems-in-the-creative-industry.html>

The present government came into power almost simultaneously with the outbreak of Covid-19, so it is rather managerially inexperienced, especially our young minister of culture, which is part of the problem. Many cultural institutions (starting with the Slovak National Theatre) are undergoing the selection procedures for their directors. It can take another couple of months to have a stable leadership in the important cultural institutions.

### **Theatre events in Slovakia**

The **Theatre Nitra International Festival** was held in September, however, without any foreign company and with many other changes in their programme.

<https://nitrafest.sk/en/home/>

The **Nová dráma/New Drama Festival** will be held at the end of October, but it will be just a couple online events, mostly readings, no performances.

<https://www.novadrama.sk/program/?den=2020-10-28>

The festival **Bratislava in movement** started on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, couple of performances took place, but it was cancelled as all the public events in Slovakia.

[www.abp.sk](http://www.abp.sk)

The **Slovak Dance Platform** (a showcase of Slovak dance) aimed at international curators should take place in November, now, it's postponed till May 2021.

[www.danceplatform.sk](http://www.danceplatform.sk)

In this situation we can only ask with the Slovak artist Fero Lipták (I am attaching few of his drawings just to cheer up a bit our dark mood): What is not going to happen next?

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## **IATC TURKEY REPORT**

### **Ragıp Ertuğrul**

- 2019-2020 theatre season was interrupted by the pandemic and the Theatre Critics Association (TEB) Awards Program had to be cancelled.
- In order to survive and continue to make theatre, independent theatre groups made the following demands which we also define as their right and consider urgent;
  - Independent theatres should be exempted from taxes such as VAT, Income Tax, withholding Tax, and regulations should be made regarding the existing debts.
  - Expenses such as electricity, natural gas and water should be frozen until January 2021. For the future expenditures, a discount regulation should be planned and applied.
  - Until January 2021, rents for the venues of independent theatres must be covered by the state.
  - Salaries and SSI premiums of independent theatre workers must be paid by the state until January 2021, and regulations regarding premium debts must be made.
  - Until the theatre season starts in a healthy way, the minimum life conditions of all individuals working at the theatre industry whose titles mentioned above in the declaration, should be provided with financial support.
  - Theatre law should be enacted without wasting time. Independent theatres should be regarded as art institutions producing public service rather than business enterprise.
  - The terms and conditions of the regulation of the financial support given by the Ministry of Culture to private theatres should be urgently rearranged in line with the needs of the day.
- On May 18, ASSITEJ Turkey, held a zoom meeting for Children's and Youth Theatres with the title "Recommendations on COVID Process".
- A campaign, starting with 2000 theatre workers' signatures, reached out to several theatre people with 30 thousand signatures and 427 theatre companies all around Turkey and it turned into an umbrella initiative named "Let Our Theatre Live" with the aim of protecting the rights of independent theatres directly and collectively. President of IATC Turkey Section, Ragıp Ertuğrul was elected to the Initiative's Executive Board.
- The initiative "Let Our Theatre Live" dedicated to follow rights-based demands, announced its demands to the public this time with a statement read in front of the closed theatre halls on 11 July.
- Since its first premiere in Berlin in 2013, "Remote X" (as it is generically known), has travelled to more than 50 cities including Lisbon, Madrid, Moscow, New York, São Paulo, St. Petersburg and more. "Remote Istanbul" opened to the public from 19 September with a première on 12 September (in Turkish) and 13 September (in English). Performances will be held over the weekends until 15 November and tours will be available in both Turkish and English. In the interest of creating and maintaining a safe performance experience, new measures and protocol will be in place within the set COVID-19 health and safety regulations.

- Dedicated to share all knowledge and experience acquired since its establishment, Theatre Cooperative, is targeting to establish seven theatre cooperatives in seven regions of the country. Founded in line with this goal, the South Marmara Theatre Cooperative, shortly after its establishment, realized its first event; Bursa Open-Air Theatre Days. Organized to support private theatres that fell apart from their audience due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Bursa Open-Air Theatre Days, took place between 21-31 August 2020.
- Some private theatres that did not take part in any of these platforms also established the Theatre Producers Association (TİYAD) to claim their rights.
- Istanbul Fringe Festival was held digitally between 21-27 September, 2020. There were over 180 project applications for the festival. Due to the measures taken in response to the current global pandemic Istanbul Fringe Festival 2020 took place as a hybrid format between September 21-27. International artists were invited to participate digitally while local artists were invited to perform live in Istanbul respecting the current social distancing regulations. Most of the performances were online for 7 days and live performances broadcast as well as live workshops, artist meetings, panels and parties.
- International Istanbul Theatre Festival will be held in November 2020 in accordance with New Normal; more digital performances, only a few live performances without the audience, workshops and speeches. As Theatre Critics Association, we are organising online workshops; one of them for writing critic practice and the other for a critical view to theatre works.

==END==