

**Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the
International Association of Theatre Critics,
held in Stratford, 10th October 2008**

1. Attendance

Those present: Yun-Cheol Kim (President), Michel Vaïs (General Secretary), Lis Hellström Sveningsson (Sweden), David Adams (Great Britain), Paulo Eduardo Carvalho (Portugal), Don Rubin (Canada), Akiko Tachiki (Japan), Jonathan Abarbanel (USA), Tomasz Milkowski (Poland), Ivan Medenica (Adjunct Secretary General, Serbia), Kalina Stefanova, director of symposiums. Also present for the second part of the meeting: Maria Helena Serôdio, honorary General Secretary and editor of the web journal, and Andrzej Zurowski, honorary vice-president.

Absences: Jean-Pierre Han (France), Katayoun Hosseinzadeh Salmasy (Iran), Irène Sadowska-Guillon (treasurer).

The participants regretted the absence of Katayoun, and of the Iranian participant in the seminar for new critics, Ashkan Ghafar Adli, because both were refused a visa from the Canadian authorities. It was decided that Michel and Yun-Cheol will send a letter to someone in authority whom Don will suggest. Jonathan wondered if we can ask UNESCO for a support in this matter.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted unanimously and is as appears below.

3. Approval of Minutes of the ExCom meeting in Sofia, 18th April 2008

It was adopted unanimously, with one correction. Jonathan says in item 6.1, he was looking for a partnership with the Chicago Humanities Festival, not the Humana Festival.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

None.

5. Reports:

5.1. President

Yun-Cheol was in South Africa in early July, to celebrate the creation of the new S-A section, but this did not happen. Only one member has joined the IATC, but Yun-Cheol was hopeful that the section would start soon. Then he was in Czech Republic, in September, 2008. He discussed with the director of the festival, Jan Burian, and had a meeting with Vaclav Havel. Next year, in 2009, during the second week of September, Mr. Havel will be asked to be a keynote speaker at the Pilsen Festival, where the IATC will have an established critics seminar.

5.2. Secretary General

Michel sent his report in advance. See annexe A. He added that Alja Predan announced the revitalization of the Slovenian section in 2009.

5.3. Treasurer

Irene, who sent her report in advance (Annexe B), was asked to specify what the «divers» item was about.

5.4. Other ExCom members

Tomasz announced a possibility for a new critics seminar in 2009, and another one with the Europe Prize. They will be discussed in item 6.

6. Programme

6.1 Congress in 2010

Jonathan distributed a written report about the progress of the organization of the Chicago event. Among the topics of interest for the symposium of the Congress is: social and political diversity, how is this reflected in theatre? Comments: Don said that a commitment of \$100,000 two years ahead of the event is very promising. However, the current global economic situation makes the situation unpredictable. The projected theme of the symposium is very interesting.

About the 2012 Congress: Tomasz said he was working on two projects for Warsaw. The situation should be clearer in a few weeks. His report was sent in advance to the ExCom. See Annexe C.

Yun-Cheol also said that the Chinese section was willing to host the 2012 IATC Congress in Beijing, just in case the Congress in Poland does not work. The decision should be taken at the next ExCom.

6.2 Executive committee

Our next ExCom meeting will be in Wroclaw in the framework of the Europe Prize on March 31st or 1st April – April 5th. It will be a good occasion for the Polish critics to meet, to celebrate Krystian Lupa, 50 years of the creation of Grotowski's lab (UNESCO has declared 2009 to be Grotowski year) and the 100th anniversary of a great Polish actress, Maya Komorowska. Alessandro Martinez wants to have as many critics as possible, so we can have a Polish symposium, an extraordinary congress, a new critics seminar, an established critics symposium, and a meeting of the new web journal. We can also extend the period. Some ExCom members find this may be too much, especially because we will have a large symposium (60 participants) in Novi Sad six weeks later, and another one in Amsterdam (80 participants) a little after. It may be wiser to combine the Polish symposium and the established critics' symposium.

It was decided to have the following events:

- New critics' seminar (starting before March 31st)
- ExCom meeting (as late as possible, 4th or 5th April)
- Polish and IATC symposium (at the beginning, maybe April 1st)
- Web journal editorial meeting
- A press conference for the announcements of IATC activities (web journal, Thalia award, progress of the code of ethics, etc.).
- The possible launching of the proceedings of the Sofia Congress.

Final dates to be announced as soon as possible.

Ivan said that if anything goes wrong with Wroclaw, we have two other possibilities for spring 2009: Novi Sad or Amsterdam.

For Fall 2009: no firm proposition yet, except one from the Baltic House in October and one in Romania connected with the Ionesco year (see the minutes of the Thessaloniki ExCom meeting). Yun-Cheol will speak with Ludmila. Beijing is the third possibility.

Michel announced a possibility for a new critics' seminar, an ExCom meeting and a symposium during the Istanbul festival, between 15th May and 4th June 2010. (Letter from Hasan Anamur, from the Turkish section.).

Andrzej talked about a proposal in Poland, in Gdansk in August 2009.

6.3 New critics' seminars

One in Sfantu Gheroghe, Romania, roughly from 20th-30th March 2009, very close to Wroclaw. Another one in Wroclaw with the Europe Theatre Prize; another possible one in May. (In front of the high number of propositions, it may be better to delay this latter invitation to 2010.) And one in Amsterdam in June, about which Ivan will speak later. Michel will send the contact about the Turkish seminar in 2010 to Paulo Eduardo. See Paulo's report in Annexe D.

6.4 Cultural Bridges

The symposiums that are sure are: Novi Sad, Pilsen (second week of September, 2009), Amsterdam; maybe Plovdiv in Bulgaria; also, South Africa: end of February – beginning of March in 2009, in Capetown, for 4-5 critics on invitation.

Ivan spoke about the symposiums in Novi Sad and Amsterdam. The topic for Novi Sad is «International theatre festivals and audience development» (28-31 May 2009) and for Amsterdam: «Forced to tour or *tour de force*» (17-21 June 2009). The official invitation for Novi Sad is already on our web site. Ivan also presented the new critics seminar for Amsterdam which topic is an extension of the symposium's theme: "Elements of belonging – elements of belonging in a theatrical context". Both symposiums, in Novi Sad and Amsterdam, are of a big scale, so their organization has already started and it runs very well.

6.5 Other proposals

Emil Boroghina, from the International Shakespeare Festival in Craiova, intends to invite us in the 2010 event, starting on April 23rd (Shakespeare's birthday), with a more important participation of IATC. According to Andrzej, this festival will be on *Hamlet* only.

7. Relations with other organizations

Yun-Cheol and Michel were invited in Madrid by the ITI, but could not attend. Yun-Cheol reminded the ASSITEJ leaders that we should revitalize our partnership.

8. Membership and recruitment

See Michel's report about Tanzania, India and Slovenia.

Other business

Kalina asked to mention a reminder to all IATC members to send her any article that was written about the Sofia Congress. This should be put on the web site too.

Second part of the Excom meeting, held in Niagara-on-the-Lake, 12th October 2008

Yun-Cheol proposed a change in the agenda: Maria-Helena to be offered an opportunity to inform us immediately about the project of the web journal. In the original agenda, this was the item 10.4.

10. 4 Web journal project

The name will probably be: *Critical stages – IATC web journal /Scènes critiques – la revue Web de l’AICT*. There was a discussion about the name: whether we need the word „web“ or not (considering the fact that our journal will exist only on the web, is it necessary to underline this in the name itself?). It would be a biannual journal (autumn-spring), with 100-130 pages (320 000 characters with spaces) and regular sections: presentations of books, interviews, essays in theatre studies. Languages: English and French. It is not obligatory to have each text in both languages: abstracts should be in the other language.

The Editorial Board will have 15 members from different parts of the world: at least four members should read all the texts of an issue, give comments, suggest interventions; at least four different parts of the world should be taken into consideration in each issue; the first issue is planned for October 2009; the journal will be illustrated with photos and video material (including YouTube), which means that the rights of the authors should be regulated; the journal would have rights for the published texts – the author could publish a same text somewhere else if he/she underlines that it was published for the first time in our web journal.

Money is needed for the maintenance of the web site and for the linguistic editing of the articles; the work of the Editorial Board is not going to be paid; a debate emerged whether editors themselves could make the linguistic editing or should we hire paid experts; Paulo’s observation was supported: since there are only a few native English or French speakers on the Board, it would be a big job for them. Yun-Cheol concluded that the experts would be paid for the linguistic editing. Maria-Helena underlined that, beside the financial support that Yun-Cheol has already found in South Korea, we will need more money. She is of the opinion that we shouldn’t accept publicities from performances, theatres and festivals, but that we could accept publicities from other journals, universities, etc. Yun-Cheol reminded us that the first meeting of the Editorial Board will be in Wrocław.

A debate on the journal’s concept has emerged. Don was of the opinion that this journal should be different from all the others, asked what would be its specificity, and developed a thesis that it should deal, first of all, with topics related to theatre criticism itself; Maria-Helena answered that our journal should be distinguished by the quality of its texts and by a multicultural approach to each topic, which perfectly fits into the general orientation of IATC; Don replied that this is the goal of every journal; Maria-

Helena enumerated possible general subjects: national theatres, the case of directors who are working in foreign countries, the destiny of famous theatre companies from the 60's and 70's...; David formulated a possible concept as follows: from critics, for critics, about criticism; Paulo is of the opinion that it shouldn't be dedicated only to the critics, that we should not be so self-centered.

9. Thalia Prize: a proposal by Margareta & Jean-Pierre and a discussion

Yun-Cheol reminded us that Margareta and Jean-Pierre were given a task to propose a revised concept of the Thalia Prize: he read their proposal (see Annexe E) and invited us to give our comments (a debate was running in different directions: this is just a brief summary, in the chronological order, of the main dilemmas and conclusions).

After the acknowledgment to Margareta and Jean-Pierre for their work, Paulo remarked that in the first sentence of the second paragraph (before comma) it should already be clearly said what is a *major contribution* – it is not an artistic achievement; Paulo is against the idea of not giving the Prize if the laureate is not in a position to come to the ceremony – it wouldn't be serious to revoke our decision when the laureate has already been chosen.

Tomasz remarked that the laureate should at least accept the award.

Don had a few dilemmas; he agreed with Paulo, in the second paragraph it should be immediately clear that we are not thinking of somebody who „creates“ theatre, but of somebody who contributed to the larger and deeper understanding of theatre in the world; Don has a problem with a „positive discrimination“ – the ethnic and gender balance should exist, but not formulated in such a strict manner; he has a major problem with the procedure: it should be underlined that ExCom has to discuss the nominations; if we ask for the nominations, then the Prize has to be driven out from there.

Michel: we need a fixed frame for the elaboration of the nomination – 300 words.

Don: during its debate, the ExCom could narrow the number of nominations to, let's say, four candidates and this short list could be put on our web site; a dilemma emerged whether to make this list of nominations public (either the original or the shorter one) or not; Paulo is of the opinion that we shouldn't make the short list public; Don agreed: it could stay only for us.

Michel: it might be good to make a kind of range list of the main candidates for the president to have the possibility to contact them in advance and check who is able and willing to come to the ceremony; Yun-Cheol agreed that in any case we should avoid the situation that happened with Peter Zadek at the Premio Europa; Lis: what are we supposed to do if he/she cancels his/her appearance on the ceremony when the decision has already been publicly announced? Don: he/she has to be obliged to write a speech which would be read on the ceremony (everybody agrees). A unanimous decision: the Thalia Prize should be given even if it happens that the laureate couldn't come to take it.

Yun-Cheol insisted upon the discussion about the paragraph number three (gender and cultural/ethnic balance); Don: it should be suggested, but not formulated as „a must“; Paulo agreed with Don: it should be stressed that IATC is very sensitive to a gender and cultural/ethnic criterion (Paulo is for an „affirmative“ formulation and not for a kind of „prohibition“). Don insisted upon the criterion of the „international influence“ of the laureate instead of cultural/ethnic/regional and gender criterion – he has a bigger problem with the gender correctness, because the cultural diversity should be a „sous-entendu“; he stressed that the „international character“ of the Prize is logically arising from the nature and the goals of IATC itself, and that all these elements could be connected in the first paragraph - that we don't need a kind of a „special demand“ considering this question.

Ivan suggested that we should define a number of possible nominations coming from one national section; Yun-Cheol concluded that each section or individual member (our statutes say that individual members exist only in the countries in which there are no national sections of IATC) could nominate only one candidate for the Thalia Prize; it was concluded that all nominations should be collected in this way, that the ExCom is supposed to discuss only official nominations (each member of the ExCom is, at the same time, a member of a national section: if he/she has an individual proposal, he/she should find a support for this proposal on a national level and then send it as an official nomination).

10. Projects

The items **10.1** (Journals exchange) and **10.3** (Book project) were not discussed, while the item **10.4**. (Web journal project) was moved to the beginning of the meeting.

10.2 Code of ethics

Yun-Cheol remarked that, as we are not going to have an extraordinary Congress in Wroclaw, it's not urgent any more to finish work on the code of ethics (Yun-Cheol thought that we could officially launch the code of ethics in Wroclaw); now we have time till the Congress in 2010; it was decided that the deadline should be defined for getting all the comments of the national sections (till now we've only got the answer from Croatia), and that before that Michel and Don would make a language revision of Yun-Cheol's final version of the code of ethics, which is based on Ian's revision of Ivan's initial proposal, which was a compilation of already existing codes of national sections (Canada, Quebec, USA, Serbia) and suggestions of Matti Linavuori from Finland.

10.5. Website: operating policies

Michel gave compliments to the new web site, its visual identity, speed and efficiency and informed everybody what the procedure for updating is: all information for our web site should be sent to him, and then he will transfer it to Ivan and his collaborator

Dusana. Yun-Cheol would like to have a bit more information about our work on the web site.

11. Any other business

11.1. Andrzej Zurovski's proposal (it was presented after the item 10.4)

He distributed a written proposal for the project of IATC's publishing activity, which should cover the very essential theatre topics, a deep professional research, because this is something that is, from his point of view, missing in our activity. Each edition could have a few hundred copies and could be distributed to all national sections and, in addition to that, sold in the book shops specialized for theatre books (11-12 euros for a book). Andrzej underlined a question of publishing and distribution (he has a potential publisher in Poland).

Lis stressed it would be an enormous work and doesn't see who could take such a responsibility; Don suggested that somebody from the ExCom coordinates all publishing activities of IATC; Kalina supported the idea of launching an edition of books and suggested to IATC to offer a co-production to the well known publishing houses dealing with theatre books; Ivan did not agree with the point from Andrzej's report and underlined that IATC's symposiums of a big scale are dealing with the most important theatre topics, that those are not informal debates and that, in many cases, a serious proceedings are published afterwards.

Yun-Cheol concluded that Andrzej's proposal is interesting, but that there are problems of a technical nature and that we need more information on the implementation of this project.

11.2. Irène Sadowska-Guillon's reply

Immediately after the meeting in Stratford, Michel got a reply from Irène concerning the "divers" items from our budget and read it to the ExCom members (see end of Annexe A).

11.3 Suggestion for the initiative of IATC Award

Ivan suggested Kalina's old initiative concerning the Critics' Award for the best performance (or some other category) at the international theatre festivals under the patronage of IATC to be renewed; the project would be on a mutual benefit for both IATC to whom it would bring a larger presence in the world theatres (like FIPRESCI Award at the film festivals), and to festival itself who would gain the extra international reference. Ivan did not want to suggest this idea prior he has not been given a general support by some of the distinguished world festivals (by now he has got three, and he is continuing with his research); a critics' jury would have from 3 to 5 members, among which most would be foreigners (2 or 3), delegated by IATC, and others would come from the country that organizes the festival, and would be delegated by the national IATC

section, or by the festival itself, if the national IATC section doesn't exist in that country; the transport and hotel expenses for the jury members coming from abroad would be on the charge of the festival. Andrzej immediately supported Ivan's suggestion and reminded that such an award has already existed in IATC's long history and that it used to be given at Théâtre des Nations. He is of the opinion that the award should be initiated at the most prominent world festivals, and not just at anyone. Ivan put the stress that some of the biggest and most prominent festivals, such as the festival in Avignon and in Vienna, are not competitive and that it is a little bit absurd to put the initiative for the award in question, while they do not give awards at all; Yun-Cheol and Michel supported the suggestion and the Excom unanimously delegated Ivan and Kalina to develop the project of the IATC Award.

12. Date and place of next meeting

Wroclaw, at the very end of the Premio Europa (the precise date is to be fixed later).

In Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada, on 10th and 12th of October 2008

Michel Vaïs, General Secretary
Ivan Medenica, Adjunct General Secretary