

**Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the
International Association of Theatre Critics,
held in Thessaloniki, Greece, 26 April 2007 at 11am**

1. Attendance

Those present : Ian Herbert (president), Michel Vaïs (general secretary), Irène Sadowska-Guillon (treasurer), Yun-Cheol Kim (vice-president – Korea), Margareta Sörenson (vice-president, director of seminars – Sweden), Don Rubin (Canada), Juan-Antonio Hormigón (Spain), Larry DeVine (USA), Jean-Pierre Han (France), Tomasz Milkowski (Poland), Maria Helena Serôdio (Portugal), Ludmila Patlanjoglu (Romania), Nikolai Pesochinsky (Russia).

Apologies for absence : Immediately after her arrival in Thessaloniki, Kalina Stefanova (director of colloquia) had had to return to Bulgaria because of illness in her family.

Two **observers** were also present : Manuel Vieites (Spain) and Ivan Medenica (Serbia). The latter was there to help Michel and Ian with translation.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted unanimously and is as appears below.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 21 October 2006, in Seoul

These were adopted unanimously, with no corrections.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

None.

5. Preparation for the Thessaloniki colloquium

This would take place immediately after the opening ceremony, later that day. Ian said that all the papers had been printed and would be available for distribution to those present.

6. Reports :

6.1. President

Ian had been working on the Salonica colloquium and on editing the programme for the Europe Prize. He had also been involved in preparations for the 24th IATC Congress, which would take place from 14-20 April 2008 in Sofia, under the aegis of the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture. Since Sofia is about five hours by road from Thessaloniki, where next year's Europe Prize ceremony will again take place (from 9-13 April), we need to look at how to get delegates from one city to the other.

Ian emphasised the importance for IATC of its partnership with the Europe Prize, which costs us nothing, yet gives us the same visibility as the UTE and the Convention of European Theatres, who are financial contributors. He said that he was willing to represent the Association in Europe Prize activities after the end of his presidency, if the resulting continuity was seen to be useful.

Larry DeVine would speak later in the meeting on the prospects for the 2010 Congress.

Ian also mentioned that he had attended the Nitra festival in Slovakia in his role of IATC President, and would be doing so at a showcase of Greek theatre to be held in Athens soon after this meeting.

6.2. General Secretary

Michel said that he had been working on developing the website, to make space for the journal exchange project. He had also supervised issue 121 of *Jeu*, which includes a dossier on 'The End of Criticism?' (the theme for the Turin colloquium), for which he had translated

all the papers. He had also put together the colloquium on Robert Lepage for this meeting in Thessaloniki, a task which had taken several months' work.

6.3. Treasurer

Irène gave her full report to the general secretary after the meeting, because it had been lost with her baggage en route. In it she noted that the financial situation remains stable, with half the sections paid up to 2007. At 16 April 2007 there was subscription income of €1,764.05 to add to a balance of €15,717.03 and interest of €176.09, against expenditure of €1,704.29 (the bulk of which was €1,522.84 for the website). This gives a grand total in hand of €15,952.88. Expenditure therefore remains well under control. Irène suggested that the Korean section should be excused their subscription for 2007 and 2008, in view of their successful organisation of the 2006 extraordinary congress in Seoul, which had slightly exceeded its budget. This was proposed by Larry DeVine, seconded by Maria Helena. Carried unanimously.

6.4. Other Committee members

Yun-Cheol : the Seoul congress had gone off well, with a slight deficit which the Korean section could cover. One of the best results of the congress had been the setting up of an Asian regional group, which was expected to hold its first meeting in two years' time in either Taiwan or China. Michel reminded us of the definition of 'regional section' in the statutes, which meant that the Asian colleagues would be forming a regional association, rather than a regional IATC section.

In Kalina's absence, Ian gave the details of the 24th congress, which was to take place in Sofia from 14-20 April 2008, immediately after the 2008 Europe Prize; the latter would be in Thessaloniki from 9-13 April and would include the last meeting of the outgoing ExCom. The Bulgarian Ministry of Culture would be directly responsible for the congress, which would probably take place in the National Theatre, while delegates would stay in the five-star Grand Hotel, Sofia. A showcase of Bulgarian theatre would run concurrently. The Bulgarian Minister of Culture, Prof Stefan Danailov, was coming to Thessaloniki and Ian and Michel would be meeting him on Sunday, together with the organiser of the Europe Prize, Alessandro Martinez. [At this meeting it was established that congress sessions would also take place in the Grand Hotel]

We were reminded of the 24th congress theme, which had been circulated on 26 February by Michel, and which is to be found on the website.

7. Activities

7.1. 2010 Congress

Larry spoke of the possibility of holding the 25th congress in Chicago. It would cost around €200,000, and the US section can expect no financial contribution to this from its government. A working party led by Jonathan Abarbanel was looking at possible sources of funding. Depending on the outcome, a definitive proposal could be made some eighteen months before the likely congress date, but probably not by the time of Sofia. Larry recalled that the US section had been affiliated since 1981 and had profited greatly over the years from the hospitality of other sections. He hoped that this might be an opportunity to reciprocate. Spain is also interested in hosting a congress, and is actively researching possibilities. Juan Antonio said that it was a matter of seizing opportunities when they arose, in Spain's fluid political situation.

7.2. Executive Committee

Nikolai offered to host the Executive Committee meeting for Autumn 2007 during the Baltic House festival in St Petersburg (19-28 October), which was this year entirely devoted to the work of Eimuntas Nekrosius. As usual, ExCom would be offered accommodation over five days, with four nights' hotel.

Since the seminar for young critics was to take place in Spain from 23-27 October, we should try to arrange the ExCom dates to allow Paulo Eduardo to be present in St Petersburg. Nikolai mentioned that there would be another festival at the same time, organised by the Alexandrinski Theatre, and other productions would be available including probably one by Lev Dodin. It was agreed that the visit of ExCom would be from 25 (arrival) to 29 October (departure) in St Petersburg. The mornings of the 27th and 28th would be made available for ExCom's meeting. We would see Nekrosius' *Faust* on the 28th. If Paulo Eduardo could not make it, Maria Helena would deputise.

7.3. Seminars for Young Critics

Margareta Sörenson gave her report. (See Annexe)

Yun-Cheol spoke of a possible international seminar in Wroclaw, Poland, at the invitation of Krystyna Meisner, director of the Dialog festival. We might have help in its organisation from the Iranian and Indian young critics who had been guests of the recent Swedish Biennial.

7.4. Cultural Bridges/Meetings of Established Critics

The next meetings are planned for Almada (Portugal) at the beginning of July, and Santiago (Chile) at the end of August. Maria Helena reminded us that there have previously been two young critics' seminars in Almada. Ian, Don, Yun-Cheol, Jean-Pierre and Ludmila will be there, as well as Hervé Guay from Québec. Michel, who was also invited, would not be able to be present. Maria Helena outlined the theme of the colloquium and its programme. Several members were also invited to the Chile colloquium, organised by Carola Oyarzún, among them Ian, Kalina and Michel.

Don distributed the proposed programme for a colloquium in Toronto, Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake (Canada) in June 2008, on the university training of critics. He expects around a hundred participants, including 50 or 60 from abroad. Since the dates are close to Sofia, Don thought it possible to put the meeting back to October of that year. He would also be able to host an ExCom and a young critics' seminar, although a young critics' seminar is already proposed for the marionette festival in Jonquière, Québec, in September 2008.

Tomasz spoke of a possible meeting in Poland, in April 2009.

8. Nomination of Ivan Medenica as Adjunct General Secretary

This was suggested by Michel, proposed by Maria Helena, seconded by Yun-Cheol and adopted unanimously. Ivan Medenica accepted this new post.

9. Projects

9.1. Thalia Prize

Larry DeVine brought two nominations from ATCA : Judith Malina and Anne Bogart. We are expecting further nominations before the St Petersburg meeting, where we shall have to pick the winner. Existing nominations will also be reconsidered. Ian undertook to check and redistribute the rules of the prize. It was agreed to invite the sponsor of the statuettes, Emil Boroghina, to Sofia, but it was not thought necessary to invite their creator, Dragos Buhagiar.

9.2. Journal Exchange and book project

Six journals are now on the website. Two others had asked for information. Ian found this total disappointingly small. This is a unique international network for journal exchange, which we must actively promote outside our congresses. If journals wish to put articles on the site in their own languages, that is acceptable, but the basic presentation of each journal should be in French or English.

Sanja Nikjevic would be calling a meeting during the Europe Prize to discuss the possibilities for a book or books on teaching theatre criticism.

9.3. Code of Ethics

Michel said that he not yet launched the working party on the code of ethics, because he wanted to be sure that Manuel, who had put forward the idea in Turin but was not present in Seoul, was willing to take part.

Manuel wanted to complete his work on the Spanish code before moving on to the international one. Meanwhile, Ivan suggested that we should ask those sections who already have one to send us their codes. These include Serbia, the USA, French and English-speaking Canada. The discussion would resume in January 2008. Michel will ask the other sections to send in their codes, and Larry, Don and Ivan will send theirs to Michel, who will add that of Québec and distribute copies of them all to the working party, which consists of Manuel Vieites and Matti Linnavuori.

9.4. New Critics' Website

Margareta described this initiative, which has a new address, <<http://www.extraordinary-young-critics.org/>>. Ian asked that it be clearly linked to the IATC site, and vice versa.

10. Relations with other organisations

Very quiet at the moment. Brian Singleton is the new president of FIRT.

11. Communications

11.1. Website

Ian finds the current IATC website a total disaster. Many users find it too slow, insufficiently interactive, hard to navigate, lacking in illustrations and generally unwelcoming. If anyone knows a web designer who might address these problems, they should inform Michel, who is open to all suggestions. Jean-Pierre proposed that we see what amount we are prepared to pay for this, but Maria Helena thought it better to put forward ideas for improvements, because designers can be found very cheaply in some countries. We could talk to Ioana, in Romania, or others among the young critics, or even to the designer of the *Theatre Record* site, who gives his services gratis. Ivan Medenica said he would get an estimate and some ideas from the designer of the Sterijino pozorje site. All ExCom members were asked to follow this up.

11.2. Congress Proceedings.

Yun-Cheol is still waiting for five papers from the Seoul congress. The proceedings will be published in three separate editions, Korean, French and English, in October 2007.

It was noted that the proceedings of the Turin congress colloquium had been published in Quebec, Moldova and Portugal among other countries. They would also appear in the Europe Prize volume on Harold Pinter.

12. New members, recruitment

The following national sections have not paid any subscription since 2005, and have not responded to requests from the treasurer. They have therefore been declared no longer to be members of IATC : **Estonia, Iceland, Ireland, Slovenia, Uruguay**. Likewise, the following individual members are no longer in standing : **Jorge Prada Prada, Rachid Mountasar, Pablo Garcia Gamez** and **Said Ennaji**. The general secretary will remove these countries and individuals from the website, but keep them on the electronic mailing list, so that they

remain informed of our activities. In addition, the following sections are considered as inactive, not having paid for 2006 or 2007 : **Cuba** and **Denmark**.

FIRT is holding its conference in South Africa in July 2007, and Don will be taking part. He will try to encourage the critics of that country to form a section.

13. Other business

Juan Antonio Hormigón announced that the journal *ADEteatro* is this year celebrating its 25th anniversary. He also spoke of the work of ADE on an important project to establish a law of theatre for Spain.

14. Date and place of next meeting

Saint Petersburg, 27-28 October 2007.

Meeting closed at 14.50

Michel Vaïs

General Secretary