

**Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the  
International Association of Theatre Critics held in Reus (Spain)  
28-29 October 2005**

**1. Members present, apologies**

**Present :** Ian Herbert (president), Michel Vaïs (general secretary), Irène Sadowska-Guillon (treasurer, delegated for France), Bang-Ock Kim (delegated for Korea), Manuel Vieites (delegated for Spain), Kerri Allen (new delegate for the USA), Tomasz Milkowski (Poland).

**Apologies for absence :** Yun-Cheol Kim (Korea, vice-president), Kalina Stefanova (Bulgaria, vice-president), Georges Banu (France), Paulo Eduardo Carvalho (Portugal), Lumila Patlanjoglu (Romania), Nikolai Pesochinsky (Russia) and Margareta Sörenson (Sweden). The president will offer the association's excuses to the Cos '05 Festival for the disruption caused by late changes in attendance.

**2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was unanimously adopted, as it appears below.

**3. Minutes of the meeting of 5 and 7 May 2005 in Umeå**

The minutes were adopted without alteration.

**4. Matter arising from the minutes**

None.

**5. Reports**

**5.1 President**

See annexe A. Ian has sent a letter on behalf of IATC to Harold Pinter, congratulating him on the Nobel prize which he has recently been awarded.

**5.2 General secretary**

See annexe B. Several points from both these reports will be discussed later in the agenda.

**5.3 Treasurer**

See annexe C. Irène now sends out invoices for subscriptions only to those sections who ask for one. Otherwise she sends out a reminder in November or December for the coming year.

At present IATC has around €18,000 in its bank account, which includes a further €2,500 in 2005 subscriptions received. The website hosts, Colbanet, have been paid – their annual bill is now two thirds less than in 2004. Office expenses remain very low, around €1200 a year.

ExCom approved the treasurer's recommendation that the reconstituted **Croatian** section should be allowed to start from zero in 2006. They have new officers and have been relaunched after several years of inactivity. As regards **Italy**, we hope that the Turin congress will encourage them to restart the section. As for the near-dormant **Iceland** and **Lithuania**, we can hope that the congress will revive their interest, too. A 2006 seminar is in fact planned for Lithuania, and Ian, who is visiting there this December, will hope to talk to their critics and find out how many of them are in the section, to decide their subscription level (subscription rates are now on the website).

**Ireland :** The president had just received an encouraging letter from Ian Hill, who said he was going to pay their subscription and would probably be coming to the 2006 congress. **Slovenia** has not paid since 2003. The president hoped to take this up with the Slovenian critics who would doubtless be at the Novi Sad (Serbia and Montenegro) colloquium in May 2006, if they

did not apply for Turin earlier. **Uruguay** had been excused payment up to 2003, and had not paid since. Michel will raise this with Roger Mirza, Ian with Cesar Herrera.

Irène proposed to suspend Rodney Saint-Éloi (Haïti), Carola Oyarzún (Chile), Carmelinda Guimaraes (Brazil) and Zohra Makach (Morocco), for non-payment of their subscription for several years. Instead, Michel will send them a note with these minutes saying that in the event of non-payment they will no longer receive communications from IATC. Nina Mazur, a Ukrainian citizen now living in Germany, has asked to become an individual member. The Ukrainian section has not paid up to date. Irène will write to Nina and suggest she joins the German section.

#### **5.4 Reports from other ExCom members**

Vice president Kalina Stefanova's report is in annexe D. We noted that she is in touch with critics from Cyprus and Malta about membership and future events. The Cultural Bridge planned for Budapest will not take place, having been refused funding. The committee wished Kalina success in her efforts.

Vice president Yun-Cheol Kim's report is in annexe E. Dasha Krijanskaia, who has a special problem over membership, will be advised to join ATCA. Kerri Allen will find out the possibilities there. She might otherwise be offered associate membership through FIRT, when such an arrangement is agreed (see below). Yun-Cheol's preliminary work on a seminar for young critics in conjunction with the 2007 Dialog festival in Wroclaw, Poland, was also noted (see below).

In his report (annexe F), Paulo Eduardo Carvalho dealt with the seminars, the IATC prize and a likely invitation from Portugal for an event such as an ExCom. (See below)

Ludmila Patlanjoglu had also sent a written report (annexe G). Ian will be seeing her in Bucharest shortly, at the Caragiale Festival. Georges Banu should also be there. Ludmila will be launching the proceedings of the 21st (2003) congress, which we hope can be sent to participants. She is negotiating with the Romanian government to take on the sponsorship of the proposed IATC prize for fifteen to twenty years, and the making of a statuette for it. ExCom offered her its sympathy on the recent death of a close relative.

Tomasz Milkowski's written report is at annexe H. It includes a report on the Theatre and TV colloquium of July 2005 and a proposal for another Wroclaw seminar, this in the context of the festival of monodrama in 2006. See below.

#### **5.5 Verbal reports**

Kerri Allen noted that she had taken part in a US conference on Latin American theatre. ExCom was also told that the next ATCA conference will be in Stratford and Niagara (Canada) from June 13-18 2006. The committee hoped that there would be IATC involvement in this event.

Manuel Vieites reported that ADE is drawing up a code of ethics for its critic members. This will be a very detailed document, like the one on which he collaborated for directors. It would be a professional code, like those adhered to by doctors or engineers. This way it is hoped that the media, among others, will be encouraged to take theatre criticism more seriously. Ian suggested that this work, together with the Quebec critics' code already in existence, might inspire IATC to draw up an international code for its members. He asked Manuel to keep us in touch with the progress of his work.

### **6. Future activities**

#### **6.1 Next Congress : date, place, theme, invitations ; IATC Prize**

There has been a firm proposal from the organisers of the European Theatre Prize, the Premio Europa, to hold our 22<sup>nd</sup> congress in Turin, when the Prize will be given to Harold Pinter and that for New Theatre Realities to Oskaras Korsunovas and Josef Nadj. There will be presentations of the work of all three winners, and in addition a programme (devised for the

Winter Olympics) of five works by Luca Ronconi, a former Premio Europa winner. The dates, as suggested by the Prize's director, Alessandro Martinez, would be as follows: all delegates to arrive 8 March, with the outgoing ExCom having its meeting that day. IATC's congress and general assembly to take place on the 9<sup>th</sup>, with the Premio Europa events following from 10-12 March. Departure of all participants 13 March. We are being offered five nights' accommodation, as well as translation and congress facilities.

It was noted that the association does not at present have an active Italian section. Ian hoped that this could be remedied with the help of Alessandro Martinez.

Irène proposed that we should not seek to stage the originally planned colloquium lasting several days in Turin, partly because of the absence of a working Italian section but also because of the full timetable for the Prize, and the fact that we were expecting to hold a bigger colloquium in Seoul later in the year. Manuel proposed that there should be only a couple of major papers in Turin, followed by discussion. He considers Pinter one of the most important figures in world theatre and expects his presence alone to attract much attention. Tomasz and Michel agreed. Bang-Ock wanted to be sure that there would be enough to discuss in Seoul. Ian wanted us to make sure that top critics came to the Pinter discussions; there should be good interest from the British (for Pinter), the French (Nadj) and the Balts (Korsunovas).

The proposal for a Turin congress was unanimously approved. We shall conduct our public business on 9 March, with the outgoing ExCom meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> and the new committee after the 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Theme of the symposium:**

**Reminder of the theme adopted in Plovdiv: IATC XXII CONGRESS: Theme: *The End of Criticism?***

**Uninformed commentators regularly tell us that theatre is dead, yet it remains the only living art form which continues to touch the hearts and minds of millions.**

**But what of criticism, an area which critics themselves, at least, regard as an essential and integral part of the wider theatre scene? In many countries, newspaper critics are finding their reviews confined to ever decreasing space, or driven out altogether by thinly disguised publicity handouts. Fewer and fewer periodicals exist where the popular critic can comment on the theatre scene, locally or internationally. Television and radio give scant time to cultural commentary of any kind. Serious journals of theatre criticism and evaluation are also in decline as outlets for the trained critic, while the growth of peer-reviewed academic journals sees much writing on theatre passing into the hands of scholars who may rarely see what they are writing about. The growth of the internet has meant a huge growth in websites and weblogs discussing theatre, but how do we judge their content, or the abilities of those producing them?**

**The coming Congress of the International Association of Theatre Critics will seek to address these problems, mixing prepared papers and panel discussions to allow the fullest debate from many viewpoints and many national perspectives. Has Post-modernism destroyed traditional criticism? Have today's new theatre forms and fusions rendered it obsolete? Is there still a place for ideologically oriented criticism? Can video records of theatre events replace written reportage? If criticism as we know it is dying, is it worth the effort to resuscitate it? Are there new forms of criticism more appropriate to today's theatre in a globalised, electronic world?**

**The IATC Congress is the opportunity for the world's leading critics to present their views.**

In the light of the decision to limit prepared congress contributions, we thought of inviting someone to put the case for traditional criticism and someone else to speak against. Perhaps we could have three positive points of view, supporting three categories of IATC membership: a writer for academic journals, an overnight reviewer, and a critic from the 'new media' (radio, TV, internet). Michel mentioned Jean St Hilaire as a daily newspaper reviewer, other suggestions were Nikolai Pesochinski or another Russian. Someone from the US would be good – Kerri will ask for suggestions there. Manuel suggested Terry Eagleton, who is not an IATC member; since he has argued that all criticism is irrelevant, he would make a good

keynote speaker, followed by the three ‘defenders’. All ExCom members are invited to offer their suggestions of IATC speakers, preferably with an international reputation, in the three categories, as well as possible major ‘keynote’ speakers in the event of Terry Eagleton not being available. ExCom hopes that at least one of the speakers will be Francophone (Georges Banu is a strong suggestion), and possibly there should be an Italian contributor.

(Later, Ian suggested that it might also be good to ask a notable figure from Italian theatre, such as Luca Ronconi, to make an opening speech of welcome to IATC delegates. ExCom thought this a good idea. Ian will check the possibilities with Alessandro.)

Alessandro will be asked to cover the publication of the Proceedings of this small meeting, including the subsequent ‘breakout’ discussions, preferably in time for the extraordinary congress in Seoul.

#### **Invitations :**

As usual, each member section is entitled to send two delegates, apart from present ExCom members and the officers. In addition, we agreed that Korea should have an extra delegate, as the section which is to organise the next congress.

We need to know what charges will be for accompanying partners, and whether delegates will have to share rooms.

Honorary members of IATC will also be invited, as will representatives of sister organisations such as ASSITEJ, FIPRESCI, FIRT, ITI, SIBMAS, UNIMA ...

Michel will let members know that since the assembly general is limited to a half day at the start of the Turin gathering, 9 March, there will not be the usual time for informal discussion and ‘lobbying’ for the elections. Anyone wishing to put themselves forward for election, therefore, should make their intentions known in advance and tell the secretary general before 1 January 2006. (Although ExCom members are nominated by country, it would seem sensible to ask each candidate country to supply a short, 100 word explanation of their candidature, with the name of their proposed representative. These can be circulated in advance of the General Assembly.)

In early November, Michel will issue the official invitation to members to take part in the General Assembly; he will remind them that any proposal for changes to the statutes should also be sent to him by 1 January 2006. Irene wanted us to stress that each section must have paid its 2006 subscription in order to take part in the Turin congress.

#### **IATC Prize:**

It was agreed to circulate an update of Ian’s paper on the IATC Prize (Umeå minutes Annexe 1) with Michel’s invitation for the Turin Congress. Members will be asked to send their nominations to the secretary general before January 1<sup>st</sup>. We will publicly announce the setting up of the prize in Turin at the General Assembly, saying that the first award of the prize will take place in Seoul. The final candidate will be chosen by the new ExCom in Turin, bearing in mind that they must be willing to come to Seoul to collect their prize. There was discussion of the nature of the possible winner, and opinions were divided between an influential critic of the provocative stature of the late Kenneth Tynan (the name of Eric Bentley was suggested), or a representative of Far Eastern theatre who had had considerable influence outside their own country (examples: Tadashi Suzuki, Yukio Ninagawa). The name of the prize was not yet established, after discussion in Umeå had produced much argument around Prospero, Antigone, Nora, Ariel ... Manuel proposed Thalia, the Greek muse of comedy, which was approved unanimously by the meeting. It will be adopted subject to the views of any sponsoring body – see Ludmila’s report above.

## **6.2 Extraordinary Congress, Seoul**

Yun-Cheol Kim told us by e-mail that he has the support of Korea's Culture and Tourism Ministry for a congress to take place in the frame of the Seoul International Theatre Festival (14 September – 3 October 2006). We have to bear in mind the proposed seminar for young critics in Charleville-Mézières, 15-24 September, and that proposed for the Sirenos festival in Vilnius, Lithuania, 27 September - 3 October 2006. For the Seoul congress, the suggested dates are therefore 14-20 September, with arrival 13 September. Invitations and the congress theme ('Criticism - the next 50 years') can be worked out in Turin, from suggestions by Yun-Cheol. We need to inform sections of the proposed Seoul event now, and confirm as soon as it is formally agreed.

Additionally, the Korean section has also programmed a seminar for 20 young critics during the Seoul Festival. Rather than a normal seminar, ExCom members suggested that it might be a meeting of former participants, to reinforce the links between the generations and give them some experience of an IATC congress. We need to discuss with Margareta, herself a former participant, how far we should go back. National sections would be asked to select their candidate for this seminar, later offering a second candidate if there are still places. Approved unanimously.

As with Turin, we should also invite honorary members, presidents of sister organizations, etc. (OISTAT is particularly strong in the Far East, and their president should be added to the list for Seoul.) This work to be done in Turin.

Ian was keen that IATC should contribute to the travel costs of less favoured sections, particularly those which could become more effective with a little financial help. It was agreed to give priority to *individuals* from the Asian countries (with advice from *eg* ITI) for the Seoul congress, and to less well off *sections* for the one in Turin. ExCom gave its agreement in principle to this proposal. Some delegates will be offered 50% of their travel costs, in return for an undertaking to remain members of IATC and develop the national section. The officers are to decide how much of the total budget should be allocated to this end.

### 6.3 Seminars for Young Critics

Margareta and Louise had sent reports on the seminars in Montreal and Limoges, as well as a general conclusion by Margareta for year 2005 (Annexe J). She intends to revise the parameters for the seminars for discussion in Turin (should we invite only professionally qualified participants, should we insist on an Anglophone and a Francophone group, what is the minimum number, etc). She would also update the instructions for monitors and organisers. With this in mind, it was agreed to ask candidates to be sure to sign on for the seminars both with their IATC director (*eg* Margareta, Louise) *and* with the host festival. We should also consider the future possibility of setting up small groups, possibly in a single language, or working in languages other than the statutory two, with local involvement. Regional rather than fully international seminars might also be considered. In short, we need more flexibility in the organisation of our seminars.

#### Future seminars:

No concrete proposals from the (Bonn) now Wiesbaden Biennale (15-26 June 2006). We may have to drop this seminar. (*Later*: Ian is in contact with the organisers, who have not yet found the money for the event but are keen to have it.)

Others to be developed by Margareta :

Charleville-Mézières (15-24 September 2006)

Vilnius : 28 September (arrive) - 3 October (depart).

Dialog, Wroclaw, 2007 (see de Yun-Cheol Kim's report): we will see later.

Wroclaw : in conjunction with the Festival of one-man shows, proposed by Tomas. 18-22 November 2006.

Michel reported interest from the twin festivals of marionettes in Guanajuato (Mexico) and Jonqui re (Qu bec), in May and September 2006. He will check with Margareta, but it was thought better to plan for a seminar at one or other of these festivals in 2007 or later.

Meeting adjourned at 14.00

---

Meeting resumed 29 October 2005, 10 am.

#### **6.4 ExCom meetings**

The next meeting was already fixed for Tokyo, and will take place between 16 - 20 March 2006. There will now be one before and one after the Turin Congress, the latter with the newly elected committee. It appears that many members of the present ExCom intend to go to Tokyo – they should tell the general secretary as soon as possible whether they are going or not. Ian mentioned the possibility of travel assistance from the Daiwa Foundation. The address of its office in England is <[www.dajf.org.uk](http://www.dajf.org.uk)>.

Other possibilities for meetings include: Pilsen (September 2006); Portugal (Autumn 2006 or later –see report from Paulo Eduardo).

#### **6.5 Cultural Bridges, meetings of experienced critics**

Kalina has spoken in her report of a possible meeting in Cyprus in 2006; the one planned for Hungary, however, had not gained financial support.

Ian's report mentioned that he is to preside over the colloquium to be organised in Novi Sad by IATC in conjunction with Sterijino pozorje (Festival 26 May- 3 June 2006, colloquium 26-28 May, departure of colloquium delegates May 29), at the invitation of the Festival's director, Ivan Medenica. The festival is built around the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Sterija (Jovan Sterija Popovic) himself (and the 150<sup>th</sup> of his death) and will feature his play *Patriots*. With this in mind, the festival's accompanying *Circles* programme will be looking for work dealing with national identity in the neighbouring theatres of central Europe.

In this context, it is proposed that the colloquium address similar themes. Under the title *National Theatres and Nationalist Theatre*, it will address both the purpose of a National Theatre and the use of theatre, in the past and in the present, to promote national identity – for good or ill. There will be places for fifty critics, and all IATC sections will be invited to attend. Anyone with particular ideas for speakers should contact Ian directly, and soon.

The Hong Kong section, in the person of Stephen Lam, has got the backing of the Hong Kong Arts Council for a colloquium in October/November 2006, in conjunction with a local festival of theatre and performance, to discuss the relationship between theatre and the visual arts. Michel will ask Stephen to confirm the dates as soon as possible, taking account of the dates now established for Seoul. When Stephen's dates are known, we can ask Robin Tu Chuan, of the Taiwanese section, whether they might also be able to organise a colloquium, as she has previously suggested. This might make it possible for some IATC members to visit Taiwan between the Seoul and Hong Kong meetings. Ian also mentioned that Jessica Yeung, of the Hong Kong section, had thought it might be possible to organise visits at that time to mainland China.

### **7. Communications**

#### **7.1 Project for exchange between theatre journals**

Yun-Cheol and Nikolai had sent a short report of their thoughts on this topic. (See Annexes E and I.) ExCom agreed to put the table of contents of participating journals on the IATC

website, with a specimen article in the original language (where the journal supplied one) and a link to the journal's own website. It was also agreed to allow those journals who wished, to add an abstract of the article in English and/or French. Someone other than the general secretary could run this section of the website, given a password to access it. Michel will ask Sébastien Trahan, who is putting the new website together, to allow for these possibilities. Yun-Cheol and Nikolai should now write to the membership (and their colleagues on the original Moscow meeting) to find which journals would be interested in this exchange. Suggestions and contacts from member sections would also be welcome, sent first to Yun-Cheol and Nikolai.

### **7.2 Website**

Sébastien has done a good job. Following a visit to the new site, we noted a series of questions and improvements which Michel will send to him. He will also be asked how photos may be added. Later, Ian will suggest to Ian Hill that he help Michel with the day-to-day running of the site, finding and editing material in English, while Michel does the same in French.

### **7.3 Congress Proceedings : Montréal, Bucharest**

The secretary general will write to all those who took part in the congress in Montréal to tell them that the book will be ready in November 2005. Those who are coming to Turin may pick up a copy there. Otherwise, IATC will pay postage from Quebec for those who cannot come to Turin. The same will be done for the Bucharest proceedings, which are also expected to be ready at the beginning of November 2005.

**7.4 Newsletter and leaflet:** ExCom decided that it would no longer be necessary to produce the newsletter and leaflet in printed form.

## **8. Membership and recruitment:**

### **8.1 New members**

Louise Ghirlando, from Malta, has been an individual member since July 2005; Irène Gogobéridzé hopes to reanimate a Georgian section. Her request for acceptance, when it arrives, will be considered in Turin at the ExCom, then submitted to the General Assembly for approval. Meanwhile, she is an individual member and auditor. (Her letter spoke of a coming invitation for an IATC meeting to coincide with the re-opening of the National Theatre in Tbilisi.) Deepa Punjani from Bombay (India) has been an individual member since 2005 and is paid up for 2006. She is hoping to establish a national section.

### **8.2 Recruitment**

Ian is to visit the National Scenic Congress in Mexico in December 2005, where he hopes to bring together the Mexican critics, who are at present somewhat divided, into a Mexican section, which should enable better collaboration with IATC.

Ian will also write to friends in FIRT and ITI, (*eg* South Africa, Austria) to generate interest in IATC, suggesting that they might be able to send delegates to our 2006 congresses. Other ExCom members are asked to consider possible similar approaches.

## **9. Links with other organisations**

Ian is to draft for Turin a proposed modification to the IATC statutes under which members of sister organisations such as ITI, FIRT may become associate members. Members of the sister organisations who are also celebrating their fiftieth anniversary will be invited to Seoul.

**ITI/UNESCO :** we have a good relationship with ITI, particularly its President, Manfred Beilhartz.

**FIRT and SIBMAS :** Ian has met recently with their Presidents to discuss continued collaboration.

**ASSITEJ** : See Michel's report. The next ASSITEJ congress will be in Adelaide, Australia, in 2008, and we hope to have a presence there as in Montreal.

**OISTAT** : Ian is in regular contact with board members.

**UNIMA** : Margareta is preparing the seminar in Charleville-Mézières, in collaboration with them.

**Autres** : **UTE** and **Premio Europa** : see item on Turin.

Any members of ExCom in contact with representatives of other organisations are asked to keep the secretariat informed.

#### **10. Any other business**

Ian had been in touch with Inger-Margrethe Lunde, now President of the Norwegian Playwrights' Association, who is working to organise an international playwrights' prize to be given by the town of Ibsen's birth. They already award a national prize, on Ibsen's birthday, 25 March, and hope to give the new prize from 2007. Inger-Margrethe is interested in IATC advising on possible winners and perhaps joining in organising the colloquium which would be organised for the event. Ian will keep us informed of developments.

**11. Meeting of 29 September closed at 12 noon.**

**Michel Vaïs**

General secretary