



ASSITEJ

International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People

ASSITEJ Newsletter N°63, May 2015



Introduction

by Nina Hajianni

It is the week of the General Election here in the UK and the main political parties have been arguing about the 'state' of our economy, Europe, the challenges facing our National Health Service which is meant to provide free and universal care, and Immigration.

This last subject seems to be one of the most emotive and divisive at this time of so called 'austerity' in Europe. Across the world immigration seems to be making headlines and it could be argued that there is a critical need to counteract the easy finger-pointing at people from other countries in relation to so many economic and complex social problems.

My own involvement with ASSITEJ has always been motivated by the principle of internationalism and the simple but profound value of bringing people of different nationalities and cultures together. ASSITEJ is a unique body in this respect, celebrating multiculturalism whilst at the same time seeking to find a common, universal language in relation to theatre for children, an ongoing creative, political and challenging endeavour - one that brings people together.

The Augenblick-Mal Festival and ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering which just took place in Berlin, not only celebrated 50 years of ASSITEJ as an association which first came into existence to 'build a bridge across borders' but it also brought together nearly 40 young and emerging artists from developing countries for the Next Generation Programme (including participants from North and South Korea). Many participants were travelling outside of their home countries for the first time and had a joyous opportunity to experience, to share, to make friends and forge new relationships, carving out new international 'cross-cultural' narratives. When you are at a festival you are suddenly a member of an international community.

Back in the UK, this month sees 2 well established children's theatre festivals taking place; The SPARK Children's Arts Festival, the largest arts festival for children in England - <http://www.sparkfestival.co.uk> and IMAGINATE in Scotland <http://www.imagine.org.uk> which marks Tony Reekie's last official festival as outgoing Artistic Director after 20 years of producing the celebrated Children's Theatre Festival.

Over the next 12 months, TYA UK with our friends and colleagues at TYA Ireland, will be preparing for a new, specially curated festival, 'On The Edge' which will be the next ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering taking place in the city of Birmingham. In July 2016, we will create space for people to come together from across the world to see shows, to connect, to participate.... and to celebrate diversity and being part of that international community.

ASSITEJ EC Member - Artistic Director, Action Transport Theatre.

Chair TYA UK.



This May newsletter is dedicated to sharing the main and most significant moments of the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2015 and Jubilee Ceremony

As you all know, ASSITEJ celebrated its 50th anniversary last month in the frame of the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2015 and Augenblick mal! festival. We want to thank once more our hosts for having welcomed this celebration, where it was also an occasion to get to know more about ASSITEJ Germany and their wonderful solid structure and great work they carry out.

We also want to thank the presence of all those who traveled to Berlin to celebrate with us: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, North Korea, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK, Uruguay, USA, Vietnam, Zimbabwe. However, we cannot avoid mentioning that ASSITEJ is a global organization with members in almost 100 countries. Many of you were missed and were present in our thoughts.

ASSITEJ President's Speech at the Jubilee Ceremony Wednesday April 22nd

So where is ASSITEJ heading in our next half-century?

By Yvette Hardie

50 is a significant age. It is old enough to have engaged with tremendous changes, shifts and developments, and it is young enough to hold its own history in living memory. We have been talking of one of the hallmarks of ASSITEJ today being its inclusivity – something which has been hard won and has been developed over the past ...

[Whole Speech](#)



ASSITEJ Honorary President's Speech at the Jubilee Ceremony Wednesday April 22nd

Where we come from. 50 Years of ASSITEJ*

By Wolfgang Schneider **

„Once upon a time“, a quotation from the beginning of fairy tales, and we know fairy tales play a great role in the history of ASSITEJ. Once upon a time there was an idea, the idea of peace and humanity, there was a utopia of a world of friendship and solidarity, there was a group of ...

[Whole Speech.](#)





ASSITEJ Magazine 2015 Jubilee Special Edition

This year ASSITEJ will be 50 years old! (1965-2015) and we are celebrating this anniversary with a special edition of our magazine. This 2015 number has two sections, Jubilee and One Step Beyond Generations, which has a double objective: to acknowledge, give thanks for and celebrate our past and to reflect on our activities for the future.

On this occasion the reader will find the articles in two versions, in English and in one of the languages of the country they come from (as far as it was possible). In this way, on the occasion of our anniversary, we wish to endorse and show our recognition

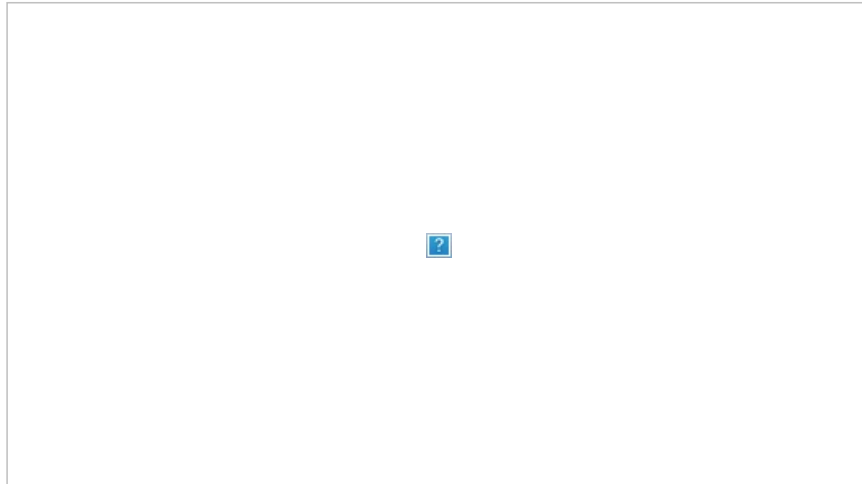
of the diversity of languages and cultures of the countries that are members of this association.

ASSITEJ 50th anniversary movie!

As part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations, we created a video with collaboration from some of our honorary members and network representatives, where they express their opinions on the past, present and future of ASSITEJ; key moments, the image of ASSITEJ in their respective countries, their hopes for TYA in the future as well as their wishes for the next 50 years of the association.

This video was launched during the ASSITEJ Jubilee Ceremony on Wednesday, April 22nd in Berlin. We invite you to take a look at it and enjoy!

[Video](#)



Augenblick Mal!, Berlin hands over to on the Edge, Birmingham at the ASSITEJ Gala

At the ASSITEJ Gala at Augenblick-Mal representatives from TYA UK and TYA Ireland presented **On The Edge Festival as the next ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering which will take place from July 2-10th 2016 in Birmingham.**

The city of Birmingham is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the UK and has

one of the youngest populations in Europe. The main festival centre for On The Edge will be Birmingham Repertory Theatre with all venues within a 10 minute walk of the city centre. The festival will showcase up to 20 productions from the UK, Ireland and from around the world.

Call-outs for workshops and seminars for On The Edge, and for the Next Generation programme will be advertised this summer. In the meantime, you can register your interest in the Festival and Gathering at the On The Edge website <http://www.ontheedge2016.com>



AUGENBLICK MAL!

THE FESTIVAL OF THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES APRIL 21-26 2015



Next Generation Program

This year, the Next Generation Program was one of the largest there has been in an Artistic Gathering, with 42 participants from Germany and 20 other countries. We want to thank ASSITEJ Germany once more for the generous support given to participants from the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Colombia, Cuba, India, Iran, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, North Korea, Rwanda, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Swaziland, Turkey, Uruguay and Zimbabwe

Manifesto Next Generation Berlin 2015

As a conclusion to their program, Next Generation 2015 came up with the following manifesto:

If I were President of ASSITEJ:

1. I would change the world map and erase all borders.
2. I would listen to the children and let THEM do all the talking.
3. I would involve government to support low profile countries.
4. I would make sure that children and young people have a theatrical culture.
5. I would remember I was also a child once, and run to get some ice cream.
6. TYA shall be the healing pill to deadly diseases of fear, hate, war and silence.
7. I would like to make educational performances for young audience.
8. I would like to give an opportunity to children, who have never seen a show.

[Read all manifesto](#)



ASSITEJ Artistic Encounters

At the heart of the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering 2015, there were four talk rounds, the International Artistic Encounters.

Encounter I: Creating Relevance

This Encounter began with a welcome and introduction by the German hosts and ASSITEJ President. The rest of the Encounter consisted in a Market Place with stalls from ASSITEJ and its four networks, which offered an opportunity to learn more about the association and its activities. At the end, there was a key note by Prof. Dr. Christoph Lutz-Scheurle titled "What is this which I see before me? – Some remarks on the perception of performances."

The center of attention for Encounters II and III was devoted to the productions that were invited to *Augenblick mal!* 2015 and their perspectives on the concept of generations.

Encounter II: The end of the world as we know it

The topics of discussion rounds for this Encounter were:

- *Generations in dialogue* – Conflicts between generations on stage.
- *"Why did you destroy everything?"* – How does TYA deal with global issues?
- *Me and my body* – In search for individual identity.
- *Generation Porn?* – TYA in a sexualized society.
- *"Yes we can!"* – Can theatre save the world?
- *Children and adults on stage* – An equal relationship?
- *Looking for freedom* – Imagination in everyday life and TYA.
- *Spaces to play* – When theatre gets closer and closer to the spectator.
- *Fragments and monologues* – Talking and language in TYA.
- *Everything happens simultaneously* – Simultaneousness of media on stage – potential or purgatory?
- *"What do you know about us?"* – How do artists mirror children's everyday life?
- *Tragic Ending* – Happy Ending – Open Ending – Let's talk about endings.

Encounter III: Talk to me, I'll be your audience

The third encounter opened with a key note by Lisa Nagel from Norway, titled "Interactive dramaturgies in performing arts for children."

The topics of discussion rounds for this Encounter were:

- *"Talk to me!"* – How do the artists in TYA talk to their audience?
- *Focus on the world through the body* – Body language – Body images. Which possibilities has TYA?
- *With the eyes of a child* – How do children's worlds influence the artistic work?
- *Open Ending* – The ending is told by the spectators – what persists?
- *Digital cameras as partners in dialogue?* – Through which media does TYA communicate with its audience?
- *Media omnipresence* – Simultaneity of media on stage – is it too much?
- *Moving and movements* – TYA as an invitation to communicate with your own body.
- *"We don't teach you"* – Questions instead of answers – what is there for the audience to take home?
- *Roles and figures on stage* – Which images of childhood and youth does theatre present?
- *Children's Plays* – The influence of children's plays on artistic process
- *Children and adults on stage* – Artistic cooperation between generations
- *More than a spectator* – The audience plays along – but how?

Encounter IV: Cooperation makes it happen

This Encounter began with a panel discussion among experts on cooperation and coproduction Ania Michaelis (GER), Joke Laureyns (BEL), Marisa Giménez Cacho (MEX), Francois Venter (SA) and moderated by Pro. Dr. Wolfgang Schneider (GER). The participants talked about their experience in international cooperation, which requires strategies and resources that for the most part are supported by public and government institutions. However, in the realization of concrete artistic projects, international cooperation entails efforts beyond logistics and economic support. From the artists' point of view, international cooperation implies being open to different languages and ways of communication and production, which generally result in mutual learning and enrichment.

The panel discussion was followed by a coffee break entitled "Make it happen," with the purpose of looking for future cooperation among the attendees.

ASSITEJ EC members Manon van de Water, Stefan Fischer-Fels and Asaya Fujita presented a résumé of the previous Encounters, and it all ended with the presentation of the Next Generation 2015 manifesto "If I were President of ASSITEJ, I would..."

Opinions by Asaya Fujita

I have heard the discussions for a last couple of days with tremendous interest. It was interesting that we could see the current situation of the culture for children and theatre transparently through each one of opinion supported by their own experiences. And having heard all the opinions, it was obvious that the relationships between the participants were changing as ...

[Read more.](#)

Comments and Quotes by Manon van de Water

Generations Porn: Cultural Differences: Sexuality as part of our Identity India: sex is not talked about, but culture is highly sexualized Mexico: plays about issues like child abuse, lack of productions about sex as part of life Germany: problems with peer pressure: not talked about that it is OK to say NO Israel and USA: TYA depends on schools as ...

[Read more.](#)

Summary of by Stefan Fischer-Fels

Walking around, I tried to link these 2 issues to the Assitej "motto" of "ONE STEP BEYOND": Looking for thoughts beyond the routines, maybe interesting for next Gathering in Birmingham July 2016: 4 (Generation Porn): Which strategies do we have in TYA to protest or comment our sexualized society? The experience was expressed, that in plays like "trashedy" or "bodybild" ...

[Read more.](#)

ASSITEJ Artistic Networks

Public Moments at Augenblick Mal!



SMALL SIZE

On the occasion of ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering/Augenblick Mal 2015 in Berlin, Small size Network had the chance to present its activities and members to the many participants coming from all over the world. The Market held during the first International Artistic Encounter saw

the participation of all Networks together, while Public Moments took place in separate moments and venues, each ...

[Read more.](#)

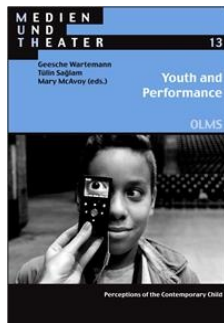
ITYARN

At the Public Moment of the International Theatre for Young Audiences Research Network (ITYARN) two new publications were presented: The first one was "Youth and Performance. Perceptions of the Contemporary Child" (ed. by Geesche Wartemann, Tülin Saglam and Mary McAvoy). This book is the outcome of the Third ITYARN conference in conjunction held in Warsaw, Poland at the ASSITEJ World ...



[Read more.](#)

[Release "Youth and Performance: Perceptions of the Contemporary Child"](#)



This publication is the outcome of the third International Theatre for Young Audiences Research (ITYARN) conference in conjunction with an ASSITEJ World Congress and Festival held in Warsaw, Poland in 2014. The ITYARN conferences' themes always give a very broad frame to invite researchers from different countries and with diverse Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA) traditions as well as diverse ...

[Read more.](#)

Release "Iberoamerican Theatre Bulletin"

Lola Lara, presented the Iberoamerican Theatre Bulletin, which is a publication of ASSITEJ Spain, and is a means of diffusion for the Iberoamerican countries on different topics, investigations, reflections and theatre texts.

The 11th issue of this bulletin includes the presentations given during the III Foro Internacional de Investigadores y Críticos de Teatro para Niños y Jóvenes in Buenos Aires, Argentina in July, 2014.



IIAN

An update from Augenblick mal! and the ASSITEJ Artistic Gathering in Berlin. IIAN enjoyed our time in Berlin and meeting with lots of international delegates and engaging in numerous discussion about inclusive theatre for young audiences. This started with the first Artistic Gathering where, along with the other ASSITEJ Networks, IIAN took part in a 'market place' event which allowed ...

[Read more.](#)

Write Local. Play Global.

The ASSITEJ Playwrights network, Write Local. Play Global. was honored and delighted to collaborate with the German chapter of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) on Friday, April 24, on Public Moment we called Translation: Words, Culture and Zeitgeist. We wanted to focus on looking at translation in intercultural contexts through an holistic lens. Against this background the network partners will discuss to what extent ...



[Read more.](#)



As part of the AAG15 activities, we must also mention two very important events:

ASSITEJ Gala 2015

These awards are given to personalities and institutions that have had a relevant role in the development, promotion and diffusion of TYA in Germany and other European countries.

Berlin Children's Theatre Prize 2015

Organized by GRIPS Theatre, this award promotes the work of young playwrights in Berlin. During this ceremony, we had the opportunity to watch scenic readings from the four finalists of the competition.

Celebrations throughout the year

We want to propose to you all that we keep celebrating this anniversary throughout the year.

The following newsletters will include, along with the information you regularly send us, a section dedicated to the Jubilee, where we would like you to share the different celebrations in your centers and countries.

We think this is an occasion to analyze: What have we achieved in fifty years? How much progress have we made? Does theatre for children in your country or community have a greater impetus than 50 years ago?

A good way to celebrate and continue celebrating with all of you this year is sharing experiences, ideas, documents and photographs.



Visit to ASSITEJ archives



In Berlin, we visited the KJTZ archives guided by the man in charge Jürgen Kirschner. These archives are located in Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt. In the Berlin archives one can find the historical materials of ASSITEJ and its centers around the world.

If you would like to see more pictures of all these events [CLICK HERE](#)

Many thanks for the great work of the Augenblick mal! photographers Jürgen Scheer and Jörg Sobeck.

