



EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK

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VISIONS AND CONDITIONS IN
THE FIELD OF INDEPENDENT /
FRINGE / OFF THEATRE WORK
IN EUROPE

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EDITORIAL

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Gumpendorferstr. 63B
A-1060 Wien
t.: +43 (0)1 403 87 94
f.: +43 (0)1 403 87 94-17
e-mail: office@freietheater.at
www.freietheater.at

Editor:
Sabine Kock

Translated by:
Lisa Rosenblatt, Renée von Paschen

Copy Editing:
Lisa Rosenblatt

Graphic Art:
Moisl www.moisl.at

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Dear Theatre People and Theatregoers,
You have in your hands the results of a European meeting of independent theatre people (including fringe, independent and off theatre) writers, actors, dramatic performers and dancers, organized by the "Association of independent theatre in Austria" from 15th 18th June 2005 in the Festspielhaus St. Pölten. During this meeting, more than 250 participants from over thirty countries discussed the general conditions, goals and visions of independent theatre companies in Europe in the scope of lectures, workshops and working groups, in the course of which the EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK was founded. The meeting also hosted six productions and an international theatre festival. The present documentation begins with a description of the EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK. The four keynote lectures of the meeting follow and, in conclusion, you will find nineteen national reports on the situation of independent theatre work in Europe, accompanied by contact addresses.

Therese Kaufmann presents arguments and strategies for emancipative and participative cultural politics, which can also be theoretically integrated in a very engaging manner. From Etienne Balibar to Chantal Mouffe to the prophetic and unconventional Hannah Arendt, discursive contexts are lucidly superimposed. In his contribution, Dragan Klaić focuses on the problematic aspect of the contradictions and opportunities in contemporary theatre. In particular, he provides a profound overview of the operating structures of contemporary theatres, which he classifies as "commercial" (meaning large-scale, cultural industries), "repertory" (from the state theatre to the municipal theatre), "experimental" (the scope of "independent theatre"), and "amateur," for which he details specific problems, stagnation, budgetary situations and innovation potential. Mary Ann DeVlieg, the long-serving Secretary General of the oldest and largest European Theatre Network IETM, elaborates the different basic types, activities and possible goals of cultural networks, as well as their phases of development and possible evaluations of their activities, before describing IETM in greater detail at the conclusion of her paper. Finally, Jadranka Anđelić elaborates the founding and prospering of another young European Network: Balkan Express is a cooperative of artists, producers and institutions from the Balkan region, all having the goal of creating greater outward and inward transparency for the entire sector of the performing arts, including practical networking and a common lobby, e.g. for touring productions. The national reports are regularly updated and can be downloaded from our homepage along with the four keynote papers at: www.freietheatre.at
We hope that we will be able to continue the sustainable development of our network this year, and would like to invite you to participate in the EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK.

ENJOY READING!

Vienna, January 2006
Sabine Kock (manager IGFT) and
Maria Haneder-Kulterer (coordinator EON)

translated by Renée von Paschen

SHORT DESCRIPTION
The EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK is a European network of independent dancers, performers, and theatre makers, formed from the perspective of the artists. The network aims to intensify the artists' cultural exchange and strengthen the presence of independent groups at a national, European, and international level, and develop a sustainable communication platform for these independent groups. The goal and existing need is to build a future-oriented, open political lobby at a European level based on better knowledge and understanding of the different, but often also very similar, even parallel theatre and cultural historical backgrounds of the participating partner countries. Additionally, transparent exchange via contemporary media formats and sustainable means of communication.

INITIAL SITUATION

Throughout the world, the situation is such that the essential impulses for a general renewal of the performing arts, for aesthetically and politically radical presentation practices, come from independent/fringe/OFF theatre, that however, as a presentation form that is not tied to major institutions, often has to work with a marginal budget and only peripheral media awareness.

The starting point for the EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK is the fact that small, but also mid-size theatre groups often lack the means and structures to communicate with one another, or even to form a lobby to deal with issues concerning labor rights and social rights in their own country and even more so at a European level to attain visibility within a larger public realm. Already in 2000, the IG Freie Theater developed an international touring concept for independent theatre groups and in 2003, a plan for a web catalogue as the first international long-lasting networking medium for independent theatre groups. The web catalogue could be a presentation of independent performing artists at a European level to strengthen their trans-regional visibility and will thereby simultaneously create a medium that provides better access for researching independent theatre work internationally. Relatively few groups have their own websites that include a keyword search system or an archive of their works or even an archive of their repertoire, ensemble, or aesthetic approaches and issues.

The efforts, however, have made clear: A living network can begin in the virtual realm. However, it also demands personal exchange, personal encounter at an international level through working sessions, conferences, workshops, and lectures, and, naturally, performances for a broader public. In June 2005, the first European-wide network meeting for independent theatre makers was realized in Austria. The large-scale meeting, organized by the IG Freie Theaterarbeit, took place at the large Festspielhaus in St. Pölten. Approximately three hundred theatre makers from thirty European countries participated. The festival also met with the enthusiastic approval of numerous politicians involved in cultural issues, cultural workers, and the media.

The conditions for independent theatre were presented and discussed from a national and international perspective in thematically grouped I

ectures, discussions, workshops, and working groups. As a result of this, nineteen initial country reports have already been published on the website of Austria's IG Freie Theaterarbeit. These short reports nonetheless present merely a beginning. They should be continually expanded in the context of the project and supplemented by the texts of other groups from the participating countries and also by country glossaries and historical overviews. Six performances and an international theatre festival rounded out the first European meeting of performing artists. Further meetings aiming at exchange and networking will follow.

The meeting also re-affirmed the great number of information gaps that are still present at a European level in the so-called "free," "OFF," "fringe," or "independent" area and how greatly the need is for theatre makers from countries in the European Union, and also the EU-candidate countries, to develop a sustainable cooperation and thereby strengthen the political, structural, and social situation of independent culture producers at a European level. Therefore, the main concern is the creation of a major European network of all independent theatre makers.

Yet, in doing so, we don't want to reinvent the wheel, but instead, use synergies to expand already existing networks. This applies particularly to the IETM as an international informal theatre platform. The IETM presents a brisk exchange and an informal cooperation, and the general secretary of the network also delivered an introduction lecture at our meeting in 2005. After intense examination and participation at several IETM meetings, however, it has become very clear that IETM is an initiative that primarily aims at internationally-oriented organizers of theatre, performance, and at international festivals. For independent groups or individuals, merely the contribution fees, oriented on institutions, are so high that only very few groups can afford them. The platform "on the move" offer further information on strengthening the mobility of independent theatre makers, yet it does not offer any possibility for a (intelligently organized key word system) presentation for the artists and offers no network forum or political lobby work for artists. A glance at the "on the move" links page makes clear that in fact, there is no other Europe-wide network such as EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK that offers a trans-genre platform for independent theatre makers from the perspective of the artists.

EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK THEATER IN (SOCIETIES IN) TRANSITION

The network currently comprises more than 350 independent groups and individuals from thirty European and neighboring countries, who, for the most part, also participated in the first meeting in Austria. At the moment, a simple means of communication is a mailing list, in which all interested persons can register at any time. At the moment there are partners from sixteen EU member states, and key persons from eighteen European countries, nine of whom are from EU member states. Additionally, there are seven so-called strong partners - representative organizations from those countries where such formations already exist.

NETWORK STRUCTURE

The network should retain an open network structure with strong partners from countries in which an infrastructure already exists through interest groups, and, on the other hand, should be represented by key persons in the countries in which there is no infrastructure.

When we speak of networks here, what is meant in most cases is a pragmatic concept of "networks," which has grown from the actual process of networking. Parallel to the real networks, in the past ten years, also a process of their sociological and scientific observation, description, and analysis. The results of this process should find precipitation in the development of the EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK: cooperation and relationships are not held with individuals or groups, but with entire networks. This has a double character: on the one hand, they form a "social capital." On the other, dense networks practice a strong social pressure on their actors. Thus, in the SNA there is a favoring of the "strength of weak relationships": "Precisely the communication arising from weak connections between heterogeneous social formations enables innovation to arise ... often these weak relationships are those that bridge various social groups and in this way also can foster social integration." (Wolfgang Neurath: "Innovation und soziale Netzwerkanalyse," in: Hubert Pichler (ed.): Innovationsmuster in der österreichischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Innsbruck 2003, pp. 73 90, here, pp. 77/78/).

In the field analyses of network analytical designs for evaluation, there are network actors characterized entirely differently:

- > Networks function when a few actors display a strong prominence: strategic actors/hubs
- > And when additionally, actors with a high "between-ness-centrality" function as change-agentsthese are the bridges between network partners, who otherwise have no direct connection or exchange.

Currently, there are already nearly twenty key persons (Change agents) in the EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK as central partners, nine of whom come from EU countries, and the others from European countries not belonging to the EU. In seven additional countries there are established representatives for the interests of independent theatre makers, which are likewise partners in the network. The network is rooted in Europe's historically evolved cultural-political context and is decisively open to countries that are not in the EU.

THEMES

Theatre in (societies in) transition
Thematic concentration of the international network is the study and description of the European theatre in social configurations in transition. In many societies in a state of transition, independent theatre has played a crucial cultural role. What is the present situation? What repercussions and mutual effects are there at the level of international intercultural awareness? What perspectives can be developed for a common future?

The function of "independent" theatre
What function does "independent" theatre have in each of the respective national contexts, and what function can it take on in European and global contexts?

The role of "independent" theatre
Does "independent" theatre currently relate to the social formation as a whole, border itself off, or deny such access?

The tradition of "independent" theatre
Indicated here is a look at theatre traditions in the individual countries - what traditions does independent theatre follow, what is considered contemporary? Innovative? Are there elements - and where - that connect it with the specific national context, or that point to something beyond?

The "language" of "independent" theatre
How can theatre work overcome language problems - does theatre speak a different - common language? Is there a common theatre language in Europe?

New Media in "independent" theatre
What role do new media play in independent theatre?

GOALS

A new awareness of independent theatre's role as "cultural ambassador", and the cultural exchange and development of this role;

- strengthening of the visibility and significance of independent theatre work for Europe;
- true networking of independent performing artists at a European level beyond mere cultural policy lip service, with an adequate infrastructure, intelligent technical and sustainable personnel support and, thereby
- development of a common political lobby at national and European levels as well as
- sustainable strengthening of the mobility and subsequently the awareness of independent theatre work at a European level;
- knowledge transfer about working methods, content, connections of independent theatre, along with an
- understanding of the various cultural heritages as well as the common European cultural heritage against the backdrop of the various historical backgrounds, social transitions in each country, and an international perspective.

STRATEGIES OF (SELF-)EMPOWERMENT AND SPACES OF RESISTANCE

BY THERESE KAUFMANN

How can the relentless process of individualisation in the world of cultural work be kept apart from the seeming inevitability of local and global neo-liberalism and be re-directed as a force for re-vitalising the democratising process?

Angela Mc Robbie¹

The coming community is whatever being... (...) Whatever is the figure of pure singularity. Whatever singularity has not identity, it is not determined with respect to a concept, but neither is it simply indeterminate; rather it is determined only through its relation to an idea, that is, to the totality of its possibilities.

Giorgio Agamben²

Only a few years ago, it was daring to even mention "European Cultural Policies" in many European circles. At the same time it appeared to be a theme as heavily charged as marginalised. Those who saw their national "cultural identities" endangered through common action resorted to the so-called principle of subsidiarity, which allows the EU action only complementary to national policies. The legal framework for such action at EU level remained as limited as it had been since the inclusion of an article on culture in the European Treaties more than 10 years ago, and due to the failure of the constitutional process in the EU, Qualified Majority Voting that could have led to a certain dynamisation in decision-making processes concerning culture was not introduced either. In addition, it is not very likely that there will be an increase of the ridiculously low budget allocated to culture - although the very fact that a budget increase is even under debate could be interpreted at least as a partial success.

Yet notwithstanding all this, it seems that "culture for Europe" is becoming an issue - not least in connection with the overly ambitious aims of the Lisbon agenda to "make Europe the most competitive market in the world", to which qualities like "creativity" and "innovation" should contribute in general as well as through the so-called creative and cultural industries in particular. Is this the direction we envisage for European cultural policies?

FROM IDENTITARIAN EXCLUSIVENESS TO CREATIVE COMPETITIVENESS?

Already in 2003 the European Parliament in one of its reports called upon the EU to devise "a cultural policy which sets out the economic conditions for the development of the European cultural model"³. This model, as evoked by the report, is built solely on economic aspects, and what I would like to argue is that - at this moment when there is a slight increase of interest in cultural policy issues at the EU-level - this might indicate a shift from the hitherto prevailing, either identitarian or hollow, sanctimonious discourse of a "European culture", to a neoliberal conception of culture, in other words the "cultural" and "creative industries" as the new motors for economic growth. The idea of a "European cultural space", based on the assumption of a "common cultural heritage" and the construction of an outside "other" has been deployed in the discussion about the accession of Turkey, for example, and not only ignores the demographic and social developments of this space, but explicitly excludes migrants and asylum seeker. However, this has not contributed automatically to a more intense debate on policy action - on the contrary.

The central question, which does not come to the fore in either of these contexts, involves the relationship between culture and democracy and, more concretely, between cultural policies and democratic policies: What is the role of culture and of the cultural field for a democratisation process in a Europe? What is its role in a future Europe, which is neither to become a fortress nor merely a competitor in the world market? How can counter-strategies be developed against prevailing tendencies to make cultural policies a space for neoliberal

governmentality, where notions like "intercultural competence"⁴ are no more than business tools or strategies of policing and regulation? How can tendencies be fought that diminish the cultural field to an experimental grounds for developing the "creative competitiveness" of the postindustrial workforce, and where artists are given the role of "motors for innovation" and serve as models for the self-reliant, flexible, independent, project-oriented, young and fashionable subject of the New Economy?

TOWARDS A RADICAL CULTURAL DEMOCRATISATION IN EUROPE

Against these approaches, which seem to be gaining increasing importance in today's policy developments stands the conviction that the cultural field can and should take an active role in the overdue democratisation process in Europe, that the cultural field can be the place of the development of a number of preconditions for political processes of active citizenship, participation, negotiation of difference and debate. But what kind of a policy would be needed for this? What should such a policy focus on and are there concrete exemplary practices already in existence, which could serve for orientation?

A cultural policy that aims at a cultural democratisation in Europe would no longer fetishise the idea of "cultural diversity", thus still following a 19th-century logic of equating "culture" and "nation", while at the same time implicitly excluding all those who do not happen to belong to the "European peoples" from its only framework programme for cultural exchange.⁵ A cultural policy that is part of democratic policies in Europe would not mainly invest in flagship projects like the "European Cultural Capital", which connects city marketing with large-scale visibility campaigns for the EU. Instead, it would rather favour a political approach, which deals rigorously with one of the most pressing challenges in Europe, namely the permanent recomposition of its societies. New, proactive approaches in policy-making would have to be combined with the exploration of new forms of cooperation, exchange and alliance-building within the cultural field and beyond, within Europe and across its boundaries. This would help to create spaces of collective engagements and of a shared mutuality, which does not resort to the stability of an "identity", but contribute to multiplying discourses and practices "that produce democratic subject positions", towards a "radical and plural democracy" in Europe.⁶

STRATEGIES OF (SELF-)EMPOWERMENT AND SPACES OF ARTICULATION

Three aspects could be defined as central objectives of such an approach to cultural policies in Europe: access and participation, the pluralisation of transnational public spheres⁷ and the support of new forms of collaboration, partnerships and alliances. All these aspects are interconnected and enable strategies of (self-)empowerment and the articulation of subject positions. Thus, enhanced access does not mean to revive the 1970s slogan of "culture for all" or to further invest in populist mechanisms to increase the consumption of cultural mass products. Instead, it indicates the necessity of not only making cultural

products more accessible, but also the means for cultural production and dissemination - especially for those who experience political and social discrimination and marginalisation in Europe. In the meantime the formulation of such an objective has been conceded to the UNESCO to call in its "Convention for Cultural Diversity" to not only to protect, but specifically to promote cultural expressions, "paying due attention to the special circumstances and needs of women as well as various social groups" (Article 7)⁸. This is also a precondition for more participation in all kinds of cultural and political processes.

The cultural activities of various different groups are interconnected with the development of different forms of cultural initiatives and organisations, which in turn contribute to the creation of a differentiated and public sphere of the political. European cultural policies that support these activities and organisational forms could thus play a role in providing the conditions for a public sphere, which should not be perceived as one singular, totalizing or uniforming space, but as a plurality of different and dynamic (partial) public spheres for a transnational mutual exchange of ideas and positions as well as for the articulation of specific political interests and concerns. A cultural policy, which supports new modes of collaboration and alliance-building among self-organised groups or initiatives across different fields as well as across borders as an emancipatory practice, would help to create the conditions to deal constructively with cultural difference. It would help to create "spaces of appearance"⁹ and articulation, where everyone speaks for themselves instead of letting others "represent" them or what Jacques Rancière calls the "part of those without a part"¹⁰.

DEMOCRATISATION OF BORDERS

In his book "We, the people of Europe", the French Philosopher Etienne Balibar identifies Europe's borders as one of the central issues in the discussion about its future in the 21st century.¹¹ What Balibar calls for is a fundamental democratisation of the borders of Europe - in his view the only way of to prevent Europe from becoming a "fortress". These borders are not longer situated only at the outer limits of its territories, but "they are dispersed a little everywhere, wherever the movement of information, people, and things is happening and is controlled - for example, in cosmopolitan cities"¹². Furthermore, these borders are to a considerable extent invented or constructed borders, e.g. through the whole idea of a "European identity", and lead to the political and social exclusion of immigrants, asylum-seekers and all those who do not seem to "fit". How Europe deals with its illegal immigrants and the excluded, he says, will be the gauge for how democratic Europe actually is. This puts a different perspective on apodictic claims, recently often heard again, of the borders of Europe as "cultural borders", which additionally evoke a current tendency to obsessively translate political and social processes into cultural ones. A dismaying example for the brutal imposition of new borders against an "outside other" within Europe, specifically in conjunction with the efforts of the EU for common action towards a "European cultural space", is provided by the city of Patras in Greece in the course of preparations for being European Capital of

1 Angela Mc Robbie: Everyone is Creative. Artist as Pioneers of the New Economy, in: T. Bennett and E. Silva (eds), Contemporary Culture and Everyday Life, Sociology Press, 2003

2 Giorgio Agamben: The Coming Community, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 67

3 European Parliament Draft Report on Cultural Industries, 3 June 2003, Rapporteur: Myrsini Zorba (2002/2127(INI))

4 see Therese Kaufmann: Speaking With, Not For. The politics of 'intercultural competence', in: Beyond Borders 8, 2005

5 Article 151

6 Chantal Mouffe: "Democratic citizenship and the political community". In Ch. Mouffe, ed. Dimensions of Radical Democracy. New York: Verso, 1992 and Chantal Mouffe: The Return of the Political. New York: Routledge, 1992

7 for both concepts see also Therese Kaufmann, Gerald Raunig: Anticipating European Cultural Policies, Vienna 2003 <http://www.eipcp.net/>

8 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, http://www.unesco.org/culture/culturaldiversity/convention_en.pdf

9 Hannah Arendt: The Human Condition, University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 198

10 Jacques Rancière: Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy, University of Minnesota Press, 1998

11 Etienne Balibar: We, the people of Europe: Reflections on Transnational Citizenship, Princeton University Press 2004

12 lbd, p. 1

Culture in 2006: Local authorities in Patras repeatedly and systematically tried to expel the Roma population from the city by destroying their living spaces as part of some "cleaning operations".¹³ The makeover of a city for the purpose of cultural representation and the "improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples", as stated in article 151 of the European Treaties, here turns into a ruthless instrument of violent exclusion and discrimination.

This touches on another thesis developed by Balibar, that is the confrontation and interpenetration of two different concepts of a "people", or "the people of Europe". In his view this is also the precondition for the existence of a public sphere: On the one hand there is the ethnos, an imaginary community of descent and affiliation, on the other hand the demos, a "politically defined community of public negotiation and the balancing of interests and conflicts"¹⁴. The systematic construction of a "European cultural identity", which draws a demarcation line between those who seem to belong and those who don't, not only perpetuates historical-political mechanisms of suppression under the flag of European culture. It also runs the risk of reducing democracy "from a model for balancing conflictual political and social interests, which has to be permanently re-established and developed in terms of constitution as well as in terms of the concrete social interrelations" to a pre-existing "European value" and "cultural heritage" - a property so to speak - of a fictitious European ethnicity.¹⁵

TRANSVERSAL ALLIANCES ACROSS BORDERS: CULTURAL COMMONS AND PRECARIAT!

What is needed, to cite Balibar again, are "independent initiatives of thought and action from below", and - as already mentioned - these kinds of networks, temporary platforms or experimental collectives in the cultural field provide the space for debate, negotiations and exchange as fundamental preconditions for democratic participation. No matter whether these spaces are real ones or virtual, the transnationalisation of a cultural-political discourse that materialises in processes of networking across different fields and across borders ideally leads to the articulation of concrete proposals and demands. We can find these spaces in socio-cultural centres and their networking activities across Europe, for example, in interventionist or community arts projects, independent radio or media networks, net culture projects, intellectual forums etc. A decisive advantage of these projects and initiatives lies in the fact that they create spaces for minority positions, that they enable access and participation, the sharing and exchange of information outside the hegemonic mainstream, and small-scale decision-making processes.

In recent years we have been able to observe the participation of the cultural field in forums such as the European Social Forum or as part of different movements and actions against the effects of economic globalisation. This participation is no longer a decorative measure of contributing a "cultural programme", but is - along with other social and political fields - one specific realm of thought and

action. On the other hand, a number of extremely interesting, often only temporary alliances and partner-ships have been initiated between the cultural field and political activism. Examples can be found in collaborative projects between cultural projects and feminist or anti-racist initiatives, for example, or with different migrant organisations, such as - to name only a few - Precarias a la Deriva¹⁶, the No Border No Nation Network¹⁷, K.u.d.a.¹⁸, the Universal Embassy¹⁹, Maiz²⁰, etc. These initiatives relate directly to the current social struggles and depart from political concepts such as the "autonomy of migration". These practices, collaborations and alliances are often risky, conflictual and very demanding. For example, the cooperation between migrants and members of the dominant society - in spite of the wish and a commitment to work together in partnership on equal grounds - can never assume a symmetry between the different subject positions²¹, but always has to face the realities of - often multiple - exclusions and discriminations of those involved. It has to deal with realities of state violence, illegalisation, criminalisation and deportation.

Finally, I would like to mention two examples for currently emerging struggles and common action in relation to specific cultural-political conditions in a European as well as a global context: EuroMayday²² is an initiative connecting part-timers, migrants, cultural operators, etc. against the precariousness that defines the conditions under which more and more people in Europe have to work and live. In the practices of the aforementioned Precarias a la Deriva in Madrid, the Glücklichen Arbeitslosen in Berlin, the French Intermittents, the EuroMayDay Parades in Barcelona, Milan and Vienna, or the devotion to "Saint Precarious", we see components of a new concatenation of a movement against exclusion, exploitation, precarisation across different fields, which does not leave the neoliberal appropriation of urban, discursive and artistic spaces uncontested.²³

The idea of establishing a realm of "Cultural Commons"²⁴ - to turn to the second example - is not only targeted against the current hype of the cultural and creative industries, but also in general against the increasing commercialisation of culture coupled with increasingly rigid intellectual property regimes, which reinforce mechanisms of exclusion and discrimination, surveillance and control. In the worst cases, as we have seen more and more often in recent times, these lead to criminalisation, censorship and the persecution of political artists, such as in the case of the Critical Art Ensemble. Against this, a conception of culture as a common or public good is strongly linked to the strategic development of alternative modes of production and dissemination, e.g. in so-called Open Source Alliances or Free Software movements.

One specific hope that may be connected with these activities and initiatives is the coming-into-being of new forms of collectivity and a new commonality against the current governmental strategies of individualisation, a "coming community" that lays no claims to identity, a community that can be formed of singularities that refuse any criteria of belonging. It "relates to singularity not in its indifference with respect to a common property (so a concept, for example, being red, being French,

being Muslim) but only in its being as such as it is"²⁵.

"We are precarious. Which is to say some good things (accumulation of diverse knowledges, skills and abilities through work and life experiences in permanent construction), and a lot of bad ones (vulnerability, insecurity, poverty, social exposure). But our situations are so diverse, so singular, that it is difficult for us to find common denominators from which to depart or clear differences with which to mutually enrich ourselves. It is complicated for us to express ourselves, to define ourselves from the common ground of precariousness: a precariousness which can do without a clear collective identity in which to simplify and defend itself, but in which some kind of coming together is urgent. We need to communicate the lack and the excess of our work and life situations in order to escape the neoliberal fragmentation that separates, debilitates and turns us into victims of fear, exploitation, or the egotism of 'each one for herself.' Above all, we want to enable the collective construction of other life possibilities through the construction of a shared and creative struggle."²⁶

THESE KAUFMANN IS CO-DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL POLICIES IN VIENNA AND COORDINATOR OF THE TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT "TRANSLATE. BEYOND CULTURE: THE POLITICS OF TRANSLATION". [HTTP://EIPCP.NET/](http://eipcp.net/) [HTTP://TRANSLATE.EIPCP.NET/](http://translate.eipcp.net/)

CONTRADICTIONS AND CHANCES OF THEATER SYSTEMS IN EUROPE

BY DRAGAN KLAIC

Throughout the 20th cent. theater in Europe has been developing in 4 dominant types: as a commercial theater seeking to make money; as an artistic repertory theater with a permanent ensemble and administrative and technical staff; as a theater of autonomous groups interested in experimentation and innovation; and as amateur theater offering the possibility of self-expression to laymen and often compensating for the non-existing professional theater in some specific places. The characteristics of those 4 types can be summarized in the following table.

COMMERCIAL	REPERTORY	EXPERIMENTAL	AMATEUR
for profit star driven entertainment producer rules	non-profit ensemble art. excellence director rules	precarious vision experiment visionary/guru	altruistic community based imitative collective creation
New York B'way London West End & similar spots, prospering despite high costs & risks	Survived 1968 crisis and the end of the Cold War. Future?	Grotowski, Brook, Mnouchkine, Barba, Fabre...	1960-70s: student stage, early inter- national contacts
Part of cultural industry. Spin-offs through digital media. Aggres- sive marketing, replicated globally	Routine prevails, rising costs, loss of profile, graying audience. Planning matters more than artistic outcome	Multiplication, developed own infrastructure. International collaboration, networks, festivals	Crisis, became superfluous by the explosive growth of the cultural industry

A sharp dividing line separates today the commercial theater from the other 3 models. Commercial theater has become part of a large entertainment industry, a highly profitable line of business, with some gigantic oligopolies that combine various media and digital platforms and fuse information, data transfer, journalistic coverage, amusement and criticism. As such commercial theater is growing in Europe and working increasingly as a network of commercial venues supplied by limited number of large producers and distributors with standardized products and appropriate marketing tools and thus able to reach a large audience of locals and visiting tourists. In the case of the Dutch commercial producer Joop van de Ende, his Stage Holding conglomerate owns and operates some 20 venues in several European cities, produces a range of musicals and other productions, and provides electronic ticket sales. Meanwhile, the other 3 types of theater suffer from shrinking audience and shrinking or stagnating public subsidies for culture, from political pressures to operate like a business and increase their own earned income and to compensate the deficits with more sponsorship. <http://translate.eipcp.net/>

13 see Der Standard, 23/24 July 2005

14 Etienne Balibar: We, the people of Europe

15 see Stefan Nowotny: Ethnos or Demos. Ideological implications within the discourse on "European culture", eipcp, www.eipcp.net/diskurs/d01/text/sn02.html

16 <http://www.sindominio.net/karakola/precarias.htm>

17 http://www.noborder.org/news_index.php

18 http://www.kuda.org/_kuda_info.htm

19 <http://www.universal-embassy.be/>

20 <http://www.maiz.at/>

21 Rubia Salgado: Participation and Documentary. Artists and Migrants in Participatory Art Projects, in: Martin Krenn: CITY VIEWS. A photo project: migrant perspectives, Wien: Verlag Turia + Kant 2004, republicart, Bd. 3, http://www.republicart.net/publications/cityviews_index.htm

22 <http://euromayday.org/>

23 see: <http://www.republicart.net/disc/precariat/index.htm>

24 see e.g. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/1.0/nl/>

25 Giorgio Agamben: The Coming Community, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 67

26 From the invitation to participate in the first derive, 2002: http://www.republicart.net/disc/precariat/precarias01_en.htm

The essential questions in the perspective of those developments are :

- What will happen with the rep companies?
- How could experimental groups sustain their innovative orientation and consolidate their own position?
- How can amateur theater discard its imitative and compensatory function and be transformed into a community or community-based theater?

It is quite unlikely that most repertory companies will survive in their present shape. Some will lose credibility by losing some of their key creators who will leave frustrated by hierarchy, bureaucracy and strict planning. If the shrinking of the audience follows, deficits will mount and at some point the politicians might refuse to finance them further. For the sake of cost cutting even now many so called repertory companies are in fact operating differently, by engaging individual actors for specific roles and productions, performed intensively for a limited time, and operating without a steady ensemble; or seeking to sustain just a core ensemble throughout a season, supplemented with the guest actors engaged per production. Some subsidized rep ensembles seek to cash in at the box office what they have lost in the subsidy allocation and thus play an easy, entertainment repertory, more befitting a commercial house. In the worse case of enmeshment, a non-profit venue rents its own stage in some free evenings to an outside production - commercial or not - to supplement its income. Despite its subsidy and prestige, it acts as an ordinary booking house, indifferent to the programming contamination that inevitably ensues. Without a steady ensemble to provide continuity and define the profile, any venue could easily become just a booking house, where everyone can rent the facility for a touring production for a limited run.

Or the venue might become a Dutch type of the presenting facility where an artistically competent programmer chooses various productions of different companies according to own taste and orientation and pays them out of a budget made available by the public authorities or offers some sort of the box office split. In this way there is much diversity in the programming and yet the audience has a hunch what sort of offers to expect in the venue's program. The programmer can balance between more popular and more experimental work, pay more or less to have certain productions and experiment with the length of a limited run. Increasingly, this sort of venues present foreign work and bridge borders among various performing arts disciplines. While the traditional rep is increasingly resented by colleagues as a closed system, resting of privileged subsidy status, the programming venue appears as inclusive, democratic and run on the competitive qualities of those who are chosen to play there.

A more advanced variant is a production house: that is a programming venue that several times a year produces its own production by creating an ad hoc team or offering producing support to an existing theater group. In this variant a programmer is on some occasions also a producer who consciously takes a calculated risk to create new work, perhaps in the collective memory and collective imagination.

a co-producing arrangement with similar venues or festivals. To assume the role of the producer, the programmer must have additional means and additional competences but enjoys the advantages and disadvantages of the first presentation of the new work ... that of course could also fail.

Those changes impact the conditions in which experimental groups work. Most small groups dream of having their own venue where they will have the freedom to experiment but fail to anticipate the accumulated costs a venue involves and the inherent difficulty of attracting sufficient audience to fill the new venue capacity - if not for income than in order to justify someone's subsidy. Also they expect the public authorities to pay for their exclusive use of a venue and for the new work they will develop and do not see that their expectations in fact reflect monopolistic appetites in relation to a venue as a resource. From the point of view of a public interest, a programming venue featuring various productions by different companies or a production house programming and producing makes much more sense, offers more diversity and deploys resources for innovation, experimentation and risks, while the same group stuck in a venue might easily slide into a routine.

The group thus appears as its own producer, whether in own venue or in a hired rehearsal hall and then on tour; but it also could be commissioned by a producing house and/or a festival to develop a new piece. The production house might even invite a group to come into residence, play some older productions, offer workshops and educational programs and develop a new piece of work. In contrast to the rep ensembles glued as it were to its own venue and rather immobile because of the raising costs of a displacement, in the later cases there is an increasing range of relationships and negotiated deals between the artists and those venues and festivals that present and produce their work. Those groups that are capable of developing strong relations with more programming venues, producing houses and festivals and that can offer a package of activity around a performance have more chance to sustain themselves despite a strong competition.

Amateur theater makes less sense today than in the past because the products of the cultural industry have become available practically everywhere. Amateur shows cannot any longer compensate the absent professional theater because there are many other high-quality and low-cost compensations available in digital media. To sustain its expressive and social function amateur theater needs to transform itself into a community theater or community-based theater. That means a switch of the working method; not any longer playing what the professionals play but a long process lead by professionals, involving members of a distinct community and developing performances that arise from the collective experience, aspirations and frustration of that community and serve to clarify its position, memory, options for the future. Inspired by Boal and many other practitioners, community theater has been a tool of development in the so called Third World but has its own place in Europe as well, especially in the marginalized and underprivileged

communities. It is a mobilizing intervention in a micro-reality, determined to make a group more aware of own position and stimulate the development of efficient responses and strategies of self-emancipation.

Autonomous theater groups could seek to opt for conscious innovation and experiment or to work with specific underprivileged communities. In some instance it is also possible to fuse those two options. In any case, those groups need to distinguish themselves from the repertory companies' model, process, repertoire and style. But that does not preclude them in entering occasionally into a collaborative relationship with a repertory company, appearing as an agent of change, a guerilla intruder. Alternatively, groups might seek partners among production houses and festivals and some unusual co-producers who are interested to voice specific issues, concerns and topics, from the area of human rights or environmental protection, for instance. In the quest for partners who will strengthen the position of the groups, deliver new insights and new audience groups one might think of the educational and social care systems, corporate world, judiciary etc. And there is always the possibility of media spin-off whereby the group engages on another digital platform beside the theater stage.

Since groups are usually very vulnerable, stuck in an annoying gap between their ambitions and resources, they need to formulate their development strategy and move beyond sheer survival through another little project. In their strategic concerns and goals they need to mobilize advocacy allies in politics and media, in other cultural organizations, in education, academia and research, in audience development organizations and local communities rather than to seek to always do everything alone and for themselves and risk painting themselves into a corner, poor and marginalized. The more diverse allies and partners a group can identify and develop, the more sustainability it will be able to secure.

Certainly, much depends on the prevailing cultural policies and how they support contemporary creativity and artistic innovation. In many countries, regions and cities, cultural policy favors cultural heritage over contemporary creativity and prefers traditional institutions to experimental groups and initiatives. Image obsessed city fathers tend to privilege large events over long, patient creative processes. Public support is needed for creativity and risk taking, and then for the mobility of the works created and their authors and performers. This mobility can be achieved only if the venues also receive public support for quality programming of lesser known and not yet established work. To go beyond a small core audience of passionate followers and enable the growth of the public special financial schemes for outreach programs should be developed. And finally, since performing arts are a complex and highly volatile system with many players and interests, there is a need for publicly supported training, information, documentation and promotion services, for intermediaries and R&D organizations that benefit the field as a whole, stimulate its development, assert the awareness of the international context and further intercultural competence of the practitioners. Cultural policies are still frozen in the notion of a

stable institutional matrix with practically automated subsidy flows to steady recipients and little drive to experiment with new instruments, develop pilot schemes and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy itself. Instead the usual yearly ritual of subsidy allocations to the life-long subscribers (sometimes a little bit more, sometimes a little bit less) grants should be differentiated for 4, 3, 2 and 1 year, plus testing project specific grants. To make those grants, an open competition is needed with equality of access, clear procedures, formulated evaluation criteria and autonomous expert panels. In allocating grants those panels should look at the input-output balance, the record of the past performances and the articulation and convincing power of the plans for the future. Programs, producers, presenters and festival directors whose decisions affect so many other peers should also be appointed for time limited mandates of 2-4 years.

Among the possible funding criteria, "quality" will be inevitably evoked but it is a fuzzy term that has lost its convincing power and means different things to different people. Therefore innovation, development, conscious enhancement of intercultural competence, collaborative attitude and a demonstrated pattern of mobility, nationally and internationally should be specified as additional criteria.

Theater systems are mostly a result of national state and national culture, their development in the last 200 years but today they are as everyone else in the cultural production much affected by the growth of the cultural industry, migration and the ICT revolution. There is much reluctance to tinker with the theater systems, check their organizational and funding models, role and functions. If such a review is undertaken, the usual "holy cows" will seek to be exempted and to reassert their privileged or even monopolistic position. This makes little sense in a cultural democracy where the public authorities owe transparency and accountability to the citizens. How theater system works is always a political and democracy question, not just a matter of artistic judgment. It is an illusion to believe that a quick fix could be provided by some comprehensive theater law; legislation cannot alter reality at once and the prosperity of the theater system is dependent on many other laws and regulations, regulating labor relations, social security, taxation etc. Today, there is a growing complementarity of cultural policies and systems in the EU, their dilemmas, challenges and frustrations resemble increasingly each other. Rather than to play a Calimero role of a constantly complaining loser, and believe that all will be fine if only they would get a bit more subsidy, performing arts groups better confederate their ideas and arguments and seek to re-affirm theater as a public space and public service, as a viable platform for expression and development of creativity, valuable for local, regional, national, European and global citizenship, as a challenge to the collective memory and collective imagination.

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Dr. Dragan Klaic is a theater scholar and cultural analyst. He serves as a Permanent Fellow of Felix Meritis in Amsterdam, teaches arts and cultural policy at the Leiden University and frequently speaks at conferences and offers seminars and trainings across Europe. He is the author of many articles and several books, most recently Europe as Cultural Project (Amsterdam: ECF 2005). This article is based on the speech given at the European Off Network conference in St Pölten (A) on 17 June 2005. (e-mail: balakla@xs4all.nl)

AN ECOLOGY OF NETWORKING IETM IN A LANDSCAPE

BY MARY ANN DEVLIEG

This speech is not only about IETM, as one of the oldest and largest of the cultural networks in Europe. It is more useful to look at the whole environment of the European cultural networks and the role and place we all have in maintaining a healthy, dynamic ecology for networking. This is true whether we are young, new, old or just emerging networks. So forgive me if you already know some of the things I will speak about; I hope you will also hear something new and that it will provide a good basis of discussion for the emergence of your own network.

1 TYPES OF NETWORKS

Of course, networking is as old as human nature itself. As long as we have been gathering in groups to ensure our safety and to exchange useful knowledge, we have been networking. There are:

- Completely informal networks of family and friends. Just look at a busy market in a small town and you'll see who greets whom and shares gossip with them.
- "Pure" networks have been documented by scientists, biologists, physicians, and social scientists. These networks have common characteristics, whether they are machines, roads or human networks. They have no centre, are chaotic and have no hierarchy. The speed of communication is an absolute and key feature of human and non-human networks; you can see this in computer networking, just as you can see it in the spread of false rumours or positive grassroots political movements. Continuity - that is, the ability to stay in relation with the other people - is a key factor in the efficacy of networks. In the early days of IETM, its members liked to say it was as "pure" a network as was possible for an association: the driving force was its members, the Secretariat was much less active.
- Associations, unions, etc today demonstrate network behaviour to do their work. Although associations have hierarchical structures, elections, representation and sometimes are top-down in their decision-making, their members use the occasion of their events to network.
- Project consortia also often use network techniques, but consortia are groups whose main objectives are to achieve fixed, concrete, finite objectives such as co-productions and tours, rather than "purely" to network. Examples include THEOREM, Junge Hunde, DBM (danse-basin-méditerranée), Comedia ...
- Finally, there are professional or professionalised networks without projects which exist principally so that their members can network, as IETM did for many years, or networks with projects, concrete services, publications etc, in addition to the networking function, as IETM is now, also ELIA 5European League of Institutes of Arts), EU Net Art (art for children and young people) etc.

2 ACTIVITIES OF NETWORKS

Networks undertake a variety of activities and tasks, and my comments here are based on research about "development networks" which has been published on a website dedicated to evaluation and monitoring - www.mande.co.uk. The differences between these networks and cultural networks are slight. According to them the principal activities of networks are:

- Learning together (exchange visits, joint diagnosis of case studies and models of good practice, comparison of work practices and finding solutions to common problems). This is the MAIN OUTCOME of networks.

- Provision of services (information, training, communication, websites, newsletters, chat rooms ...)
- Advocacy (influencing public policy). Professionals get together to share their ideas but also to express their needs towards public administrations or other funders or partners.
- Influence on the consciousness, behaviour, empowerment of people and societies. We network in order to understand ourselves and the world better. One of the researchers calls this "the making of meaning".

3 BENEFITS OF NETWORKS

In 2000, IETM commissioned Fondazione Fitzcarraldo, a research organisation based in Turin, to make a study of the benefits of networking in IETM. The study was called "How Networking Works" and it was published by the Arts Council of Finland. We hoped this first-ever scientific study of cultural networks would inspire others to commission similar research. Alas, to my knowledge it is still the only real study of a network. Fitzcarraldo gave us many surprises; they also confirmed and proved some things we thought. They found that network members benefited from:

- Inspiration. This was, unanimously, what IETM members valued most. By hearing about other peoples' experiences, they were able to identify and adapt models for use in their own territories. Sometimes the inspiration comes not from hearing about something that one could "copy" but just from hearing the story and being inspired to do something different. (This is the "learning" referred to above.)
- Information-exchange. Of course, the aim of good networking is to exchange facts, useful news, concrete information as well as wisdom, savoir-faire and experiential knowledge. (provision of services)
- Breaking isolation. Although one could say we are sometimes competitors, we also share common visions, dreams, values. Network members forge solidarity partnerships which can come into use, for example, by letter-campaigns when one member or country is threatened by adverse cultural policies, or - to give another concrete example, to help with financial donations after the flood in Prague which ruined many theatres. It goes without saying that this support manifests itself often just by moral support and confidence building!
- Intercultural competence and learning. When we meet the same people over time, learn their perspectives, work practices, values, modes of communication and interaction, we learn how to work together. When we work together, we are obliged to "get into their shoes", learn how they see the same problematics we have to face together. We call this learning "intercultural competence".

4 PHASES OF NETWORKS

Like other organisational groupings, networks have development phases. Although this list is schematic, most groups will, more or less, follow these patterns of development over time.

- Initiation. The network idea is born, often from one or a few individuals. We can call them "prime-movers". They work hard to enthuse others, to bring more people in, to get support. IETM existed from 1981 to 1989 without any statute, employees of its own, funding etc. This is an extremely long time to develop (and grow ... from 5 people to well over 250 member-organisations) based totally on "volunteers". I firmly believe that it is this foundation of solidarity and generosity which has allowed IETM to be strong until this very day.
- Operational! The network organises meetings, workshops. It develops some rules to govern its behaviour and establishes communication tools such as newsletters.
- Consolidation takes up to 5 years after initiation. In this phase there may be a redefinition of structure and objectives. By now, there are several activities (services, advocacy ...). A Secretariat is in place as a coordination point.
- Dissolution, Adjustment and Evolution. The network has served its purpose for some time, but the environment, its members, the reasons for its creation have changed. It is time to move on - either by dissolving or radically changing. In 1999, the IETM Secretariat challenged the Board by asking the question, "Is IETM still the radical, pioneering movement it was in 1981? If not, we have two options; to close it down or to radically change." I am pleased to say the Board took the second option! This became our "restructure" which changed the mission, the structure, function, aims, objectives and geography of IETM.
- Now that we've looked at network theory, let's remind ourselves of a bit of history. Cultural networks, as such, have existed in Europe for a relatively short space of time. If IETM was perhaps the first, in 1981, we are looking at a brief 25 year development. I call it "the network movement", as there were so many networks formed in the 80's and 90's and the belief in the importance of networking as a new social phenomena was wide-spread - but not at first!

5. EVOLUTION OF "THE NETWORK MOVEMENT"

In the 1980's a somewhat rare, alternative, pioneering, opposition to the supra-national institutions like the UNESCO and the Council of Europe was starting to be seen. IETM was arguably the "first" of its kind in 1981. Trans Europe Halles and CIRCLE were also founded slightly later in the 80's, and many others followed. The ideas behind these groupings was that the post-war institutions set up to transcend borders and bring peace to Europe and the world, worked on an institutional, governmental level. However by the 80's we knew that, for example, a theatre maker in Vienna could and should be able to freely meet a theatre maker in Lyon without having to go through their Culture Ministries and have official invitations. As the 'independent' scene was rising, we also felt that people in this scene had as much need to meet (or maybe more!) than the national theatres and institutions. The desire to bypass borders and to meet colleagues drove us. The belief that our artists deserved international, rather than merely national audiences also fuelled our energies.

- In the 90's, we witnessed the rise of the networks, and their struggle for official recognition. In those years the institutions used to say "networking is NOT working" and accused us of merely wanting to travel ... Funny as it may seem now, networks were branded as lazy, do-nothing, wanting to take money away from the real arts organisations, "another layer of bureaucracy" (yes! Someone in power actually said that ...), and sometimes as dangerous to the national existence of the arts organisations.
- Today, the institutions recognise us and our value, but although there are some scarce, time-limited possibilities for EU funding of networks, neither the EU nor the Member States really properly fund us. We, the networks, argue that "we are not national, we are European; we belong only to the EU level", but the Member States oppose any rise in the EU culture budget which would make it possible to see appropriate funding for the existing and the emerging networks in the old and new Member countries. On the other hand, the same Member States do not want to fund us out of their own, national budgets. Some years ago the Dutch EU Presidency organised a conference about this, called "Between Two Stools". The situation has not changed very drastically since then ...
- The youngest generation professionals seem to be moving from networks to networking. Is this a post-network scenario? Will they want to join structured networks, or is "networking" a normal situation for them? Will they see us as "institutions" and want to be free from even our loose structures?
- And what about our current and future existence? Manuel Castells, author of 'The Network Society', has recently written an article (available on-line in a publication by DEMOS, the UK think tank) calling for "responsibilisation" of networks. He means inter-sectorial alliances should be forged between networks in different sectors to bring political, policy, economic, social, educational, cultural etc actors together to jointly envision and enact alternative ways of addressing our societies' evolutions.

6. DANGERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As networks, we have responsibilities. We are groups of people who have a great influence in society and thus, even if we are not elected representatives, we do "represent" in some way. We must look at the wider environment and ensure we are behaving in ways which are positive and productive for society. Some of the dangers are:

- Speed of information flow (for better or worse). The AIDS virus was spread via networks, so can wrong information be spread ... We must guard against rumours and gossip and prioritise information which is useful and true.
- Mafia?! The weight of influence ... Are networks mafias? If a lot of people are learning the same things and spreading the same info, we could have a manipulating influence in our sector and risk marginalising those not in our networks. Thus we have a real responsibility to keep our networks open, to encourage the new voices, the marginalised voices, to keep our structures democratic, to change our Board members frequently, to ensure our members have plenty of opportunities to discuss, debate, question ...
- Institutionalisation, hierarchisation. People have a normal tendency to create hierarchies, to seek their parents, a leader, someone to be responsible. It is much easier to create a committee, install a chairman and leave all responsibility to him or her. However, networks must remain as "flat" structures empowering all members equally. This is a constant task, as we are all busy, and the more efficient some network members are, the easier it is to the others to let them do the work. But then we are no longer a network. We have to watch constantly that our members are well motivated and have the means to participate in the network's decision making, direction, evaluation.

And so, to counteract the dangers:

- Listening: is one of our chief responsibilities to counter the dangers: listening to all voices, being vigilant
- Empowering the marginal voices is very important in a network, to let the weaker or more silent ones express their perspectives
- Constant self-questioning as to whether the network is still fulfilling its purpose, still useful, still achieving its intended objectives
- Opening doors for others is a responsibility of a mature network which has a certain influence

CURRENT PRESSURES ON NETWORKS

- Accountability. If we use public money or our members' money, we must be accountable for it. However, in today's increasingly "measurement-based" society, we are increasingly obliged to measure our outputs and outcomes as a proof of the good use of that money. Now, if learning is one of the most important outcomes of networking (as the researchers tell us it is ...), how do we measure learning

- Public funding / politics: Networks have long argued for public funding and in fact, we have made gains. There are funds, if few, on national and European levels. However, if we accept public funding, are we then complicit with political values and ideologies? What do we do if we are funded from Culture or Foreign Affairs budgets and we do not agree with the political parties in power?

- Loss of home / internationalisation (who owns a network?): Networks exist to foster cross-border collaboration, thus as mentioned above, we are international and not national. Thus no country feels responsible for us - this means great difficulties in getting funding!

- Finally, linked to the "accountability" aspect above, "Realisation" of benefits: We are more and more often required to undertake the extra work of proving that we achieve what we say we do ... and because the most important benefits of networking are 'intangible', this is far more problematic than, for instance, counting the numbers of people who have purchased theatre tickets or the numbers of ads which were placed in our local newspapers.

... and finally, to the subject which I was asked to speak about today! ...

8. IETM (FORMERLY KNOWN AS - AND OFTEN STILL CALLED - THE INFORMAL EUROPEAN THEATRE MEETING)

IETM (international network for contemporary performing arts): Our Mission Statement changed in 2002 to reflect our new reality, and it is probably already time to change it again. It is:

IETM is a membership organisation which exists to:

- stimulate the quality, development and contexts of contemporary performing arts
- in a global environment

by initiating and facilitating:

- professional networking and communication,
- the dynamic exchange of information,
- know-how transfer and
- presentations of examples of good practice

You might note that our mission statement doesn't specify "with whom". In fact, we work for the whole sector, for the good of the cultural field in general, even if we target our members in some of our work.

IETM has evolved many times, and this evolution might be illustrative as an example of the evolution of all networks. Its evolution is both organic and strategic.

Organic evolution is what happens naturally by this vast grouping or "swarming" of independent people. The Secretariat or Board can't do anything about this! It is the result of the members' actions and activities, interests, networking together. It is this organic, critically massed, surprising movement that makes networking fascinating and never dull ...

- Growth - IETM has very open criteria and no formal selection process, so its growth is organic. We grew

from 5 people to 150 - 200 - now 400, and will probably stop there. When we had 450 some years ago due to the fact that about 50 organisations had a "free membership", it felt too crowded. Now everyone has to pay, but we have 8 categories of fees to reflect the economic differences.

- Diversity - our diversity is, according to Fitzcarraldo, one of our most attractive features. The members see a vast "potential" in being able to meet so many different organisations and people. We attract any organisation which has an interest in contemporary forms of performing arts, media, new tech, installations, as well theatre and dance. So: documentation centres, artists associations, local authorities as well as festivals, companies, centres ...
- Sub-networks - IETM is and has always been a fertile pépinière for new, smaller, more focused networks. Professionals find each other in the big IETM and decide to bring together a smaller group and work intensively. We have many ways to actively encourage (accompany) the development of new networks in IETM; it is one of our policy priorities.
- Tendencias (new tech, globalisation ...): the natural evolution of artists' and programmers' interests is shown in the subjects discussed in working sessions at our conferences and seminars, and of our digital publications and web projects.

Strategic evolution refers to plans and actions that the Secretariat or Board can do.

- IETM became pro-active instead of reactive: our new mission statement replaces the first 19 years of the network which focused only on the 'pure' network function: bringing professionals together to network.
- Stimulation / provocation: we listen to what our members are saying, but importantly to what they are NOT saying or seeing; we research and find ideas to stimulate our members to think or notice what is happening around them.
- Mega-level / not in competition. We cannot and do not create any project which could be done by our members, such as creating a festival or performance tour. We identify and use synergies and the overall perspective to make appropriate projects which benefit or stimulate a majority of members.
- Development of services
This includes:
 - training packages ("soft" training and know-how transfer offered during our big meetings and at other occasions)
 - aids to arts mobility (we created the Roberto Cimetta Mobility Fund in 1989 and ran it until 1998 for people from Central and Eastern Europe. Then we founded the new, independent Fund to help artists and operators in the Mediterranean countries. We founded www.on-the-move.org)
 - OTM - now giving 1600 links to sources of funding and info for professionals mobility, commissioning articles on issues such as tax and social security etc.
 - support and accompaniment (for our members and for the development of new networks)

How has IETM taken responsibility?

Over the years, we have taken risks to commission or publish information which did not exist, yet could be of great help to the sector. We have also created associations, written and promoted discussion documents to influence public policy, and been a strong advocate for the contemporary performing arts sector and its values. Among our achievements:

- Info Box / Bread and Circuses / More Bread and Circuses (1990-1994). This was the first ever publication listing and analysing all the EU funds suitable to fund culture. The last editions (1994) were in French, German and English, co-published with the ZKF and the Arts Council of England. Now of course, this info is available from the EU Culture Contact Points.
- EFAH. IETM was a founder of the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage, the advocacy group for culture in Europe.
- Roberto Cimetta Fund (1996): As mentioned, IETM founded this unique fund which gives travel bursaries to artists and arts operators to travel for professional reasons in the Euro-Med countries. It is not funded by the EU, but by France (Ministry, ONDA and Fondation de France), Italy (sometimes, depending on politics!), Portugal (Gulbenkian Foundation), and the Netherlands (European Culture Foundation).
- How Networking Works (2000), was commissioned to not only give a basis for public support of networks, but to incite other networks to make their own evaluation research.
- Evaluation of Networks (1996 !! - present). IETM has been the unofficial spokesperson for the networks, believing that we should set our own standards high and inspire each other to always do better. We have written many documents proposing evaluation criteria and benchmarking standards.
- www.on-the-move.org (2003). As mentioned, IETM created this free, on-line database of 1600 links to sources of info and funding for arts mobility in Europe and beyond.
- In 2003, the European Culture Foundation commissioned IETM to make two different publications researching and analysing new tendencies in cultural management and international collaboration, in the independent sectors in
 - a) South East Europe and
 - b) Euro Med countries.
- Both publications listed recommendations to funders based on the real life experiences of their clients. ("Every Step has an Echo" and "I showed her my work, so she started to know me")
- "P-to-P", IETM commissioned this publication which gives a comparison of the statutes and working conditions of independents in performing arts in 25+ countries) (2004).

- Mobility Action Plan (2005). IETM published this advocacy document for the Irish and Dutch EU presidencies of the EU; and we continue to use it to lobby EU politicians and Member States to do more.
- Relations with "3rd" or non-EU countries (1989 !! - present). IETM has always been strongly against "fortress Europe" and has written many papers and spoken out for a more open visa policy for artists.
- Constant "accompaniment" / encouragement of new networks: EU Net Art, Junge Hunde, THEOREM, DBM, Chesa Africa, BE (Balkan Express), Central Asia Caravan ... these are only a few of the networks which we have helped to see the light of day ...

Presentation given at the inaugural meeting of the EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK by Mary Ann DeVlieg in S t. Pölten, Austria/ 2005

Mary Ann DeVlieg is currently Secretary General of IETM; Vice-President of the European Forum of the Arts and Heritage (EFAH), Advisory Committee Fondazione Fitzcarraldo. Co-founder/ Treasurer, Roberto Cimetta Fund for Mobility of Mediterranean Artists and Operators. Founder www.on-the-move.org arts mobility portal and project.

FOUNDATION AND GROW OF THE NETWORK FOR CONTEMPORARY PERFORMING ARTS IN THE BALKANS (BALKAN EXPRESS)

BY JADRANKA ANDJELIC

Balkan Express started from the initiative of theatre artists from Balkan countries involved in IETM meeting to gather and establish their own network. The founding meeting in Ljubljana, 2002 (organised by BUNKER Production, on the occasion of an IETM meeting held in April 2002 in Trieste) gathered some 20 theatre makers and managers, some reluctant some curious what that network could mean for all of us.

The term Balkan in that time still was charged with heavy connotation and mere pronouncing of the network's name provoked some bias feelings in participants. Were we defined by common perception of Balkan - region of conflict and wars? Besides politicians, not all artists were ready to be a part of Balkan Region, in political neither cultural level. On the other hand we were there from the need to meet and re/establish our communication, to share and collaborate.

We were all in Ljubljana 2002, out of need to change the situation - luck of contact and real collaboration, reinforced by political and economic problems that the region has been facing. The new situation created by the enlargement of Europe was/is also challenging for performing artists from Balkan - new boundaries were created but also new opportunities for collaboration.

Then, Balkan Express (BE) mission was defined: Re/Establishment of the mobility of art in the Balkans with the aim to improve the exchange with the rest of Europe. The aim is to develop as an informal platform of performing arts professionals from Balkan countries, which facilitates the exchange of information, ideas and projects, the dialogue and communication, and encourages collaboration in the Balkan region, helping as well in establishing connections with other regions.

More meetings followed:

- December 2002: BE development meeting in Medana, Slovenia. A small group of active members focused on identifying the key needs and lacks in the field of performing arts in the Balkans, defining the role and means of action of the BE network in the region.
- May 2003: BE caravan meeting in Flanders, Belgium. A group of ten cultural operators from the Balkan region gathered in Flanders, at the invitation and with the support of the Vlaams Theatre Instituut. The meeting was aimed at a direct contact and better knowledge of the contemporary performing arts situation in Flanders, and in making contacts and connections with local operators and artists.

November 2003: BE meeting in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. It focused on the possible collaboration and exchange of information within the region as well as with other European and non-European countries. Organised in cooperation with Jazz fest Sarajevo. It also included a workshop for actors and directors, led by Jozef Houben (pedagogue and artist).

- March 2003: BE working group within the IETM meeting in Budapest, Hungary.
- June 2004: BE meeting in Sfantu Gheorghe, Romania focused on the topic of audience development. Organised by the ECUMEST Association, it also included an artistic workshop for theatre directors, held by the theatre and opera director Andrei Serban as well as a work- shop for cultural operators on "How to set up international projects. The role of European cultural networks" held by Corina Suteu.
- August 2004: Artistic workshop for actors and dancers held by Jozef Houben, organised in the framework of the Mladi levi Festival, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
- March 2005: BE meeting in Belgrade, Serbia. The meeting is organised by the DAH Theatre Research Center as a Satellite meeting to the IETM plenary meeting (17- 21. March 2005). It gathered the biggest number of participants (70) from Balkan Region and stimulated new initiatives between dancers (Brain Store Project) and artists involved in social work. It reconfirms the importance of meetings/gatherings in order to keep network alive.

• November 2005: BE meeting in Skopje, Macedonia, on the occasion of the Balkan Dance Platform and in cooperation with Lokomotiva, Skopje. This meeting focused on contemporary dance in South East Europe. Approximately 60 participants took part in 3 intensive days of discussions, debate and informal exchange. It included, among others, vivid discussions on clichés, myths and exoticism in performing arts in the Balkans, and best practice examples of development strategies in contemporary dance, along with an information and training session on management of artistic companies and international touring.

During this period, the network continued to develop, in its organic and not predictable way. Like other significant networks, Balkan Express grows when artists started to recognise their needs and recognise the tools that networking can give them in creating productive situations for their work. The perception of "Balkan" in the network changed from the start and began to get its own profile/pride and characteristics that can be stimulating and creative.

The main obstacles for performing artists within the Region are still there. The lack of mobility and communication, the lack of information and artistic education, the lack of national and international funding sources still dominate as problems in our discussions during the BE meetings. But as well I believe the awareness and knowledge about the possible strategies to face these problems grew between artists and managers on Balkan. However the network became a meeting ground for performing artists from the Region and one of the rear possibilities for artistic exchange, despite political and economical circumstances. It is for me (as a director coming from Serbia), still a unique opportunity to fulfil a desire to meet and know more about my colleagues from Kosovo and Albania, in artistic and friendly environment!

BE today developed in:

- A network of contemporary performing arts operators from South East Europe and from other regions interested in collaboration in and with Balkans.
- A meeting point for diverse organizations or individuals promoting and encouraging the development of performing arts in all of its diversity.
- An information point on the contemporary performing arts in the Balkans, its major artistic tendencies, the models of management, the opportunities of cooperation and exchange, funding, education, innovative practices, etc.
- An active promoter and facilitator of mobility with and within the Balkans.
- A think-tank on relevant issues concerning cultural policy, mobility, exchange and other topics in relation to the development and role of contemporary performing art.

BE's activities are focused on conferences, meetings, professional visits, trainings, publications, work placements, information exchange, etc.

The mailing list (balkanexpress@network.ietm.org) is an efficient and very lively cyber platform for exchange of information and consulting between members of the network. The website (www.ietm.org/projects/Balkan) is hosted by IETM which strongly supports the network but it needs reconstruction and a new profile. Still one can easily find basic information and links to partner organisations in different activities.

Balkan Express Network is animated through a partnership between IETM (International network for contemporary performing arts Belgium) www.ietm.org, Bunker Productions (Slovenia) www.bunkerproductions.org and Association Ecumest (Romania) www.ecumest.ro. Balkan Express is kindly supported by Flemish Community of Belgium from its start.

Jadranka Andjelic, director, graduated from the Academy of Drama Arts at University in Belgrade, Theatre and Radio Directing Department. In 1991, together with Dijana Milosevic, she founded DAH Theatre in Belgrade, the first theatre laboratory in ex-Yugoslavia. In 1993 the company enlarged in DAH Theatre Research Centre with an ongoing program of performances, workshops, lectures, seminars and festivals. www.rex.b92.net/dah She is also one of the founders and Head of the Board of Association of Independent Theatres (ANET).

PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENT PERFORMING ARTS FINANCIALLY STILL ON THE FRINGE

We estimate that approximately 300 to 400 professional, independent theatre- and dance groups work in Austria. A turning point for fringe theatre came in 1989: Robert Harauer published the study "Zur sozialen Lage der freien Theaterschaffenden" (study on the social welfare situation of independent artists), which provided evidence of the lack of adequate social welfare and poor economic situation of Austrian independent performing artists; basing their argumentation on this study, artists have been able to convince the Minister of Cultural Affairs to finance the founding of IGFT The Austrian Association of Independent Theatre and to initiate the project "IG-NET," which provides financial aid to independent performing artists to cover the costs of social security contributions. IG-NET is currently financed by the Arts Division of the Federal Chancellery and is administered by the IGFT. IG-NET provides approximately 280 000 euros annually to support performing artists.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, some fringe groups were able to start their own venues, or own working structures and the scene as a whole expanded with a very broad diversity of artistic approaches. In recent years, financial circumstances have deteriorated (living and working costs have generally gone up and the necessary financial means to market fringe theatre work is still missing). The struggle to make a living as an artist continues to intensify. Artists who have produced enthusiastically for 10, 15, or more years are now confronted with inadequate social security.

In 2001, KSVF initiated a fund to provide artists with social insurance. To the great disappointment of the many initiators (of course IGFT also did a lot for the development and implementation of this law and the correlating subsidies for artists), this fund now only subsidizes the regular social insurance payments (up to a certain amount). Artists with a very low income from their artistic endeavors have no access to this fund, although they would need it most; thus, there are still artists who cannot afford social insurance. This leads to the next political field in which the IGFT will invest a great deal of energy in upcoming years: the precariousness of work. International networking has already begun with "euromayday." As a member of the "Kulturrat Austria," the IGFT was able to create a video "Precariat ... so that the people can hear our voice" (available for viewing at <http://kulturrat.at/precariatyvideo>).

In Austria, fringe groups have limited opportunities to tour. Fringe venues that also show performance art often do not have a large enough budget or political support to risk non-event programming that does not boost spectator quotas. Many productions are on stage for very short periods. There are no real agencies in Austria in this field, so artists have an additional managerial job acting as their own agents, added to the many other things they already have to do, such as creating and promoting their work. Fringe groups in the field of children's theatre have already

THE SITUATION OF FRINGE THEATRE IN EUROPE

COUNTRY REPORTS

built up their own touring system, going to schools and other suitable venues. They show a very high degree of mobility, supplying children with quality art in even the smallest villages.

The budget situation of fringe theatre varies greatly among Austria's nine provinces and is dependent on how long an artist has been working (it was possible to obtain better conditions several years ago). Fringe groups' access to federal subsidies is contingent on state funding.

In 2003, the Republic of Austria dedicated 24.8 percent (173.3 million euros) of its arts budget (733.1 million euros) into the sectors: music-theatre, theatre, and dance. Of these funds, 77.3 percent (134 million euros) went to the Bundestheatre-Holding (Burgtheatre, Vienna State Opera, Volksoper Vienna). Federal state and municipal theatres got 12.4 percent (21.5 million euros) of the funding. Twelve "big" and "midsize" theatres received grants from the Arts Division of the Federal Chancellery: 14.8 million euros (three theatres shared more than 60 percent of this amount). Eighty-six "small" theatres and independent artists share 2.1 million euros from the same source. The grants for independent theatre increased until 1997 and have decreased or stagnated since then. Grants in Austria's provinces vary greatly and correspondingly, the number of independent performing groups/artists varies.

In Burgenland, two groups are working with very small budgets (about 8,000 to 35,000 euros per production).

Kärnten (Carinthia): In 1998, professional fringe groups were granted 230,000 euros, in 2000, only 16,500 euros. Most artists left and went to work in Viennasome do productions in Carinthia in the summer.

In Niederösterreich (Lower Austria), the host of the EUROPEAN OFF NETWORK, cultural policy seems focused on events, summer theatre, and festivals. By contributing to regional festivals, independent performers can benefit from this strategy. Four independent performing artists and groups were able to create their own venues.

In Oberösterreich (Upper Austria), one independent group Phönix theatre has been successful in transforming into a well-funded theatre. There are only minimal grants for independent artists although they have gradually increased in recent years. Yet only few groups produce. Structural supports have been initiated: a technical-pool (database, which offers user-friendly and efficient exchange of technical equipment, stage sets, and costumes) and plans for venues and rehearsal-rooms for independent artists. Salzburg provides an annual budget of 264,560 million euros for fringe theatre. Most production grants range from 1,000 to 7,000 euros. International acknowledged dance groups receive about 11,000 euros annually from the province of Salzburg. The city of Salzburg gives grants for productions and annual funds, but the budget for fringe groups is small and is getting smaller. A small budget dedicated to touring has been set up.

In Steiermark (Styria) there is a regional association of independent artists "Das Andere Theater" It has been able to create a monthly poster with production-dates, open rehearsal rooms and recently opened its own venue for independent artists: "Kristallwerk." Graz and Steiermark have to recover financially from having been European Cultural Capital 2003, as this major event drained financial resources. About 27 fringe groups work in Styria and receive grants in the sum of 600,000 euros from Graz and 700,000 euros from Styria.

Tirol is probably the province with the most amateur theatre groups in Austria, they get grants for costumes, stages, lighting systems etc., but not for their work. The same principal in funding was the measure for professional performing artists. This strategy is changing only reluctantly. Grants for fringe groups are around 75,000 euros, there are also very low annual grants of 2,300 euros, production grants are between 1,090 to 10,500 euros.

Vorarlberg has about 15 independent performing groups with a very wide spectrum. Funding by the province of Vorarlberg has increased continuously during the last years from 300,000 euros in 1998 to 540,000 euros in 2004. The artists receive project grants (500 to 3,000 euros) and annual grants (8,000 to 161,000 euros).

Wien (Vienna) as city and federal province is the most generous supporter of fringe performing arts in Austria: 5.6 million euros in grants (10 percent of the total budget) was dedicated to fringe artists in 2001. Still, this money is not enough for appropriate funding of the broad variety of fringe theatre and dance in Vienna. Currently most Viennese theatres as well as independent artists are confronted with an ongoing reform. The reform had the cultural-political scope to reform fringe theatres. Fortunately the reform is now aimed at most of Viennese theatres. The general intention is to fund less independent artists with higher grants to produce "higher quality" in a financially and structurally improved environment. This means that fewer groups will get more money (in 2001, Vienna granted 199 professional fringe projects, annual grants and three-year-grants, 42 percent of the projects got funding up to 3,634 euros). Starting with September 2005, independent performing artists have access to two different systems of funding:

1. Production-grants (also for production concepts up to two years) with a total budget of 4 million euros. Within the production-grant pool, extra funds are dedicated to the promotion of young dance and performance artists, the field of theory, inter- and multicultural theatre and productions for children and youths.
2. Concept-grants with four-year-contracts. Within the concept grants, 14 fringe groups are funded.

Fringe theatre still means having a great amount of artistic independence the main reason for a lot of artists to work exclusively in this field.

Barbara Stüwe-Ebl
Interessengemeinschaft Freie Theaterarbeit - IGFT| Austrian
Association of Independent Theater
Contact: b.stuewe-essl@freitheater.at

B

BULGARIA

BULGARIAN FRINGE THEATRE - IS THERE SUCH AN ANIMAL?

Sixteen years after the so-called "soft revolutions" in the former Soviet bloc, the Bulgarian theatre scene still suffers from the syndrome of "fear of freedom." After 1989, when the ideological control on the arts field suddenly disappeared and artists no longer had to hide their political and aesthetical preferences, the ecstasy of freedom quickly waned and most of the artists as well as part of Bulgarian society stumbled and froze on the general issue: 'Freedom!... But what should we do with it now?'

There were two main options. The first was to replace the existing socialist system of state owned theatres and repertories with a more effective and flexible one, for example, by converting the theatres into production centres without employed artists; and into venues that mainly accept touring productions. The second option was simply to replace persons who were running the socialist theatres at that time with "democratically orientated" people, but to keep everything still within the existing frame. Unfortunately, the Bulgarian theatre scene pursued the second option, which secured minimum wages for the employed artists but nearly wiped out any kind of constructive ideas.

The present situation is similar. Broader development of a fringe scene as well as the independent initiatives in the field are still blocked. Basically, there is no market for fringe theatre productions no accepting venues, no touring agencies and no independent production houses - and there is basically almost no money in Bulgaria to produce such projects.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria still has no clear strategy for situating the theatre and dance scene within the new conditions of the market economy. The ministry supports only the country's state theatres on an annual basis, providing wage subsidies for the employed artistic, administrative and technical staff, and some funds for building maintenance. There is almost no support provided for production costs. The few municipality theatres in the country are run under exactly same model as the state theatres. The fringe/independent companies do not have direct access to state funds for maintenance and administrative costs. They can simply apply for very limited funds, and only for particular projects.

Twice per year, The National Centre for Theatre (part of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism) announces a public tender for project sponsoring. Each of the tenders states what will be given priority, and has a very limited budget. For example, the spring session held in April 2005 had a budget of approx 56 701 euros and priority was given to staging Bulgarian theatre plays and theatre festivals in the country in 2005, which means that other types of projects had no chance of funding. Twenty-four projects (out of 38) by state and municipality theatres were supported with a total amount of approx 41 856 euros - 75 percent of the overall sum - making an average of approx 1 757

euros per project. The supported projects initiated by independent legal organizations were 14 with a total amount of approx 14 536 euros - 25 percent of the overall sum - making an average of approx 1038 euros per project.

Over the past 15 years, the few existing Bulgarian independent/fringe theatre and dance groups became accustomed to getting support mainly from SOROS Centre for the Arts Sofia (which stopped the programme in Bulgaria in 2001) and also a little bit from the Swiss cultural programme in Bulgaria (Pro Helvetia), which is still running an office in Sofia. Both organizations offered project-based support, not annual programming support, and ideally, they supported just one project per organization per year. The average support provided by these organizations is approx 1,546 euros.

At the moment, the only way for fringe companies to survive is to do either very commercial low budget projects or to cooperate with partners from abroad and do international co-productions. In general, fringe companies in the field of drama and puppet theatre are very commercially oriented and they do small, low budget touring productions (for example, Perpetuum Mobile, Ariel, Tzvetete etc). An exception is the drama theatre company La Strada, the only one of its kind which has, until now, managed to create high quality projects in cooperation with a few state theatres in Sofia.

The most interesting artistic work comes from fringe companies in the field of physical theatre and dance. There are a few companies that cooperate and tour mainly with partners from abroad (New Forms Theatre, Kontrapunkt, Den Gri X Foundation, Satores & Arepo Group etc).

The country's only event intending to focus audiences' and critics' attention on alternative performing art forms in Bulgaria is Aquarius Era festival of Bulgarian dance, visual, and physical theatre. It is organized biannually by Theatre in a Suitcase Independent Foundation in Bourgas and held in May or June.

The Bulgarian theatre and dance scene still needs radical reform to distribute state subsidies for these arts more efficiently. Bulgaria's entry into the EU in 2007 will, perhaps, help with that. At least this is the dream of the independent artists.

Petar Todorov
is Bulgarian theatre and dance director with large international experience. He recently is working in the frame of the artistic partnership Satores. He is president of Pro Rodopi Foundation and manages the unique for Bulgaria and Balkans Pro Rodopi Art Centre in Bostina, homebase of Arepo Group.
Contact: petardesi@infotel.bg

The Croatian fringe theatre scene appeared mainly in the 1970s. The leadership of the organized Croatian amateur theatres in cooperation with prominent theatre critics stimulates and encourages unique and original artistic theatre companies. It has led to the emergence of many award-winning theatres, doing especially well at BRAMS, the leading alternative theatre festival in former Yugoslavia in the 1980s.

Those theatres from the core of contemporary Croatian alternative (fringe) theatre are (Lero, Dubrovnik; Daska, Sisak; Pinklec, Čakovec; Inat, Pula; and from Zagreb Kugla glumište - today Damir Bartol Indoš), while non-institutional professional theatre groups and theatres represent another wing (Theatre Exit, Mala scena, Kufer, Bad co, Montažstroj Zagreb; Traffic, HKD teatar Rijeka etc.)

The International Festival of Student Theatre (Kazališta) IFSK in Zagreb in the 1960s was a precursor to festivals such as Eurokaz in Zagreb, MAK, SOS in Sisak, Male scene in Rijeka, PUF in Pula, where both Croatian and international fringe theatres perform. Theatre magazines Frakcija, Kazalište, Zarez, and Vijenac very often feature Croatian fringe theatres.

The main event in the last 10 years for the Croatian fringe theatre has been the PUF Festival (Pula Art /Umjetnički Festival) in Pula.

THE PUF FESTIVAL:

The international theatre festival PUF was founded in 1994 by the leaders of the four top non-institutional theatres in Croatia: Branko Sušac from "Dr. Inat" in Pula, Davor Mojaš from "Lero" in Zagreb, Nebojša Borojević from "Daska" in Sisak and Romano Bogdan from "Pinklec" in Čakovec. During wartime, when a large part of Croatia was occupied, while Dubrovnik and Sisak suffered the direct threat of war, the founders of the festival decided to locate this theatre manifestation in Pula, which was spared from direct wartime devastation.

PUF was born as a direct commentary on Croatian theatre reality. While wanting to show that theatres and theatre festivals do not necessarily have to have huge overhead expenses, with its choice and its concept, PUF has indicated that the existing Croatian theatre festivals have completely ignored an entire segment of the current theatre offerings - and precisely the segment that represents Croatia more at international festivals than any other Croatian theatre institution. This festival was also created as a comment on the terrible lack of terminological precision and clarity that still predominates Croatian theatre. PUF is a festival of theatre differences and openness within a sincere theatre experience. It attracts different poetics, seeks new theatre directions and rallies artists and spectators around the idea of theatre. PUF establishes and stimulates dialogue and allows polemics to arise. PUF functions as a communication channel; revealing the world from a new angle: not monologue and passive communication, but dialogue, frankness, identification, and participation. At the same time, it is obvious that PUF will be a site of encounters between

artists who differ in their worldviews and inner necessities, yet not in their marginalized social position.

We hope to see you at our Croatian alternative theatre festivals in June and July.

Welcome!

Nebojša Borojević

DASKA Theatre Sisak

For the PUF program's book: Dubravka Lampalov and Branko Sušac

Contact: daska@online.hr

THE THEATRE NETWORK, ITS FUNCTION, SYSTEM OF FINANCING AND SUPPORT

Copied from the article written by Bohumil Nekolny & Ondrej Cerny (April 2000) / Theatre Institute, Prague

In the 1990s, the state monopoly on theatres came to an end and most theatres were transferred to the control of local councils. Private production management began mainly in the sphere of musicals and dozens of theatre and dance companies were formed as independent, non-governmental organizations.

Czech theatre has a multifaceted theatrical network in which, thanks to tradition, there is a predominance of classical repertory theatres with permanent ensembles. Most of these theatres are administered and run by local councils (currently there are 44 such theatres). Most privately managed productions are musicals, but there are also companies founded on the "star" system. There is also a tradition of professional support for puppet theatre. Several festivals are held annually: International Festival Divadlo/Theatre in Pilsen, the Festival of European Regions in Hradec Kralove, Dance Prague, Four Days

in Motion, the Prague German-Language Theatre Festival, the International Frontier Theatre Festival in Cesky Tesin, and the Fringe Festival Prague. The Prague Quadriennale continues as an international exposition of stage and costume design and theatre architecture. International companies appear more frequently, and there are close contacts with the Slovak theatre world. However, based on the number of international invitation, it seems that there is little interest abroad for hosting Czech companies.

The extensive infrastructure for theatrical activities employs a large number of artists and other professionals (in the case of the municipal and State theatres, the majority have permanent contracts). Amateur theatre activity, which in the Czech lands has a fertile, multi-faceted, and active tradition, is also supported by public funds. Czech law dictates that any legal resident or physically able person may manage/operate a theatre company. Apart from tax requirements, there are no other regulations. The basic difference between public and private theatre companies lies in access to public resources. Whereas State and municipal theatres have this access guaranteed by law, the remaining private subjects do not have guaranteed access and rely on arbitrary decision-making processes by governmental officials.

As early as the first half of the 1990s, the Ministry of Culture created a grant system designated to support civic associations (non-profit organizations). This development made it possible for a varied range of unofficial theatre activities, experimental work, festivals and workshops of smaller and newly founded companies in a wide spectrum of genres and kinds to receive grants and other financial support. In the second half of the 1990s, an additional grant system was established for legal residents and physically able persons. This system is based on "specialist decision-making" wherein quality and diversity are the basic criteria. The problem of these grants is the size of their budgets, which are proportionally much smaller than the means granted by the public budgets to contributory organizations, i.e., the clear majority of repertory theatres.

In 1999, the Czech government approved the principles of a cultural policy report: "Strategy for a more effective state support of culture." However, in spite of this proclamation, the necessary legislative and financial changes were not made. Sources of funding in the Czech Republic, other than public funds, are extremely limited. There is the State Culture Fund, whose main source, the lottery, foundered, and for which another attempt at revival is taking place. Meanwhile, a special tax on commercial cultural activity has been established but is not used. Important assistance was provided by foreign foundations and institutions during the period of transformation. There is no large and wealthy private cultural foundation or clearly conceived donor activity.

There are professional theatres with permanent companies in twenty-two cities and towns. In a number of places there are professional theatres of

various types (e.g. drama theatre and puppet theatre). In roughly the same number of places there are limited seasons, which do not have a formulated concept and ad hoc program coordination.

In the 1990s, with the liberalization of the cultural environment, a number of smaller companies and groups renovated some small spaces as studio theatres, theatre clubs, and small stages, but in small percentages. They are frequently the first pioneers to use non-theatrical spaces (halls, amphitheatres, historical monuments, public spaces) for their projects. In this sense, Czech theatre really did experience a boom.

MAMAPAPA PUBLIC ASSOCIATION IN 2005

The situation in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland has indicated the possibility of these three countries joining the European Union when their economic and social-cultural debts are on par with those of Western countries. Aiming to become part of the EU Community, Czech society should start new educational process towards an open minded, creative, cosmopolitan thinking in the arts.

An underdeveloped civil society struggles constantly with economic and socio-cultural insufficiencies and problems. Competent institutions are not solving the issue of the third sector, which is crucial for civil society. Natural movements and processes that move in this direction within social life are considered a cause of trouble rather than respectable and valuable processes that can directly report on trends in society.

Companies that are generally beneficial, civic associations and foundations struggle with problems in all possible fields (social, charitable, ecological, cultural, art, education). Our association mamapapa has already faced similar problems for several years, and there are no suggestions from either the milieu or conditions we are situated in, that something will change and get better.

mamapapa is developing a strategy for its own activities to find solutions to these problems and improve conditions for the realization of projects. Main activities in this period - symposiums, seminars, workshops and unique artistic events - have focused on education, open communication, reviving and disseminating different models and examples that have already proven valuable, cultivation of mutual respect between non profit and commercial sectors, and state authorities' recognition and support of such events.

Tomáš Žižka

artistic director of mamapapa from 1997 till now;
Contact: mamapapa@mamapapa.cz

mamapapa o.s is an independent, non-profit initiative founded and run by artists for the artists of the performing and live arts. Its projects aim to create the conditions for communication, education, exchange of experience and knowledge. Presently, mamapapa is continuing with the development of the LightLab project. LightLab is an open interdisciplinary platform and mobile technological studio created for the purpose of hosting seminars, workshops and symposia. A place for experimentation, a piquant spot for the creation of a theatrical miracle.

Independent theatre still uses various forms and structures: from one-person-theatre to complex ensembles, it sometimes has its own stage, sometimes not. Independent theatre is at home in all genres: whether puppet-theatre or dance, artists play for all types of audiences - both children and adults. Productions often cross borders of different kinds of art and sometimes offer pure spoken word theatre. Increasingly, independent groups no longer work in established ensembles, but in production companies where professionals come together for one project, often at stages and venues such as Kampnagel in Hamburg or Sophiensäle in Berlin, which function as production venues and not as a form of municipal theatre with its own ensemble.

However: the theatre "scene" has changed. The categorical separation, even irreconcilable opposition of independent and established theatres, which led to the foundation of Independent Theatre in the 1970s, no longer exists. Therefore, in terms of general structure, discussions and debates about the theatre - such as the alliance for theatre recently initiated by the German Federal President - can no longer be aimed exclusively at one of the two forms.

Not only the example of the Berlin Schaubühne, which is successfully managed by three independent producers, but also the increasing number of collaborations and of professional producers and actors who move between both forms, emphasize that the former, content-based boundaries between independent and established theatre, are becoming blurred. Many municipal and state theatres work experimentally, many independent theatres work conventionally, either continuing to do so or once again. Some independent theatres function better on the basis of experimental work; some municipal or state theatres function better with conventional work. Sometimes, however, the reverse is the case. Measured on audience demand, all forms are justified, regardless of who does what. Various forms of aesthetic ideals and work approaches can be found in independent and established theatres. What is clearly evident in both forms is that we find a wide base and a narrow peak of top quality. And, if there is a hideaway of theatre avant-garde, then it would be in the small, top quality independent theatres.

The structures of both systems, are, however, positioned irreconcilably against one another, although in Germany, independent theatre, i.e., not connected to the State, is nonetheless often supported by federal and provincial funds. On the one hand, in so-called independent structures, people work in a project-related way, without social security or permanent structures; available funds are invested in the artistic work. Artists work freelance and have no financial security between projects. Established theatres, on the other hand, invest the majority of funds in running an enterprise, which subsequently struggles to raise money for the actual production of plays, much to the chagrin of the artists engaged there.

In Germany, all independent theatres together, estimated at more than 2000 groups, have a budget of approx. 30 million euros, whereas the state and federal theatres - about 200 - have a budget of approx. 2000 million euros.

For more information on Independent Theatre in Germany, see: www.freie-theater.de

Jochen Brockstedt and Rolf Dennemann
BUFT Bundesverband freier Theaterschaffender; this is the Association of Independent Theatre in Germany
 Contact: service@freie-theater.de

THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THEATRE IN GREECE

There are two kinds of private theatres in Greece:

1. Commercial Theatres that belong to big managers who promote firms and Stars.
2. Non-profit Repertory Theatres. Some of these are supported by the Government.

The second category of theatre is the most dynamic part of Greek theatre. Small, medium or large theatre groups create with inspiration and vision and present many performances in various spaces.

This does not include:

1. The National Theatre of Greece (based in Athens)
2. The National Theatre of Northern Greece (based in Thessalonica) and the
3. Sixteen municipality theatres all over Greece.

Theatre spaces - venues

In Athens there are approximately 150 theatres (venues). These venues host ca. 350 performances per year (winter and spring theatre seasons). Athens hosts 90 percent of the theatre productions in Greece.

In the other major cities of Greece there are roughly: twenty theatres in Thessaloniki, three in Kalamata, six in Patras, four in Larissa, two in Volos, and approximately fifteen more theatres scattered throughout the rest of Greece.

To talk a bit more about the area of private theatres in Greece, we must stress that most of the theatre spaces mentioned were not initially designed to function as theatres. Very few were built and designed or transformed to be theatres. These few are the large theatre buildings that belong to foundations or to the Church. They are mostly managed by large commercial theatre managers with famous names and stars. The rest of the theatre spaces are old warehouses, large neo-classical buildings, old movie theatres, old factory spaces or even basements and garages that have been transformed, more or less, into theatre spaces. And this is what is most interesting. The architectural solutions developed for such spaces to be converted into multiple spaces and to host performances and audience are of great interest.

Theatre Groups

Furthermore, it is also very interesting and "healthy" to think about what to do and what the mind of theatre makers will invent in order to find a space to host their dreams, sensibilities, and imagination. So, in Greece, we have seen high quality performances in small and tight spaces. Naturally, the gaiety and desire of the theatre makers is answered by the misery and lack of generosity (financial and ethical) of the institutional Greek State. Politicians that do not respect or appreciate art in general, do not understand theatre and underestimate it. In the last 40 years, no government has had a cultural policy. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Culture financially

supports about 50 private, non-profit, theatres. The ministry appoints a consultant commission that meets and decides to give a small amount of money to various theatre groups. But the expenses of a theatre performance are many times more than this amount and resulting debts are usually also very high.

This happens because another paradox exists in the theatre area. While creation blooms and develops in so many performances and theatres (a unique phenomenon in Europe) the audience diminishes. In Athens, about 300 Theatre groups present their work in the above mentioned spaces. They have a very rich repertoire with plays from all over the world and performances that are experimental, vanguard, or dance-theatre.

They perform periodically for a period of ten days to three months and create high-quality professional performances with professional actors and costumes, stage design, lights, sound and everything else a performance requires such as printed programs, promotional photos, and advertisement.

Nickolas Kamtsis
theatre director of Theatre Topos Allou-Aeropolio

RICH COUNTRY POOR COUNTRY **The Hungarian theatre structure is ripe for change**

The Association of Hungarian Alternative Theatre (the official name is now Association of Hungarian Alternative and Independent Theatre /AHAIT) was founded in 1994 by ten groups. Its original aim was to provide a business-like federation for those companies and institutions that had no structural base in the strictly divided Hungarian theatre scene. It was able to provide a true aid to these groups in order to emerge from the "amateur" ghetto that was always looked down upon in Hungarian professional theatre circles. Already in the first period we were able to convince the Cultural Ministry and the City Government of Budapest to provide annual funding for these groups. Along with the Soros Foundation, which was the first and previously sole supporter, we made important moves for those who joined.

New leadership facing - progress

By spring 2003, the General Assembly of AHAIT elected a new presidency, partly because the former one was unable to define the kind of art to strive for, and - something that is also related - what kind of policy to pursue in inviting groups to our yearly festival/contest. We tried to put more emphasis on being progressive in our general policy and lobby work to hold together those who have a strong urge for progressive, innovative, independent creation and, ultimately, for a profound change in the Hungarian theatre regime.

At the moment we have 106 registered members from a diverse range of Hungarian independent theatres. Another important field of our work is to develop good relations with those people, institutions, and authorities that work outside the AHAIT but still agree with our goals and way of working. Our conviction is that after having integrated into the European Union, it is unacceptable that the outdated Hungarian theatre structure spends about 10 million euros on mainstream State supported theatres, while the whole range of alternatives receives only 200,000 euros.

We believe that the jewel of alternative theatre lies in the personal and unique relations that exist between the creator and creation, between the creator and the world, supposing that one considers the theatre as a form of art. The greatest problem in the operation of alternative and independent theatres is that, in spite of examples available from other countries, no importance is attached to the institutionalization of these types of theatres. In fact, the case is quite the contrary. Although it appears that these institutions resist institutionalization as they are much more mobile than traditional theatres. Mobility here means personal theatre thinking, sensitivity to the unique process of creation where training and experimentation are organic and natural parts of the creation. Our conviction is that the EU cultural market is enlivened by these decentralized, small institutions holding the right of sovereign decision making, owning fiscal strength to buy and sell productions that can contribute to the renewal of theatrical arts. Most Hungarian fringe groups work in catastrophic

infrastructural conditions, yet, still, some world famous productions have recently emerged. If it becomes clear that a company's "home" is not the theatre but the rehearsal space, then it would be possible to found a few "incubator houses" to really contribute to the proliferation of the miracle of theatre in Hungary.

Protection of common interests, lobby work, promoting changes in theatre structure

The Hungarian theatre world is much more permeable today than ten years ago. There are no rigid barricades between "stone-age theatres," alternative, and amateur theatres. In fact, this is good news but almost nothing has happened to lessen the atrocious differences in financial resources. (The non-state maintained field of Hungarian theatre receives around 1 percent of the total expenditures on theatre.) We would like to achieve changes in the attitude and practice in a cautious and diplomatic way that does not directly oppose the interests of the prevailing theatre system. Eventually, artistic quality and community importance should be the scale by which support is matched. Also, alternative theatres could develop healthier conditions for deconstructing their ghetto-like existence, since for certain artists this situation is too narrow, whereas for others it is a comfortable framework for survival.

Public funds available to alternative groups in Hungary today

First, we must emphasize that in Hungary there is currently no relevant private sponsorship that would show serious interest in supporting our community. So we can only count on those funds that the state offers:

1. "Operational support" is a part of the State Budget defined yearly by the Parliament (at the present it is 1,380,000 euros). This sum is distributed by a committee appointed by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage that, besides the Ministry delegates, is composed of theatre professionals and critics. This sum was increased significantly two years ago when the success and world fame of the "homeless" Krétakör Színház /Chalk Circle Theatre enforced the decision makers to create a new category and add a surplus 40,000 euros to this expenditure, which is now called the category of "Prominent Companies." This allowed a few truly excellent groups to receive a sum sufficient to create something. The rest (145 million) was spent on the others who went on living on a day to day base like beggars. Also the receiving theatres of Budapest get support from the same fund, which means 70,000/100,000 euros per year. This sum is just enough for basic operation, in fact, they have no chance to buy, promote or produce projects henceforward. Our immediate goal now is to make authorities create one more new category with the requisite money that would be called the category of "Prominent Receiving Theatres." There are four or five "big" receiving theatres in Budapest with a season of 150/160 performances a year.

2. Theatre Fund of the Capital's Cultural Committee. As 90 percent of the alternative theatres work in Budapest, this fund is very important for them. Originally these resources could only be used for projects / productions but, roughly three years ago, the policy of the City of Budapest changed somewhat with the decision that applicants can also apply for complete theatre seasons. Actually, this fund is very little and cannot significantly aid groups and theatres. As a result of our efforts, most of this limited amount of money is now given to alternative groups and children's theatres.

3. National Cultural Fund Programme is a huge foundation promoting the widest range of arts and culture in Hungary. Its theatre section has announced competitions for productions till now and this is the first year that they will promote tours and series of the previously supported projects. This fund gets its resources from revenues from the cultural market (film distribution, press, magazines, electronic media etc.)

What is important about these funds is that we can send our own delegates to their curatorial boards.

Festivals

The new leadership was given the mandate by the members to change the policy of the representative festival of AHAIT. Earlier it was held in Budapest, and everybody who wished to perform was invited and the event spread out all over the city, and there was no orientation for the audience or professionals. Rather than showcasing our talents, we discredited ourselves with this event. Two years ago we joined the well operating Szeged Theatre Festival (organized by MASZK Hungarian Center of Alternative Theatres) and engaged three professionals to do the job of pre-selection. They have to choose those performances from the season that they think are the best, most innovative, and most interesting regardless of the theatre groups' working frame. In this way, for our festival we could regain the image that is at the center of our general policy: progressiveness. This annual festival is called: SZASZSZ. In addition, we also have good contact with the MADIWAVE Győr Festival and with the organizers of the Hungarian Nationwide Theatre Meeting (POSZT).

Sections, communication

A decision was made to form sections to promote a wider range of operation. Now we have sections of critics, photographers, designers, and documentation specialists. We also have a website, which is doing well, called: www.alternativszinhazak.hu, where the fluency of communication is ensured for all our members.

János Regős

*Vice President of AHAIT / Association of Hungarian Alternative and Independent Theatre
Based partly on thoughts of László Hudi, President of AHAIT
Contact: mozgohaz@axelero.hu*

ENTERTAINMENT AND RATINGS OR CULTURE AND ART?

In the state of Israel, which was founded in the year 1948, culture is still a developing matter. Most of the theatre in Israel is repertory and conventional theatre created in the well established and supported national or city/regional theatres, or commercial entertainment theatre. Independent or fringe theatre, the main concern in this report, is less popular among the performing arts than dance or music.

There is one theatre festival, "the Acco fringe festival," which is a platform, mainly for young theatre makers who want to expose their work to the public for the first time. Since the budgets are so low, professional artists find it hard to produce new shows under these conditions. The festival hosts both Israeli and Arab-Israeli productions. There is a competition that motivates people to work hard to perhaps earn a few extra shekels, and the first prize is normally divided between an Israeli production and an Arab one, in order to be politically correct. This festival was founded 25 years ago with the idea that it would be a great way to incorporate Israeli-Arab co-operation and also the idea that the city would flourish, but none of that really happened and the festival seems practically decadent. The local people in the city of Acco complain that the artists from Tel-Aviv simply arrive 2-3 days before the festival and leave on the last day, and the people of Acco can't even afford the theatre tickets. Another issue is that the title fringe might be a misnomer as most of the theatre created for this festival is conventional and the festival has never even been wise enough to integrate the outdoors and site-specific theatre as an equal to indoor theatre.

The prize productions move on to perform in Tel-Aviv, where they possibly started out anyway, at the Fringe theatre center or the Tmuna theatre space. These are the alternative homes for fringe theatre in Israel, which unfortunately, "can't preserve" the fringe theatre scene, in sort of standard-conventional theatre spaces instead of allowing diverse theatre spaces to be chosen or created for the needs of each production. Most of the theatre productions are text based, which I would define as contemporary theatre rather than fringe theatre. There are two more centers for fringe theatre in Jerusalem: Hamaabada, the laboratory, which is quite new and privately funded, and Hazira the Arena. A few new productions are made there every year, and a very small scale festival. "The voice of the word" has also been produced there for the past three years. These are all supported by government and city money; which is mainly how they manage to survive, although the support is certainly not at the same level as that for the city/national theatres. A few theatre companies supported by public money have their own spaces, such as the Acco theatre center, Notzar theatre, Clipa, and the Arab-Jewish theatres in Jaffa and Zik, but this is very rare and mainly in Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem. Most actors in Israel who wish to create or perform in fringe productions, find themselves in a difficult situation due to lack of production opportunities. The theatrical education system in Israel, educates the actors to be

mainly repertory theatre actors. They are not trained to be creative, producing actors, or as we can define it- total actors- who are responsible for their own production as a comprehensive art piece. There are only two theatre schools that offer this kind of training, one of these is Hagoof, which was founded by ex Lecoq students, for example, Gil Becher, and teaches Lecoq theatre methods in Tel-Aviv. The other school is the Shlomi center for theatrical work and creation, in the north of Israel, which teaches diverse methods of acting influenced by Grotowski, Stanislavski, Butoh, and the work of the Israeli Director David Maayan. The importance and influence of independent schools such as the above could be great, but the school in Tel-Aviv is not yet financially supported, and the one in the north is supported financially, but people seem to feel that it is too far from the cultural center of Israel, which is, without a doubt, Tel-Aviv. There have been several attempts by theatre artists to create fringe or independent theatre outside of Tel-Aviv, but as all have discovered, without proper financial support, it is impossible to survive. As a country, Israel's main agenda is still survival and security. The arts and fringe theatre, especially, are just not on the agenda. They are either luxury, or worse than that: silly, not "serious" and not worthy of proper support. Even scholars teaching theatre at major Israeli universities are not aware of and, for the most part, not interested in the independent and fringe theatre scene. In the Israeli government, there is no office for the minister of culture; culture is just a sub-department of the ministry of education. Popular, cheap, television culture is easier to sell, the ratings have never been better, so why bother spending money on developing fringe or independent theatre if the public prefers sitting in front of the television? Many people profit from this! There is a big yearning "to be American," which is endangering Israeli culture. The country is so young, only 57 years old, immigrants are still arriving, diverse cultures are still being introduced to each other, and artistic experiences for integration are necessary. But politics, power, and money get in the way of creating genuine Israeli culture. Because artists depend on public money, only a few artists dare to put these issues on their artistic agenda. There is hardly any exchange between theatre companies and it seems to be a type of isolated creative work. But still, there is an audience in search of new and fresh art and theatre.

ARMA Theatre (the Hebrew initials of Earth, Wind, Water & Fire) was founded in 1990 by Lisa Jacobson and Gil Becher. ARMA theatre combines diverse working techniques, for example: physical theatre, street theatre, site-specific and Bouffon theatre, clown work, plastic-arts, dance, video-art, architecture, light design, and man-space-movement relations. Each project can be very different in style of work, choice of space, and media used.

We have never received regular support, only per production when participating in festivals. It is clear that maintaining a regular schedule of work in this type of situation is impossible. In our deep conviction that the artistic center is not a question of geography, but of artistic interaction and interest, we are now

planning to create a center for theatre and cultural exchange where we live, in the Ein-Hod Artists' village (which was founded by Marcel Janco, one of the founders of the DADA movement). Our aim is to create a center where we and other companies from Israel and abroad, can create new productions in alternative spaces, indoors and outdoors, as well as collaborative work. Theatre workshops will be held at the center, as well as conferences, lectures, a theatre education center for youth and exhibitions.

Israel is geographically isolated, surrounded by countries who do not share cultural exchange with us (and I am not getting into politics! ...) I would like to say that there is a true need for cultural exchange with artists from diverse countries, there is the talent, the curiosity and openness to work together and share views and artistic horizons. You may define Israel as the Middle-East, which it is, but many Israelis (quite a nomadic people) today, are descendants of families that came from Europe, and they absorbed European culture from day one: all spiced up with middle-east flavors, so we might be talking perhaps of Eurasia, or south-east Europe or the European middle-east? Well perhaps this too, is nonsense after all, but all I am saying is: don't cut us out, embrace Israel as part of Europe - at least for an intriguing cultural exchange!

Lisa Jacobson
ARMA theatre, Ein-Hod artists' village, Israel
Contact: arma@netvision.net.il

TALY

INDEPENDENT THEATRE IN ITALY: A PICTURE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

At the end of the century, a new theatrical generation emerged, although a lot of professional critics probably absent-mindedly missed it. The protagonists of this new wave are theatrical companies born and raised far from the normal theatrical network, and often also far from the theatres: it is easier to see the shows produced by these young and even younger people in places where people gather, such as social centers and discotheques, and they also work in abandoned and neglected shacks and buildings.

They use a theatrical language that, as all theatrical avant-gardes assert, puts all the elements that share in the theatrical event in the same place (therefore they don't use only words, which is sometimes announced, but also the body, the music and the sounds and the scene). Crossovers between theatre and other arts, and other aspects of reality are preferred.

This new levy developed by auto-pedagogy is often explicitly declared. Scenic forces of amazing and fascinating complexity are often able to establish a connection with the audience.

Fanny and Alexander, Motus, Teatrino Clandestino, Teatro del Lemming, Masque, and Scena Verticale are the most important theatrical companies working in the frame of "research theatre." For these groups, as often happens in every type of avant-garde, a certain principle of representation has lost substance, and consequently, that is Ego representation. Therefore, the actors have to reform their role.

These companies investigate the reasons and modalities of the non-performable elements of the real and no longer search to automatically tune into the sensibility of the spectator; indeed, scandal and provocation become indispensable ingredients to captivate, amaze, upset; even if it happens within a mechanism of rules, spaces, and utterly rigid semiotic flows, where there is no room for distraction or the observer's reverie.

The message is the media as Marshall McLuhan said. Along with this trend, which arose in the 1990s, recently, it has been possible to identify a new way of making theatre. This is characterized both by direct communication and an extreme simplification of the scenic installation. These performances, which can be included under the general heading of "narrative theatre," are sustainable due to the presence of only one or very few actors.

Short political and economical analysis of independent theatre in Italy

An independent theatre not linked to political power and financed by private means does not exist in Italy. Independent companies that have obtained a certain success due to their artistic merit have had to consolidate their role and seek institutional aid. This is a long and exhausting search.

The Italian theatrical system is, in fact, based nearly exclusively on ever-insufficient municipal, provincial, regional, and government funding. However, access

to this funding is possible only when the theatre company has been recognized by another official institution. The principal ambition of research companies that follow this long procedure to become recognized by an institution is to become a "Teatro stabile di innovazione" (Innovative repertory theatre). In this case, they need a theatre and they have to demonstrate that they produce, program, and promote their activities. For this reason, all the professional companies try to consolidate their positions in order to have access to state contributions. Therefore, after a long period on tour, the desire is to find a stable location for continuing with their own artistic research. This aspiration also diffused in Italy during the Italian Renaissance: in fact, Mimma Gallina speaks about "diffuse stability."

In Italy there is a demarcation line between the theatrical experiences of the center-north and those of the south, where it is even more difficult for the companies to reach a system of stability, which has been attained in the north since the 1970s. The law regulating financial support in Italy dates from 1985. At this time, the minister Lagorio tried to put order into the complex theatrical Italian system, allocating specific funds for different kinds of shows (traveling music, cinemas, theatre, circus). He instituted the Fus - Fund united for show - which on the basis of two parameters, quantitative estimate and qualitative estimate, had to finance these different kinds of performances, both live and reproduced. The funds attributed from Fus to the category of theatre, for the year 2002, was equivalent to approximately 24% of the total, and was divided among different categories:

1. state repertory theatres (13);
2. private repertory theatres (14);
3. innovative repertory theatres for experimentation (16);
4. innovative repertory theatre for young people (20);
5. production companies (154);
6. experimental production companies (190);
7. national figure theatre (puppets etc.);
8. street theatre;
9. organizations dedicated to the promotion and the education of the audience (15);
10. theatre and municipal theatre (51);
11. theatrical promotion and professional training (44);
12. theatrical reviews and festivals (27).

To summarize, in Italy, "independent" companies, or rather, all theatre groups that cannot be included in the complex universe of the Italian theatrical establishment, are forced to confront, with enormous effort and risky economical investments, a long and difficult bureaucratic procedure, which only in some cases ends with artistic acknowledgement and financial support. These independent companies are also forced to conceal those who work more economically, but with a smaller engagement, in the framework of artistic research.

Angelica Zanardi - artistic director CREXIDA Theatrical company
Monica Morleo - organization and press office
Contact: crexida@fastwebnet.it

KOSOVO

The first independent theatres in Kosovo were established in the early 1990s after Yugoslavia began to disintegrate. Those were times when almost all cultural institutions, including theatres, were closed by the Serbian regime. Two or three theatres that were established then carried out their activities at locations such as coffee shops, away from police attention. This was a kind of political theatre with shows referring to violence and oppression, the Milosevic regime was being forced on Albanians. Aesthetics was not the primary concern of those involved and they worked mainly with no budget on a volunteer basis.

After the war, there was a certain euphoria in creating and establishing independent theatres, although the majority were unable to function and survive. Actually, in Prishtina there are only two independent theatres: Oda, which puts on stage plays for adults and CCTD (Center for Children Theatre Development), which focuses mainly on theatre for children and youth. The State finances only the two public theatres of Prishtina: the National Theatre and Dodona Theatre.

This lack of independent theatres is due to mainly two reasons: lack of institutional state support and lack of tradition and especially lack of management skills. Actually, the budget of the Ministry of Culture is concentrated in two institutions categorized as being "of national interest": the National Theatre and the National Arts Gallery. A lot of funding has been allocated to the restoration of historical monuments burned during the war, as well as the restoration of churches destroyed in the riots last March. At the present time, there is no support for independent theatres. Oda and CCTD, as well as other minor theatres have managed to gain donations from international institutions interested in human rights, reconciliation, democracy, and other issues. Of course, this limits the theatres' independence, but at the same time, it is the only way to continue working.

Nonetheless, these private theatres have offered a good alternative and have had an extraordinary social and political impact. CCTD has drastically changed the aesthetics that dominated children and youth theatre. It contracted some of the best Kosovar actors and changed the outlook of this kind of theatre as "a world of tales with a happy end." CCTD has put on stage plays with topics that were previously dealt with only in adult theatre. Its most recent project "The longest winter," included two groups of actors, Albanians and Serbs. There were two separate productions with the same text and the same director. The play was about the fact that people disappeared during the war and did not bear any political connotations. This is only one example of the activities of independent theatres and their role in contemporary Kosovar society. However, actual developments speak of hope in the field of theatre, of establishing more independent theatres and producing more high quality shows.

Jeton Neziraj
is playwright from Kosovo. Currently he is the Executive Director of MULTIMEDIA / Center for Children's Theatre Development in Prishtina.
Contact: jeton@cctdkosova.com / www.cctdkosova.com

POLAND

Political changes led also to changes in the life of independent theatre groups. Before 1989, independent theatre was the alternative to professional stages, which had specific obligations towards the government and the ruling political system - meant by alternative is that they had the possibility to talk outwardly about social and political life in Poland at this time. It was a risky, but also very profound role. After the political changes, which brought the abolition of censorship, alternative theatre became independent theatre, which basically meant without the financial protection of the government. This status is a basis of the structure and specific character of independent theatre in Poland.

Nowadays there is a whole range of theatre productions that are called independent:

- Performances by amateur theatre groups, which work mainly at schools or community centers, with very limited financial support
- Student theatre, which is developing very well at the moment and which organizes a lot of festivals the most important in Gdańsk, Olsztyn, Kraków and Częstochowa
- Performances prepared by experienced artists evolving from amateur theatre, whose works have been appreciated by the public and critics alike and who have their recognizable theatrical language and teaching techniques. Some, such as the director of Sopot Fringe Theatre Centre, Ewa Ignaczak, the founder and director of The Pegasus Stable Theatre, have been given their own places to work. These kinds of institutions are mainly supported by city authorities - there are only a few such places in Poland.
- Dance theatres - a vast majority of dance theatres in Poland have the status of independent theatres, mostly because there are no professional schools for modern dance for choreographers and dancers. There is an idea of founding such a school in Bytom, but at the moment there are only classical dance/ ballet schools with additional short-term training in modern dance. Dancers have to receive training by joining a more experienced and well-known dance theatre and then found their own theatre groups.
- Street theatres - most street performances are prepared by theatres that also work on stage. Some have achieved international success such as Dreams Theatre from Gdańsk or Biuro Podróży (you will be able to see their performance on Saturday!).
- Village theatres that focus on traditional and ritual culture, some are very famous like Gardzienice from Lublin, Węgałty from near Olsztyn or Pieśń Kozła from Wrocław (which won the "Best International Show" award in Edinburgh last year).
- Independent productions made by artists working on professional stages or independent theatres founded mostly by well known artists, who have been able gain a very strong position among the public.

Although the tradition of independent theatre in Poland is very strong, drawing its inspiration from the work of Jerzy Grotowski and the social centered performances of Eight Day Theatre from Poznań (which celebrated its fortieth anniversary this year), the survival struggle for fringe theatre remains. Those cases whereby city authorities give financial support and space for working are exceptional and also come with obligations that make the theatre group less independent. The theatres that get such an opportunity are those with at least 25 years of work experience, like Eight Day Theatre, Centre of Theatre Practices "Gardzienice", Theatre Kana from Szczecin, or The Pegasus Stable from the Tricity. Most became centers for fringe theatre providing opportunities for education, participating in interesting projects on the periphery of theatre, and organizing important festivals. Some of the theatres launched associations or foundations and got funds from European sources. But there is still a lot to be learned in this area.

Since the 1990s, there have been ongoing negotiations about creating an organization with a program similar to that of The Austrian Association of Independent Theatre, but the talks are still ongoing. Those who dedicate their life to independent theatre in Poland must consider that apart from being an artist, he or she must also be a good manager. And they have to keep in mind that sometimes they'll have to change their project to get any external funding - which may sound quite bitter, but what we have learned from our cultural history is that limitations inspire development.

Agnieszka Kochanowska
Sopocka Scena Off de BICZ / Sopot Fringe Theatre Centre
Contact: czincz1@wp.pl

In the late 1990s, it was almost fashionable for graduates of theatre academies to found a cultural foundation whose aim was the administration of an independent theatre. This might have helped Romania to look good - at least statistically: there were a lot of free theatres registered, but hardly any that really existed and functioned.

And the one that did was called, for instance, Teatrul Inexistent - The Nonexisting Theatre. This fringe group, initiated and led by Theodora Herghelegiu, has meanwhile produced more than twenty plays, many of them very successful. But the great majority of fringe theatres existed only on paper. Some of them managed to show one or two plays before being forgotten by the founders themselves. What made those groups emerge and what made them disappear before having even tried to utter a manifesto?

On the one hand, the subsidized theatres had an offer which presented no major differences compared to the repertoires before 1989. The repertoires comprise more than 90 percent classics. And 90 percent of the classics are still directed and performed in quite an old fashioned way. But, until a few years ago, there was hardly a state theatre daring to perform Schwab or Mayenburg or Sarah Kane.

On the other hand, the number of people graduating from theatre academies kept growing. More and more cities had the ambition to create their own schools. Now, there are about 150 graduates a year, in a country with less than sixty subsidized theatres. And these theatres are hardly employing young actors, as the old ones hold lifelong contracts.

Young, daring, aggressive performances about real contemporary life were thus sorely needed on the Romanian theatre market. And this is what those few independent groups that managed to make their way through a hostile territory (at least from the legislative and financial point of view), are really doing. Although for years they were treated with condescendence or even hostility by the critics, although they had to face sponsorship regulations which were made to discourage sponsorship, some managed to create performances that are now acclaimed by both critics and audiences. Companies like Teatrul Inexistent, Teatrul fara frontiere, Teatrul Toaca or Teatrul Imposibil (Cluj) are groups that already have their own histories. Many of the young stage directors who made their debut in fringe performances are now considered to be the best of their generation and are already working in subsidized theatres. But, although they do not receive any subsidies at all (yet this seems to be changing now), they still do not have a location of their own.

In Bucharest, for instance, there are only two independent theatres with their own house: ACT, located in a basement, and ARCA, located in an attic. Others are coming up in the provinces now, like Teatrul Pi Buni in Piatra Neamt. This is why more and more cafes, bars, and clubs are hosting or even producing theatrical performances. If the new team at the Ministry of Culture keeps their promises and if some public money is made available for independent groups, Bucharest might soon have a very exciting theatrical offer.

Victor Scoradet

Theatre critic and translator; founded in Dec. 2004 a new independent theatre - the second in Bucharest with a stage of its own: Teatrul ARCA.
Contact: vicisco@b.astral.ro

SERBIA

The tradition of performing arts in Serbia, like in the whole former Yugoslavia, was mainly formed, developed, and supported by the State until the 1990s. Theatres were largely dependent on the State in terms of funding, organization and even artistic expression. The performing arts tradition is thus marked by a lack of independent theatre companies and organizations during this period.

Independent initiatives started in the 1980s, ad-hoc groups were formed (gathering artists on a project-by-project basis) and it was these groups that began to challenge the hitherto political and cultural system. (Most representative of that time is KPGT Company, led by Ljubisa Ristic - later president of JUL, the political movement initiated by Milosevic's wife!)

During the Milosevic era in Serbia, in the 1990s, institutional theatres lost much of their financial support due to the general economic crises. At the

same time, they were pressured to serve the regime through the creation of false pictures of reality and of the ongoing war - mostly by presenting low level "entertainment" theatre.

Meanwhile, in contrast to that situation, independent professional theatre companies began to appear. Dah Theatre Research Centre was the first, formed in 1991 and throughout the mid 1990s, other companies followed: Ister Theatre, Blue Theatre, OMEN Theatre, ERGstatus Dance Theatre, Objective Drama Project, Svan Theatre, Chamber Theatre "Ogledalo"; INTRA Dance Company (Dalija Acin, choreographer); Ad Hoc Lom Company (Bojana Mladenovic, Isidora Stanistic dancers and choreographers), and KRAFT Company.

Today we can speak about a whole new theatre tradition that developed in our country during this time. During the Milosevic regime, these independent companies represented freedom of thought and cultural opposition to the regime with strong anti-war activities. In 1999, Ister Theatre, Blue Theatre, OMEN Theatre, ERGstatus Dance Theatre, Objective Drama Project, Svan Theatre, and Dah Theatre Research Centre formed the Association of Independent Theatres ANET - which today represents a platform for independent companies from Serbia.

The number of independent companies continues to grow (Spleen Theatre, Bazaart, Human Theatre, "Dance, Language, Identity" Project, and others) and a few cultural centers are active in the field of performing arts: REX-Cultural Center B92; CZKD (Centre for Cultural Decontamination) and Dom Omladine Beograda.

Since 2000, and since the democratic changes occurred in Serbia, state bodies have begun to finance independent performing arts companies (although in limited amounts) for the first time in our modern history. State-supported theatres and cultural centres with their old-fashioned, non-flexible organizational structures now find themselves in an institutional crisis. They are facing reforms as they are confronted with the flexible and creative independent companies. The awareness of our common interests and the need for exchange between state and independent companies has developed. Governmental and non-governmental institutions have begun to collaborate.

Some institutional theatres have also opened their doors and programs to new works in the performing arts, such as: National Theatre (Program of 5th Floor Stage) and Belgrade Drama Theatre. BITEF Theatre, an institution of the City of Belgrade, has based its whole program on the new work of independent companies. There is a growing tendency among regional cultural centers in Serbia to open their doors for contemporary independent theatres, although financial limitations make that process very slow. Novi Sad Drama Academy post graduate program is led by an independent group of artists.

Nowadays, we are witnessing a further development

of contemporary performing arts organizations in Serbia: new theatre/dance companies, movement theatres, multi-media projects, centres for promotion of contemporary performing arts, theatre research centre, cultural policy research projects, centres for drama in education and youth theatre, workshops, festivals, special projects, associations. It is all predominantly happening in the frame of independent, non-governmental organizations that show vitality and a rich source of creative energy.

Also, there is a growing need and awareness of the importance of regional collaboration and networking that has led many artists and organizations to travel abroad and collaborate internationally; usually supported by some European or international organization/ foundation. Still, generally speaking, there is a lack of more profound exchange and genuine collaborative projects between independent theatres from Serbia and their European colleagues.

Unfortunately, official cultural policies with the present old fashioned theatre laws, do not adequately follow the achievements in this field. Under present law, the independent artistic organization does not even exist. All independent companies today are formally citizens' associations, registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs! This also reflects the traditional view on theatre confronted with the independent companies, which are bringing contemporary, multi media expression of performing arts. Anticipating a new law on performing arts in Serbia, we wished to focus our attention on the needs and demands of independent organizations in the field, to support the performing artists to participate in policy making, to define the needs and proposals and in that way to benefit to the process of creating cultural policy toward performing arts in Serbia. There have been a few attempts to influence the policy makers and the Ministry of Culture as a main body, in an effort to change the situation (like Forum of Independent Theatre 2003) but we were faced with strong resistance from the old bureaucratic system and other state institutions.

With the change of Government in 2004 and the new staff at the Ministry of Culture, the situation has become even worse. Unfortunately, we notice that much needed cultural reforms are on the bottom of the list of priorities for the present government. The city councils today represent the only safe source of support for independent theatre organizations in Serbia (in the context of limited budgets for performing arts).

Thus, the position of independent theatres in Serbia is complex and exhibits a constant lack of financial support and mechanisms for that support. The strategy for survival must be constantly reinvented based on the present obstacles. Lack of stability threatens to destroy and stop a process that has led to many good achievements (as described before).

Jadranka Andjelic

*theatre director, Dah Theatre Research Centre - www.rex.b92.net/dah
Head of the Board of ANET- Association of Independent Theatres - www.rex.b92.net/anet
Contact: andjelic@EUnet.yu*

Twenty-three "independent" groups are mentioned in the official list of the Slovak Theatre Institute (www.theatre.sk), which means, as declared there, that they work on the basis of civic associations (NGOs). Among them are commercial groups, small one- or two-person puppet theatres, communities working with mentally handicapped people and maybe four or five professional groups that can be labeled as alternative or experimental. On the other hand, on the list there are no groups outside of the capital, which in their artistic ambition and results could be considered as fringe or independent, but they are still part of an amateur network. That ambiguity in terms is a symbol of an ambiguity in values and is very significant for the contemporary Slovak theatre.

It is well known that in former socialist countries theatre had an exceptional status. Theatre professionals, especially actors, not only played a remarkable role in theatres controlled by the communist regime, but also supplied a lacking elite. After the changes, theatre professionals very naturally - but only briefly - slipped into the new political life. Two years ago, the last of the great symbols of the theatre-politics connection, Václav Havel, left his position as the highest political authority in the Czech Republic. One of the commentaries on his accomplished mission should be: the golden age of theatre has passed. This means: the ideological support is over. Theatre can now only count on itself. After 16 years, theatre in Slovakia is divided into those

that are still stuck in socialist times, the ensembles supported by state and local authorities, and so-called independent theatres, which try to be dependent, because their existence is (with some exceptions) in permanent danger. Due to lacking legislative and financial support, it is almost impossible to establish and run a fringe theatre group over a longer period of time. Recently, there have been many promising one-shot productions that consumed enormous energy and stopped after some reprises. There have been a lot of ambitious productions damaged by compromises caused by the permanent lack of funds.

In the international context, Slovak theatre productions are very rarely invited to international theatre festivals, talented theatre people migrate, mostly to the Czech Republic (along the lines of the brain-drain in other areas of society). Young Slovaks are not only looking for better material conditions, but, above all, for more respect and a better social status for their work.

Of course, it is also necessary to point out the "theatres" contribution to this situation. In Slovakia, the nineteenth century bourgeois, so-called repertory theatre is still being promoted as a dominant theatre model. The whole institutional discourse (theatre system, state financial support, educational system) is organized with a strong dependency on this model of theatre: in this context, fringe theatre is something pushed to the very edge, and becomes the extreme fringe. "Bourgeois" forms of theatre have not been able to maintain contact with a young, progressive audience. Young people are not interested and, in general, think that theatre is something akin to a boring movie.

What can be done? How is it possible to promote fringe theatre, amidst the general decay of theatre in Slovakia? It is necessary to start from the very beginning. A friend of mine, a director, was recently very disappointed by a group of pupils from a school for gifted children. During the production, they were not able to accept any theatrical illusion and constantly explained all so called tricks to their neighbours. Many of them were experiencing their first visit to a theatre. Alternately, I was impressed by the system in Germany whereby groups of young people attend the theatre (Jugendclubs des Theatres). From my socialist childhood I remember very well organized visits at theatres. Although the quality was perhaps not the best, we loved the theatre for various reasons, and not only because we got out of our regular instruction. This program was cut after the change in government. I am convinced that one of the most important motivations for doing theatre today is its clear practical impact. For example, in schools, asylums, hospitals, and refugee camps: On the fringe, the periphery of society. This would strengthen the social dimension of theatre and would show people that theatre could be a positive presence in everyday life.

Anna Gruskova
Theatre Nota bene, Theatre SUD, Theatre Journal Salto
Contact: annagruss@yahoo.co.uk

All of the independent organizations in Slovenia are financially dependent on the Ministry of Culture and City Councils. The majority of their finances are provided by government and therefore we cannot speak of financial independence. Ministry of Culture and City Councils don't directly interfere in artistic programs and management of independent organizations, consequently their independence is artistic and managerial.

Unfortunately, financial dependence results in managerial and consequently artistic dependence. Slovenian independent organizations don't get enough money to establish a proper infrastructure for their activities. In most cases, artists work as producers, organizers, PR persons etc. Additionally, if independent organizations want to be financed by the Ministry of Culture and City Councils, they have to change (expand) their artistic program in order to comply with the stipulated conditions.

There are two forms of financing - program financing and project financing. Some independent organizations realize programs (several projects within a time period), while others produce only projects. The criteria for financing are: Quality of the program / project, references (realization, awards), international presentation and international cooperation.

If not employed by a public institution, artists can get a special status from the Ministry of Culture: self-employed in cultural work. If artists yearly earnings do not exceed a certain amount (which is 19,113 euros gross for 2004), the Ministry of Culture offers a possibility of financing artist's social security. Last year there was a change in tax legislation - self-employed artists have to pay more taxes, which results in the greater financial need among independent organizations, and also in the greater financial need among self-employed artists.

In Slovenia, independent institutions can scarcely exist without public institutions. The biggest problem lies in space facilities. In Ljubljana, for example, there are only three small and badly equipped theatre venues, which are supervised by independent institutions. The relationship between the audience and the independent organizations is what enables the existence of an independent theatre praxis.

Last year we entered a new system of three-year funding cycles. This system guarantees cultural NGOs an average amount of finances for a three-year period. The three-year system of financing is not meant for all independent organizations, just for those with a program. The definition of program is very strict and therefore some independent organizations have to increase activities - to receive the same amount of funding. The three-year system also requires long-term planning, increased bureaucracy, etc., which is again one of the methods leading to an institutionalization of the independent sector. Pejoratively speaking about institutionalization, I refer, among other things, to the lack of artistic freedom, lack of liability for new practices, lack of inclination to

experiment, lack of responsibility to artistic innovation, lack of interest in interdisciplinary approaches, lack of consideration for diversity of audience, and a lack of consideration of aesthetic diversity.

Independent organizations that have entered a proposed Culture 2000 project are experiencing ever greater success. Slovenia is supposedly one of the most successful countries in receiving financing through European cultural funds. Slovenian applicants are qualified and are not rejected because of bureaucratic error. Independent organizations apply for these funds based on the existential issue of survival rather than conceptual reasons. Local sponsors incorporate new EU supported networking into their policy. EU / international cooperation is advantageous for obtaining financing from the Ministry of Culture.

On the other hand, a smaller NGO involved in the Culture 2000 project must supply a great deal of energy and time to the initiator's project and other partners' projects. Consequently, it cuts its own program. Sometimes cooperation is successful in terms of feedback and follow up projects with individual partners, and sometimes it is not so gratifying if the cooperation is artificial (in cases where the initiator remains anonymous and is merely seeking partnership in one more country).

Nevertheless, the impact of international support affects the financial, artistic, and of course organizational sphere of independent organizations. Financial support helps in solving existential issues, which indirectly affects the artistic and organizational sphere.

There are two artists unions in Slovenia that are significant for the independent sector. First, there is The Association for Contemporary Dance, which was formed in 1994. The Association for Contemporary Dance is an association of dancers. Their main goal is to connect dancers and achieve better conditions in the field of modern dance. Their main activity is education, mostly organizing workshops. They were active in establishing the course "artistic grammar school - dancing course, modern dance" at the Artistic school in Ljubljana. This course was introduced in Slovenia in the year 1999/2000 for the first time. Currently they are trying to establish an archive for Slovenian contemporary dance.

The Association of non governmental organizations and individual creators in the field of culture and art Asociacija - was established in 2002 for the purpose of achieving better conditions for NGOs and individual creators. Their fundamental goal is to assure equal rights for artistic and cultural activities as compared with public institutions and general improvement of conditions of culture in society. They stand for modernization of cultural policy, which will stimulate cultural and artistic diversity and create conditions enabling access to different aesthetics.

Asociacija started its battle by gathering information

(such as number of projects, spectators, awards etc.) on contemporary art from the years from 1998 to 2002. They compared these data to similar data from public institutions. Results were rather astonishing.

Asociacija exerts constant pressure on the Ministry and the City, which is an absolute necessity at this point. Asociacija insists on placing people from the independent sector in different governmental commissions, which distribute finances to independent organizations. Asociacija is trying to create a partnership with governmental institutions to recruit their assistance in preparing legal documents concerning the independent sector.

Since Asociacija was established, some initiatives have been taken, which resulted, for example, in another performing space (Bunker's Stara Elektrarna). There is still one space (former cinema Kino Šiška), which is supposed to be renovated and Asociacija is constantly pressuring the Ministry and the City to invest in that space. Beside that Asociacija is trying to find other potential spaces for independent organizations.

Asociacija is also trying to obtain recognition for independent artistic projects and independent artists by the institutions that reward artists and artistic projects.

Slovenian independent institutions present their work throughout the world, whereas, public cultural institutions meanwhile present their work mostly nationally and in the states of former Yugoslavia. Organizations in the independent sector have a certain advantage they are all internationally oriented. A strong need to present projects internationally and to present foreign projects in Slovenia is highly present in the independent sector. This is, of course, due to the above mentioned principles (artistic freedom, liability for new praxis, inclination to experiment, responsibility to artistic innovation, interest in interdisciplinary approaches, consideration for diversity of audience, consideration for diversity of aesthetics etc.).

I would just like to mention that despite the brutal growth of capitalism, there is no governmental initiative to draw in capitalistic companies as potential sponsors. This could be initiated by tax legislation, which is still not in favor of arts and culture. Income tax relief would most certainly result in better conditions for independent and also public organizations. I think that at the moment, the main needs are organizational, which are, of course, strongly connected with financial needs.

There are not enough producers in Slovenia, independent organizations mostly arise from creative needs; almost all independent organizations are founded and run by artists. All the artistic domains are developing quite normally. Considering the international interest in independent Slovenian organizations, I would say that the Slovenian independent cultural scene does not fall behind the European and North American cultural scenes. Slovenian artists (dancers, performers,

choreographers, visual artists, new media artists) are working worldwide and are highly appreciated. The Slovenian independent scene is somewhat the inheritance of the NSK movement in 1980. The Slovenian independent scene affects the public sector. Slovenia is a very small country and the creators of the independent scene thus also create the public scene. The only artistic domain that is not institutionalized is dance. Contemporary dance exists only in the independent sector.

Simona Semenik

Dramaturge, author and Theatre critic
Contact: simona.semenik@waxfactory.org

To get a rough picture of the situation we have picked some figures from 2003:

This year the Swedish National Council for Culture supported the independent theatre companies with approx. 5.7 million euros. However, this only represented 4 percent of the government's total subsidy for theatres in Sweden (a total of 13 million euros). During the same year, the independent theatre companies gave 6,000 performances for combined audiences of over 600,000 people. The independent companies actually performed for 18 percent of the total audience reported in 2003. A large number of these companies perform theatre for children and young people; they make up to 44 percent of all performances to these audiences.

The figures above are solely relating to independent theatre companies or productions, which are receivers of governmental grants, 60-70 companies and 20-25 productions each year. Other than those, there are a lot of independent theatres that maintain their activities exclusively on local subsidies, co-productions, various combinations of other incomes and/or extensive touring all over the country. Thanks to creative ways of earning an income, many companies are up to 50 percent self sufficient.

For many companies, the possibility to tour has an immediate correspondence to how many months per year they can keep their staff employed. Over the past 5-10 years the public means for programming has constantly decreased. The cuts have also affected financing for children's and young people's theatres, which has resulted in less performances for many of the touring companies.

In 2001 the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs asked for an investigation of the situation of fringe theatre. The result was as bad as those working in the field already knew: The independent theatres are financed far below reasonable proportions to what they are presenting to the public. The society gets a lot of theatre for a very small amount of money.

Despite the circumstances, the opportunity to create one's own work, under one's own authority, and, the ability to choose one's own partners, still provides strong motivation for the independent companies to continue with their work, and for new companies to start.

Lena Gustavson

Teatercentrum Sweden
Contact: lena.gustafsson@teatercentrum.se

Teatercentrum is a national non-profit members organization and network for independent theatre in Sweden. Our members are professional theatres, producers and artists working on their own commission, without external political or commercial claims.

Teatercentrum's main activities are:

- cultural politics, to improve the situation for independent theatres, for artistic diversity in the field of theatre, for the necessity of a good infrastructure of presenters to improve the access to theatre for the audience and the income for the theatres.
- sharing experiences on artistic and practical matters concerning theatre-activities, organising various meeting points for artistic development, further education, information, support etc.

S WEDEN

Fringe theatres are situated in most parts of Sweden, with a high variety in genre, artistic design, continuity, personnel and constitutions. However, a majority are to be found within the area of the three largest cities of Sweden: Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmoe.

The independent theatre companies in Sweden may receive subsidies from three main sources: the Swedish National Council for Culture (working for the government), the County Council and the Local Council. However, these subsidies are far from sufficient to properly support the companies.

There is not one fringe theatre scene in Switzerland - there are about 10 different fringe scenes. First of all, there are great differences between the French, Italian, and German speaking parts of Switzerland. They more or less work separately. So when I'm talking about the fringe scene(s) in Switzerland I'm referring to the Swiss German speaking part, which is the biggest one.

How many theatre people work in the fringe scenes? It's very hard to tell. It also depends on the definition. Who belongs to it? In the last decade, more and more actors and directors moved from the fringe scene to the institutional theatre and vice versa: There is no longer a strict borderline.

The Swiss fringe theatre developed a great diversity in the 1980s and early 1990s. A lot of groups existed as a counterpart to the highly subsidized municipal theatres. A special awareness for collective work and a highly political background was an important feature.

The New Capitalism of the 1990s, which affected cultural work to a high degree, forced a lot of groups to change their structures and their way of working. Continuous ensemble work became more and more difficult. As a result, fringe theatre tended to become a scene of individuals who worked in different groups and projects.

The fringe theatre scenes are located in the bigger cities of Switzerland where there are theatres, or rooms to be discovered and a certain public support. There are special fringe theatres for touring groups or producing groups in Zürich (Theaterhaus Gessnerallee, Rote Fabrik), Basel (Kaserne, Roxy), Bern (Schlachthaus Theater), Luzern (Boa), Aarau (Theater Tuchlaube). And there are still a lot of small theatres in many communities all over Switzerland for productions with a small cast (1-3 persons), also showing a great variety of genres such as cabaret, pantomime, clowning, musical theatre, variété etc.

There is under a great deal of pressure everywhere. The municipal theatres reduced their ensembles to save money. As a result, a lot of young actors who formerly went to the institutional theatres are now starting in the fringe scene with their own projects. Actors with many years of experience in the institutional theatre also tend to switch to the fringe scene. The money for the scene of course hasn't increased.

The identity of the fringe scene has become scattered because the municipal theatres took over a lot of things which were first initiated by the fringe theatre: opening new rooms, discovering alternative places like old factories, projects integrating other art forms, getting closer to the audience, introducing new, provocative plays, projects and playwrights.

The fringe scene, however, is still very flexible, innovative and new groups are still appearing. The possibilities for fringe theatre groups to tour have increased in the last years. This is, of course, an

important advantage compared with the institutional theatre. But depending on the city or town, the possibilities to realize a theatre project differ greatly. Zürich as the economic center of Switzerland, has the biggest fringe theatre scene. This works like a magnet for young people and new groups.

Financing a production mostly starts out with a request for subsidies from the city and the canton. When this is granted, there are private institutions and foundations that can be addressed. But the amount that can be raised differs greatly from city to city. The social security for fringe theatre workers is very low. The struggle to survive is hard. The problem will become more evident when people get older.

Switzerland is notorious for its many organizations for everything and everybody. So within this tradition there exist organizations for every branch of the fringe theatre:

- ASTEJ young people and children's theatre
- KTV organizing the interchange of (small) theatres and (small) productions
- UNIMA Suisse figure and puppet theatre
- VTS producing fringe theatre people

Touring has become more and more important in the past few years. It works with only a few groups nationally and internationally. But it could, and it still has to be improved. And of course Switzerland has a problem in the cultural exchange because we're not part of the EU.

Hans Läubli and Jost Nyffeler
VTS Vereinigung Theaterschaffender der Schweiz / Association of Independent Theatre in Switzerland
 Contact: vts@theaterschaffende.ch

THE SHORT STORY OF TURKEY'S AUTONOMOUS THEATRE MOVEMENT

As in many countries, theatre in Turkey followed a divided path in the past. During the Ottoman Empire, there were vivid, musical performances during the festivities in the capital. Traditional dramatic games in the rural regions originated from rituals and myths. The shadow play Karagöz - dates back to 16th century. It emerged as satirical opposition to the Empire's capital. At the beginning of the 20th century, Western theatre showed up on the scene in the form of independent Levantine companies. During the Republic period, the conservatories, and State and municipal theatres were founded and funded by the government.

The independent companies (or autonomous theatres as Dragan Klaić prefers to call them) still remained: mainly as vaudevilles or operettas. Only during the 1960s and 1970s (After the military coup in 1960) did a group of independent theatre companies flourish, which today we may consider as the antecedents of the so-called fringe (or autonomous) theatre. Originating as university theatre clubs, these groups brought onto the stage, their ideological point of views, new ways of addressing the audience practiced by actors and directors, and new playwrights who dealt with social and political issues.

Between 1960 and 1980, Turkey was a haven for autonomous theatre companies. Although there was no funding from the government, they could survive solely from their audiences. The municipal theatres were also influenced by this movement. Some directors and designers worked on avant-garde productions, experimenting with theatrical space-audience relationships, working on contemporary adaptations of the classics, and taking theatre onto the streets. They had a great impact on the politicized society. They were experimenting with new styles. Following the 1980 military coup, the lively theatre scene came to an end. There was a deep silence in the country for a few years.

Starting with the second half of the 1980s, Theatre people who were expelled from the municipal and State theatres came together and founded one of the first private art schools in the country. Bilsak Theatre workshop was the first independent theatre school. I was one of the first to attend the acting school led by all the renowned theatre people in Turkey. It was the first initiative to get back the ground which had been lost after the coup. They were trying to set the independent theatre on its feet again. The training opened up a completely new way of looking at theatre, as did the productions. I was one of the founders of the company Bilsak after the acting school closed down in 1987. Small scale productions by the group had more impact on the theatre world of Istanbul than had been previously anticipated.

More and more groups have emerged, one after the other, working in small spaces such as apartment houses, clubs, and basements of old buildings during the 1990s. All were confident enough to experiment with all the tools of the art. There were almost no subsidies from the government. (And there still is little

or none for these groups!). Yet the members of the groups worked in other jobs to finance their theatre (and still do).

All through the 1990s and in the first years of 2000, this movement was growing and expanding but inversely became less influential than it was in the beginning. Not only in Istanbul, but in many regions in Turkey, young people's tendency to go into arts is increasing. A growing number of NGO's use art as a social tool in the deprived regions of Turkey. So young people, especially, are now introduced to art at an early age. The desire to make theatre begins at school. Almost every secondary school and university has a theatre club. These clubs turn into small amateur groups afterwards. Some become professional. But ironically, as the number of practitioners increases, the audience they can reach decreases since the lack of visibility becomes a major barrier, especially in metropolises like Istanbul.

Theatre makers are working in other jobs to earn their living, so they can make theatre in their spare time. Today, none of the theatre companies (including commercial companies) can survive without funding, except for a few TV stars who also occasionally do theatre. They also need a lot of promotion and publicity. Although there is a great interest within society for all kinds of artistic activity, the State undermines this movement as always. The State, especially after 1950, when the liberal parties took control of political authority, has showed little interest in the country's educational and cultural life (this is clear from the State budget where only a very small amount is dispensed to educational and cultural activities).

The Ministry of Culture financially supports independent companies with a very limited sum (last year it was about 500,000 euros to be divided among 80 companies. A considerable portion of this money goes to the well-known commercial companies rather than young experimental groups and avant-garde projects.) Although the circumstances are difficult in all ways, an increasing number of groups and performance artists emerge every year. However, because the working and living conditions (also the performing conditions) are so limited, in my opinion, development is slow and problematic. The sponsors and the government subsidies usually go to popular stars or established companies. There are, however, some optimists who remain idealistic and try to create small-scale self-funded art spaces. They have to earn their living elsewhere to support these spaces. Nonetheless, there is still hope for the future

Nihal G. Koldas
 Maya /Istanbul-Turkey

In the UK overall responsibility for Arts and Culture rests with the DCMS (Department for culture, media and sport) which is responsible for the government policy on the arts, sport, the national lottery, tourism, libraries, museums and galleries, broadcasting, film, the music industry, press freedom and regulation, licensing, gambling and the historic environment. They are also responsible for the listing of historic buildings and scheduling of ancient monuments, the export licensing of cultural goods, the management of the Government Art Collection and for the Royal Parks Agency an almost absurdly mixed brief overseen by Minister of Culture Tessa Jowell.

The DCMS provides funding for the Arts Councils (one for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) which describe themselves as "the national development agencies for the arts distributing public money from government and the national lottery". The Arts Councils are responsible for providing funds for the large state theatres and for the independent sector, and although a high proportion of funding is taken up in supporting an infrastructure of regional repertory theatres, since the arrival of lottery funding there has been an increase in support for independent and alternative arts. The UK has a thriving fringe and alternative theatre scene with a complex layer of "revenue funded", "project funded" and "un-funded" companies, organizations and venues. With regard to revenue funding (continuous full or partial funding of an organization at a minimum of 30,000 euros per year) in the South East region alone there are over 100 companies being funded in this way, from companies like Shiva Nova, a collaborative new music performance group to organizations like SEETA, the development agency for small and middle scale venues in the region and production and commissioning centres like Third Space, which provides co-production facilities and finance for companies interested in rural touring. The best funded of the independent groups in this selection is given over 300,000 euros a year (compare this with one of the regional state theatres The Nuffield Southampton which is given 700,000 annually and you can see that the level of funding for independent work is good).

The Arts Council also oversees the National Lottery Grants for the Arts funding stream. This money is not available to regularly funded organizations and independent artists, either companies or individuals are allowed to apply for sums from a few hundred euros to hundreds of thousands of euros over multiple years (usually up to three). If you wish to apply for under 6,000 euros then they will give a decision in under five weeks. The lottery has also contributed to the construction and repair of a great number of theatre spaces and galleries, from the Tate Modern in London, The Lowry Centre in Salford and the Baltic in Gateshead as well as hundreds of smaller projects throughout the country. It has also been instrumental in brokering closer relationships between the arts "establishment" and independent or emerging companies, particularly those led by people from ethnic minority backgrounds. It has recently completed a two year programme of development for independent Black and Asian theatre in the UK called "Decibel".

There is a strange anomaly in the work of the Independent theatre in Britain in that outside London fringe groups are paid to perform their shows there is a network of arts centres through which new and challenging work can be disseminated, and unknown companies can at least expect a box office split rather than a hire fee even if they are not given a financial guarantee. However; in the capital there are a number of venues which have a high profile but do not pay actors and charge extortionate rates to independent groups wishing to hire them. In spite of the fact that they often have low audience numbers for productions. This is often an exploitative relationship and relies on the companies' desire for recognition.

The ITC, the representative body for Independent companies, is a well established and strong organization, able to negotiate specific contracts with the actors union, Equity and providing examples of best practice in management through its training schemes. Companies wishing to join have to subscribe to existing agreements on working practices and wages ensuring that conditions for performers and administrators are suitable and fair.

In conclusion, I think there is much that is positive within the sector, though there are of course many areas that could be improved upon.

Sean Aita

Forest Forge Theatre Company

Contact: forestforge@btconnect.com increased in the last years. This is, of course, an

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