

ENICPA Staff Exchange Programme

Anna Galas (Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, Poland) was visiting Centro De Documentación De Las Artes Escénicas de Andalucía, Spain for two days in October 2016.

Which is the key role of an information centre of the performing arts in the information and communication society?

In my opinion, these kinds of institutions are really important sources of information and national heritage. All European centres, members of international network ENICPA, use new technological tools, digitalize their archives, develop websites and virtual archives. It is a way to get closer to our users and respond to the needs of artists, researchers and the whole cultural environment. I believe that the new technologies, which we are using nowadays, give us a possibility to think about how to use information collected over the years and to rethink the past and the stories that are in these documents.

Talking about the Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute, what kind of users do you have? What are the most usual enquiries?

The majority of our users are artists and researchers, but also students and people from different institutions like theatres, museums and other archives. Frequent inquiries refer to photographs and sources of documents. We have also a wide audience that participates in our daily activities (debates, performing lectures, performances) that are an important part of our program, they are not only professionals but also “regular” theatregoers

Which are the distinctive characteristics between the Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute and the Centro de Documentación de las Artes Escénicas de Andalucía (CDAEA)?

Everything I saw there gave me an impression of being in a quite dynamic place, where the objectives are carried out in a consistent manner. I really liked the idea of building relations with the whole Andalusia region, organizing different events outside the Centre, collaborating with theatre schools. I really liked the tools that you have created, for example the one to design exhibitions or the database of theatre festivals in Spain. One of the distinctions between our institutions is that you also record your own video-documentation of chosen performances in each theatre season. We only collect those prepared by the theatres.

I also think that each place is somehow created by people who work there and in your case I definitely felt, during these few days, that your team is very involved in what they do.

What does ENICPA offer to European users?

ENICPA is a network connecting experts from different documentation and information centres dedicated to performing arts. However, it is important to understand that for all those institutions documentation is only a part of their activities. They all create their programs aiming to enlarge theatre knowledge, promote performing arts and organize events for a wide audience. Our network is also one of the important sources of finding information on the international level and especially on the European level. ENICPA members also try to develop their common projects.



What is your opinion about ELEKTRA, the digital archives of the performing arts in Andalusia
<http://elektra.cdaea.es>?

Elektra is a well-designed tool. The most important thing is that it is easy and intuitive for the users.

Do you think that the information centres should focus only on the professional sector, or should they have an educational role too?

I think they play the educational role. I don't think it should replace the theatre education or university programs. But they should create a program that will offer deeper analysis and extend knowledge of artists, researchers, theatre managers and wide audience. There is a lot of important information in the archives that can help deepen the reflection about our contemporaneity. Various statistics that can be prepared thanks to the collected information may be very useful for the cultural sector. As well as all publications, activities and everything that has the educational aspect. Your Centre has about 74 thousands of visitors each year, if I remember correctly, what is a really good proof of the energy that you invest in the cultural development of the society.

Should an information centre of the performing arts try to network with other cultural documentation centres?

Yes, definitely. I believe that the exchange between institutions is a way to improve our work and to be inspired by the ideas developed by the others.

Besides of the information and documentation services, what kind of other activities should this kind of centres organise?

The idea of an open institution is very close to my way of thinking about this kind of institutions and we are trying to implement this idea in Warsaw. These places are alive when people come and use what we offer. I have an impression that it is also important for your organization. We organize meetings, presentations, debates, lectures, readings etc. I think, that a really important part of your activities is everything you organize outside CDAEA, outside Seville, throughout the Andalusia region, collaborating and supporting the performing arts sector in the region.

Interview by Catalina González Melero, Centro De Documentación De Las Artes Escénicas De Andalucía