

European Network of Information Centres for the Performing Arts
Réseau Européen des Centres d'Information sur le Spectacle Vivant

ENICPA Meeting Report
Dublin, 1st and 2nd October 2008
at Irish Theatre Institute
By Conso Martin

Members and guest attending the meeting:

Michael Freundt (ITI Germany); Bianca de Waal (Theater Instituut Nederland, Netherlands), Caroline Williams (Irish Theatre Festival, Ireland), Jen Coppinger and Siobhan Bourke (Irish theatre Institute), Dries Moreels (Vlaams Theater Instituut (VTi), Belgium), Riitta Seppala (Finnish Theatre Information Centre) Luciano Brogi (IALS - Istituto Addestramento Lavoratori Spettacolo, Italy), Anna Valls (Centre de Documentació i Museu de les Arts Escèniques (Institut del Teatre), Spain, Piiia Ahonen (Finnish Dance Centre, Finland), Andrea Keiz (Mime Centrum, Berlin, Germany), Joanna Nawrocka (Theatre Institute Warsaw, Poland), Conso Martin (Centro de Documentación de las Artes Escénicas de Andalucía, Spain), Dmitry Osipenko (Theatre Union of Russia), Ondrej Svoboda (Theatre Institute Czech Republic); Kamma Siegumfeldt (Danish Dance Information Centre); Marion Rundal (Estonian Theatre Agency);

Guests:

Torkel Ronold Brathen; Ine Berg; Sindre Jacobsen. Dance Information (Norway).
Susanne Porksen, Dansens Hus (Denmark)
Paul Johnson, Dance House, (Irlanda)
Catherine Boothman (The Arts Council. European Cultural contact point)

1st October 2008

Brief introduction to the Irish Theatre Institute by Jen Coppinger.
Welcome by Michael Freundt, President of ENICPA network and presentation of the agenda for the two days: a space for sharing ideas, mirror our own work and reflect on Enicpa developments.

Introductory round and brief presentation of institutions, by members and guests attending the meeting.

Bianca de Waal voiced her preoccupation about how to present the benefits of being a member of ENICPA in our own institutions; Marion Rundal came to the meeting also to report to her institution if being an ENICPA member is worthy.

In relation to this matter the board has agreed to put together a task group that will collect and make a formal document that will be available on ENICPA's website to be used by members or anyone wanting to apply for membership. First's action of the task group will be to make a draft to be sent to all members in order to consider their own ideas or suggestion on the matter.

Introduction to the main theme: The information centres and the individual artists.

The info centres have to take into consideration the needs and demands of the artists'. Some centres provide training for professionals, space for rehearsal and workshops, most of us are support centres for them (databases, information services...). We need to think of how they can benefit from us and how we can benefit from them.

Information's centers serve as some sort of a link between the individual artists and the policy makers.

To exaggerate a little: All artists care about themselves and evaluate the activities of the info centers based on whether it benefits them.

The intensity and regularity of the relationship between the centers and artists varies quite a lot. The smaller organizations in the smaller countries seem to have more active and day-to-day relations with the artists. This does not however mean that there is no relationship between the bigger centers and the artists: maybe the centre just does not have to contemplate on it regularly. > We should all perhaps reflect a little bit more how the individual artists see us. After all, we would not have work if it was not for them.

Ondrej mentioned that as an organization subsidized by the government they cannot provide serve just few individuals.

Dmitry asked what are the institutions based on: membership of individuals or organizations.

Paul from the Irish Dance House said they were based on individuals, companies and groups.

Riitta remarked that they served the Art field (not the general public): meaning the professionals, researchers...stressing the importance of international exchange: without knowing networks such as ENICPA, On the move, IETM...you cannot do it.

Kamma said that they work for everyone and for no one in particular. We are not supposed to judge or recommend, even when sometimes as specialist you somehow do.

Michael mentioned that as Germany is a federation, there is not national organization, in the case of the ITI Germany is a membership association. It seems in general that the Nordic centres: Norway, Ireland, Finland, Denmark are working more on the line of services aimed to individual artists.

Nevertheless the question of the relation between individual artists and Info centers may lead to revisit the working strategies of an information centre. The relation to the individual artists – as a key target group – may be the nail proof for the quality and flexibility of the working strategies.

The sessions were divided in 3 blocks:

Under **Individual artists: advocacy, education and promotion, exchange**, Piia Ahonen (Finnish Dance Centre) presented **International promotion**: some aspects of Finnish Dance info Centre's program from a view point on the individual artists. (Presentation on Enicpa website)

Riitta Seppala (Finnish Theatre Information Centre) talked about the **Senior Manager Exchange**, a program the Finnish Theatre Information Centre and the other art information centres in Finland are planning to run. The program is about educating cultural managers in international networking. This project is based on a need of producers, agents...to learn about the market, how to make a fair, and make international contacts...

Catherine Boothman (The Arts council) mentioned the existence of grants in the Leonardo da Vinci program for training and mobility in UE.

Andrea Keiz from Mime Centre made a presentation about the **link between dance production and dance education**. Starting as a centre for body theatre and dance, Mimecentrum offered initially rehearsal spaces, technical and artistic support to artists working in Berlin. Once the centre got video equipment we could and still can offer a video documentation of performances with a high technical standard.

Through governmental support the infrastructure could be offered for free at that time and could be seen as an indirect support to the artists. This has lead to a very close and easy contact to quiet a lot of artists working in the field of performance in Berlin.

For two years now Mimecentrum has been a part of „Hochschulübergreifendes Zentrum Tanz – Pilotprojekt Tanzplan Berlin This involvement has brought the centre closer to formal education and is encouraging us to transform the video archive into a media archive: the place where we offer to watch the registered and donated registrations of performances to an interested audience. Students of Performing Arts, Dance Science, M.A. Students in the field of dance, researchers as well as the teaching staff and an interested general audience have the possibility to use the facilities of the media archive. Wishes and visions are:

- to set up a video server in order to watch the videos via an intranet.
- to create „packages of knowledge“ manifesting themselves in the database in order to help research to link with adjoining fields
- to create a structure where an active participation of the user in gathering knowledge is possible.

Under **Creating Networks and connections** Luciano Brogi (IALS) presented **the Incommedia project**. SAT has been credited in the UNESCO list of NGOs for this project. SAT has put together the first Commedia dell'Arte meeting in history, there 30 organizations and individuals gathered to discuss about the subject; the goal proposed has been reached, thanks according to Luciano to the experience and spirit he acquired in the Enicpa network.

Kamma Sigumfeldt (Danish Dance information centre) introduced the **kedja project**. keđja works as platform, a specific dance network that seeks to bring all parts of the dance scene together and encourages the artists to join up, act and inter-act. (Presentation on Enicpa website)

Michael Freundt (ITI Germany) talked about a **New Study and Symposia on the Situation of Theatre and Dance Makers** where the purpose of this study is to generate a differentiated analysis of the working and living conditions of professional theatre and dance makers. In the subsequent symposium (May 2009), concrete suggestions for the improvement of working and living conditions will be presented on the basis of this precise data material. (Presentation on Enicpa website)

By the end of the session Michael took the chance to remind the members that board elections would take place the following day so candidates could step forward and think about it.

Under **Information services for all: databases and documentation** Joanna Nawrocka presented the **Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute** in Warsaw as an active centre that participates in the present cultural life in Poland. The past, represented by the archive collecting documents and pictures, may serve to form the contemporary and the future ideas. The Institute tries to respond to the needs of every participant of theatre life. In a particular way it embraces the work of theatre artists by recording and updating their artistic paths. The archive and library content is for their almost unlimited use and they may participate in the study trips programme to be initiated soon. Some artists receive special attention by having an exposition or a festival of their work. All available in their webpage: www.e-teatr.pl

Conso Martin (Centro de Documentación de las Artes Escénicas de Andalucía) presented a new video project using **Oral history for documenting the Performing Arts**. The Centre has conducted and recorded 20 *Oral Histories'* interviews, about 40 hours-worth in total, with performing arts' personalities responsible for, or related to, performances produced in the 60's and 70's, actors, director, authors, critics, technicians, dancers, etc. These interviews are full life-histories with the emphasis given to the narrator's own personal experience, and unique point of view as a source of knowledge. (Presentation on Enicpa website)

Jen Coppinger (Irish Theatre Institute) demonstrated online their new database of **Irish Theatre Artists** updated by the users currently holding over 450 live profiles of free lance practitioners working in professional theatre or dance in Ireland. . The database servers people who are looking for e.g. lighting

designers or actors or their artistic collaborators. In other words it helps Irish theatre artists to find new working possibilities.

www.irishteatronline.com

Input lecture by Dries Moorels on **the semantic web**. An introduction to key concepts and the strategic benefits of the 'linked data' approach for information and documentation of the performing arts, with examples from VTI's new database application (under development) and from the SPACE application to the EU. (Presentation on Enicpa website)

2nd October 2008. General Assembly.

Michael goes through the agenda for the day.

Financial matters and bookkeeping for the year 2007, was presented by Dries including details of membership fees paid and costs.

The bookkeeping of the year 2008 was approved by members.

There are members that have not paid and have not been attending meetings: such as The Place, Writer's Guild of Great Britain; Total theatre.

It was agreed that if there is no change in situation there will be a vote in the next general assembly about whether to exclude them from the network.

Discussion and approval of proposed budget 2009.

There will be an ENICPA meeting in April within the IETM and the annual meeting with a proposal made by ARCADE to be held in Aix en Provence.

Also Kamma offered Copenhagen to have the annual meeting in 2010.

Sindre asked to postpone the annual meeting later than October, as they are involved in the Kedja project and are busy in October.

There is a budget aside for the new website, but for any money to be spent there should be an agreement within the board previously.

Two new task groups have been formed: One to gather information for the development of the new website with Michael Freundt, Ondrej Svoboda and Sindre Jacobsen. The second

to work for communication within and outside the network has been formed by Piia Ahonen, Bianca de Wall and Conso Martin. First task will be to work in a paper about the benefits of being a member of ENICPA.

Other members are encouraged to contribute if you do, please contact:

Consolacion.martin.g@juntadeandalucia.es

Report of the board. Michael goes through the meetings held in 2007:

- Meeting of the board in Copenhagen for directions of the network, discussion on the new webpage
- Annual meeting in Berlin in June 2007
- Assembly in Gent where rough ideas for the new website were presented and Dublin proposal for hosting annual meeting in 2008.

- In 2008 was impossible to get everyone together to have a board meeting.

Michael announces that **Dance Information Norway (DI)** attending the meeting as guests and has decided to **join ENICPA as members**. Dance Information Norway (DI) is a national information office and proficiency center for the art of dance. The center was established in 1994 by the Norwegian Dancers Association, and is funded by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

The work of Dance Information Norway falls into three main areas:

Promoting the art of dance in general, providing information about dance to the press, media and public and acting as an advice and proficiency center for the art of dance.

DI offers, among other things, library services (books, films and magazines), a bi-monthly newsletter, forums and a rehearsal space in addition to host at three year dance history project, coordinate International Dance Day and present an annually Honors award. DI is the Norwegian partner in the Nordic / Baltic kedja project.

Since it was founded DI has been working towards the Government in order to establish a National House of Dance. In December 2001 the Norwegian Government approved of the founding of a Dance House Norway (DH), a National venue in Oslo. DH was founded in September 2004, and was programming on different venues in Oslo until fall 2007. The official opening of DH took place on February 29th. 2008. Dance Information Norway is located in the same building.

On the subject of networking, Michael talked about **LabforCulture** and that he as ENICPA president has been included in the team. There is a task to define an advisory group and Michael will keep in contact as a representative of ENICPA .

Caroline said that it is important to keep in contact and possibilities of potential cooperation with other networks such as IETM, SIBMAS, ITI...Also it was mentioned the financial problems that On the Move had and Caroline said that there should be a discussion within the board to see what could be done to help them.

Dries said that Mary Ann Vlieg has talked to him about this problem and that to salvage "On the move" is too big operation for ENICPA to take on.

Riitta asked the board to keep in contact and see what could be done.

Elections of a new board

Dries explained briefly Enicpa as a nonprofit association under Belgian law, and the need of a formal board of director with 3 people in the positions of president, treasurer and secretary.

Presentation of candidates for elections: Piia Ahonen, Michael Freundt, Dries Moorels and Conso Martin. New board voted and elected by all members attending the general assembly.

Thanks by the president of ENICPA to members leaving the board: Luciano Brogi; Jan G. Christiansen and Caroline Williams.

ENICPA projects /Development of the network

Luciano Brogi presented the **European Dance Video Navigator** an online tool to discover and locate dance videos in different collections across Europe. It is a cooperative project initiated in 2006 by ENICPA.

Currently includes seven partners all ENICPA members, but it is agreed that from now onwards the project can be joined by other non members organizations paying a fee entrance.

Dries introduced **SPACE project** that counts on ENICPA support for the EU application. SPACE is a group of national cultural institutions with an international policy and practice created a new platform, dedicated to **Stimulate the Performing Arts Circulation in Europe**. The members of SPACE share a position in between politics and the artistic field in their own countries. They work as centres of information, promote the (performing) arts on a national and international level and are experienced in supporting and running bilateral and multilateral cultural programmes. They share the belief that one of the cornerstones of a European Cultural Policy will be to facilitate and support the circulation of (performing) arts across Europe. But they also realize there are still a lot of imbalances in this transnational (performing) arts sphere; asymmetries between countries, regions, artists, disciplines and cultural operators.

Michael made a quick **introduction to ENICPA website** for new people attending the meeting, showing services available on the restricted area: chat, member's projects, databases... There was a bit of discussion on what of these services should be already on the public side and not only for members.

Visit to DanceHouse (Dublin). An enjoyable trip to a very functional and interesting building

Members Presentations

Ondrej Svoboda introduced two projects: **Conservation and Presentation of the Cultural Heritage of Czech and World Theatre**. Project supported from Financial mechanism of Norway and is focused to three main activities: 1) Digitalization of collecting of theatre photography and its presentation; 2) Processing and digitalization of PQ Archive; 3) Database of amateur theatre (this part is solved by partner, not by Theatre Institute) and **www.theatre-architecture.eu** project is focused to theatre architecture and was create in Theatre Institute and realized in National Theatre with partners from Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Slovenia. (Presentation on Enicpa website)

Piia Ahonen presented a **A little guide book on how to look at dance art**. A section on Finish Dance Info's website. It has a text part and a video part. The title of publication would roughly translate as "Can tiptoeing be dance?" (Presentation on Enicpa website)

www.tanzplattform.de

Michael presented a recently started project to create an online source for materials on contemporary dance in Germany based on documents about the Dance Platform Germany from 1994 till 2008. The project aims to collect all essays, portraits, data on performances and additional material to present it at www.tanzplattform.de.

ILONA Database

ILONA database is a joint effort of TINFO and Finnish Theatre Museum and serves for many purposes **partnership building project with many Russian partner organisations**

(the Russian Theatre Union, some theatres in Moscow, St.Petersburg and Omsk) as we were in the meeting Riitta got the news that they got the money.

Closing remarks

- Next annual meeting to be held in Aix en Provence by ARCADE.
- We have a new member **Dance Information Norway**
- Two task groups have been formed: communication within and outside the network and new website development.
- Need to keep collaborating with other networks.
- Presentation will be uploaded in ENICPA website.
- General feeling that the meeting was very interesting for all.
- Need to come up with an interesting subject for next meeting:
 - Update on digitization has been demanded by some.
 - Quite a number of people were also interested to continue discussions about the idea of oral histories as a documenting method.
 - Also the topic of statistics came up in the end: why and how?

The board will also put together some guidelines along the topic of "How to organise an ENICPA meeting". This way the future organisers won't have to start from zero. Like the Finnish saying goes: don't need to invent the wheel all over again.