

# International Playwrights' Forum IPF

November 2024

Report of the International Playwrights' Forum  
following the 37<sup>th</sup> World Congress



*International Playwrights' Forum Committee Meeting during the 37<sup>th</sup> World Congress*

## **General:**

1. Due to the illness of the IPF's President, Prof. Gad Kaynar-Kissinger, the General Secretary, Ms. Ursula Werdenberg, chaired the meeting at the WC.

2. The attendants:

### **Chair:**

Ursula Werdenberg, Dramaturg/Autor, General Secretary of IPF, Switzerland

### **Assistant/Minutes Taker:**

Raju Schwarz, Author, Delegate of Swiss ITI, Switzerland

### **Participants:**

Abdus Selim, Playwright/Translator, Bangladesh

Ivanka Apostolova Baskar, Creative Producer/Video Dramaturg, North Macedonia  
(President of North Macedonia Centre of ITI)

Nina Križan, Producer, Croatia,

Vladislava Fekete, Director of "The Theatre Institute Bratislava", Playwright, Dramaturg,  
Slovakia

Yvon Wilfride Lewalet Mandah, Playwright/Poet, Congo Republic (President of Congo  
Republic Centre of ITI)

Yveyi Yi, Director/Writer, Korea Republic (Secretary General of Korea Republic Centre of ITI)

Zeljka Turcinovic, Dramaturg/Editor, Croatia (President of Croatia Centre of ITI)

Latif Abubakar, Playwright/Director, Ghana, guest

Stefania Bochicchio, Director of UK Centre of ITI, United Kingdom

3. Since the last congress in Fujairah two of the IPF's appreciated colleagues have passed away:

Rathna Pushpa Kumari, from Sri Lanka. She was Vice President of the Committee, a well-known TV personality, a counsellor in psychology and a specialist in human empowerment, who organised a lot of theatre workshops in her country.

Márcio Souza, from Brazil. He was a Board Member and a famous playwright, writer, journalist, filmmaker, translator and essayist.

4. Plans:

Over the last years, the IPF saw its mission not only in fostering young and beginning playwrights through workshops and competitions. Yet, we thought that in addition to these already established methods, we should move on in new directions. In the context of the progressive vision of the ITI that seeks to engender a creative and peaceful dialogue in the various performative fields among disparate cultures, to disseminate information and experience with regard to new developments in each field, and to explore less familiar modes of artistic expression, the President and the Secretary General of the IPF drafted – in a series of zoom sessions – the outlines of several projects that have been discussed in Antwerp, and will be further developed and implemented (subject to possibilities and circumstances) in the months ahead.

The projects:

#### **4.1 “New Methods of Teaching and Practicing Dramaturgy” – Panel and Workshop**

**Dramaturgy has become an “umbrella field” that offers new dramatic/theatrical genres, plays an important role as a toolkit in creating novel and hybrid forms of theatre and performance, and more than ever links performative activity to the social and cultural contexts. The international panel and demonstrative workshop that we are planning as a part of a New Dramaturgy Conference is intended to address these issues.**

In this panel experts of various fields in Dramaturgy will present their branches, demonstrate them and – in accordance with possibilities – explore them practically.

**The following different categories of Dramaturgy will be represented in the panel by leading dramaturgs and playwrights listed below (a tentative list), who will also conduct working groups that will practically test and implement the various approaches.**

- Classical Dramaturgy for Playwriting/Creative Writing
- Interdisciplinary Dramaturgy
- New Methods of Dramaturgy involving Communities (Anton Juan, USA/Philippines)
- Interdisciplinary Storytelling in Contemporary Performing Arts Practice
- (Ursula Werdenberg/Raju Schwarz, Switzerland)

- Adaptations and Translations, Postdramatic Dramaturgy [Inter alia: Research, Adaptations/Translations initially tested in the context of the Analogio International Festival, Athens 2018, 2019] (Gad Kaynar-Kissinger, Israel)

*We are looking for a Centre capable of hosting this panel and workshop. One of the options would be to accommodate the project in the next World Congress.*

#### **4.2 A New Global Playwriting Competition: Multicultural Folktales and Children Stories in a Changing World.**

The **Playwriting Competition** has over the years become one of the signature enterprises of the IPF. This time we have decided to devote this framework to Children Theatre.

Children Theatre has become one of the globally most varied and rapidly growing performative modes, strongly linked to Theatrical Ethnography that explores folktales. Its significance has substantially been fortified by serving as counterbalance to the digital screen addiction of children worldwide, as well as by the need to foster the interest of the younger generation in their cultural heritage, as well as in other, remote cultures.

We therefore thought it fit to dedicate our next international playwriting competition to this issue, and include it in a plethora of current and budding types or categories (such as: performance art, textual drama, interdisciplinary stories, etc.). One winner will be chosen for each category. In each category the jury members will be subject to according guidelines.

**The Call for Texts will be launched by the end of December 2024. Six months will be allotted to submit the contributions. Three months will be given to the decision of the jury, composed of volunteering IPF members from various countries. The announcement of winners will take place on October 2025.**

**The kind of awards and publication of the winning texts is still under discussion.**

It should be noted that this project does not constitute a competition to the ongoing activity of ASSITEJ, but on the contrary: It is a complementary initiative that emphasizes the creative aspect of writing for young audiences, rather than merely holding conferences and workshops on this topic.

#### **4.3 A Cross-Cultural Dialogue** (Promoting the artistic relationship and interaction between theatrical traditions of East and West, North and South).

This project seeks to address the deep and natural discrepancies in artistic languages, communication modes, traditional and prevailing genres and methodologies among different cultures. These differences are especially imprinted in the dramatic writing conventions of various cultures. Thus for instance, in the history of IPF there were festivals and dramatic workshops in the East (India, Philippines, Sri Lanka) and the West (Slovenia, Croatia and in other places). There were however no synergy and interchange between them.

The IPF (as the entire committees and activity frames of the ITI) intends to safeguard the alterity of each theatrical culture, but – on the other hand – wishes encourage a reciprocal dialogue and mutual influence among them, without losing the uniqueness of each culture.

*The Plan:* The IPF, as part of the ITI that strives to promote peace and cooperation among cultures, considers ways to discuss and practice a kind of rapport through discourse and practical work between the dialectically and diametrically remote playwriting traditions of East and West, North and South. This collaboration might enrich the writing and directing modes in the cultures involved, as well as the understanding between them.

There are several possible methods of realizing this endeavor, involved with considerable organizational and financial investment. We are therefore still in the initial stages of probing and assessing the best ways to implement our intention.

#### **4.4 Presentation and Discussion of a Nationally or Internationally Acclaimed Living Playwright**

**Important and intriguing living dramatists, well-known and influential in their country, are sometimes unknown internationally because of translation problems, lack of global representation etc., therefore depriving the international theatre community of new and stimulating inputs. This project strives to deal with this problem by presenting and discussing a nationally or internationally acclaimed living playwright in an online meeting (not only European. There might also be a cross-cultural presentation of celebrated dramatists).**

Following the model of the Slovenian ITI Centre initiated and implemented by Tatjana Ažman and others\*, we seek arrange online meetings and discussions, wherein we analyze the plays and the dramaturgy of a suggested living playwright(s).

*We shall accordingly apply for proposals from IPF members, as well as from other ITI members.*

\* **Reading Ivan Cankar, the "undiscovered Central-European Ibsen"**, promoted for the first time on an international scale in English translation, in a round table moderated by Tatjana Ažman (Zoom Event, Streamed Online).

Thank you for your attention,

**Prof. Gad Kaynar-Kissinger, President IPF**  
**Ursula Werdenberg, General Secretary IPF**