

Theatre FESTIVALS IN TRANSITION

ROUND TABLE IN VILNIUS

FESTIVALS AS GENERATORS AND CIRCULATORS OF NEW IDEAS, PROFESSIONAL, LABORATORIAL AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL VILNIUS THEATRE FESTIVAL *SIRENOS 2005*

October 1st, 2005, 11:00-14.30 At Vilnius Small State Theatre

Participants:

Rose Fenton - moderator of the discussions / independent arts producer, former artistic director of LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre), London, Great Britain

Tilmann Broszat - artistic director of the festival Spielart, initiator of F.I.T., Munich, Germany

Dr. Dragan Klaic - Permanent Fellow, Felix Meritis Foundation, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Elona Bajorinien - artistic director of the festival Sirens, partner of F.I.T. / director of European Cultural Programme Center, Vilnius, Lithuania

R ta Prusevi ien - executive manager of Vilnius Festival / deputy director of the National Philharmonic Society of Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania

Audronis Imbrasas - director of the festival New Baltic Dance / director of Lithuanian Dance Information Center / director of Arts Printing House, Vilnius, Lithuania

Audronis Liuga - director of the festival New Drama Action / director of Theatre and Cinema Information and Education Center

Jurgis Giedrys - head of Arts Department of Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania

Jadwiga Oleradzka - director of the festival Kontakt, Torun, Poland

Balász Kovalnik - artistic director of the Autumn Festival, Budapest, Hungary

Kristian Smeds - playwright, theatre director, Kayani, Finland

Dasha Krijanskaia - critic / scholar Roosevelt Academy, Middelburg, Netherlands

Alison Andrews - performing arts officer of Arts Council England, London, Great Britain

Philip Morgan - producer of Brighton Festival, Brighton, Great Britain

Ott Karulin - PR coordinator and marketing manager of the festival Baltoscandal, partner of F.I.T., Rakvere, Estonia

Fanni Nanay - Theatre Institute Budapest, Hungary

Odeta Abromavi i t - director of public institution "Kult ros artel "

Jurga Knyvien - representative for public relations of Kaunas State Drama Theatre, Kaunas, Lithuania

Danas Skramtai - concert manager of National Philharmonic Society of Lithuania, Vilnius, Lithuania

Goda Dapšyt - documentation of the discussion (festival Sirens, Vilnius, Lithuania)

FIRST PART LOCAL AND NATIONAL DIMENSIONS

Elona Bajorinien :

Hello to everybody. My name is Elona Bajorinien . I am an artistic director of "Sirens" festival. As all of you know we will have a discussion about festivals in transition this morning. I will start from practicalities: everybody is welcome to speak English, but if some Lithuanians feel that it would be better for them to talk in Lithuanian we have an interpreter and please feel free to use her services. I will try so save time and speak in English but if necessary we can translate.

The second point

"Festivals in Transition" is a project initiated by "Spielart" festival, which is based in Munich and it is a collaboration of eight festivals. It is agreed that Rose Fenton, former LIFT festival in London one of co-directors moderates discussions in all of participating festivals. I just pass the microphone to her and ask her to lead our conversation.

Rose Fenton:

Thank you, Elona. Welcome everybody. I just wanted to say that it is fantastic to be here in Vilnius. It is my third visit and I see changes every time I come here. And it is also wonderful to be in such challenging and interesting festival as "Sirens". A really important festival. I have already seen some extraordinary works. Thank you, Elona.

As Elona has explained briefly F.I.T. is an initiative of eight different festivals. This is a third F.I.T. discussion. And these eight festivals from across the Central and Eastern Europe: the Baltic's, Poland, Germany, Slovakia, Slovenia are meeting over the next year to really explore the impact and the potential both the present and the future of festivals in building a new sense and understanding of the emerging Europe through the arts. I believe it is very important and timely initiative that Festivals In Transition projects for two reasons really. One is that it is here to build the network of ideas, shared practice, strategies, professional collaboration and to engage not just in artistic life but also to incorporate this notion of the civic life over reemerging Europe. In fact the key characteristics of these festivals are presenting and producing a contemporary work, engaging with new ideas and perceptions, exploring new forms. It is always quite difficult, because this work is often going off the map of peoples' understanding of what the theatre is. It is really engaging people in very challenging, provocative and interesting way. But in fact through the work of Festivals like Sirens there is a sense that we can both be celebrating our communality across the Europe and also investigating and acknowledging our differences. This notion of F.I.T. as a way of building a network and showing ideas in practice is very important.

The European Union does not have cultural policy. We have an economic policy and a lot of discussions, but culture has not featured so highly in the European Union as a kind of strategy, as a sense of building the Europe. I would suggest that perhaps this growth of Europe in some sense has been very arrogantly taken for granted. There have been no serious efforts to invest in an understanding of the feelings, the emotions and indeed the imaginations of people and individuals to provoke somehow a true interest for their future existence in Europe in its widest sense. And it's most fundamental sense that's of culture.

In fact it is interesting that there is an initiative led by a group of people under the title "A Soul for Europe" which is meeting on a regular basis over the next few years. It started as a meeting in Berlin. It invited key cultural thinkers, operators and governments to talk about what it means "A Soul for Europe". President Barosa made the opening speech in which he declared: "The EU has reached the stage in its history where its cultural dimension can no longer be ignored." But how then we will put that realization into practice? And of course EU is supporting this F.I.T. project and a number of other

European cultural initiatives. And I believe they are waiting of the results of these conversations with great interest. We will be presenting a report at the end of the year, but also as the discussions evolve they will be posted on the website of F.I.T. So this is the opportunity for all of you here to have your voice, to be heard by the European Union.

As I said this is a third meeting. We had a meeting ten days ago in Riga at the Homo Novus festival which brought together the key stake holders of the festival: the City, the Ministry of Culture, sponsors, international government agencies, the British Council, Goethe Institute as well as local producers and some international festivals. We asked everybody: why do you support this festival? What are you giving to it and what do you expect to gain? What more would you like to gain? We identified some of the agendas. We asked whether there was in everybody's agendas a confluence or conflict? Where was the conflict and where there might there be more confluence? And what are the strategies to make that happen? This was Riga. You can read the results of this discussion on the website.

Less than a week ago in a festival Nitra, it was much more focused on the artistic questions: what is a role of the festival in inspiring the practice of the local artists, in the development of theatre and also in the developing the taste of audiences. We also examined the role of the press: what is their approach, what is their responsibility as one of the key entry points to really grappling with some of these questions about contemporary art and contemporary theatre.

This was Nitra and now here we are in Vilnius where I think we will try to bring together both these topics the artistic and the sense of civic partnership. The festival is a generator and circulator of the new ideas and also has very strong notion of educational, training role. What are the pressures here and what are the pleasures? There are always these two conflicting sides. And also the sense of society: what is the civic role of the festival beyond that is often perceived as the closed artistic world. How do we open into a larger conversation? How do festivals realize this role? What are their strategies? What are the pressures?

So, these are some of the issues we will be looking at for next couple of hours. It is a very informal set up here. There are people dotted around who said that they will contribute. There should be two of the Sirens partners the City and the Ministry of Culture. And also some key cultural players within Lithuanian culture: the Vilnius Festival, New Drama Action and New Baltic Dance Festival together with Arts Printing House. As well there are guests of the Sirens festival from many festivals and some of them are indeed partners of F.I.T. So, the first part will focus on what is happening here in Vilnius, the break and then the second parts will broaden in to the international perspective. We do not have much time but I believe that we can achieve quite a lot.

But before we begin, I just wanted to say something about the sense of where art is in society and make reference to somebody who I knew very well, whom we worked with during the LIFT festival, a director called Barney Simon from South Africa. He set up the Market Theatre. During the very dark years of apartheid he really created a platform for many voices of the black community and nurtured an extraordinary flourishing of theatre that dealt with everyday reality. When apartheid was dismantled he was awarded a prize in recognition of his work in changing society through the arts. In accepting the prize he made the point that he did not believe the role of the arts was to change society but rather to nurture a changing society. And this is important thing for us to think about how the art can nurture a changing society. And then he went to quote Jung, who says: "Artists often serve their cultures and epochs in ways that are veiled and not immediately understood. Art is constantly at work educating the spirit of the age, conjuring up the forms in which the age is most lacking and compensating for the one-sidedness of the present." And that is something that I personally

absolutely, truly believe in. This is very important notion of art in nurturing the changing society. In fact we are in a very fast changing society. How do we comprehend, how do we grapple it, how do we grasp all these tensions, contradictions and differences? I think art has very important role here. But having said that, I would like to pass over to Elona to say something about this festival in relation to arts nurturing the changing society. I was very interested to note Elona's words in something she has written: "Sirens is not just another international festival", - she said. She talks about Sirens festival aims to provide" responsive, challenging and contemporary "theatre. And, this is important, to "promote cultural partnerships" as a value. I think your slogan is "New reality, new theatre for what kind of audience". So, Elona, if you could talk a little bit about your artistic vision, but also about your civic vision, and what are the challenges here.

Elona Bajorinien :

Thank you. These are very general and very difficult questions. You have quoted what I wrote at the beginning of short history of "Sirens", because it is only the second year when we have this festival. In the philosophy of our festival, which was quoted right now for me, most difficult is permanent investigation of the triangle, which stands as a basement for every event: first, new reality, which will always be new, second, the reflections of an artists to that new reality, to its challenges and third corner, which is extremely important for us, is the audience, because we would like to be open to as broad audience as possible or to the various segments of society. This festival is focused not only on experimental or investigating performances but also we think that dialogue with let's say general audiences is very important in Lithuanian context. Luckily until this moment we see full houses and big interest of the theatergoers. I would wish for my self to keep this line, because I see big challenge in building really good artistic program of the festival and it is stronger than financial or cultural partnership problems.

Rose Fenton:

When we spoke yesterday you talked about the role of the festivals in the 'white spots' on the cultural landscape, which, I suppose, is filling a gap, fulfilling a need that is not fulfilled anywhere else. Perhaps you could talk about that.

Elona Bajorinien :

The program of the Sirens festival is quite complex. It is like a cake: we have program of foreign performances, Lithuanian theatre showcase, quite interesting club program with different presentations, video screenings, etc., and a seminar. It is our position that we are trying to fulfill 'white spots' of cultural or theatrical landscape of Lithuania when we design program of the festival. When we make a seminar we are filling the gap that we feel in theatre education or management education, when we make an international discussion we again are filling a gap of this kind of international discussions that we do not have in our regular cultural life, when we are doing the Lithuanian theatre showcase we are providing the only opportunity for Lithuanian theatre makers to meet international partners, because our theatres do not organize national festival or special showcase by themselves. So, this festival is a really good opportunity to make complex impulses on different sides of theatre or cultural life and we never know in advance which side will be the strongest one. You can experience it only during the festival.

Rose Fenton:

So in fact what you are saying that there is not only the artistic aspect of the festival, but also the educational side. How does that what you are doing here relate internationally?

Elona Bajorinien :

Last year we had seminar on Audience Development for performing arts managers, which was

opened for participants from other countries. It was very surprising that the lecture from the United Kingdom was immediately invited through us to the Golden Mask festival in Moscow and later on to Riga. So, professional people understood that this topic is very relevant and important for them and professional talks about how to work with the audience not simply in rhetorical sense, but in the professional way, that they need this kind of skills and that it may bring something important for them. It was really unexpected for us that the same seminar with the same topic started to travel around.

Rose Fenton:

How has it impacted on your marketing practice?

Elona Bajorinien :

When I was thinking about this year's festival I was using certain exercises, which were introduced during that festival. I was testing something then while attracting audiences to this edition of the festival. But that is already my kitchen.

Rose Fenton:

You talk about presenting Lithuanian work within this festival as a showcase. You present existing peaces. Do you feel as a festival that your role is to invest, to commission new work both internationally and within Lithuania? Is this a long-term view and if so, how do you imagine doing this with partners (perhaps some of them who are already here) within Lithuanian cultural scene?

Elona Bajorinien :

I would say that other festivals have more experience and better results than we in this field of investing, commissioning into Lithuanian local productions and I hope that they will talk about it. For us it is just the beginning. I would say that it is a longer perspective indeed, in the future maybe we would like to make co productions, but not in that sense when different organizations are putting money together and then one theatre is touring to those countries which has invested into there piece. For me much more difficult and much more interesting would be real collaboration between artists, but I am afraid of this way, because it seems a bit artificial. Artists have to find each other in their own way and the only things we can do is provide a framework, create a favorable situation and have luxury money. I would prefer this way even though it does not bring quick results.

Rose Fenton:

It is interesting that you talk about the need of the process to have true exchange or collaboration. That can often be difficult, because people sometimes want to see results immediately.

Elona Bajorinien :

Not sometimes, but always. And in a way they are right, because you usually use public money, you have an annual event, you have to work hard a show certain results. It means that your work should be organized in two or three flows. One flow goes in this experimental way, and you have this luxury situation, but you always have keep in mind that you play also another game, that you have to have a real festival for big audiences, that you have to present what is interesting on European or non-European scene in theatre. So, it is always about very complex approach to the same event.

Rose Fenton:

In a moment I would like to ask some of the collaborators about this, because I imagine they would also be partners and also the experience of other festivals in Vilnius on this issue. But before, just to touch very briefly, you talked about your partners, public funding and accountability. I guess that through some of these processes that you might evolve this will also be an education for these partners to understand the value. What I see from Sirens festival to compare with several others within Central Europe, is that it seems to have quite developed sense of partnership with the City, with

sponsors, in fact you have a great sponsor, and with the Ministry. I would like just to hear you talk about your philosophy of partnership. Why do you need those partners? Of course it is the money, but why else? What are the difficulties in forging these partnerships?

Elona Bajorinien :

I would say that we are in quite lucky situation. I know the possibilities of the state and preferences of the business world here in Lithuania. The only thing I can say, just big thankful words to management team of Oskaras Koršunovas Theatre. They have extremely good experience in running their theatre and they have transformed their skills into the festivals situation. We work with all possible partners that are on the local market. Internationally we are feeling quite a strange situation, which is related with my private situation. I work in two jobs and program "Culture 2000" is partly closed for Sirens festival, because of conflict of the interests. I work as a head of Lithuanian Cultural Contact Point, but since I work for the festival also, I cannot use money from "Culture 2000". Of course there is an option that I have to leave either Sirens, either Lithuanian CCP, but until now I am trying to keep both. Actually I do not now how to answer to your question about partners. I think we simply feel stronger when we have more sponsors, more partners and also we feel stronger when we think that we had succeed with our programming, when we see that they like our job and understand that we are working hard and we really care about culture topics and culture life. When we have a crisis situation, which we experienced this year as well, we were almost losing one show; the Vilnius Municipality helped us very much with substantial support again and we were able to keep the program as it was planned.

Rose Fenton:

Thank you, Elona. There are many questions, which come out of this. What I would like to do before we going on is to hear from other people within Lithuania. Let us start perhaps with Rta, from the music festival, which I know is not only presenting, but also commissioning new works and has many partnerships with people at the Opera house. As I know one of your commissions yesterday opened at the Opera house. It is kind of sense of investing into artistic life not only for one festival but also for a longer life.

Rta Pruseviien :

To begin with I would like to introduce my self. My name is Rta Pruseviien . I am Executive director of Vilnius festival as well as Deputy Director of the National Philharmonic Society. I agree with Elona, in Lithuania it is impossible for arts and culture manages to have just one job, you should occupy much more. I occupy two and I am in so many committees on culture in Municipality and Ministry of Culture, because you have to be very creative in order to get good relationships, to lobby and to build social economic and other partnerships. Vilnius Festival was celebrating 9 years this summer and it will be 10 years next year. Though it is rather short history of the festival in comparison with other Western European festivals, however I think that our cultural development in Lithuania that was going in parallel with a very big economic and social changes and it is much more rapid then elsewhere. People had to learn so many new things, to get new knowledge and tools for culture management. I mean that no one of us was trained as a cultural manager. We all come from very different fields. I think that Vilnius Festival is still a story of success. It has started in 1997 with the idea of former General Director of National Philharmonic Society Gintautas Kvišas. He thought that he should extend regular season of Philharmonic in June on purpose to attract more tourists, more people and to create something very special. Of course he knew that a festival in itself is a phenomenon, because marketing and packaging of the festival is different from regular season. He managed to attract the names like Mstislav Rostropovich, Gidon Kremer, Kristzof Pendereckij, Yuri Bashmet and other famous musicians to the first festival. He had created very good music partnerships, because the major strength of Vilnius Festival is the involvement of two largest music institutions in Lithuania,

which are National Philharmonic Society with its six leading music groups and National Opera House. We often say, that the cost of the festival would be maybe 10 times bigger if we would have to pay for halls, orchestras, choruses and opera singers. So far we manage to do everything ourselves. We have two people working for the festival all the year round and we involve administration and management of those two large institutions during the month of June.

Rose Fenton:

I have two questions. First, the international dimension of your work what does it bring to you? And secondly, do you think that the festival frame is one, which allows you to take more risks?

R ta Prusevi ien :

Yes, it is. To the first question I can answer that our festival is very international. Not only because since 1999 we belong to European Festivals Association and have many different partnerships and exchanges with other European music festivals, but also music has no boundary and no language barrier therefore it is rather easy to put together international artists with our musicians and to produce something very exiting. Almost every production of Vilnius Festival afterwards tours round other music festivals in Europe. We never end in June; we prolong festival's projects in July an August.

Rose Fenton:

Is your audience quite young or across the board?

R ta Prusevi ien :

It is very diverse. It is not white-haired people. I think in general Lithuanian audiences are very diverse and young people are interested in all art forms and genres.

Rose Fenton:

And ready to take something new, to take risks?

R ta Prusevi ien :

Yes. Let me give just one example. In 2002 Lithuanian middle-aged composer Mindaugas Urbaitis was commissioned to create a ballet for the festival. It is called "Acid City". It has been premièred during Vilnius festival and then it became repertory ballet in the Opera House. It is one of the most attractive productions for the young audiences. The language of the music in this performance is very contemporary and it is one of the best selling productions.

Rose Fenton:

Thank you. Now I want to bring in two Audronisis to hear from them the response to some of the questions and issues that have been raised. How do you see your relationship to a festival like Sirens and other festivals within the landscape? Is this an opportunity for you to do things that you otherwise would not be able to do? What are your hopes and expectations in terms of the work you do, because you both are working in the contemporary performing arts? Who can I ask first? Here Audronis from New Baltic Dance festival.

Audronis Imbrasas:

I do not know if I could respond to your question, because I would not say that we cooperate among the festivals. I would say that we cooperate as people, as personalities. We know each other and we cooperate on other projects. For example Elona, Audronis and me, we are cooperating on establishing the Arts Printing House, but it is not a festival of course. With dance festival it is a bit another story. It is unfortunately that I have to repeat it for 10 years, but contemporary dance does not have its own place in Lithuania. That was the first and initial idea to start the festival, to promote contemporary dance as such and to implement this art form in Lithuania and in all Baltic region. I could tell a lot of stories about the impact of the festival on its social, educational and artistic development.

We also have implemented 9 festivals and next will be our anniversary. As distinct from Vilnius Festival, we have to rent all the spaces. We do not have our theatre so we always rent all the spaces and pay to technicians. In terms of sponsorship and fundraising from the beginning we had to combine three sources: state support, private sponsorship and support of international institutions. Usually part of state support in the festivals budget is from 15% to 33%. The artistic vision consists of three main directions: to produce and to present contemporary dance performances of Lithuanian choreographers and also performances of choreographers from neighbor post-soviet countries, where contemporary dance did not exist officially and was neglected by officials; another direction is to present contemporary dance from Scandinavia where they had similar situation 20-25 years ago and the third direction is to present the contemporary dance from the rest of the world, from the countries that already have strong tradition and well developed contemporary dance scene. We always had educational projects. Finally, we have very interesting results, for example we impacted on contemporary dance chair in Kazakhstan of course as well as in Vilnius. Some of the artists even created productions based on their experience, which they got here, as Norwegian choreographer Jo Strøngrem, who made a film. We also impacted on development of satellite festival in Kaliningrad and so on. So, yes, we have partnership, but mostly with dance institutions and dance festivals in, I would say, all over the world. We present large scale of different forms and directions of contemporary dance starting from almost neoclassical and in some cases if it is important for us up to vanguard pieces. So it is from big companies as Cullbergballet or La La La Human Steps up to very small experimental performances from Belarus, Poland or Latvia.

Rose Fenton:

Do you see the impact of your work on the contemporary dance scene here?

Audronis Imbrasas:

Since we have some theatres that developed or were established after productions in our festival and Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy has started education on contemporary dance, I could imagine that yes. But I should not be the one who states that.

Rose Fenton:

I have another question. Why did sponsors from the private sector support your festival? What is their motivation?

Audronis Imbrasas:

I do not know. I think that we are very lucky that Lithuanian branch of Philippe Morris is supporting us from the second festival. One of the reasons for that is that this company supports dance in other countries also. Philippe Morris helped a lot on development of modern and contemporary dance in United States. I am not really sure why they started to support us at the beginning because it was not a big festival then. Perhaps they saw a possibility to develop something that was not developed in the country before? The profit that they get from society they are returning part of it back as a creative, cultural product.

Rita Prusevičienė:

I have a very good story. The sponsor of Vilnius festival is Price Waterhouse Coopers. One of the senior partners is British married to a Lithuanian woman. This year we have visited him to reconfirm the support of Price Waterhouse Coopers. And that is what he said to us: "You visit me once a year, drink my tea, ask for big money, but I still like you." So, that I think is the answer to your question.

Rose Fenton:

But I imagine that they get very good profile from this. They feel it is some kind of social responsibility, their investment in the country where they are actually making profit, but they give back into creation

of civilized society through the arts.

Elona Bajorinien :

It is interesting that mainly Western capital companies were first to start this kind of partnership, not local ones. But now we already have very first examples. Vilnius Bank was the first, I guess. They started to support Vilnius festival. Now we have sponsorship of supermarkets chain VP Market. So little by little it is also starting.

Audronis Imbrasas:

It is right, that at the beginning it was mostly those companies that more or less had Western mentality. It was the same in our case. But already five years ago we had the same Vilnius Bank as a Maecenas. For five years we have the support from SBA Corporation, which produces furniture. It is absolutely Lithuanian business company. So, there is a development.

Rose Fenton:

Firstly, does the sponsor influence your program? And secondly, does the sponsor make use of your program to bring its employees and engage with the festival?

Audronis Imbrasas:

In our case, directly they do not influence us. If we would talk about their employees, then in some cases yes. But I have to say that our sponsors were educating themselves during those years. At the beginning we had situations when somebody gives us 2000 \$ and asks for 100 invitations, but now situations is absolutely different. Our sponsors respect what we do. I even know some facts when they refused to give the invitations for employees telling that this they have to support this festival because it is their child also.

Rose Fenton:

It seems that you have many opportunities here to create a deeper dialogue with the sponsor. As you said, you come and have tea with me once a year, but that is all you do. We should discuss how it could be possible to go further.

Rita Prusevičienė :

Our sponsors use the opportunity to make their corporate events related to the concerts. It is already second year that very good British music critic visited the festival. She was very euphoric. She has written six articles in British press. This year one of them was in "The Independent" and she has mentioned several of our major sponsors there. They were so delighted.

Rose Fenton:

Last night we had a conversation with Dragan Klaic and Tilmann Broszat after seeing the "Sabination", which is raising a lot of questions around corporate responsibility, a kind of sense of belonging for employees with a company, corporate and individual identity, the loss of. Actually for a company like, for example, Pricewaterhouse to engage in this performance for its' employees to go and then use it as the talking point in terms of what their own practice is. As a company they advise other major corporations. Performances such as Sabination could offer them an insight into the world as it operates today and the human dimension. And as one of the themes of this festival is the Social Reality of Today, how do we use this incredible resource to create a discussion outside just the art sector but into a wider discussion? Anyway, I will leave that question there, because I think it is one of the big questions, which certainly we at LIFT particularly grappled with. The 21st arts organization, as our Arts Council told us, has to have a mixed economy. Sometimes it can be very humiliating simply to go to the sponsor with your begging bowl.. How can we go beyond this image? To create a more equitable relationship. I guess this question applies not only for the corporations and private

sponsors but also indeed for the public sponsors, the Ministries of Culture and City partners.. How do they engage?.

R ta Prusevi ien :

The answer is total and daily education. From the side of the festival, we had seen and experienced that we really have educated governmental institutions, our private sponsors and the audience. They have changed. For example, one of our major sponsors told that he was educating himself as a personality through sponsoring the festival and attending every concert. I would say that the governmental institutions also a bit lack general strategies for what are the key players in the arts and culture field. Lithuania has no real culture market. So, there should be governmental and political strategies in this area. Festivals are such strong tools for creating the image of the country and they did a lot for that. Two years ago we have persuaded Vilnius City Municipality to establish public institution Vilnius Festivals, which covers five different genres festivals in Vilnius city. It is a result of our lobbying that we managed City Municipality to accept the idea that they should get involved very strongly.

Dragan Klaic:

May I ask what is that Vilnius Festivals is actually doing for you and in which this is an advantage?

R ta Prusevi ien :

Firs of all, it provides the coordination of the festivals taking place in Vilnius. We had cooperated before between the directors of the festivals because we had to divide the period of the year for not to compete, but to cooperate. The establishment of this kind of public institution lets us to cooperate more and the City Municipality is participates in it financially, presenting the cultural life of Vilnius, attracting tourists. The statistics of Vilnius Festival say that in some of the concerts we have around 40-50% of foreigners in the audience. This public institution also helped us to have few paid positions for the coordinators of the festivals. It is very important, because, as I told it before, we all have other jobs that consume all our time.

Dragan Klaic:

So you actually created some kind of small core staff that provides continuity.

Elona Bajorinien :

I have to say that for Sirens festival the establishment of Vilnius Festivals was absolutely crucial, because it was a chance to start the new theatre festival in Lithuania. Without establishing this umbrella institution we would not have started. Vilnius Festivals united four existing festivals, but we have been the fifth, which appeared on the scene thanks to the establishment of this umbrella organization. Practically speaking, they gave salaries for two people, who could start working on building the festival. They gave funds for traveling which is very important for an international festival. And also the City provides basic money for programming. It is not big money, but we can add money that comes from Ministry of Culture, Sports and Culture Foundation and so on. So this basic, core funding in our case was absolutely crucial. In the case of the Vilnius festival, they already have the existing structure of the National Philharmonic Society and they have State funding for that, so it is a little bit different story. New Baltic Dance and New Drama Action, those two festivals have started on their own and they do not have this luxury situation as we have. I want to pass the microphone to another Audronis, who runs the New Drama Action, and to my mind this festival during its' existence experienced very interesting artistic changes. Maybe you could talk about ways of working, about your investment in discovering new Lithuanian groups and presenting the new material for all the Lithuanian theatre, not only the experimental scene. And now you start very important and to my mind interesting collaborations with artists from other countries. We see Kristian Smeds from Finland here,

with you and also you have some plans with Árpád Schilling from Krétakör Színház. You try to create space for elaborating something.

Audronis Liuga:

Thank you, Elona for such nice words. Actually, it is very nice to hear from my colleges and sometimes I am really envious, but of course I can understand that they put a lot of efforts to have such festivals as Vilnius Festival, as Sirens, as dance festival. I can say that we do not have a big structure, just two people – my sister and me. We do not have big sponsors, maybe any sponsors at all. We do not call ourselves a festival. I do not call myself a manager; I am a theatre critic. We are surviving since 1999. Anyway we are happy that during these years we collaborated and presented here, in Vilnius, on the very early stages, when they just began their career international artists as Grzegorz Jarzyna, Árpád Schilling and Jevgenij Grishkovec. I am also really happy about our collaboration with Lithuanian artists and those were at least for us were very important collaborations at the very early stage with Oskaras Koršunovas. With our common work he started his theatre, Oskaras Koršunovas Theatre. We also collaborated with directors Gintaras Varnas, Jonas Vaitkus, Rimas Tuminas, with playwright Marius Ivaškevičius. So there are artists we are working with, we are sometimes initiating, on our own efforts co-producing or sometimes producing new works by them. I call our work personal initiative, because the luxury I am having, the luxury of so called complete independence. Each year when the New Drama Action is over I think that I will stop doing it, because I want to return to theatre critics. The reason to write an application for the Ministry of Culture for the next year is some kind of trigger, some spark, which flames your mind and gives an idea that I want to do something new. I often catch myself thinking, “Why am I doing this?” Elona has mentioned our collaborations with Kristian Smeds and Árpád Schilling. As well we have conversations and very big interest from Needcompany and Jan Lauwers from Belgium to collaborate on certain projects. I am very happy that we had presented “The Seagull” of Árpád Schilling made in very interesting way in the still not reconstructed Arts Printing House. So, we want to collaborate on certain idea of research on theatre. What theatre could mean nowadays from very simple forms, from the very essence as communication. We have started with new plays, introducing new texts, but now we do not feel this necessity to continue working with the new play as a play. 10 years ago Harold Pinter was the most contemporary playwright, now theatres are doing readings, play presentations, and now we do not feel the necessity going this way. Now we feel the necessity to go on this risky, maybe partisan research of what theatre means for us nowadays together with the artists we know, that we personally appreciate, with whom we feel we have something like a common group of blood. I am really happy that artists as Kristian Smeds and Árpád Schilling would like to go to this journey here, in Vilnius. Maybe this is a spark for me still not to go back to theatre critics.

Rose Fenton:

Thank you, Audronis. From what you have said I see the big picture of landscape of international cultural collaboration. Vilnius is going to be Cultural Capital in 2009 and I was wondering whether in fact one of the reasons of this successful proposal was because of this festivals organization too. I am getting the sense that there is a very good sense of partnership in this city. It is a pity that we cannot hear from the City, but we do have here representative of Ministry of Culture, Jurgis Giedrys. So, Jurgis, to close this session it would be very good to hear of your view of this cultural landscape. Why do you support this festival and how do you see it in relationship to your cultural policy? Not only in the frame of Lithuania, but also in your international cultural policy, if you have one. In Great Britain the Arts Council does not have one, so that is why I say this.

Jurgis Giedrys:

Hello everybody. I will be very brief. We support the Sirens festival, because, as Elona mentioned,

there was about five year's gap when we did not have an international theatre festival in Lithuania at all. This festival makes impact on the development of our society, on the artistic education of our theatre professional, it gives an opportunity for our artists and creators to share experience with the colleagues from other countries. For all of these reasons we as a State support this festival. The main problem, as organizers of the festivals can confirm, is the amount in the budget line for the festivals. From the other side I can say that we are lucky because in the budget of the Ministry of Culture we have a separate special line for supporting international festivals here in Lithuania. We are trying to divide it according to the proportion of the artistic genres.

Rose Fenton:

I will talk from my personal experience. Years ago when we set up LITFT, the Arts Council we would not fund LIFT. because, they argued, there is not enough money for the British artists, so why should we be putting British taxpayers' money into the foreign artists? For the first 10 years they did not give us a penny. This was an extreme position, which has changed. But there is always a tension between the need to support the local artists and international. Is it a tension or can it be resolved?

Jurgis Giedrys:

I cannot see this tension between artists, maybe because many of local artists are involved in the international festivals movement. Many of managers of the festivals have occupied positions in cultural institutions. I would not say there is a tension between artists because of money.

Elona Bajorinien :

Unfortunately we do not have people with the different opinion in the audience. Recently in the cultural press I have read that literature people think that money committed to the international festivals is money that goes for nothing, because festivals are just fireworks. In their opinion guest theatre groups or musicians are coming to show one or two performances and that is it, that it is a matter of one group. For example, hosting of the Krétakör Company in our festival has cost the same amount of money as staging of three performances in State theatre in Šiauliai. I think this question exists. It is about balancing and a lack of money for culture. We have to be clear here, we really have very small money for culture. If we get the same amount every year, it means that every year we get less, because prices are growing. I think it is a political question. I do not have a big hope that the situation will change, because even me myself I would prefer that first changes would be made in social politics of the State. Culture always remains on the last place.

Audronis Imbrasas:

I have a short comment. I think there is a tension between festivals and local artists, because there is a part of artistic community, which thinks that it would be more reasonable to spend those resources on them than on foreign artists. But I also do not agree with Elona that there is not enough money for culture. I would say that we have proportion, which we have, and it is quite ok for Lithuania, but we do not have cultural policy. The percentage of budget, which we have for culture, is spent in not most reasonable way.

Dragan Klaic:

The fact is that Lithuanian cultural spending is among the lowest in Europe. And then there comes the question of inefficient spending on expensive and not very productive things. But it is a fact that you have wasted 15 years and have not reformed your cultural system or created a radical reform of cultural policy. 12 Ministers of Culture that you had did not do that. Perhaps it is not a nice to say that as a guest, but that is a fact.

Elona Bajorinien :

Do you know the country in Eastern Europe, which had this radical reform of cultural policy?

Dragan Klaic:

Unfortunately no post-communist country dared to embark on such change. The one that did the best is a very small country Slovenia. Their percentage of budget for culture is very high but they also invested in the rationalization of cultural system. Redistributing the flow of the subsidies allowed independent initiatives to compete also. That has been a considerable achievement.

Jurgis Giedrys:

I am not responsible answer for policy of the Ministry of Culture or on behalf of all government, but I can completely agree that the percentage of budget for culture must be much higher then it is now.

Audronis Liuga:

I just wanted to tell how we are trying to solve this problem. At the beginning, when we introduced some new risky plays, we ask few at that time well known young Lithuanian directors like Oskaras Koršunovas, Gintaras Varnas. We addressed to second big Lithuanian theatre, Kaunas State Drama Theatre with the play of Jean-Luc Lagarce, which was suppose to be directed by Gintaras Varnas. The theatre said no, it is impossible to stage it and we cannot take this risk. Then I said that we will take the risk and put money into the exploration of the play and we will make the work in progress. It happened that on the very low budged we made a real artistic research and presented it in the frame of the festival. Then Kaunas theatre came and said, "Oh, it is a complete production, we will take it". This performance has a very successful life in Lithuania. The same happened with some other projects. I think this is an example how this tension could be solved, of course in a very small scale. I mean it is not a question of amount of money; it is a question of collaboration. A collaboration based on sharing risk, because anyway if you want to find something you have to go on risk. Otherwise you can stay on routine. Never mind it is a state or private institution or how big it is sharing risk is just a question of collaboration and trust to the idea and the artists.

Rose Fenton:

Audronis, thank you very much. I think you have made a very strong point for us to end on this part of discussion. The idea of sharing risk and collaboration and whichever way you look at it artistically or governmentally. Let us have some coffee for 20 minute. And then we will open our discussion to the floor and to the other perspectives. **SECOND PART INTERNATIONAL / EUROPEAN DIMENTIONS**

Rose Fenton:

Welcome back to the second part. A lot of interesting points were raised on the first part of the session. I would like to hear from some of the international guests their perspective on these questions and other things they would like to put into the debate. I know we have Jadwiga Oleradzka from Poland. I would like to hear about work she is doing and the perspective she may bring to some of these issues of the artistic investment.

Jadwiga Oleradzka:

I had a special arrangement with Elona and she allowed me to speak in Russian. That will be faster and more efficient. If I would try to speak English it would be worse. There is just one problem that I am facing and it is related to the problems you were discussing in the firs part. My problem is that we do not face all these difficulties you were talking here about. Our problems and things we are working with are quite different. Krystyna Meissner founded our festival in 1989 and it was an authorial festival. It still managed to maintain its profile. We have had nine such festivals already. In the first festivals we tried to show our close and distant neighbors. It was the place where theatre companies form the West, East and Central Europe in general could meet and get acquainted with each other. That is why our festival was called the Contact. The beginning was much easier because it was the first festival. To the Polish audience this was a major discovery. They discovered for themselves for example the Lithuanian theatre, which found a way to the West after festival in Torun. The idea to have all the

members represented in each festival came to an end in 5 or 6 years, because it is a competition. That is why it was a bad practice to take one performance from a country with a very strong theatre tradition and to take another one from the country where theatre is at a low level. Our audiences chose not to go to some performances, they just simply did not want to see them. In the year 2000 we started very gently changing the tradition and the practice. In that year our administrative staff, which is only three people, arranged the festival of young directors. The criterion for selection was that the directors had to be professionally working less than 10 years. We still continue to invite people from across Europe who are still young. That gives us legitimate right to say that we have made quite many discoveries both in Poland and in other European countries. We can proudly say that we had such famous directors from Germany as Christoph Marthaler, Kasper, We had very many famous people from Russia, Lithuania and other countries. And these were people who were just to enter the professional stage art. The idea of every our festival is different. For example this year we invited very many young directors from Europe who had to show their own individual approach to classical plays. On the other hand, we had directors of the middle generation who showed their interpretation on contemporary plays. Our main attempt is to preserve the wholeness of the festival. It should not be just the collection of different things; it should be united in one whole. It is a competition and we need to have a dialogue between different performances. That is why we do not have the problems with the audience. We are getting large numbers of people who are coming from all over the places and who book tickets not to individual performances but to the whole program of the festival. In the end those people can make a conclusion about their preferences and what the international jury found to be the best. As I said before, our festival is an authorial event. It is organized just by three people and we all are very good friends. We know each other and we know what we like. Our tastes perhaps are not the worst, because the festival exists for 16 years already. Normally we start with an idea and we have friends and contacts in different countries. When we communicate that idea to different countries our acquaintances give us advice as to where to find the performance that fits our idea. Perhaps because of the age of our festival we do not face major financial problems. The governmental priorities are such that they allow us to get financial support at both a local and national level. We are a prioritized event. When the festival was founded back in 1989, at that time a number of agreements on cultural cooperation and exchange programs were signed between different countries in Eastern Europe. In these documents it is stated that once a year each country, which has signed the document, is accepting a theatre company from the other partner of the contract. Which again means that the guest performers get financing from their home country to be able to come to our festival. We have to pay only the honorarium. Once I had the idea to invite three theatre companies from Hungary. Since our Ministries had developed very good cooperation among themselves, I was so successful that those Hungarian companies could come. Those companies were so good that the jury awarded them with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes of the festival.

Elona Bajorinien :

You are talking about your festival that the picture is just marvelous. Do you still have any challenges at all, or it just goes so smoothly all the time?

Jadwiga Oleradzka:

It sounds very smooth when I am telling about the history but each year is much more difficult than this. From now on the practice is that at the end of the year I have to apply for a grant for three years. That means that today I know how much money I will have for the coming three years. But this is a new practice, which came into being after the new minister came. Before that, the date when I knew how much money exactly I will have was the 2nd of March and our festival takes place in the last week of May. So our work reminds me of kamikaze: we invite people and then we wait and look what we can do. We hope that from now on it will be easier, because now we know about the situation for the three

years ahead. But governments change...

Elona Bajorinien :

So this is mainly financing problems that you are facing?

Jadwiga Oleradzka:

The artistic problems are not that large. We have a chain of cooperation, we know people. So this is not a problem. For example two years ago we decided that we have to do something with antique things, because many people were telling us that it is what many directors were investigating on that time. So, we thought that it is an interesting theme for one of our festivals.

Rose Fenton:

It sounds that it is a very clear program of very successful work you are presenting internationally and within the Poland. I guess you are not commissioning and producing work. It is more a festival of presentation. Is it correct? What I would like to do now, is to move on beyond the presentation and to talk about those festivals, which are investing in new collaborations and new work. Is this something that you are doing?

Jadwiga Oleradzka:

We do not produce as a festival, but we do co-producing as a theatre. I also work as a director of the theatre. There is a link between the festival and the theatre. I will tell you how we do co-productions. We invite the directors who were awarded with the Grand Prix at our festival to stage the performances in our theatre. We find this very interesting because these international directors at our theatre work with Polish literature. Just to give you one example, we have invited an Estonian director Elmo Nüganen to work with a play of Witold Gombrowicz, which is called "The Marriage". In the productions there is also a Lithuanian actor Vladas Bagdonas engaged who by the way acts in Polish. This production was very successful. It has already visited four international festivals and further invitations are coming.

Rose Fenton:

Can I stop you now for a moment? I would like to hear from the other people about their experience of collaboration and commissioning of new works. Tilmann, perhaps you could tell a little bit about the policy of your festival and why you are doing this. Elona earlier talked about the desire for Sirens to go in this direction, but it will take some time to develop.

Tilmann Broszat:

I am from Munich, from the Spielart festival in Germany. In our terms it is a low budget festival. So for us it is a challenge to initiate or to co-produce projects. Our means are very restricted. Sometimes we get some additional funding from the City. Mainly we can do one or two projects for each festival when have some kind of co-production engagements. For example last year we have made a co-production with the Polish company Teatr Cinema. We engaged German actors to collaborate with this Polish company. They had worked in Poland and in Germany and after that went on tour in both these countries. As I said for us it is a big challenge each time because we have no theatre, we do not have a structure. This project took a year and a half. So out of the structure of our festival, which is constructed only to have a highlight event, for this project we had to reinvent another continuity structure, which challenged us a lot. What we are missing in Munich is this cooperation system with steady institutions, which are working all-year-round that you have here. In Munich we are fighting for years that there should be something like a performing arts center, which exists in other cities in Germany.

Rose Fenton:

One of the issues we were talking about before the break was the question about tension between local artists and international about the investment. Actually what you are describing with your commissioning is often collaboration between local and international. Do you feel this tension in Munich?

Tilman Broszat:

At this moment we still have this tension. Very often I cannot find a lot of interesting artists in Munich. It is because a superstructure is missing. When I speak about artists, I speak about the freelance scene, which is quite isolated. If we would look at Berlin or Düsseldorf, they have performing arts structures, dramaturges working with the freelance people. All these functions that one theatre company cannot afford are centralized in performing arts centers. All this is missing in Munich. It is our 'white spot'. These performing centers which I have mentioned on one hand they are exploring the local scene, but on the other hand they invite international artists to give an inspiration for the local scene. This is what we also try to do with our limited theatre festival means. We invite our local artists to see the festival, to make them feel challenged with new artistic ideas. Of course the best way to bring these ideas up is to bring the artists into collaboration. But as Elona has told, you cannot force it. People have to find themselves and we can only frame it or encourage it.

Rose Fenton:

I think it would be interesting for us within these F.I.T. meetings to look at what are the ideal conditions for this kind of process. Dragan in fact uses the phrase 'intercultural competence' and that applies in many areas of our work. Tilman, you made a wonderful statement in Riga about artists not representing national identity, but they very naturally work across borders. There is this openness in their approach. How can a festival create the fruitful ground for this kind of experiment?

Tilman Broszat:

At the moment we have this European policy that the culture is regarded the one, which remains in the hands of local governments. For this reason we have this situation when local governments try to keep national identity by supporting mainly local artists. I see a little danger in making the local artists some kind of representatives of the State. The funding center does not respond to the center of the artistic idea. I think there is a transnational, trans-border movement and artists often resist their government by finding their own identity in opposition to what is normal or common. I think there is a danger in this idea of cultural identity, which I think does not fit in these times.

Rose Fenton:

Thank you, Tilman. Now I want to ask Kristian. I know you have done a lot of work in investing in the artists, in collaborations outside the center. What is your experience and response to some of the issues that have been raised around process of collaboration?

Kristian Smeds:

When you go to work abroad, the first question is why? There are two good reasons for that: first is money and the second is fame. But if you do take these two points as priorities, then the problems will start. My brief working history is that I have founded a small free group in Helsinki, Finland. It happened in 1996 and the company existed until 2001. We did works out of the structure, with a very little money, in the cellars, basements and other different places. Then I moved up to north, to the middle of nowhere. Now I am leading Kayani Municipal theatre for four years. It is a small town 600 kilometers from Helsinki. We have here the highest suicides and unemployment rates. The next theatre is 200 kilometers away. Even Russia is closer than the next theatre. And there are wolves. Last year I have been working in Estonia. If festivals are dealing with this kind of cooperation, as an artist I think that you need quite a lot of time. I have been working and rehearsing in Estonia for four

months before the première. You need time because the cultures are different. In Estonia for me it was quite easy, because the troupe spoke fluent Finnish. Next spring I will come to Vilnius and I am afraid because here I will lose Finnish language totally. So I think that the organizers of this kind of international collaboration firstly should provide the time and opportunity to meet the other artists. For example, I have known the Estonian company for five years before we started working together. The same happened with Audronis. My first artistic trip abroad was to Vilnius with "Uncle Vanya" made with that company from Helsinki I have been working with in late 90's. The reason why I am coming to work here is that Lithuania has a very special place in my heart. That is most honest answer I can give you. The salary I am getting when I come to the Baltic States is twice less than I would get in Finland. You have to find other values then that. For me sometimes it is going towards unknown. In that travel to the unknown I am expecting support. I guess it should be more human and spiritual support than any other.

Rose Fenton:

When you travel and work abroad you are usually dealing with the host organization. What you have said is very true and beautiful, but you must be able to choose the organization, you must develop a relationship with the individual from this organization before coming to work to this place. It is about connecting relationships all a way along the line. For example in Vilnius you will be working with Audronis in his New Drama Action, maybe he is working with another festival. So this sense of interconnectedness is vital, and then as you mentioned equally vital is the sense of support and being able to take risks together. It is a whole culture of risks and support, which seems to me one of the key ingredients of this 'intercultural competence'. All this together with time. How do we find the time within our festivals to create the space for getting to know each other and for taking risks with the other demands we have within our organization? I think we have the key in partnerships.

Kristian Smeds:

It is possible that you make a deal to work abroad, you choose to have two months for rehearsing and then you just put your esthetics to the stage and leave home. Yes, you can do that. But if you are really searching for these new dimensions or new reality, it takes time.

Rose Fenton:

Do you find a big difference between staying in a town and creating a new piece of work to simply visiting a festival and showing your work? You do both. What is the difference that you find there?

Kristian Smeds:

Well I would say that it is the same difference as between taking a holiday and moving to live somewhere.

Rose Fenton:

And how it is in terms of reaction of the audience? In one case you know your audience a bit better and in other case you are going into a new situation.

Kristian Smeds:

When you are touring with some piece abroad, the most valuable thing is the response your performance is getting from foreign audience. In a way you can measure if your work has more general value than the national value. The work in Estonia is my first time to work abroad. We did not have our première yet so I cannot tell anything about the response of the audience in this case.

Rose Fenton:

How do you look at the festivals and their role as an artist?

Kristian Smeds:

I have just visited the Homo Novus festival in Riga. As an artist I think of course that the main thing is showing your work, but it is also important to see the works of other artists. That is way from the point of view of an artist it would be great that the schedule would give a possibility to see the performances of the other artists and maybe even have a discussion with them during your stay in festival. But usually when you come to the festival, you have a day for setting-up, one or two days of performing and then you leave. I think the festivals should find some funding which would allow the artists to stay for the whole festival and see its program and have chance for communication and discussions.

Tilmann Broszat:

I really like what you have said. We always try to find possibilities to invite the artists to stay not just for their own performance, but also longer. I must say that this is one of the reasons to make conferences about theatre performances during the festival. Usually it is not so much about the arts discourses, but we do it just to make a possibility for artists to stay longer, because it is easier to get money for the conference than for theatre projects.

Dragan Klaic:

In my view it is one of the key functions of the festival. Not only to present art but to advance and stimulate reflection and discourse of the artistic community. To organize opportunities for the discourse for the artistic community within the frame of the festival gets together to talk which often does not happen otherwise. Also to have this discourse provoked, advanced, stimulated by the presents and engagement of artists and artistic intermediaries and experts from abroad. It sounds very opportunistic then you say that, Tilmann. But actually what you are doing is not opportunistic. I think it is very essential and important for every festival. So many festivals had been crucial platforms where the artistic community was able to recognize its real common interests, to articulate them and then to advocate them at home and internationally. So, this reflective and analytical function of the festival I think is one of the key reasons to have all these festivals.

Audronis Liuga:

Yes, it is related with the question of time. It is absolutely crucial. When we are living in time when there are famous artists whose performances are just jumping from one place to another. For example Árpád Schilling had spent two days in Vilnius, but he lives as a madman because he cannot stop to research something. He jumps from one place to another and there is no place to stop, even in the festival, to reflect what he is seeing. So for the artists who want to do a research on their work and are looking for the collaboration it is crucial, because the collaboration cannot start just from some made programs, which are just schemes presented to the artist. This was the way in which we had collaborated with one international or let's say intercultural program initiated by Chris Torch. There were successes and there were disadvantages. It was a research project called SEAS. It was a good example in what way this instrument could work and in what way it cannot. I think that it is very important that the State, which is supporting the festival, would be reasonable. In Lithuania under the State support we do not have a right to pay per diems for international artists in order for them to stay longer. We have to invent something for an artist to stay longer. We have to look for this money in international funds outside the country. We can make Kristian's project only because we have money from Culture 2000 and Baltic Circle collaboration. My organization is a member of Theorem and we have got their support, together with New Latvian Theatre Institute that we collaborate with, for the project of Árpád Schilling. This is the only money that we have for this project and we even do not know if we will get something from Lithuania. It is important that this money could be allocated for artists to go on research: stay in a new place, to meet artists they want to collaborate with. We need to understand that we are living in a time when there is a big demand from great artists to have a success, to make good selling productions, to make performances, which could be co-produced. Everybody in the society itself forces artists to be

successful. I want to stress very clearly that big artists should have a possibility to not to go to this products making competition all the time. Artists should have a chance to stop and reflect or think about what they are doing at this moment. There should exists some frameworks for these artists to reflect their work not just participate in competition with somebody.

Rose Fenton:

Thank you, Audronis. This is a very interesting point. Is this a role that festivals could take on or maybe festivals in partnership with producing venues? I think you are right, it is very important. We always come back to this sense of the artist as a product, which is at tendency for many festivals to focus on. A product for constantly hungry and sometimes not so interested audience. I think many festivals are really grappling with this issue. I would like to ask another question which is in terms of programming of festivals. In Britain we have a saying: "He, who pays the piper, plays the tune". I have asked if the sponsors do make a particular demand on the work that you show or is the Ministry of Culture doing it. There are a lot of agencies such as Goethe Institute, British Council, French Institute who we work with very naturally as festivals. Do we feel that there is a pressure to present a particular view of other country through the recommendations of these international cultural institutes? Are we given a particular palette to choose from? I remember for example when I was at he Ayloul Festival in Beirut in 1997 the festival director there asked me what work they should bring from Britain, what I would recommend. I said that they should look at the work of Foster Entertainment because of their relationship with the city and place and the kind of explorations they were doing. Of course they needed the support of the British Council. The British Council in Beirut said that they do not think that Beirut was ready for this kind of work. So there was some kind of gap between the British Council and the audiences they wanted to attract and the artistic sesnsibility and sense of agency of the Ayloul festival. Does this issue still come up, or maybe less and less? How do we deal with this issue? Does anybody have any comments?

Elona Bajorinien :

My perception and experiences are a bit different from yours. I feel that these institutions have such big need of local partnership that they cannot dictate. Neither the British Council, nor the Goethe Institute are dictating. We are free not to take their productions. They need us to pay fees and part of expenses. It is always about the dialogue. If there is no good dialogue with the French Institute, then we have less of French productions in our festival. If there is a very good connection with the British Council, we have a lot of British art here in all the festivals. It is about the research. That is my experience.

Audronis Imbrasas:

In nine years of experience we have had very different situations. Now these institutions do not push anymore and they are looking for partners. But as I said, we had very different experiences. For example, during those years we had approximately 10 French dance companies of different styles starting from Preljocaj up to small productions. One year we wanted to present Jérôme Bel with "Jérôme Bel". The cultural attaché said that it cannot represent French culture and that it is impossible, because it is too expensive and interesting only for 200 spectators. So we could not bring it. Ones we had a kind of educational story with Goethe Institute. We had a pressure from them to put one company on the program and to put it on the main stage. I told them that it will be a bad lesson. They did not believe that. Finally we had a record in whole history of our festival when approximately 60% of the audience left the hall. After this we did not have any conflict anymore.

Tilmann Broszat:

According to my experience, there is a kind of pressure. In Munich we have Spanish cultural institute,

called Instituto Cervantes. Last year they made a production of "Don Quixote". I have seen it on video and it was a quite good dance production. They said that if you will present it, you will not pay anything, we would cover all costs. And there was this quite funny situation between the several cultural institutions in Munich. They have pushed this video from one to another and in the end nobody took the production. The Institute was very disappointed. When I asked them to fund our invitation of Rodrigo Garcia it was not so easy to talk to them even though finally they funded it.

R ta Prusevi ien :

I would like to ask if you were allowed to sell tickets to that performance. I ask about it, because in Lithuania they require not to sell tickets to the productions of Spanish artists.

Dragan Klaic:

Why not?

R ta Prusevi ien :

It is their policy that they are bringing the production, paying all the expenses and Lithuanian audiences should get it for free. It is very strange.

Elona Bajorinien :

We had the same situation with No theatre from Japan.

Dasha Krijanskaia:

I think that the problems with these international agencies in Eastern Europe go deeper than just the presenting. The question is whether this affects the artists who are involved in co-production? Everyone knows that choosing the German play would give more financial opportunities for an artist than taking a play from Czech Republic for example. So the presence of these institutions in a way slip into involuntary censorship for an artist and in fact affect his or her choices.

Tilmann Broszat:

I totally agree with that. You have to be very aware of this process in programming. If you are the programmer and the budgeted director, as most of us are, you have to be very careful that you would not walk into these traps, which are of course there.

Rose Fenton:

I am aware that the time is marching on, but I would like to ask if there are any other questions or comments around this. We have someone from Autumn Festival in Budapest. Perhaps there is anything you would like to say about your approach to producing, presenting and some other issues we have talked about?

Balász Kovalnik:

I am sorry, but my English is very bad. Can I speak German if it would be possible to translate? My name is Balász Kovalnik and I am the artistic director of Autumn Festival in Budapest. I think we have all these problems that you were talking about. We have all these problems and advantages connected with these international institutions and we are very depending on personal contacts in this frame networking. You were talking a lot about Árpád Schilling and I am happy that he is known so well, but it is unfortunate that he is the only one Hungarian artist who is known even though there is much more of them. If you have good contacts to the politics you can manage to have good productions and good life of your theatre.

Tilmann Broszat:

You will have the 14th festival already, but you had mentioned that you still have problems with the audience. Could you explain that more?

Balász Kovalnik:

One of the main purposes for me in making this festival is the presentation of unknown Hungarian theatre companies. Our audience is quite traditional. The young people are quite phlegmatic towards contemporary arts. If we would have "Sabonation" in our festival, we would have a full house. But when we invited good known dance company from Israel for two performances in a hall with 300 seats, there was now chance to fill the house. A week after that the same company had two performances in Prague, in a venue with 800 seats and the house was full for the both performances. The other festival from Budapest, Spring Festival, which is more orientated in classics, invited the same company and the audience was totally full.

Tilmann Broszat:

What I find interesting here is the framing of the festival and the expectations of the audience. You had the wrong expectations in your festival. I could add similar experience. Last year we invited quite famous Polish director Grzegorz Jarzyna for the opening. He showed "Festen" after the Dogma film. After the première everyone was saying that it was very traditional. It was true and our audience was very disappointed of Polish superstar doing just a normal theatre in the frame of our festival which is somehow dedicated to unusual forms of theatre.

Balász Kovalnik:

Our festival has very low entrance rates and in Spring Festival it is two or three times higher, but nevertheless they have a bigger success.

Rose Fenton:

Sometime people say, that the higher the ticket the more people want to go, because they expect something really special. The question of audiences is something we have not touch but we had it in other F.I.T. discussions. The expectations of the audience are a really big question. Who we are programming festivals for? We had this debate in Nitra. How to create the synergy and education on all fronts? I know last night there was big debate with "Sabonation" group with a lot of confrontation. It happens and it is more interesting rather than the audience passively sitting back. But I think it is a big topic, which I think we should go on further in following F.I.T. discussions. At this point I think I have to draw to an end. But it is only a staging point, because there are other discussions. The next one will be in Munich. We will have two days of discussion and will be able to go deeper into some of the topics raised today. Here we had a very short time. But I see some really clear questions arising here. The idea of the festival role and the partnerships' need to take risks. The local and the international tensions and how they can be resolved. The process and the product. National voice or European voices, or maybe voices of the artists without borders. Also this notion of artists needing time for reflection. And again the role of the festival as a reflective analytical space. It seems that these are the key issues, which should be raised here. Please go on the F.I.T. website, because you will see this discussion posted. There will be a full version and also the highlights. Continue to engage in the discussions through the website if you cannot be there physically. I hope that Dragan is finding it productive to listen to it in terms of the research that he is doing about festivals. Finally, if you would forgive me the indulgence, I would like to end on something that the artist and musician Brian Eno said. He is someone we worked together with on a project called the "Business Art Forum", which brings together young people, businesses, the public sector and artists to talk about what world they have walked in through coming to see some international contemporary work at LIFT and how it has challenged their perceptions and ideas. Brian Eno said something really important: "Humans are capable of the unique trick creating realities by first imagining them, by experiencing them in their minds. As soon as we sense a possibility of a more desirable world, we begin behaving differently. As though that world would start to come into existence. As though in our mind's eye we are already there. The dream becomes an invisible force, which pulls us forward. By this process it becomes true."

The active imagining somehow makes it real. And what is possible in the art become thinkable in life".
That is how I will close. Thank you very much.