

# Curtain Up! The Kids Are Back

**CYT**heatre Online Conference  
5 March 2023



## CYT Theatre Conference Programme

*Curtain Up! The Kids Are Back* is a one-day conference, taking a look at children's and youth theatre groups during recent years and asks the following questions:

What have we learnt from COVID and other crises?

What more can be done?

How do we give kids a voice?

AITA/IATA has assembled speakers from across the globe to talk about their own practices, research and findings concerning children's and youth theatre. As such, the conference offers talks in English, French and Spanish. Translation happens simultaneously, and where it is not possible, the recordings that will be online during the two weeks that follow will have subtitles in the three languages.

AITA/IATA unites and links amateur theatre groups, community theatres and organisations actively working for theatre amateurs and individuals throughout the world who love creating and making theatre in their free time. People and organisations we link with, work with and for children, with young people and with adults. AITA/IATA brings people together by offering meeting places, so that they can share knowledge and practice within the field of theatre in order to deepen understanding, develop practice, create new opportunities and strengthen the global amateur theatre sector.

*A schematic version of the programme can be found on the next page. Time used is Central European Time, CET (UTC +1, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, ...).*



## Conference Overview (CET)

11.00-11.15	<b>Opening</b>	
11.15-11.45	Nurturing Creativity as a Right in Season and out of Season (EN) <b>Fredyl Hernandez, Surangi Kosala, Hyejin Yun &amp; Su Rong</b>	Le personnage de théâtre pour enfant, ce grand éducateur de l'enfant (FR) <b>Elisabeth Toulet</b>
11.45-12.15	Finding the Voice of the Young person in Theatre for Young Audiences (EN) <b>Lillian Mbabazi</b>	
12.15-12.45	Indigenous Theatre in Norway (EN) <b>Eila Ballovari Varsi</b>	
12.45-13.30	The Future of International Children's and Youth Theatre Festivals (EN) <b>Edith Coen</b>	
13.30-14.30	Workshop EN <b>Sergey Velichanskiy</b>	Taller ES <b>Roxana Avila Harper</b>
14.30-15.15	Keynote speaker (EN) <b>Gillian McNally</b>	
15.15-15.45	Covid & Youth Theatre (ES) <b>Liliana Galvan</b>	Work Ensemble (EN) <b>Ekaterina Vetrov</b>
15.45-16.15	<b>Galo Granda Sarmiento (ES)</b>	<b>Shoaib Iqbal (EN)</b>
16.15-17.30	<b>Panel Q&amp;A</b>	
17.30-18.30	<b>Closing Speech</b>	



## 11.00–11.15 CET – Opening

### Aled Rhys-Jones (EN)

Aled Rhys-Jones is the president of AITA/IATA (International Amateur Theatre Association) and will give an opening speech to kickstart the conference.

## 11.15–11.45 CET – Slot 1

### Panel (EN) – Nurturing Creativity as a Right in Season and out of Season: Glimpses of Children and Youth Theater in Asia

The panel explores a number of initiatives from the region that ensures theater is available to children and youth no matter what the situation is, whether within pandemic or outside the pandemic; whether within the normal, the new normal, or the abnormal. And as theater and the arts are to be found within the coordinates of society and history, our insistence of doing theater also leads to the birthing of new forms, ways of doing, and strategies of engaging the public. Our sharing about our experiences of doing children and youth theater in our region of Asia is premised in these contexts.

Beyond the fulfillment and validation we get in providing creative spaces and platforms to the young, we always view our work in the theater as a response to the needs in the area of child development. We need not look to the promise of the future where we see theater as a meaningful and effective means of cultivating the potentials of children in view of what they could possibly become. Our work's value is in the now as we provide opportunities for children and youth in claiming their rights to development and participation especially in moments of crises and emergencies.

### About the Panelists

Fredyl Hernandez is an artist-teacher member of the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA), and a faculty member of the Department of Art Studies, University of the Philippines Diliman. He is frequently invited as a resource person / consultant for theater and arts curriculum and other activities of the Philippines' Department of Education. He is also a newly accepted member of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts' National Committee on Cultural Education.





Surangi Kosala is a teacher by profession as well as an actress and programme presenter. She fondly incorporates Sri Lankan performance traditions in the theater classes that she conducts with her students. In 2019, she participated in the 2nd Next Generation Program of the National Centre of Theatre for Children and Young Audiences in Lahore, Pakistan. She is currently taking her MA in Theater Arts in Middlesex University.

Hyejin YUN is an artist who tells and shares a story of ordinary people around us with Gayageum, a Korean board zither with 12 silk strings. Her performances mainly focus on connecting the past with the future using a Korean traditional instrument. She is a Gayageum player, composer, and an actress. She wants to communicate with people of this time through her music and art.



Su Rong is a drama teacher with seven years of teaching experience. She always attempts to use drama to assist her students' learning and development, and enables them to discover themselves by engaging in meaning-making and connecting with the world. She also has a background in drama and museum education. She is a PhD candidate at Middlesex University.

**Elisabeth Toulet (FR) – Le personnage de théâtre pour enfant, ce grand éducateur de l'enfant**

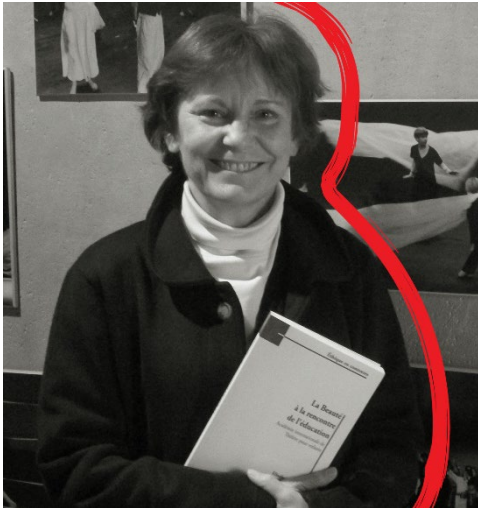
In 2004/05, Elisabeth Toulet carried out action research with children who participated in the creation of The Iliad and The Journey of Ulysses, based on Homer, in order to better understand how theatrical expression is formative for the child and under what conditions. This study shows that by working on their character on stage, the child can accomplish an





inner work that opens them up to themselves, to the other and to others and makes them grow in humanity. "The whole point of acting is to give of oneself," said Jacques Copeau. The stage is not a place where one learns to "pretend" but a place of where one discovers who one is by taking the risk of giving oneself as one is: "I do theatre to communicate with the whole world," says Clara, 10 years old. Elisabeth Toulet proposes to share with you the conclusions of her research, based in particular on testimonies of children from families living in extreme poverty.

### About Elisabeth Toulet



French, born in 1953 in Paris, Elisabeth Toulet was confronted during her first years of teaching with the existential malaise of many adolescents. Her encounter with theatre people in 1976 revealed to her that every person has the desire and the capacity to become an "actor" in their life and in the world in which they live. Leaving the French National Education system, she became involved in the development of artistic education from childhood onwards: in 1982 she created a Children's Theatre Festival in the Champagne region of France, during which she initiated the shooting of a film with 450 Amerindian, Quebecois and French children on

the encounter between peoples: "L'Avenir de l'homme dans les yeux d'enfant" (broadcast by France 3 and Radio Canada in 1987). Following this intercultural adventure, she created in 1986 the International Academy of Theatre for Children, which offers theatrical workshops and the creation of shows for children aged 8 to 12 in France and in other countries: Belgium, Lebanon, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, Algeria; since 2009 in Angola ([www.theatreenfant.org](http://www.theatreenfant.org)). Elisabeth Toulet has published an essay on art education: "La Beauté à la rencontre de l'éducation" (Collection Ethique en contexte, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2015). She now divides her time between the International Academy of Theatre for Children and heritage mediation in Vézelay, Burgundy, on a Romanesque site classified as a World Heritage Site ([www.vezelay-visiteur.com](http://www.vezelay-visiteur.com)).

## 11.45–12.15 CET – Slot 2

### **Lillian Mbabazi (EN) - Finding the Voice of the Young person in Theatre for Young Audiences: Case of Productions born out of research using participant-led and creative strategies in Uganda, East Africa.**

I look to focus on three aspects:

1. Why the young person's voice is important?
2. At what point in the creation process is it given prominence?



3. How do practitioners in Theatre for Young Audiences give space for the voice of the young persons to thrive in the production?

### **About Lillian Mbabazi**

Lillian Mbabazi is an Assistant lecturer, Researcher and Facilitator of Applied Theatre, Theatre and Drama in Education, and Young People's Theatre at Makerere University's Department of Performing Arts and Film. She is a founder member of Arts Applied Uganda Ltd (AAU Ltd) and has also served as one of the Directors for AAU Ltd. from 2020 to 2022.

She is an experienced arts educator who has conducted projects in Intergenerational Theatre, Refugee Theatre, Inclusive Theatre, Community Theatre, Educational Theatre, and Theatre for Young Audiences. She has coordinated projects such as the Youth Theatre Project (2013), supported by the Danish Embassy, The Inclusive Theatre Project between Tramshed Theatre Company in Black pool U.K and Makerere University, and the Refugee Sustainable Livelihoods Project in 2015 among others.

Lillian believes that "Art is the lens through which the world should seek to better herself".



## **12.15–12.45 CET – Slot 3**

### **Eila Ballovari Varsi (EN) – Indigenous Theatre in Norway**

There is a great deal of international attention surrounding Sami artistic expressions. The Sami people live in Sápmi, which consists of four countries, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. Theater is one of the tools that can be used to share the Sami narrative and perspective. On the Norwegian side, there has been a commission that has looked at the effects of the oppression that the nation-state of Norway has carried out against the indigenous population and national minorities. There will be a report in the summer of 2023, which we expect will lead to the development of measures and strategies to, among other things, take back the Sami language.

### **About Elia Ballovari Varsi**

Eila Ballovara Varsi is working as a freelance actor in theater and film. She is currently working on the production Maid Sára čiegada by Beaivváš Sámi Našunálateáhter. She started with theater as a child in the Sámi Mánáid Teáhter under the direction of Ebba Joks, where the stage and working language



was Sámi. For two years, she has been an instructor at a summer camp in the Young Sami Scene project for Sami children and young people.

*A special thanks to HATS Norway for organising this presentation.*

## **12.45–13.30 CET – Keynote Speaker: Edith Coen (EN)**

How much do children's and youth theatre groups interact with one another on an international level? What issues do they prioritise when planning or participating in an international collaboration? Edith Coen is sending out a survey into the wide world to find out the answers, asking if groups have participated in international festivals and how they have heard about them. She is also looking into which current issues these groups think are important, from gender equality to clean water to education. Next to the survey, she is also conducting in-depth interviews with people active in children's and youth theatre groups, from all over the world. Edith will present the results and data she will have gathered at that point.

### **About Edith Coen**

Edith Coen is a graduate student at the University of Antwerp, currently pursuing a master's in arts and cultural management. She previously earned a bachelor's degree in theatre, film and literature studies, as well as a master's degree in cultural studies. Her research focuses on international children's and youth theatre groups and festivals. She is looking at how groups interact with one another on an international level and in what way organisations let children and youth participate in governance.



## 13.30–14.30 CET – Lunch Break with Workshops for Youth

### Spanish Workshop – Roxana Avila Harper



My name is Roxana Avila Harper, I am the co-director and founder of Teatro Abya Yala, a non-profit theatre company based in Costa Rica committed to developing new works as well presenting plays by others, touring, offering workshops and organizing paratheatrical activities in the Central American region, since 1991.

I was tenured professor at the University of Costa Rica for more than three decades, until I retired last year. I hold a Master's in Fine Arts with an emphasis in theatre directing from Carnegie Mellon University, as well as degrees in psychology and studies in diverse somatic practices and tai chi.

### English Workshop – Sergey Velichanskiy

Sergey Velichanskiy is a Ukrainian theatremaker who works with children and youth. Due to external circumstances, Velichanskiy may possibly not be able to lead the workshop. In that case, a substitute will take his place.

## 14.30–15.15 CET – Keynote Speaker: Gillian McNally (EN)



Gillian McNally serves as Professor of Theatre Education of the School of Theatre and Dance at the University of Northern Colorado, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate level theatre education students and produces the yearly Theatre for Young Audiences production. She served on the board of TYA/USA for 10 years. Gillian is the recipient of the Alliance for Colorado Theatre's 2011 Higher Education Theatre Educator of the Year Award. Her writing has been published in *ArtsPraxis*, *Stage of the Art*, *Incite/Insight*, and *Theatre for Young Audiences Today*. She has essays published in the books *Signs of Change: New Directions in Theatre Education* and *The Reflexive Teaching Artist: Collected Wisdom from the Drama/Theatre Field*. She was chair of the 2014

American Alliance for Theatre and Education national conference. A proud Longhorn, she holds an M.F.A. in Drama and Theatre for Youth from The University of Texas at Austin.





## 15.15–15.45 CET – Slot 4

### Liliana Galván (SP) – The Art of Trusting Again

Children in a Peruvian orphanage are reconnecting with the world, being heard, being seen, slowly but surely regaining trust, after the longest quarantine in Latin America. Without parents, without teachers, only volunteer caregivers, the children resisted loneliness, lack of love and total isolation.

The doors of the orphanage opened in 2021, but the doors of their hearts were slow to reopen. The first glimpses appeared when they had the opportunity to express through arts, their bewilderment, their discomfort, their anger, their need to be loved. Theatre, music, corporal language, storytelling, yoga and integrated arts were spaces for self-awareness and recognition of their rights to be cared for and loved as unique beings.



#### About Liliana Galván

Executive Vice President of the International Association of Drama, Theater and Education (IDEA). Founder and director of art education School's as "Tuquitos", "Rasgos Teatro Taller" and "Integrarte, Arte para descubrirnos". National art education advisor and consultant for the Ministry of Education. Founder of Starscamp, Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Learning Director of ProAdalid Consultores and Vice President of the Center of Visual Anthropology of Peru. Has been officer of IDEA for two periods 2004-2007 and 2007-2010.

BA Educational Psychology from the Cayetano Heredia University. DEA in Research by the Polytechnic University of Cataluña. Author of books "Creativity for change: Innovation for life and business" (UPC), "Huellas Forum, a milestone for transforming art education in Peru" (SINEACE), "Agenda de Innovación para la Danza Escénica", por el Consejo Nacional de Danza Peru.



## **Ekaterina Vetrov (EN) – Work ensemble: communication, trust, friendship, collective creation**



In this presentation, Ekaterina will talk about practices of KingDom Theatre and its approach to work with an ensemble of youth actors: building friendship, trust, and connection between students – methods and exercises; communication training and our experience with in-house psychologist; collective creation as a basis for production of a theatrical performance – giving a voice to youth artists.

### **About Ekaterina Vetrov**

Ekaterina Vetrov, Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Directing from the University of Ottawa; Theatre Director and Educator; Founder and Artistic Director of the children's theatre KingDom Theatre (Ottawa, Canada) which represented Canada at the World Festival of Children's Theatre in Canada (2016), Germany (2018), Japan (2022); Contract Theatre Professor at Carleton University, Co-founder of the international Children's Theatre Exchange program (Canada).

## **15.45–16.15 CET – Slot 5**

### **Galo Ivan Granda Sarmiento (SP) – “INVOLUCR-ARTE”/“GET INVOLVED”**

In my lecture I will express my work and experience with children, young people, especially with youth with disabilities, and the way I have managed to involve art as a means of playful training, as a way of social recovery, transmitting messages, through play and recreation, as well as my experience in training young people and children with self-respect and appropriation of their social, political and cultural environment with the aim of forming upright human beings and concerned about life and others.



### **About Galo Ivan Granda Sarmiento**

Galo Granda, born in 1974, Loja-Ecuador, dedicated to artistic and community work since the age of 17, has worked in artistic and acting projects, has directed artistic workshops for schools and colleges, people with disabilities and universities.

In 1998 he created the theatre and mime group Trompos y Garabatos, a group dedicated to artistic creation with social messages, rights to respect for life, nature and the environment, knowledge and preservation of cultural heritage. With innovative proposals of fusion of mime, dance and live music, it has toured the country with works such as "El Respeto A La Vida y la



Diversidad", "Mimo Historias", "Por Una Muñeca Me Hice Chiquitín", "La Hija Del Jornalero Que Se Escapó Con Un Jilguero", "Pedrito y el Lobo", "La Caja De Sorpresas", "Los Caminantes", "Queremos Vivir Mejor", "Del Encanto al Espanto", "Alfarer@" "Los Niños de Noviembre", "Lluvia de Sueños", "Taita Pendejadas", "El Silencio no Existe"; and has participated abroad in countries such as Germany, Colombia, Spain, Venezuela, Bolivia and Peru. These are 25 years of experiences, which guarantee his commitment to art.

In 2011 he created the International Meeting of Mime and Gestural Theatre La Alegría del Silencio, unique in the country, which already has 11 uninterrupted editions. In these meetings several artists converge with their diverse realities, making the art of silence an important cultural work.

## **Shoaib Iqbal (EN) – Performance and Theater for Young Audiences in Post-Pandemic Times**

Covid-19 posed various challenges for performing arts and theatre for young audiences. TYA being already marginalized, relatively small and challenging to produce, the lockdowns and inability to perform public shows made it more challenging. A number of groups innovated online engagements and performances, some festivals also were organised online during the times.

The magnitude and duration of Covid-19 propelled a major shift in the ways audiences were engaged in theater and also its consumption. There are many observations that will be shared in the session from a learning and opportunities perspective.



### **About Shoaib Iqbal**

Shoaib Iqbal is the Founder of The Little Art, Co-founder of the Tamasha Festival for Young Audiences in Pakistan, ASSITEJ Pakistan President and currently serving ASSITEJ International as a member of the international Executive Committee.

Shoaib Iqbal is an arts manager who has worked as a communication manager, curator, event manager, director and arts educator of arts and culture projects since the year 2000. He founded The Little Art and various large-scale national & international festivals, a digital music distribution company, has led British Council's national portfolio as Head of Arts and as a consultant with various international organizations including UNESCO and the Government of Sharjah. Shoaib post-graduated from DeVos Institute of Arts Management (Kennedy Centre, Washington D.C.), holds a diploma in International Development from East Side Institute NY and 2013 Asia21 fellow with Asia Society, an Acumen 2015 fellow, 2015 ArtThink South Asia fellow, 2018 EHF New Zealand Fellow and 2020 International Society of Performing Arts Fellow. Shoaib worked with British Council as Head of Arts, Pakistan for two years in 2017-18 and currently leads The Little Art as Director.



## **16.15–17.30 CET – Panel and Q&A**

The conference ends with a panel comprised of speakers from the conference. They will come together and discuss the topics that have come up during the day. Conference participants can ask questions in the chat that the panellists will answer. The moderator for this panel is to be announced.

## **17.30–18.30 CET – Closing speech**

After the Panel and Q&A, Aled Rhys-Jones will give a closing speech that marks the end the conference. Participants can stay afterwards for a digital meet-up with others.

