

DRAFT Minutes of the 39th AITA/IATA asbl General Assembly, Saturday 24 June 2023, Debrecen Hungary

1. Official opening 09:40 and welcome to the 39th AITA/IATA asbl General

Assembly – Zsigmond Lakó welcomed delegates to the University of Debrecen and to the AITA/IATA asbl General Assembly (GA). He introduced the University's Dean of the Faculty of Humanities Dr Professor Róbert Keményfi who welcomed delegates to the University's auditorium on behalf of the University of Debrecen. He quoted from Peter Brook who said that the purpose of theatre is making an event in which a group of fragments are suddenly brought together in a community and that the strength of amateur theatre lies in its ability to forge a community. He referred to the motto of the festival - *PEACE – Bring peace and harmony to the world* - and asked delegates to look at the beautiful stained-glass windows that had been restored in 2011 following their destruction in WWII. Like the phoenix, the symbol of the city of Debrecen, the mission of the University has always risen in the midst of adversity and promoted peace between peoples, international relations and internationalism: the same goals as those of AITA/IATA. He concluded with a quote from Peter Brook "a stage space has two rules: Anything can happen; and Something must happen" and he encouraged all delegates to keep up their good work. Zsigmond Lakó thanked the Dean and introduced AITA/IATA President Aled Rhys-Jones.

2. Introduction and welcome from the President of AITA/IATA asbl, Aled Rhys-

Jones – President Aled Rhys-Jones welcomed delegates to the festival and thanked the Dean for his words of welcome. He noted that it had already been quite an exceptional week of theatre and recalled a couple of conversations that related to the understanding of amateur theatre. Over lunch he had been asked by one of the members of the Sri Lankan company about the meaning of amateur theatre, because in Sri Lanka no-one gets paid to be a performer. There followed a fascinating conversation about the relationship between us as individuals and the artforms that we choose to fulfil our creative instincts; how individuals become involved in amateur theatre and about their life journey travelled through theatre and their lifelong relationship with theatre as an artform. The relationship between the individual and the artform is a constant and is part of a creative continuum. Whereas the relationship between the individual and payment, which can be used to define whether a creative is a professional or an amateur, constantly changes - the love of theatre, of the artform, is the constant that sustains us throughout life.

a. He was delighted to see so many friends of the AITA/IATA family in Debrecen. There had been concern that having the GA available online might deter delegates from attending in person. He stated that had been coming to Hungary almost every year for over 30 years

and that most of his visits had a connection with the amateur arts and especially with theatre. This connection confirmed the importance of Hungary in the world of theatre and of their ability to make something happen. This placed them very firmly on the international cultural scene. AITA/IATA was hugely indebted to the 10th Theatre Olympics for their support which had enabled the festival to happen. The President reflected on the 6-year journey to bring the Debrecen event to fruition that had started as an initiative of former President Rob Van Genechten back in 2017 and, he was pleased to note, Rob was attending the event online. He noted that delegates had already seen excellent quality theatre in a superb new venue and he thanked Rob for starting the ball rolling. He also thanked the Dean and the University for hosting the General Assembly in the magnificent hall. Zsigmond Lakó thanked President Aled Rhys-Jones and closed the opening of the festival.

b. President Aled Rhys-Jones asked delegates to stand and asked for a round of applause in memory of Bernard Cellario, a key personality and long-time worker within the Mondial du Théâtre in Monaco who had passed recently.

3. Appointment of the Presiding Chair of the 39th General Assembly – Council proposed Dirk De Corte, Flanders (SGT) as the Presiding Chair of the GA.

Unanimously approved by a show of hands

a. The Presiding Chair asked delegates to mute their microphones and introduced the President of AITA/IATA, members of the Council in Debrecen and Councillor Patrick Schoenstein attending online. He also introduced delegates to Ben Schutz, who was sitting next to him, a US citizen working at the University, who would assist him with Zoom voting procedures.

4. Roll call of all Members represented in Debrecen and online – The Presiding Chair asked those who were either present in Debrecen or attending online to confirm their presence. Delegates from the **26** Members (National Centres) had registered to vote but not all were present at the start of the GA. The following National Centre (NC) Members responded to the roll call:

Austria – 6 votes; Catalonia (SGT) – 6 votes; Denmark – 6 votes; Estonia – 6 votes; Faroe Islands – 6 votes; Flanders (SGT) – 6 votes; France – 6 votes; Germany (BAG & BDAT) – 6 votes; Great Britain (SGT) – 6 votes; Hungary – 6 votes; Italy – 6 votes; Japan – 6 votes; Latvia – 6 votes; Lithuania – 6 votes; Monaco – 6 votes; Russian Federation – 6 votes; Slovenia – 6 votes, South Tyrol – 6 votes; Spain – 6 votes. Those joining the Zoom later included Indonesia – 6 votes; Finland – 6 votes (carry the proxy of Iceland) and others may have also joined later but did not make themselves known.

d. The Presiding Chair then invited the Associate Members who were either present in Debrecen or attending online to conform their presence. Delegates from **11** Associate Members had registered to vote but not all were present at the start of the GA. The following Associate Members responded to the roll call:

Patrick Russell (Australia) – 1 vote; Josef Hollos (Austria) – 1 vote; Stephen Tobias (Canada, The Saint John Theatre Company) – 1 vote; Rob Van Genechten (Flanders (SGT) - 1 vote; Guy Verzele (Flanders (SGT), de WAANzin) – 1 vote; Mary Pears (Ireland) – 1 vote; Paul Percy (New Zealand, Theatre New Zealand) – 1 vote; Matías González Pinos (Spain, Federació de Teatre Amateur de la Comunitat Valenciana) – 1 vote. Other Associate Members may have joined during the GA.

a. The Presiding Chair launched a Dummy Poll to test the system which was successful. He noted that the result of the polls would be announced but they would not be shown on the screen. He reminded delegates that voting would be as in previous years, namely that the first round of voting would be for NC with the Associates in the waiting room and the second round for Associates with the NC in the waiting room. There would be a third round of voting because Finland was carrying a proxy and the Finnish delegate could not be in two rooms at the same time.

5. Agree the Agenda of the General Assembly

The Agenda of the GA was agreed by a show of hands.

6. Council's proposal to terminate the mandate of Councillor Anna-Karin Waldemarson

– President Aled Rhys-Jones explained that Council had received a letter dated 13 June 2023 from Anna-Karin Waldemarson tendering her resignation as a Councillor which had made this point on the agenda redundant.

7. Appointment of Tellers and appointment of Drafting Committee - The Presiding Chair explained that in the unlikely case that drafting of text was needed, Council recommended Kevin Dowsett (English), Beatrice Cellario (French) and Brigitte and Councillor Carlos Taberheiro (Spanish) as the Drafting Committee. Tellers – neutral eyes - were required to count the numbers of votes and to confirm the final numbers on screen. While Ben Schutz would look at the Zoom voting figures on the computer, Council recommended that Paul Percy (New Zealand) and Ragnhild Arntsen (Norway) should also view the screen and provide an independent scrutiny of the numbers.

8. Acceptance of new Members (National Centre and Associate) 2022 – 2023

The Presiding Chair explained that under Article 6 of the Constitution, all Members (National Centres and Associates) proposed by Council to become a Member of AITA/IATA needed the approval of the GA. Three new National Centre Members and six Associate Members were

listed in the Forum Book (FB) on page 15¹. The Presiding Chair explained the voting procedures and asked for the patience of members as the process would take some time. He noted that two organisations from Sweden had asked to join as a NC which was perfectly possible under the revised Constitution. He reminded delegates that when voting, abstentions would not count. The result was as follows:

- a. To accept National Centre FCAT - La Fédération Centrafricaine de Théâtre, Central African Republic as a National Centre Member of AITA/IATA asbl

Using the online poll, FCAT - La Fédération Centrafricaine de Théâtre was approved as a National Centre Member (91%) (125 votes)

- b. To accept Sveriges Arbetarteaterförbund – ATF, Sweden as a National Centre Member of AITA/IATA asbl

Using the online poll, Sveriges Arbetarteaterförbund – ATF was approved as a National Centre Member (87%) (119 votes)

- c. To accept National Centre Amatörteaterns Riksförbund – ATR, Sweden as a National Centre Member of AITA/IATA asbl

Using the online poll Amatörteaterns Riksförbund – ATR, was approved as a National Centre Member (100%) (137 votes)

- d. The Presiding Chair noted that because of technical issues, voting to approve Associates would take place later and The Presiding Chair asked the GA to approve a change in the order of the agenda.

Unanimously approved by a show of hands.

- 9. Call for written questions to Candidates for Election to Council** – The Presiding Chair confirmed that no delegates wished to submit a written question.

- 10. Approval of the Minute of 38th Online General Assembly by Zoom 23 July 2022** - The Presiding Chair noted that the minutes of the 38th GA were in the Forum Book on pages 9 – 14. There were no questions and delegates were asked to approve the minutes by a show of hands.

The Minutes of the 38th General Assembly (GA) were agreed by a show of hands.

- 11. AITA/IATA asbl review 2022 – 2023**

- a. *Council review by President Aled Rhys-Jones* – President Aled Rhys-Jones reported on a busy year, especially now that the GA was held annually rather than every other year. The biggest event had been the online *Curtain Up! The Kids are Back* Conference held on 5 March 2023. This had been the creation of Councillors on the CY Theatre Group: Sofia

¹ The inclusion in the list of an Associate Member from Australia was an error.

Wegelius; Ksenia Nesterova; Frank Katoola; and MA Student Edith Coen. President Aled Rhys-Jones asked Vice President Sofia Wegelius for a short report on the successes of the event.

b. Sofia Wegelius referred delegates to the information on pages 19 – 21 in the Forum Book. This was a new way for AITA/IATA to work and considerable thought had been put into the event given the range of languages and time zones involved. The CY Theatre Group were proud of the final programme which had been very versatile with speakers from around the world talking about how to work in theatre with children and young people. The CY Theatre Group would have liked a bigger audience, but much had been learned and they were looking to plan a similar event in the future. She asked if delegates had thoughts and ideas for future themes she would love to hear about them.

c. Council had wanted events to offer to Members something that they could offer to their members and the programme had included discount codes for AITA/IATA Members and workshops that were free for young people and those young at heart. One lesson learned was not to hold events in parallel as translation is not possible for both events. The CY Theatre Group hoped to offer a new event within the next year.

d. President Aled Rhys-Jones noted that the spread of countries attending had been good and the event had included speakers and new contacts from the Philippines, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Peru, Pakistan, Uganda, and Hong Kong. He noted that building these bridges and making contact with new people was a priority for Council.

e. Building on his last council report, Council had tried to create a team of people who would take on responsibilities and deliver something for the organisation and this was largely working well. But sadly, he had to report on a weak link in the team and he read from his report in respect of the former Treasurer, Councillor Anna-Karin Waldemarson. After Council came across issues with the financial management of the Association, they decided on 30 May 2023 to suspend the mandate of Anna-Karin Waldemarson to prevent damage to the reputation of the Association. Ms Waldemarson submitted her resignation on 13 June which had been her first communication with Council since the end of March. Council had taken positive steps to manage the situation and had initially removed the role of Treasurer from her on 2 May 2023.

f. AITA/IATA had subscribed to a new accounting package and with the support of former Treasurer Villy Dall and the Financial Controllers Mats Wenlöf and Dirk De Corte, Secretariat Anne Gilmour and the President worked with Michalis Karampelis to create a new and full set of accounts. For the future, with full training support, Anne Gilmour will manage the day-to-day bookkeeping. A new PayPal account will be set up and Council would look to

appoint a new Treasurer on Council without voting rights until the next GA as described in Article 15 of the Constitution.

g. President Aled Rhys-Jones noted that it had been a difficult time and he was limited in what he could say but, the failure to communicate, absence from meetings and failure to make payments and deal with the day to day running of the Association had led to Council taking immediate action. He was pleased to note that AITA/IATA was almost there in terms of resolving this issue.

h. Council would report on planned future festivals and events towards the end of the GA, but President Aled Rhys-Jones reassured delegates that a lot of work was taking place behind the scenes to make these events come to fruition. Here in Debrecen, delegates could meet and discuss matters and it was an opportunity for delegates to let Council know if they thought they could host a festival, perhaps one that was different and did not follow the 'usual' model. The highly successful 2017 AITA/IATA Spots Op West festival held in Westouter, Flanders (SGT), had been an international festival held in a small village and was very different from the 'normal' AITA/IATA Festival, but it had worked and worked well. He thought there were many possible 'models' with which AITA/IATA could work and a festival could have a different focus - perhaps Senior Citizen, Disability, Children, Youth etc. He asked delegates to see if AITA/IATA could change the picture of a festival presented every other year and he asked delegates for their help. Council also looked for people to host Council for face-to-face meetings and while it was possible to use Zoom, face-to-face meetings were needed to build a team and bring people together to create new ideas. While a couple of offers had been received, Council was always looking for new ones. He asked delegates to consider why not attaching a meeting to an event whether a festival, a training session or conference, and urged delegates to come and talk to Council with suggestions.

i. President Aled Rhys-Jones noted the elections were to be held and Council would lose two members: Tim Jebson, a Vice President for the last two years; and Frank Katoola who have both played a full role in the organisation. Frank had served for a long time on the former Standing Committee for Children and Youth but had not always been able to engage in Council Meetings because of the difficulty in how an international NGO is perceived in Uganda. He offered thanks to both Tim and Frank for their work and input over the last couple of years and delegates gave them a round of applause.

j. There were no questions.

Council's review was agreed to by a show of hands.

12. Finance review 2022 - 2023

- a. *Review of finance and approval of finance report* – The Presiding Chair referred delegates to page 37 and 38 of the Forum Book and noted that President Aled Rhys-Jones would report on finance in the absence of a Treasurer.
- b. President Aled Rhys-Jones reported that the accounts had only recently been prepared which explained the late publication of the Forum Book but he wished to stress that they had been done so very carefully as accuracy was the important issue. AITA/IATA was confident that an accurate bottom line has been established in an accurate set of accounts.
- c. In respect of the income for the Financial Year (FY) 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023, he thought these were self-explanatory in terms of what AITA/IATA had received. He noted the figure of € 2,300 which were funds received from the Goethe Institute for the *Curtain Up!* Conference. The main differences in these accounts from last year's figures were the € 1,222.81 for Miscellaneous operating income which was mostly the Commercial Fee from the Canadian Associate the Saint John Theatre Association who paid AITA/IATA to brand the online theatre event held in February 2023. This was also a new departure for AITA/IATA, who had worked with Councillor Stephen Tobias to select the plays and run the application process.
- d. The Subcontracting Fee was the Fee for Secretariat and he also noted the substantial increase under Internet and Web which reflected the upgraded Zoom package which offered a translation facility. The Legal Fees of € 1,391.50 reflected the need for advice and action to address the situation brought about by the difficulties with the former Treasurer.
- e. President Aled Rhys-Jones noted that under Extraordinary revenues and costs, the Write-back Provisions of € 1,257 referred to a fund to develop the World Theatre Day (WTD) website which was underspent and therefore brought back in. The other Extraordinary Charges related to the PayPal account: this facility enabled Members to pay their Fee into a PayPal account which was a better arrangement for some countries. This option had been run efficiently for some years by previous Treasurers, but the recent financial hiatus had prevented Council from producing a statement testifying to the amount received into the PayPal Account (€ 1,640) when the accounts were drawn up on 31 March 2023. Therefore, an extraordinary charge of € 1,640 had to be accounted for as the Paypal Account had to appear in the books at € 0 where it should have been € 1,640.
- f. In summary there was a total operating income of € 22,037.78 and a total operating cost of € 20,910.01 which gave an operational surplus of € 1,127.77. But, taking into account the Extraordinary charges that had to be deducted, and the Extraordinary income that had to be added, left a small surplus of € 400.38.

g. Turning to the balance sheet, President Aled Rhys-Jones noted that the € 3,300 was the funds from the Goethe Institute and the Saint John online Commercial Fee which related to activity in 2022/23 and which had not arrived before the 31 March 2023 but had since been received. He drew delegates attention to the Provision for Legal Fees of € 1,391.50 and offered an explanation of the Fees at the bottom of the page: the Deferred Charges and accrued income of € 15,463. He noted that AITA/IATA invoiced Members for the Fee in January for the following Financial Year and this figure represented the Members who have paid in advance for the following year. The total on 31 March 2023 in the bank account was € 14,680.10 and the total in the savings account was € 65,430 totalling € 80,110, which, with the expected receivables, gives a total of € 83,410.

h. The Presiding Chair thanked President Aled Rhys-Jones for his explanation and noted that the overall profit for the FY 2022 / 23 was € 400.38 after a provision for the PayPal account of around € 1,640. There were no questions.

Using the online poll, the finance report was unanimously accepted.

i. *Discharge to Councillors* – The Presiding Chair explained to delegates that this was a legal requirement. Delegates were members of an organisation and legally were the owners although, as AITA/IATA is a non-profit organisation, delegates did not own shares. By electing a Council, Members delegate the power and the responsibility to run the Association to these Councillors and trusted them not do anything against the interest of the organisation. Every year the Council presents itself to the Members through a General Assembly and, the Presiding Chair explained if they felt that Council had done a good job delegates would grant them discharge. This meant that delegates could not take any legal action against Council unless they committed criminal offences such as theft. Given the peculiarity of the situation outlined by President Aled Rhys-Jones in respect of Anna-Karin Waldemarson, the proposal was to give discharge to Councillors except for Anna-Karin Waldemarson. President Aled Rhys-Jones confirmed that this procedure had been recommended by legal advisers.

Using the online poll, the discharge to Council with the exception of Anna-Karin Waldemarson, was unanimously accepted.

13. Preparation for the Elections – The Presiding Chair noted that every two years the GA elected four Councillors (apart from the President). There were four vacancies and four candidates had offered themselves for election. Because of the late resignation of Anna-Karin Waldemarson, Council would continue with eight rather than nine Councillors. Two of the candidates were already on Council, Councillors Stephen Tobias, and Carlos Taberneiro and two new people had put themselves forward. They were Kelli McLoud-Schingen, USA

and Heidi Troi, Sud Tyrol. All candidates' statements of intent were in the Forum Book but they were asked if they wished to make an additional statement.

a. Stephen Tobias, Canada said he was proud to be in Debrecen and privileged to be on Council for two years and thanked President Aled Rhys-Jones and Council for their work, and specially thanked Tim Jebesen and Frank Katoola for their work and it had been great working with them. He placed a high value on what he had learned in the last few years about remaining connected using technology and he was proud that his company had been able to host an online digital festival. They had been able to share with the world from a fairly isolated community in Canada and he hoped to continue this in the future. It had been great to meet delegates this week and he hoped to have the opportunity to talk with more delegates.

b. Carlos Taberheiro, Spain referred to his statement in the Forum Book and asked delegates to read the last three sentences which expressed his real intention that it was important that in this organisation all the opinions and views were considered, as more Members were needed. He also wanted to thank all the work done by the President and, despite the technical difficulties, he also wanted to salute the new Members.

c. The third candidate Kelli McLoud-Schingen from USA was not present in Debrecen nor was she in the digital room, so delegates were referred to her statement in the Forum Book.

d. The fourth candidate Heidi Troi from Sud Tyrol was in the digital room and the Presiding Chair welcomed her and asked if she wished to add anything. She noted she was from the German-speaking part of Italy, but she did not wish to add much to her statement but noted that she was arranging festivals on a regular basis and wanted to promote more festivals in the future in AITA/IATA.

e. The Presiding Chair noted that the technical difficulties of approving the six Associate Members would be resolved over lunch. After this voting process, the election of the Councillors would take place.

Lunch

Return to Agenda Item 8 - The Presiding Chair asked delegates to turn to the approval of six Associate Members using a new technical procedure. He asked delegates to look at the chat function in the Zoom where they would find a link to a Google voting form which would offer the possibility to tick multiple boxes. If all the new Associate Members were accepted, they would then be able to vote in the election of the Councillors. He noted there would be two break-out rooms, one for NC and one for Associates. Each break-out room would have a link to the Google Form where delegates could vote. The one exception was the delegate from Finland who was carrying the proxy of Iceland and she would vote by paper.

f. To accept Signaghai Theater, Georgia as an Associate Member of AITA/IATA asbl

Using the online poll, Associate Signaghai Theater, was unanimously approved as an Associate Member

g. To accept Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University's theatre "skhveni", Georgia as an Associate Member of AITA/IATA asbl

Using the online poll, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University's theatre "skhveni, was unanimously approved as an Associate Member

h. To accept Dramatic Troupe for Artistic Creation, Morocco as an Associate Member of AITA/IATA asbl

Using the online poll, Associate Dramatic Troupe for Artistic Creation, was unanimously approved as an Associate Member

i. To accept Proster Theatre, Serbia as an Associate Member of AITA/IATA asbl

Using the online poll, Proster Theatre, was unanimously approved as an Associate Member

j. To accept Theatre Association Partizánske, Slovakia as an Associate Member of AITA/IATA asbl

Using the online poll, Theatre Association Partizánske, was unanimously approved as an Associate Member

k. To accept Koma Sanoe, Syria as an Associate Member of AITA/IATA asbl

Using the online poll, Koma Sanoe, was unanimously approved as an Associate Member

Return to agenda item 13 - Election of the Candidates – The Presiding Chair reminded delegates that these were multiple-choice questions, and that voting would take place in waiting rooms not break-out rooms. After voting, the Presiding Chair confirmed that the candidates had received the following votes:

- Candidate Stephen Tobias received 100% of the votes (126 votes)
- Candidate Carlos Taberneiro received 95% of the votes (120 votes)
- Candidate Kelli McCloud-Schingen received 98% of the votes (124 votes)
- Candidate Heidi Troi received 100% of the votes (126 votes)

b. The Presiding Chair noted from the Agenda that this was the moment that retiring Council members leave and newly elected Council members take their place. Retiring Vice President Tim Jebesen vacated his place and joined the body of the GA.

14. AITA/IATA future plans - President Aled Rhys-Jones welcomed Heidi Troi and Kelli McCloud-Schingen to Council and welcomed the return of Councillors Carlos Taberheiro and Stephen Tobias. He noted the immediate priority of Council would be to address the absence of a Treasurer and implement in-house book-keeping training. In respect of the Treasurer, Council would bring a suitable person onto the Council as an appointee without voting rights. He thanked Mats Wenlöf, one of the two AITA/IATA Financial Controllers, who would stand down from this role for his work. He asked that anyone interested in taking on the role of Financial Controller should get in touch with him. The individual would be appointed at next year's GA, but it was acceptable for AITA/IATA to continue with one Financial Controller.

a. The Presiding Chair explained that the role was to check that everything in the accounts is financially compliant and has been correctly carried out; that the cash balances at the end of the Financial Year; and that the bank statement confirms the funds in the bank. It is also necessary to check that the expenses that have been made are compliant with the decisions of Council and the budget that was voted on. It is, therefore, mainly a procedural check of decision making. Under Belgian Law it is not obligatory to have Financial Controllers for not-for-profit organisations of the size of AITA/IATA, but AITA/IATA has done so from the start.

b. President Aled Rhys-Jones noted that three working groups had been set up following his election in Monaco in 2021 and they would be refreshed following the elections. He asked Sofia Wegelius to report on *Digital Capability* matters. She noted that Council wanted to use technology to find a way to reach the many groups out there that know nothing about AITA/IATA. The Association wanted to try and visualise the amount of amateur theatre out there in the world which would help when AITA/IATA spoke to politicians. She announced a new feature on the AITA/IATA website, a map which would show the location of our Members from around the world, which she hoped would be working very soon and would enable Members to pin themselves to the map. She asked delegates to please let their theatres know about this and encourage them to show themselves on this map.

c. She also announced the launch of an Instagram account [weareamateurtheatre](#). This would be hosted by a different amateur theatre group each week to enable them to showcase their work to the world. She asked delegates to please let the Secretariat know if they had a company or a theatre event that would like to host the site for one week. Council was aware that not every country allowed access to Instagram, but AITA/IATA could post on their behalf. President Aled Rhys-Jones found this project exciting and innovative and urged delegates to sign up and get involved.

d. President Aled Rhys-Jones noted that Carlos Taberheiro would lead on the review and relaunch of the World Theatre Day project after Christmas. The Children and Youth Sub-Group would hold a full de-brief of the online *Curtain Up! The Kids are Back* event to capture the lessons learned and to help create new events. Council would also work with the [Drama in Education Event](#), 22 – 27 March 2024, about which delegates would hear more from Dagmar Höfferer shortly.

e. Council would also undertake a concerted Membership drive to encourage groups to join AITA/IATA, especially now it was possible to encourage people to become Associates on a relatively affordable Membership Fee. President Aled Rhys-Jones noted the priorities outlined in Monaco in 2021 included the need to look at the administration of the organisation and start creating events. He felt that now was the time to show groups what AITA/IATA could offer which would encourage groups to join. AITA/IATA would seek the help of its Members to find new groups and Members to join the AITA/IATA family.

f. He noted that Council hoped to have a face-to-face Council Meeting before Christmas as well as one or two online Zoom meetings. There were no comments.

15. Other proposals submitted for consideration by the General Assembly – the Presiding Chair noted that no proposals had been submitted. He also noted following the approval of the six Associate Members, AITA/IATA had 32 National centres and 59 Associate Members bringing the total to 91. He hoped that by the time of the next GA the total could reach 100.

16. Budget 2023 – 2024 – President Aled Rhys-Jones referred delegates to the final page of the Forum Book which detailed the one-year budget which was based on expenditure patterns of the last two years. He noted the Membership income of around € 19,000 and it was also planned to raise € 3,000 a figure which had been managed in the year just gone, making a total projected income of € 22,000. The expenses included € 13,200 which was the Secretariat contract which has been static for the last 10+ years. As AITA/IATA becomes more pro-active and the workload increases he noted that an initial 10% increase in this figure had been included. Delegates had been informed about the increase in the use of technology, particularly Zoom, but the other figures were mainly in line with past expenditure. There is no figure for depreciation because we don't have depreciable fixed assets. The figure for the write-off of PayPal funds of € 1,250 reflected the uncertainty about the funds that would be received from the PayPal account. The day before yesterday the Bank account had received funds from the PayPal account, but there had not been sufficient time to reconcile what had been received against what was expected. This figure, therefore, represented the anticipated figure at the time of publishing the budget. A

breakeven budget had been prepared but as monies had been received from the PayPal account the overall picture would look a little better at the end of the day. The Presiding Chair stepped into his role as the Financial Controller and noted that the Write-Off would, in reality, be € 0 because the provisions made for PayPal funds have been received. There were no questions.

Using the online poll, the budget was unanimously accepted.

17. Report on PAT Toyama 2022² – Mr Yukihiro Funamoto, Japanese President of the Japan National Centre and Vice Chairman of PAT (Performing Arts Toyama) was invited to the microphone to report on PAT 2022. A video of the event was shown to delegates while he spoke. He handed over to Tamami Arikawa the PAT Secretary General. She noted that PAT and Toyama worked hard together to realise the festival which had been held for 20 years. The festival had been over 5 days - 30 July – 3 August 2022 - but had been postponed in 2020 because of COVID. For the 2022 event, applications had been received from 46 groups from 35 countries from which groups 19 groups from 19 countries were selected. But, because of the COVID restrictions there was final participation from 9 countries but a total of 69 international and local groups performed with around 2,000 participants. Various intercultural exchanges such as workshops and an art exhibition with 150 pictures from across the world were also held. They had also introduced a system of streaming the event for those outside the festival. PAT was delighted to host so many children on the stage and welcomed the participation of about 420 volunteers. The children said that they would deepen their friendship and pass on their friendly feelings through participation and creation with grownups. Toyama sincerely hoped that this activity would contribute to world peace and on behalf of PAT and the committee of Toyama, Tamami thanked President Aled Rhys-Jones for his support and all those who came to the event including Béatrice Cellario and Mary Pears, who has participated in all PAT events since 1983 and Mr Paddy O'Dwyer and Mr Josef Hollos and all international friends who participated.

18. 25th Drama in Education Congress, 22 – 27 March 2024³ – Dagmar Höfferer was invited to the microphone and spoke to her PowerPoint presentation and invited all delegates to come to the Drama in Education Congress in March in Retz, Austria. She noted that the topic of the Congress was: Every Child Matters... the place of young people in the world, which is a UNESCO sustainable development goal and which will be discussed during the Congress. There was a call for papers and best practice and there would be many

² The presentation and video are on the AITA/IATA Website on the page with the FB of the 39th General Assembly.

³ The presentation is on the AITA/IATA Website on the page with the Forum Book of the 39th General Assembly.

additional programmes. Dagmar noted that this would be a celebration of 50 years of Drama in Education in Austria and all were invited to the event which is in a beautiful location with good wine.

a. President Aled Rhys-Jones thanked Dagmar and added that AITA/IATA would look to offer 3-4 bursaries to help young people attend the event in Austria although details are yet to be agreed by Council, the aim would be to help those in less developed countries.

19. Host venue for 40th GA in 2024 – President Aled Rhys-Jones noted there is no physical event planned yet and it would be possible to have a Zoom event. But as all delegates appreciated the benefits of meeting in person, he asked them to please get in touch and let him know if they would like to host this event.

20. Lingen World Festival of Children’s Theatre 2025 – Stephan Schnell came to the microphone and read from text on behalf of his colleague Nils Hanraets who sent his regards to delegates but unfortunately was not able to join the GA in person. He reported that due to various circumstances including the impact of COVID, the World Festival of Children’s Theatre due to be held in Lingen in 2024 had been postponed to 2025. He thanked President Aled Rhys Jones for his excellent co-operation and willingness to find a common solution and was now able to announce that TPZ and the City of Lingen would host the event 27 June - 4 July 2025 as part of the 1,050 anniversary of the town of Lingen and would welcome theatre friends from around the world. Stephan asked delegates to save the date.

21. Notification of host venue for 41st GA 20 – 27 August 2025 (Monaco)⁴ – Béatrice Cellario came to the microphone and thanked everyone for the opportunity to make this presentation as the President of the Studio de Monaco: the Vice President of the Studio de Monaco was also present. The event would last eight days - Wednesday 20 – Wednesday 27 August - and would be the 18th Mondial du Théâtre in Monaco. It was first held in 1957 and then every four years. It used to be a ten-day festival, but that was reduced in 2021 to 6 days with 15 companies but in 2025 it will be an eight-day festival with 22 groups, 18 of which would come from AITA/IATA. There will be colloquies and two workshops of 3 days each as well as a closing night soirée. There will be a call for applications in Jan 2024 which will be sent to all AITA/IATA Members with a deadline for applications of October 2024 and the joint committee (to select the groups) will be held in January 2025. The GA of AITA/IATA will be held in the middle of the festival over the weekend with regional committees on Friday 22 August and the Forum and GA over two days (23 - 24 August) at

⁴ The presentation is on the AITA/IATA Website on the page with the Forum Book of the 39th General Assembly.

the weekend. The contact details are mondialduthetheatre@monte-carlo.mc She looked forward to seeing everyone in Monaco.

22. Other business – Joke Quaghebeur, Opendoek, the NC of Flanders (SGT) came to the microphone. She noted that they hoped to hold a World Festival of Children’s Theatre in 2026 in the city of Antwerp. They had been working together with Event Flanders and AITA/IATA. They hoped to connect with as many drama teachers as possible and wanted to collaborate with Dagmar Höfferer. The dates were not yet agreed but it was likely to be in July 2026 and she asked delegates to spread the word.

23. Closing of the 39th General Assembly of AITA/IATA asbl – The Presiding Chair thanked delegates for their patience and apologised for the technical difficulties and thanked the technicians and the translators. He offered special thanks to Ben Schutz his right-hand assistant who 24 hours ago knew nothing about AITA/IATA.

a. President Aled Rhys-Jones thanked everyone for attending the GA and staying for the day and noted no-one would be in Debrecen were it not for the Theatre Olympics about which he wanted to know more. In future, perhaps AITA/IATA should try and coincide with similar events. He thanked Janos Regős, Zsigmond Lakó and his wife Alexandra Mihály for their amazing work organising the event. He hoped that delegates appreciated that the last few months had been difficult for the organisation and thanked everyone for bearing with us. He thanked Anne Gilmour for the considerable work she had undertaken and also thanked Ben for his work with the Presiding Chair. Thanks also went to Ragnhild Arntsen and Paul Percy for their work as ‘innocent eyes’ scrutinising the votes. While they were both totally new faces to AITA/IATA, because they kept coming up to the stage all delegates now knew who they were. He also thanked Michalis Karampelis for his work behind the scenes bringing the accounts together which had been a considerable effort. He offered grateful thanks to the Presiding Chair Dirk De Corte, a gentleman and a good friend whom he had known for many years and, if it were not for his knowledge of Belgian Law and ability to manage Zoom, he could not imagine how AITA/IATA would have got on: his corporate knowledge, his work as a ‘constitutional chamber’ of AITA/IATA and his input to the organisation was immeasurable. And last but not least Council: he remarked that we do make things happen, despite the recent ‘hiccup’. He thanked them and delegates for their patience and continued trust and for the unanimous support for the budget.

39th General Assembly of AITA/IATA asbl closed at 15:30.