

European Association for Theatre Culture

TRANSARTLANTICA

An educational programme for American Universities

presented by Prof. Dr. Jurij Alschitz, artistic director of the European Association for Theatre Culture (EATC) in collaboration with the Russian Academy for Theatre Arts (GITIS)

Initiated by Prof. Elizabeth Craven and Prof. Blake Robison of the University of Tennessee Knoxville, TRANSARTLANTICA was successfully conducted in Spring 2003 by EATC in Moscow, Berlin, and Bari. Experiences gained in this pilot-project have enabled us to further develop the structure, procedure, and content.

The general idea of TRANSARTLANTICA is

to provide theatre education for professionals and to initiate practical theatre research. Programmes are designed to open new methods or themes on acting / directing / teaching, thereby connecting theatre traditions and cultural roots of East and West Europe and America.

The practical aim of TRANSARTLANTICA is

- to introduce American actors to a European theatre school, which is based on the heritage of the Russian theatre tradition, further developed by Jurij Alschitz, and influenced by his long European practice.
- to re-introduce the laboratory process for the development of the theatre culture by creating research projects
- to work in multicultural groups: American students act and train together with actors from different European countries

Other possibilities include:

- a professional audience into the research process by inviting them to witness the working results.
- theoretical results through different media, print, video etc. after a supervised scientific research.

The structure and content of TRANSARTLANTICA is

A group comprised of acting/directing students engaged in an MFA or other professional training programme elects to take a semester abroad in Europe. During a two to three month period, the group will travel from Moscow to Berlin to Italy, studying and engaging in theatre practice. Optionally more countries and cities can be included, such as Sweden (Stockholm), France (Paris) and others.

The main methodological theme of the semester abroad will be determined through a close collaboration between the EATC team, the head of your department and the professor leading the trip. Likewise, text material will be chosen accordingly.

On this collaborative basis, the artistic director and the programme director are able to design a unique journey for your particular group. This individualized planning extends to the choice of guest professors and lectures, to the route and timing of travel, up to the choice of the additional cultural programming.

Students will be introduced to the theories and practice of Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Brecht, Grotowski, as well as to contemporary Masters of the profession in the different countries. They will visit and work in such prestigious places as the Stanislavsky House, GITIS, or the “School of Dramatic Art – Anatoly Vasiliev” in Moscow, the Brecht House and the Berliner Ensemble in Berlin etc.

Practically, the students will move from one city to another, each time staying for 2 - 4 weeks. Living conditions will be provided, the travel is usually pre-arranged by the American University. The students can concentrate exclusively on their work.

Final certificates are issued jointly by EATC and GITIS.

The pedagogical foundation for TRANSARTLANTICA is

its Team of Teachers. The network’s Master students of Jurij Alschitz form a unique pedagogical team. Each is currently leading one of the centres of EATC, conducting their own seminars, laboratories, or productions. These artist/teachers each reflect the pedagogy developed by Jurij Alschitz, which is derived from the Russian school and his own research in Western Europe during the last 12 years.

In this brief but intensive period of study, students are able to gain an impression of a whole teaching tradition. This is accomplished through direct contact with the grand old masters of GITIS in Moscow, via meetings with important theatre directors (like Anatoly Vasiliev in 2003) and through intensive work with Jurij Alschitz and his Team of Teachers of the next generation, from Germany, Italy, and France.

The journey will lead from the flood of impressions into a very concentrated work situation; from the general educational input and to focus on the individual actor/director, enabling him/her to find a personal means of artistic expression. The aim is to help develop each students’ unique artistic personality through confrontation with new and different aspects of life, culture and theatre hitherto unknown to them.

First experiences with the students of the University of Tennessee Knoxville brought very interesting artistic results. During the final exam, students demonstrated strong individual development that extended far beyond their previous experiences and expected possibilities. In the end, a group who arrived as ten individuals gained the experience of an artistic ensemble.

Universities who like to book this programme, please contact

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TRANSARTLANTICA

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(...) In the final week the students were ready for presentations. Four actors a day would show their work to an audience of invited guests. The audience moved from room to room in the castle to view the 45 minute performances. Each event was unique, the sum total of that actor's most personal exploration. And even though all ten actors were exploring the same two roles, there was very little similarity in their final interpretations. Sometimes, as I was watching these presentations, I felt as though I was witnessing something sacred — the inner soul of the actor manifesting the invisible life of the play. Now as I reflect back on distance these students travelled artistically in just eight weeks it is really hard to believe. They had transformed from theatre larvae — earthbound and immobile — into theatre butterflies able to soar skyward with their colorful wings outspread. Their transformation was indeed magical.

(...) I want to thank everyone who made this monumental achievement possible — all the teachers, artists, and administrators — because their combined effort created a completely new way of actor training. Mostly, I owe an immense debt of gratitude to Jurij Alschitz, without whom this network and pedagogy would not exist. It was his students turned teachers, actors and theatre professionals who (along with him) formulated the core of the teaching team. Together they constitute a vital new force in the theatre world.

From the report by

Prof. Elizabeth Craven

Director Graduate Performance Program (MFA)

University of Tennessee Department of Theatre, Knoxville, Tennessee

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Having just participated in the European Association for Theatre Culture's week-long intensive training program for professional actors in August, 2003, I can say without any reservation that the organization offers one of the most challenging and practical educational experiences in theatre available today. Jurij Alschitz and company have gathered what seems to be the most skilled, intense, and forward-looking group of teachers in Europe and Asia and provided the kind of training that explodes boundaries and introduces new perspectives to the craft and art of acting. I therefore highly recommend their transARTlantica program to schools and groups that have the time and resources to partake of this organization's program.

Professor Edgardo Bengson De La Cruz

Head of Department of Theatre and Dance

California State University, Hayward