

OVERSEAS

BRITISH SUCCESS AT PQ91

On Friday 14 June in the Wallenstein Palace, Prague, the international jury of the Prague Quadriennale unanimously decided to award the prize for the best national exhibit of Theatre Designs from the past four years to the Great Britain delegation.

British theatre designers sharing the Gold Triga Award were:

Pamela Howard	<i>John Browns Body</i>	Tramway, Glasgow
Richard Hudson	<i>Clockwork Orange</i>	RSC, London
	<i>Too Clever by Half</i>	Old Vic, London
Ralph Koltai	<i>Metropolis</i>	Piccadilly Theatre, London
Nigel Lowery	<i>Oedipus Rex</i>	ENO, Coliseum, London
Anthony McDonald	<i>Hamlet</i>	RSC, Stratford upon Avon
	<i>As You Like It</i>	Old Vic, London
Timothy O'Brien	<i>Love's Labours Lost</i>	RSC, Stratford
	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	Playhouse, London
Joe Vanek	<i>Dancing at Lughnasa</i>	Abbey Theatre, Dublin

The Award was presented at a public ceremony by the Czech Minister of Culture and the Commissioner General of the Prague Quadriennale, Jaroslav Malina, the scenographer of the Prague National Theatre.

Forty countries participated in this "confrontation and competition" of theatre design throughout the world in sections devoted to stage and costume designs, recent productions on the theme of Mozart, architecture, and the National Exhibits.

The British entry, sponsored by the British Council, aimed to reflect the diversity of design for the theatre in Britain in the last four years. The work reflected Ireland and Scotland, as well as England, and included Shakespeare, Musicals, Opera, Contemporary Plays and Site Specific Theatre. This selection proved to be of enormous interest to the large number of visiting scenographers and to the general public who came to see the exhibition housed over four floors in the Palace of Culture.

This is the second time that Britain has won the Gold Triga, having first carried it home in 1979, and at subsequent Quadriennales British designers have won gold and silver individual medals.

There will be a London and Glasgow showing of the British exhibit within the next few months.

PQ 91

Until quite near the scheduled date there was some doubt about whether there was to be a PQ 91. The country's political changes had, not unnaturally, had repercussions in all Czech activities. The changes of personnel in the cultural field led to a reappraisal of past policies and there were rumours of pressures to scrap the PQ. The PQ supporters eventually prevailed and this unique event went ahead but with a much reduced budget dictated by the prevailing economic climate. The venue was changed to a modern Palace of Culture which being much like any standard national conference centre had none of the atmosphere of the previous exhibition site. But the 'shows the thing' and this one was, although not perhaps 'bigger and better' than its predecessors it certainly attracted a record number of participating countries. A number of new exhibitors had been previously excluded for political reasons so colleagues from Israel, South Africa and Yugoslavia were warmly welcomed.

Political and economic changes at home had presented some of presenters with difficult decisions. As early as last September a the decision had to be made as to how Germany would be represented. In the event there was a single stand representing work from both sides of the now non-existent wall, which gave an opportunity to compare the same topical play which had recently been produced in both East and West. Funding for the various country's exhibitions is drawn from a variety of sources and in the case of Germany it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The group from Finland had experienced a last minute financial crisis which may be with them for some time. Having submitted their budget about a year prior to the event and due to some oversight they were told a short time before their departure that they would only receive a fraction of the amount budgeted. With little time left for seeking alternative funding the group went ahead and will be in hoc for some time unless they can find an alternative sponsorship source. Doubly difficult after the event.

It was in Amsterdam we were first introduced to the car park as a trade show venue and in Prague the basement car park at the PQ 91 venue was made available to the schools and their students. Such was the creative effort that went into producing a thoroughly professional show that their section received a special mention from the PQ 91 jury at the award ceremony.

The Golden Troika, which was won by the British entry, is one of several prizes awarded in different categories. The Award for the best presented stand, for instance, went the USA and that was in spite of losing their major exhibit at the hands of their shipping agent. Details of all the awards, names of the jury etc will be given in the July / August issue of the news.

In spite of early misgivings in the host country it was apparent that the organisers were justly proud of this year's event which had attracted entries from such a large number of countries. After the award ceremony we were assured that there would be a PQ in four years time but if it is to happen it would be as well for the organisers to explore ways of spreading their financial burden as host. The trouble with a quadriennial event is that one thinks there is plenty of time before the next one.