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Introduction about Cultural Cooperation Czech Republic – Asia

on the occasion of Focal Point: Cooperation Asia – Europe organized by Asia-Europe Foundation and Arts and Theatre Institute

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Ladies, gentlemen, dear colleagues from ASEF and the Ministry of Culture Czech Republic,

I am extremely glad that today's meeting focused on artistic and cultural cooperation between Europe and Asia has raised such a great interest. The response to our invitation was much higher than we expected, more than 60 representatives from the Czech cultural sector answered our small survey about previous collaboration with partners from Asia and future plans in this field. Therefore, I would like to thank to our colleagues from Asia-Europe Foundation first for their initiative and proposal to the Arts and Theatre Institute to organize this event.

Your responses helped us out to find out that such a format as today's meeting is really in demand, because only 9 respondents out of 60 know ASEF and its activities well and only 1 declares a direct previous experience with the foundation. Therefore, I am happy that you will have a unique opportunity later on to get a detailed orientation in ASEF's mission and activities thank to the presence of our distinguished guests from Asia.

I was asked to provide a small insight into the cooperation of Czech cultural sector with Asian partners. It is not an easy task, because there is not any central overview or database we could work with. Nevertheless, with help of my colleagues – dance, literature, music and theatre experts from the Arts and Theatre Institute – we have collected some examples of cooperation projects. It is also true that cooperation with such a huge and also geographically distant and culturally diverse territory requires personal engagement, good knowledge and high financial costs, therefore it is also a matter of personal relations, circumstances and chance, whether such a collaboration comes true.

Nevertheless, if we speak about the territory covered by ASEF, we can see some highlights in cooperation with Czech artists. These highlights are Japan, South Korea and China. Probably the longest collaboration with Japan takes place in the field of classical music and it is a one of the most desired territories not only for guest performances of biggest philharmonic and chamber orchestras, but there are also many occasions for master classes and workshops or other educational activities. Even independent contemporary music orchestras such as Berg orchestra and various Czech

electronic/rock and heavy metal bands are presented in Japan. South Korea and China are also destinations for presentation not only of Czech classical music, but also of puppet theatre, theatre, literature, dance and film/TV – mainly thanks to the presence of Czech studies for literature activities and support of Czech centres in Tokyo and Seoul, or the Czech embassy in Beijing. Czech musical is extremely popular in South Korea. We have also an example of cooperation in the field of cinema among the participants here, the International Shakuhachi Festival Prague, which regularly collaborates with the Japan Foundation. Another aspect of this cooperation is the presence of Asian countries in the cultural programs of theatres, cultural centres, festivals, galleries etc., which – except China, Japan and Korea – is very rare. There were also some past and current collaborations with other Asian countries mentioned in our survey: in the field of performance and performing arts with Myanmar, a film coproduction with India, contemporary circus and theatre performances in Australia. And I am sure that other projects will be mentioned later on in the discussion.

If we check the direct stimulation or support of the cooperation with Asian countries coming from the state or municipalities, we must mention:

- The China – Central and Eastern Europe Cultural Season organized in 2017, which had been initiated by the Czech Ministry (and other ministries from the region) some years ago. This season was a culmination of efforts made in support of cooperation among Chinese and CEE partners in the past 5-10 years and covered the field of dance, theatre, music, visual arts and theatre for youth and children. Both the National Theatre (namely the ballet company of the NT Brno) and independent puppet theatre and physical theatre companies were represented during the season.
- Another form of support of the Ministry of Culture Czech Republic is the grant program for professional cultural activities abroad. If we check the results from the past 5 years, we will find out they do not show bad results:

2017: 11 supported projects: Japan 3x, China 3x, South Korea 3x, Philippines and Sri Lanka, mainly classical music, visual arts and architecture exhibition and theatre

1. Architectura Antonín Raymond 7x / travelling exhibition Japan and Philippines (Japan, Philippines)
2. South Czech Philharmonic - China National Tour 2016-2017 (China)
3. ArtProm - V.O.S.A. Theatre at Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka)
4. Balet Praha: Participation of Prague Chamber Ballet in a dance festival in Busan (Korea)
5. Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra South Korea tour 4th Nov – 13th Nov 2017 (South Korea)

6. Moravec – Příhoda – TRAJEKTORY (China)
7. Jana Boušková, the Harp Queen, in Japan
8. NEIRO Association for Expanding Arts – Czechs composing for Japanese instruments – concert and artistic dialogue in Tokyo (Japan)
9. Czech exhibition "Lukáš Rathouský and Theodor of Prague" (Japan)
10. Eben Trio tour in China 2017 (China)
11. The Loser(s) – PAMS (Korea)

2016: 10 supported projects: 2x Taiwan, 2x Korea, 3x Japan, 2x China, 1x India; classical music, jazz, visual arts, theatre, dance

1. Art & Fact: Wilderness, vanity of bird feathers – participation in PAMS in Korea
2. Pavlína Vogelová: exhibition MILENA DOPITOVÁ / MY BODY IS A TEMPLE (Taiwan)
3. Bathroom production: 2016 Taiwan International Vocal Festival (Taiwan)
4. Teddy Bear Theatre: GOLEM (Japan)
5. Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava: China tour
6. Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra: India tour
7. Příhoda: MONUMENT: contemporary Czech art in Beijing (China)
8. Blažek: Mydy Rabycad: Jazz in Seoul 2015 & Tour (Korea)
9. Another Landscape (Japan)
10. Verte: CORRECTION in Japan

2015: 9 projects, 4x Korea, 3x China, 2x Japan; ballet, classical music, theatre, puppet theatre, visual arts

1. Divadlo Continuo – The Eighth Day at PAMS 2015 (Korea)
2. Puzzle: Czech puppet theatre at Gyeonggi festival (Korea)
3. Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra Olomouc (China)
4. Švanda Theatre was a guest at the international BIPAF festival (Korea)
5. Participation of Prague Chamber Ballet in the International Dance Festival in Busan and Modafe contemporary dance festival in Seoul (Korea)
6. Bezhlaví: Czech Theatre and dance in Beijing
7. MONUMENT: contemporary Czech art in Beijing
8. Japan Tour PKF - Prague Philharmonia 2015
9. Metaplay exhibition, Prague – Tokyo exhibits by laureates of the 7th Critics' Award

It is true that the same organizers repeatedly appear in these lists, so their range will hopefully become more diverse after today's meeting.

- In 2012 the Arts and Theatre Institute initiated the presentation of Czech performing arts in most important world performing arts markets, one of them is the Performing Arts Market in Seoul. Every year we present Czech theatre, dance and music and some of the guest performances included among the above-mentioned projects supported by the ministry art part of this presentation.
- The short-term mobility program was introduced in 2013 and administrated by the Arts and Theatre Institute. It supports individual travels of Czech artists, experts and cultural operators to events such as conferences, festivals, workshops etc. So far we have supported more than 300 applicants. We supported travel projects to the following destinations in Asia:

6x Japan

5 x Taiwan

5x China

2x Korea

1x Sri Lanka

1x Indonesia

1x Indie

- Other stimulations of international cooperation with Asian artists and cultural organizations are the cities. For example, the city of Prague has its own program of international presentation and cooperation with partnering cities including the cities in China, Japan and Korea.

I hope that further support and stimulation of cooperation with Asian artists will be discussed at today's meeting. According to our survey we found out that:

- Mostly representatives from the field of music, visual arts, cinema and performing arts are represented, followed by a smaller number of architecture, literature, photography, fashion, but also ceramics and health resort (spa) representatives, who are present here.

- The most wanted forms of cooperation are: residencies and study or scouting trips due to the absence of knowledge of most countries in the regions, then co-productions and guest performances, a few of our today's participants would be interested in lectures, exhibitions.
- The most desired destinations would be:

Winners:

36x Japan – total winner

32x Korea – 2nd place

29x China – 3rd place

Between 25 and 10 mentions:

25x Australia

23x India

20x Vietnam

18x Singapore

15x New Zealand

13x Thailand

11x Indonesia

10x Mongolia

10x Cambodia

Less than 10 mentions:

7x Philippines

8x Burma

8x Malaysia

7x Pakistan

Almost none or none mentions:

Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia

This was just a short introduction. And now I give the floor to Mrs. Anupama Sekhar, the director of the Cultural dpt. of Asia-Europe Foundation.

Thank you for your attention.

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