

WPIC 2012 - an opportunity to meet, to build networks, to create genuine, lasting contacts between women playwrights and theatre professionals. Our aim is to have a supporting impact on cooperations and to build bridges between people from different parts of the world.

**More info, go to**

**<http://wpic.riksteatern.se>**

Mail adress **[wpic@riksteatern.se](mailto:wpic@riksteatern.se)**

Contact Mireille Bergenström, project manager

Homepage for WPI, **[www.wpinternational.com](http://www.wpinternational.com)**.



**Feel free to spread this news letter among your colleagues!**

## **9th Women Playwrights International Conference** **Stockholm - Sweden 15-20 august 2012** **Theme: THE DEMOCRATIC STAGE** **Newsletter #3-2011**

### **The registration opens soon!**

The last working days before New Years eve are hectic. All the things you're supposed to have done.

For the WPIC team the work goes on with reading, evaluating and selecting plays for the conference. We got some 600 synopsis. We asked for 214 full scripts in English and they are now dropping in to the WPIC e-mail inbox. The reading committees will hopefully be ready 15th of February but we aim to give clearance as soon as possible, maybe before that date.

**IF YOU HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SEND YOUR FULL SCRIPT, PLEASE DO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!**

The plan is to present ca 100 plays in readings at the conference. The presentations will be professionally prepared and done by actors and theatre students. If necessary, we will ask you to join in.

The programming besides the readings will be done during early spring. Have you any questions, suggestions or want to encourage us in the planning group, mail us - **[wpic@riksteatern.se](mailto:wpic@riksteatern.se)**

The conference is open to all that are interested in the issues that will be lightened, discussed and shaped. We hope for participating by playwrights and directors as well as managers, actors, culture politicians and journalists.

To participate in the conference you have to register. The registration will open January 10th.

**<http://wpic.riksteatern.se>**

Here you'll find all the information needed.

The participation fee is 2500 SEK (380 USD or 280 Euros). Apart from that you have to finance your own travel to Stockholm, room and board. More info on costs also on the last page of this letter.

***We wish you all A Happy New Year!***

***See you in Stockholm!!***

**Mireille Bergenström**

project manager for the Stockholm WPIC 2012

## A Canadian Playwright in Mumbai: Thoughts from the 8th WPI Conference

November 3, 2009: Ten female Canadian playwrights gather under a frangipani tree on the beautiful grounds of the University of Mumbai for a group photo. A patient new friend takes turns using each of the women's cameras. Other women begin taking pictures with their own cameras. Why would these women from all over the world be interested in capturing this moment? Why are these Canadian playwrights causing such a stir? We will have to start from the beginning.

I was Chair of the Women's Caucus of Playwrights Guild of Canada. I encouraged Caucus members to submit scripts to the 2009 WPI Conference in Mumbai. After the December 2008 bombings, there was speculation that it would be cancelled. However, in January 2009, a posting appeared on the WPI site ambitiously announcing the conference in November. Its co-presenters were the Academy of Theatre Arts, University of Mumbai and Stree Mukti Sanghatana (Women's Liberation Organization).

The conference theme of *Liberty and Tolerance* was broad enough to include many works. Of the twenty-plus Canadian playwrights invited to present our work, nine of us were able to attend.

We formed our own email group, sharing information on visas, funding and what to do on our down time. Tara Goldstein put together a casting template for our readings and Beverley Cooper organized a sightseeing tour for those of us who would be in Mumbai the day before the conference began.

During the opening ceremony we finally met Jyoti Mhapsekar, President of Stree Mukti Sanghatana

and is, in her words, an activist and an accidental playwright. Theatre is one of the tools she has used in thirty odd years of running the organization to help women find their own voices and support themselves. For me, hearing her speak was the highlight of the night even though Bollywood superstar Shabani Azmi was there and gave a wonderful speech on the importance of the female gaze.

The next day, the conference began in earnest. Our first readings and their talkback sessions were well received. We were ambushed at our meal break. Writers wanted us to take part in their readings because they loved our clear pronunciation of English. Throughout the rest of the week, Canadians appeared in works by American, Swedish, Australian and Dutch playwrights.

Each day began with a talk or presentation, then readings, lunch, a panel discussion, dinner and two plays (usually not in English). I confess to skipping back to the hotel after dinner some nights. We took over the hotel bar, scaring off travelling business men who only wanted to relax with a Kingfisher beer and watch a cricket game at the end of the day. We were loud, raucous women who were thrilled to have found one another.

The Swedish contingent did a presentation about *Spets*. The word has two meanings: lace and shard. Three women from Riksteatern, the National Touring Theatre, presented plays by Sweden's forgotten female playwrights. They tackled reproductive rights, mental health issues and fidelity

and were written between the 1880s and 1950. They were huge hits in their original and remounted productions. These incredible Swedish theatre artists encouraged and inspired us to find forgotten female playwrights from our own countries.

I am absolutely thrilled that the 2012 Conference will be in Stockholm, helmed by the women from Riksteatern, the theatre behind *Spets*: Birgitta Englin, Jenny Andreasson Rani Kasapi, Nadia Izzat and Mireille Bergenström.

**I look forward to meeting all of you next August!**

**Marcia Johnson**

*Canadian Representative, WPI Management Committee  
Former Chair, Playwrights Guild of Canada Women's Caucus*



**Karen Jeyens:**

# Report from a Stockholm visit

In October of 2011 myself and Allison Foat, an arts publicist, travelled to Stockholm to meet with the WPI conference organisers for 2012. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to meet with Lene Teigen, WPI President, and Mireille Bergenstrom and the other hard workers from Riksteatern. It's given me a lovely insight into WPI, and the conference next year. It was also good to get some impressions of the cultural life in Stockholm, with our outings ranging from Strindberg to circus to a photographic exhibition and a fabulous Argentine Tango band.



As far as 2012's conference goes, I'm very excited. The venue, Sodra Theatre, is beautiful, has a huge variety of spaces, and the manager was very welcoming and enthusiastic. It's also lovely to have a smaller independent venue connected to the conference, Dramalabbet, to get a sense of variety. These spaces will be maximized to the hilt for our conference, and particular emphasis is being placed on finding warm and inviting areas for discussion and networking.

The teams I met involved with the organisation were very inspiring, and the elements of the programming that we discussed look very promising. Each day has been themed, and keynote speakers from around the world have been identified to lead our thoughts to new places. In addition workshops and smaller, more interactive sessions have been planned, with options to suit, we hope, all inclinations.

A huge amount of the work involved has been the reading and selection of plays - so exciting to have a selection from so many countries. With the hundreds of applications that came in, some difficult decisions have already had to be made, and the choices only get harder from here.

Other useful meetings were with the Drama Academy, a supporter of the conference and a state of the art place of learning, with ITI, whose involvement in the 2012 conference is valuable, and with the South African Embassy.

Further discussions with Lene about the future of WPI were also very fulfilling. The difference of

meeting in person can't be described, and I believe that we were able to discuss some important aspects of both the 2012 and potential 2015 conferences, as well as ideas for WPI's online presence and some webinars and other ways of connecting to playwrights between conferences. We also discussed how we can maximise the profile of WPI in the lead up to the event, and how we can start to make use of online technologies to engage and connect with women playwrights outside of the conference itself. One of the initiatives has been establishing a twitter account, @womenplaywright, so do follow us, and let us know if you're a WPI member.

I very much hope that we are able to raise the energy for 2012 and carry that forward to 2015!

**Karen Jeynes**, WPI Management Committee  
Committee Member at Performing Arts Network of South Africa



Above: Karen and AnnMari Engel of the Swedish ITI.

Far left: Outside the venue Södra Teatern, left to right, Allison Foat, Lene Teigen, Karen Jeynes.

Photo: Mireille Bergenström

*AL-HARAH Theatre is committed to principles of plurality and multiculturalism. Through producing and promoting theater arts in Palestine, we are partaking in building and maintaining a civil society that emphasizes human rights, democracy and freedom of expression as key components for a dynamic society.*

Al-Harah Theatre, who is co-operating with the WPIC 2012, is based in Beit Jala, near the city of Bethlehem in Palestine. The name means "the neighborhood" and they tour a lot in the region. One reason is that today the theatre has no stage of its own. *"That would be a dream, to have our own studio"*, says Marina Barham, general director.

Al-Harah aims to produce theater that is well crafted and moving, challenging yet accessible and honest. *"We believe that theater has the potential to change the lives of those who make it and those who watch it."*



Since its establishment in 2005, Al-Harah Theater has produced several plays for children and adults, which toured locally and internationally.

*"We believe in our work and its potential for achieving social change. As a Palestinian theater group, we believe that it is very important for us to reach international communities through connecting with artistic and cultural organizations in the whole world."*

One of Al-Harah's major goals is to develop playwriting and script writing in Palestine. That is a pri-

## AL-HARAH in Palestine

ority for the Theater movement in Palestine since there are no professional Palestinian playwrights. The founders of Al-Harah Theater started a playwrights' project already in 1995. The training began with professional story and novel writers and ended up with young people who were interested and had the potential and talent to become playwrights.

The project was initiated by and is implemented, in partnership with the Royal Court Theater in London. Over the years, very well known writers and directors from the UK have worked with developing Palestinian playwriting, including Mr. Stephen Jeffreys, Phyllida Lloyd, April de Angeles, David Greig, Rufus Norris and Elyse Dodgson. This project has been funded by British Council and by sponsors like Guiding Star LTD. Through the project, new writers have emerged and began their way to professional playwriting.

AL-Harah is also now in partnership with six countries including France, collecting texts from Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Algeria, Tunisia, Syria and Egypt. Performing in theater festivals abroad or participating in artistic forums is a great way to tell audiences about lives as Palestinians and reflect on culture in a different way than what is shown in the Media. It increases awareness on what international audiences know about Palestine and creates curiosity for them to explore more through visiting Palestine and finding ways to connect with Palestinian individuals and organizations.

Al-Harah Theatre received the first Annual THAW Scholarships Award by Theatre Against War in New York in recognition for their work with children and young people in Palestine in 2007.

Al Harah performances have been to different Arab and International theater festivals and toured in the countries like Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Italy, Sweden, Turkey, Japan, Romania and the United Kingdom ■



*The Confinement*

**During the WPIC 2012, Al-Harah will do a presentation of their work. One morning you will also be able to listen to a keynote speech on theatre for children and youngsters with Marina Barham and Suzanne Osten, the prominent director and front figure of the Swedish theatre for children.**

# Costs to participate in WPIC 2012

## Participating Fee

which covers the whole 5-day program including lunches but NOT dinners **2 500 SEK (380 USD)**

## Travels

Every participant must book and pay oneself

## Lodgings

Hotels are expensive in Sweden. We have pre-booked rooms close to the venue. **NOTE! You book and pay for your own lodgings!**

For our suggestions below, use code **WPIC**.

Booking must be done at the latest May 1st 2012.

## Hotel Columbus

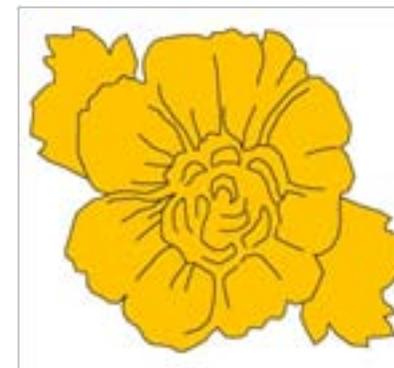
Address: Tjärhovsgatan 11 – walking distance 10 min.  
e-mail [info@columbushotell.se](mailto:info@columbushotell.se)

Single room - 6 nights ..... 6 570 SEK (998 USD)  
Twin room (separate beds) - 6 nights ..... 7 470 SEK (1 135 USD)

## Mosebacke hostel

<http://www.mosebackehostel.se/index.html>  
Address: Högborgsgatan 26 – walking distance 10 min.  
e-mail [booking@mosebackehostel.se](mailto:booking@mosebackehostel.se)

Single room 495 SEK/night – 6 nights ..... 2 970 SEK (450 USD)  
Room with 2 beds 595 SEK/night – 6 nights ..... 3 570 SEK (570 USD)  
Room with 1 double bed 695 SEK/night  
– 6 nights ..... 4 170 SEK (635 USD)  
Room with 4 beds – 195 SEK/night/person  
– 6 nights ..... 1 170 SEK (180 USD)



## Best Hostel Old Town

<http://www.besthostel.se/skeppsbron/>  
Address: Skeppsbron 22 - walking distance 15 min.

Singel room 600 SEK per room/night – 6 nights ..3 600 SEK (547 USD)  
Singel room with shared bath  
– 500 SEK per room/night – 6 nights ..... 3 000 SEK (456 USD)  
2bedroom– 820 SEK per room/night – 6 nights .. 4 920 SEK (748 USD)  
2bedroom with shared bath  
– 720 SEK per room/night – 6 nights .....4 320 SEK (657 USD)  
2bedroom with bunk beds and shared bath  
– 670 SEK per room/night – 6 nights .....4 020 SEK (610 USD)  
3bedroom – 1185 K per room/night – 6 nights ...7 110 SEK (1080 USD)  
3bedroom with shared bath  
– 1080 SEK per room/night – 6 nights ..... 6 480 SEK (985 USD)

Towels cost 15 SEK extra.