

Report and Documentation
June 2007



Real Tales from Denmark

Danish Children's Theatre on Tour in China
May 18 - June 3 2007



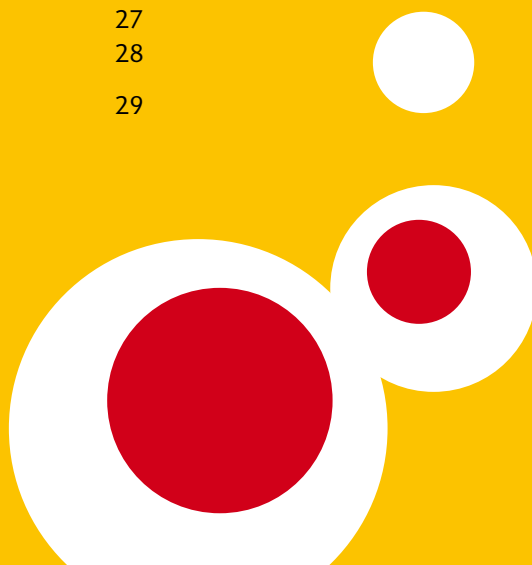
Beijing · Shanghai · Hefei · Xi'an · Fuzhou · Chongqing

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1 Introduction and purpose

“Real Tales from Denmark” was a festival of four Danish Children’s Theatre companies travelling to six cities in China during 17 days in May-June 2007. The four theatre companies were:

- Theatre Batida (Dir. Mr. Søren Ovesen)
- Corona La Balance-National Danish Children Theatre (Dir. Mr. Jørgen Carlslund)
- Teater TT. (Dir. Mr. Torquid Lindebjerg)
- Mr. Jones (Mr. Jens Chr. Holland) & Jimbut (Mr. Jun Feng).

Two tour managers (alternating), Ms. Lene Thiesen (Danish Arts Agency) and Mr. Peter Manscher (ASSITEJ Denmark) and two journalists Ms. Lone Nyhuus (Danish Broadcasting Corporation) and Ms. Vibeke Wern (Berlingske Tidende – a national daily) (alternating) also took part in the tour.

“Real Tales from Denmark” was the first international/foreign children’s theatre festival ever to tour in China. It was also the first major arts touring programme in a new opening up of cultural exchange between Denmark and China. As such a pioneer programme, the project provides important hands on experience on many levels which can inform future initiatives.

The project can be defined as an independent i.e. non governmental initiative. The tour was initiated and co-ordinated in China by Marina Guo, director of Sunspirit Cultural Development Co. The Danish Cultural Institute in Beijing provided a vital Danish – Chinese link in Beijing, the four participating theatre companies and ASSITEJ Denmark established a project team in Denmark. Lene Thiesen, Danish Arts Agency, provided the contact to the Danish funding system and together with ASSITEJ and Theatre Batida managed the overall co-ordination for the Danish side.

The project received 450.000 DKK from The Danish Arts Agency and Arts Council – grants which covered international travel, cargo and partial fees. The Chinese partners paid for all local costs (sightseeing days included!).

41 full length performances were presented which makes the public “cost” per performance in China 11.000 DKK – an extraordinarily low price for a pioneering project on a new continent. The low cost budget also reflects the very high level of local Chinese engagement and support to share the full budget costs.

Project Goals

The main goals of the project were :

- to initiate contacts in China which could provide the framework for cultural exchange in the field of children’s theatre.
- to share experiences with Chinese colleagues and creative environment in the Chinese children’s theatre sector on current practices (arts/management/policy level) and in particular to present the “model” of children’s theatre in Denmark including the relationships to young audiences (both the artistic and the conceptual level).
- to present a multi-layered pilot programme for the Chinese public and also for the professional sector including performances, workshops, seminars.

2 Background

2.1 PROJECT PLANNING - STEP BY STEP

April 2005

Flemming Holk, former president of ASSITEJ Denmark, met Ms. Marina Guo, Operation Director of the Shanghai International Children's Theatre Festival and Director of Shanghai Sunspirit Culture Development Co. Ltd. at Belfast Children Festival, and made recommendation about Danish participation in Shanghai Festival 2005.

July 2005

Holbæk Teater presented 'Sweet Heaven' – a Hans Christian Andersen production at Shanghai International Children's Theatre Festival to celebrate Andersen's 200th anniversary.

Sept. 2005

A delegation from Danish Arts Agency (incl. Lene Thiesen) visited China in relation to the opening by the Danish Minister of Culture of a new Danish Cultural Institute in Beijing. The Shanghai programme included a meeting with Marina Guo, expressing an interest to visit the annual children's theatre festival in Denmark.

Jan. 2006

Huang Rui and Bérénice Angrémy from DIAF festival, Dashanzi Art District, Beijing, paid a 5 day long visit to Denmark, including a first discussion with Peter Manscher, ASSITEJ Denmark, where the directors expressed an interest in presenting Danish children's there at DIAF festival, May 2007.

April 2006

Marina Guo – with the assistance from The Danish Cultural Institute in Beijing – was invited to the annual festival for Children's Theatre (this year in Nykøbing Falster). She was accompanied by the journalist Zhu Guang from Xin Ming Evening News who made a series of reports from the festival.

July 2006

Søren Ovesen (Theatre Batida & member of ASSITEJ's board) visited China and the Shanghai Children's Theater Festival. Initial brain-storming meeting with Marina Guo re. the idea of a tour with Danish children's theatre in China.

Oct. 2006

Nick Yu, manager and producer of Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center visited Cph. as guest at the Showcase "Part.dk", organised by KIT and met with Søren Ovesen and Lene Thiesen. William Sun, the deputy president of Shanghai Theatre Academy visited Cph. and met with Søren Ovesen and Lene Thiesen.

Nov. 2006

Peter Manscher, Head of ASSITEJ Denmark office, paid a 2-day visit to Shanghai to get acquainted with the theatre sector and further discussions with Shanghai Sunspirit Cultural Development Co. and the Danish Cultural Institute re. a Danish Touring Festival in 2007.

Nov. - Dec. 2006

China: Feasibility study about the proposal of Danish Touring Festival in China 2007.

Marina Guo forwarded medio Nov. an official preliminary proposal to Danish Arts Council for a touring festival of 5 Danish companies in 8 cities in China. The financial model was based on the premise that China would cover all local expenses in China if the Danish side would provide funding for international travel, cargo and fees.

Denmark: 1. Dec. Preliminary proposal formed the first formal application to The Danish Arts Council's Committee for Performing Arts.

Jan. - Feb. 2006

China: Development of festival administration, including license applications, contact to local organisers, fundraising from local and commercial sources (to cover national travel, cargo, per diems, hotels etc.)

Denmark: Detailed budgeting, discussions with partners re. programme, internal discussions at Danish Arts Council (to cover international travel etc.)

Jan. 19: The Danish Arts Council's Committee for Performing Arts (DACCPA) awards a grant of 200.000DKK which covered approx. 40% of minimum budget for Danish side. Project still on hold due to only part funding from Danish side. Conditional letter of support from DACCPA given to Chinese partners January 25.

Ultimo Jan.: Peter Manscher, ASSITEJ, on a week-long visit to China in order to check up on theatres and venues in the participating cities (Shanghai, Beijing, Hefei, Xi'an, Fuzhou – and negotiating with additional cities, Wuxi and Kuming). He is accompanied by Marina Guo and Flora Guo.

Medio Febr 2007

Additional 250.000 DKK awarded from Danish Arts Agency, Steering Committee for International Collaboration. Project given formal green light to Danish theatres and to involved partners in China.

March - May 2007

Denmark: Production planning period for the project of three months. This is co-ordinated by Theatre Batida (for theatre companies) and Lene Thiesen (Danish Art Agency/Centre for Performing Arts) on the Danish side.

Visit by Marina Guo ultimo April in connection with the annual Children's Theatre Festival in Viborg to discuss final details, touring schedules and finances. Following this, contracts issued ultimo April.

China: Continued local preparations and funding plus formalities.

May 16 - June 3

Tour in China

2.2 PROGRAMME SELECTION

The final programme selection was a process of negotiation between the Chinese partners (hosts and organisers) and the Danish Arts Council's Committee for Performing Arts.

- 1) As the first festival of its kind, the Chinese hosts valued accessible productions for larger audiences and this factor supported the choice of Hans Christian Andersen productions. The question of audience size was crucial for the Chinese partners (partly a question of tradition, partly of large scale venues and partly financial considerations).
- 2) The second set of parameters were technical flexibility and also technical requirements

i.e. the wish for highly flexible productions. These parameters reflected the very varied level of local facilities and technical resources available and also costs.

3) Thirdly, practical circumstances also played a large role including availability of Danish companies.

4) Fourthly, the productions had to have a high visual and/or musical character.

Theatre Batida was the first choice of the Chinese partner wanting to secure both quality and lightweight productions for larger audiences

After having consulted a number of possible groups (including Det Lille Turnéteater, Meridiano*, Apollo Theatre and Uppercut Dance Theatre) a final selection of three groups with clear and independent profiles was agreed to by all partners:

Theatre Batida – a musical theatre ensemble with 9 actors/musicians performing 2 productions : “Grande Finale” and “A Wonderful Trio”

Corona La Balance (The National Danish Children Theatre) with a dance-theatre production “Tolo on his Way” with live music

Teater TT with a poetic mime piece “The Fly”

The clear priority of the Chinese partners to have a Hans Christian Andersen programme caused some difficulties. As only few performances based on HCA were in the Danish repertoire at this time and a number were not approved by the Committee for Performing Arts this was problematic. In order to comply with the Chinese local partners’ increasingly stronger interest for a HCA contribution, which was seen as “essential” to engage local partners and audience interest, a special introduction of 15 min. by **Jens Chr. Holland’s** (Mr. Jones) about Hans Christian Andersen life and oeuvre was rehearsed and added to the programme with the Chinese poet **Jimbut** as interpreter and co-actor.

2.3 PARTNERS IN CHINA

Danish contact China:	Dir. Eric Messerschmidt - The Danish Cultural Institute (DCI)
Partner China:	Dir. Marina Guo – Shanghai Sunspirit Cultural Development Co. Ltd.
Local partner Beijing :	Dir. Bérénice Angrémy - Thinking Hands Culture Co Ltd. (in collaboration with DCI)
Local partner Hefei:	Mr. Tan Huyuan – Hefei Government Affairs & Culture New District Development & Investment Co. Ltd.
Local partner Shanghai:	Dir. of programming Nick Yu - Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center
Local partner Xi’an :	Dir. Lilly Li & Zhou Xiaoli - Shanxi Beautiful Culture & Comm. Co. Ltd.
Local partner Fuzhou:	Mr. Zhen Shuqing - Fuzhou Golden Age Cultural Development Co. Ltd.
Local partner Chongqing:	Mr. Yu Lin - Chongqing Zhendian Cultural Development Co. Ltd.

* As Meridiano Theatre was originally selected and non-available in May, the company was subsequently invited to China by the Chinese partner’s annual Children’s International Theatre Festival in Shanghai in July 2007.

3 Organisation

3.1 OVERALL ORGANISATION IN DENMARK

The pre-planning period was 13 months (Sept. 05 - Oct. 06) which included the first tentative meetings and visits plus identification of partners.

The overall planning period was five months - from first Chinese proposal in November 06 to actual departure in May 07.

The partners were aware that five months of preparation and planning was extremely short or such a complex project in an insecure context and environment and a limited budget.

In more ideal situations a planning process of one year would be normal.

The high risk of the project was made clear for all participants.

The main contributing factors of "high risk" were:

- limited time for planning
- limited resources for preparations incl. lack of full time tour manager
- difficulties of language, cultural understanding, structural and political structures
- differences in artistic and cultural concepts

The decision to carry out the project despite these high risks was based on the fact that this was a unique opportunity which might not exist in 2008 or indeed after, as everything would depend on the outcome of the Olympic Games.

The planning and management task was shared between:

- ASSITEJ, who launched the co-operation with China and assisted with tour management in China for part of the tour.
- Theatre Batida who - due to lack of time/resources at ASSITEJ - took over project management ultimo February 07 (main tasks: travel, visa, cargo), supported by
- Lene Thiesen (Danish Arts Agency/Centre for Performing Arts) (main tasks: budget, contracts, fundraising, publicity).

This very 'flat' structure had advantages and disadvantages. It was a disadvantage not to have one ongoing project co-ordinator and contact person who secured the communication with China. However, it proved to be an advantage during the actual tour as the logistics were shared and this proved to be advantageous in solving specific problems.

In the long run, the shared management and leadership strengthened the organisation, involvement and sense of responsibility.

The inclusion of the Danish based Chinese interpreter in the project (the poet Jimbut) was an important factor which solved many practical difficulties and also enabled a broader cultural contact in China.

3.2 ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE TOUR IN CHINA

In China, two main contacts/partners were responsible for the tour:

- for Beijing: Eric Messerschmidt, The Danish Cultural Institute
- for other cities: Marina Guo, Shanghai Sunspirit Cultural Development Co.Ltd.

Since this was in fact a pilot project in China, the tour was highly dependent on these two main partners' input, skills and commitment, their experience in managing arts and theatre tours in particular and on their relations with the professional performing arts environment and media

The two partners' main tasks were:

- to find suitable and reliable local partners
- to obtain licences from the Ministry of Culture to perform
- to secure communication to the local performing arts environments
- to secure local transport of persons
- to handle international cargo from the Chinese side

Local partners in the four cities were contracted by Sunspirit Cultural Development Co. to manage all aspects of their city's programme. These partners were independent agents and all were officially registered as official cultural agencies. They were all responsible for the securing of facilities, production as well as PR. All local agents bought the production(s) from Sunspirit and these fees included payment to cover Sunspirit's agency's own management costs.

In some cases, local "agents" work with local government (like in Xi'an) and can engage the support of the city or region in presenting programmes. In other cases they act independently and commercially with local sponsors. The conditions for presenting international theatre/art are therefore highly individual and often extremely complex. In this case, there are two "levels" of agencies involved and both have to cover their own costs via project budgets.

This model of engaging local presenters is a normal touring model but it does, however, require that there is transparency, a good flow of information and knowledge, and most of all the right choice of main partner.

Although the model did function well on an overall level – and indeed this model is the only model available unless one undertakes a full state-sponsored national tour. There were, however, some cases of lack of information on the local level, mainly related to the location for the artistic presentation. However, these situations are completely normal in international touring but are far more troublesome in China due to language and cultural differences or simple lack of communication means.

Beijing

The Danish Cultural Institute in collaboration with a local cultural organisation Thinking Hands, located in the 798 Dashanzi Art District, handled Beijing.

The performances in Beijing took place in two venues:

- Chaoyong 9 Theater, centre of Beijing, functioned well. The venue had done a successful outreach job with the neighbouring schools
- South Gate Space in Dashanzi Art district, in the periphery of Beijing, proved to be a more difficult choice of venue as this avant-garde arts district apparently did not make it a natural venue for the public we wished to attract for children's theatre. The Danish programme was initially part of a larger arts festival which had to be cancelled (DIAF festival) which partly explains the lack of audience.

There was approx. one hour's drive between the two theatres, and with a constantly changing programme which in itself was too ambitious. This impractical programme resulted in unnecessary set up conditions (with 700 kg. cargo and sets) which required additional preparation time overall for the programme and which resulted in unnecessary complications and in some cases lowered the artistic level of the work.

The collaboration between the Danish and the Beijing organisers (and between the two Beijing organisers) could have been better prepared, and lessons have been learned by all the partners involved. A more detailed and formally production plan agreed to by all partners would have solved many of these complications.

It is, however important to stress that the two venues both provided the intimacy, which the Danish companies cherish.

Hefei, Shanghai, Chongqing, Fuzhou, Xi'an

Shanghai Sunspirit Cultural Co. had the overall responsibility for the other five cities.

Generally, the logistics worked out well, except with regards to the ever present problem of having to deal with major venues which were basically too large for children's theatre. On the other hand, these mainstream venues did heighten the visibility of the events.

Sunspirit, our Chinese partner, did communicate the max. number of spectators to local partners and asked them to respect these and use smaller venues. Sunspirit, however, only partly succeeded in persuading the local partners to limit audiences.

Moreover, smaller, intimate venues often do not exist as part of the Chinese cultural infrastructure (and if they did, they were often so shabby that the Chinese didn't want to invite international groups to perform there) and if there were, they could not generate the necessary ticket income base. In the frenetic state of the market economy it is very hard to persuade a Chinese partner not to fill large venues to the maximum.

In some cities i.e. Hefei and Chongqing the performances were offered free for school children. Whether paid by the City council or a private sponsor, they wanted naturally to give this opportunity to as many children as possible.

Those partners who had the opportunity to see the same performance in a small and a larger venue realised the difference of quality, but not all seemed convinced of the standard Danish practice of strictly limiting audiences to maximise concentration. This was however easier to agree on when collaborating with partners with knowledge of performing arts (Shanghai and Xi'an).

Not surprisingly the best venue was the professional Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center. This huge complex of three major theatres also hosted the 3 workshops and a seminar. It was also in Shanghai that we had the most meaningful dialogue with professional Chinese colleagues. Therefore it was a great pity that the performances of Corona La Balance and Teater TT had to be cancelled due to our Chinese partner's last minute loss of a sponsor in Shanghai.

4 Programme

4.1 DAY-BY-DAY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

City	Date	Event	Media/Organizer/Address	Participants	Audience
Beijing	17	Reception at The Danish Embassy	DCI	4 representatives	
	18	Performance: Tolo on the Way	Chaooyang 9 Theater	Corona La Balance	100
		Concert Danish EU Youth Jazz Orchestra	DCI	8 representatives	
	19	Performance: Tolo on the Way	South Gate Space	Corona La Balance	30
		Performance: Tolo on the Way	South Gate Space	Corona La Balance	25
		Opening Bjørn Nørgaard exhibition	DCI	10 representatives	
		TV-interview	Xi'an TV	E. Messerschmidt, Jimbut, J Carlslund, L.Thiesen	
	20	Performance: The Fly	Chaooyang 9 Theater	Theatre TT	150
		Performance: The Fly	South Gate Space	Theatre TT	20
		Performance: Tolo on the Way	Chaooyang 9 Theater	Corona La Balance	100
	22	Beijing Children Arts Theatre	DCI	Almost all	
		Performance: Tolo on the Way	Chaooyang 9 Theater	Corona La Balance	80
		Performance: The Fly	Chaooyang 9 Theater	Theatre TT	30
		Workshop	Thinking Hands Dashanzi Art District	T. Lindebjerg, J. Carlslund, S. Ovesen, Jimbut	35
	23	Performance: Grande Finale	Dashanzi Art District	Batida	300
		Performance: Wonderful Trio	South Gate Space	Batida	60
Hefei	24	Press Meeting	Lobby, Hong Xiang Hotel	All	
		Welcome reception, Hong Xiang Hotel, Banquet Hall	Hefei hosts (Cultural Dept.)	All	
	25	Reception/City Hall/Mayor	City Hall, VIP room	All	
		Official Opening, Danish Culture Week. Speeches, gifts for orphans. HCA Story	City Hall Theatre	All	600
		Performance: Grande Finale	City Hall Theatre	Batida	600
		Performance: Wonderful Trio	City Hall Theatre	Batida	600
		Seminar incl. presentation of promotion DVD	Hefei Lai Shaoqi Arts Museum	P Manscher, T. Lindebjerg, M. Guo, J. Carlslund, S. Hauch, L. Christensen	30
		When East meet West. Peking opera incl. demonstrations	Anhui Peking Opera House	All	
	26	Performance: Andersen Story + Grande Finale	Sport Center	Batida + JC Holland, Jimbut	600
		Performance: Tolo on the Way	City Hall Theatre	Corona La Balance	500
Performance: The Fly		City Hall Theatre	Theatre TT	500	
Extracts from performances, musical games. Community Programme		Songdu Community	Batida, Theatre TT, Corona La Balance, JC Holland, Jimbut	100	
Performance and extracts. "Nordic Carnival"		Swan Lake (out-door)	JC Holland, Jimbut, Extracts from Corona La Balance Theatre TT Batida Grande	800	

City	Date	Event	Media/Organizer/Address	Participants	Audience
Shanghai	28	Performance: Grande Finale	Theater Arts Salon	Batida	70
		Seminar: Theatre at Eye Level http://www.zhuaxia.com/item/345707329	Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center	J. Carlslund, T. Lindebjerg, S. Hauch, P. Manscher	70
		3 Workshops: From Idea to Performance http://china-drama.com/NewsShow.asp?ID=wfClpFBJbl409v3gT08rThl	Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center	1: Søren Ovesen 2: Torkild Lindebjerg 3: Jørgen Carlslund	1: 25 2: 25 3: 25
	29	Per: Grande Finale (extracts, mu. Games)	Kindergarten	Batida	120
		Performance: Grande Finale	American School	Batida	300
Chongqing	28	Welcome Ceremony	CQ Datong Elementary School	JC Holland, Jimbut	(1100)
	28	Performance: Andersen Story	CQ Datong Elementary School	JC Holland, Jimbut	500
	29	Performance: Andersen Story	CQ Youngchuan Gymnasium	JC Holland, Jimbut	500
Fuzhou	30	Performance: Tolo on the Way	Fujian Ming Theatre	Corona La Balance	200
		Performance: Tolo on the Way	Fujian Ming Theatre	Corona La Balance	200
	31	Performance: Tolo on the Way	Fujian Ming Theatre	Corona La Balance	200
		Performance: Tolo on the Way	Fujian Ming Theatre	Corona La Balance	180
Xi'an	30	Welcome reception incl. VIPs (speeches, exchanging gifts etc.)	Baixing Restaurant	Batida, Theatre TT, Peter Manscher, Vibeke Wern	
	31	Charity Programme, Deaf School. Andersen Story, The Fly	Deaf School	Theatre TT, JC Holland, Jimbut	300
	June 1	Andersen Story. Children's Day event	Pearl Home Mart	JC Holland, Jimbut	800
		Performance: Grande Finale, HCA Story	Pearl Home Mart	Batida, JC Holland, Jimbut	800
		Performance: The Fly	Xi'an Xin Cheng Theatre	Theatre TT	300
		Performance: Grande Finale	Xi'an Yisu Theatre	Batida	600
		Performance: The Fly	Xi'an Xin Cheng Theatre	Theatre TT	300
		Performance: Grande Finale, HCA Story	Xi'an Yisu Theatre	Batida, JC Holland, Jimbut	1000
	2	Andersen Story	Xi'an Ziwei Square (outdoor)	JC Holland, Jimbut	250
		Perf: Grande Finale, musical games	Xi'an Ziwei Sq. (outdoor)	Batida	250
		Creative drawing/ painting. Celebrating Children's Day. Speeches, Andersen Story. Theme "Dream, Hope, Love"	Greenland Community	Peter Manscher, JC Holland, Jimbut	200
		Performance: The Fly	Pearl Square Theatre	Theatre TT	1200
		Performance: Wonderful Trio incl. HCA intro.	Shanxi Folk Art Theatre	Batida, JC Holland, Jimbut	100
		Performance: Wonderful Trio incl. HCA intro.	Shanxi Folk Art Theatre	Batida	100
		Performance: Grande Finale, Andersen Story	Pearl Square North (outdoor)	Batida, JC Holland, Jimbut	300

4.2 PROGRAMME KEY FIGURES

No. of performances: 39 (plus 10 short 'Andersen Story' introductions)

No. of compiled shows: 2

No. of offered tickets (estimated): 25.000

No. of sold tickets: 4.700

No. of audience: 16.000

No. of workshops: 4

No. of participants: 120

No. of seminars: 3

No of participants: 90

No. of cities involved: 6 (4 with full programme)

No. of partners/agents: 8

4.3 MEETING THE CHINESE AUDIENCE

Was it a successful meeting? Yes, but it was not all plain sailing. And first of all the overall problem of too many spectators had to be faced.

In Beijing we had a very lively audience, somewhat livelier than the Danish one and with parents coming and going. However, all in all it was successful.

In Hefei we realised that theatre audience attitudes in China can be very different from Europe. It is acceptable that you eat, drink, come and go, speak on mobile phones, and that there are often too many people etc. Something had to be done. An introduction before the performances by one of our Chinese assistants changed the attitude radically. She told the children how Danish children behaved, and asked them to ask their parents to turn off the mobiles, and introduced the performance. There was total silence. Chinese children can apparently understand authoritative messages. This method was used for all remaining performances. We also added a voice over by Jimbut, our Chinese interpreter, during Batida's two performances and experienced a totally different audience concentration – an important lesson.

This direct contact, logically, decreased the audience's eagerness to come onto stage after the performance which is normal in China in order to have a photo taken with the actors (bless America!). On a few occasions especially outdoors, the actors improvised some rhythmic games with the children.

The principle of strict age groups was impossible to respect for performances. Another cultural difference! But it mostly worked out fine. However, there is no doubt that the few times where school classes of the "right age group" (like the last "Tolo on his way" in Beijing), the overall experience for audience and performers was definitely maximised.

With good physical conditions and with well "prepared" audiences, the performances functioned extremely well. And it is encouraging to note that the Chinese children's reactions were very similar to Danish - they laugh at the same things, as they are touched by the same things.

5 Press, publicity & marketing

5.1 IN DENMARK

A press release was launched by the Danish Arts Agency May 15, the day before departure. No resources available to follow up the news. We produced a simple, well designed 16-pages brochure with text in English and Chinese was produced for our Chinese partners (printed in China and forwarded to our two main contacts in Beijing and Shanghai). Two journalists were invited by Chinese partners to cover the tour: Lone Nyhuus (DR/Danish Broadcasting Corporation) covered Beijing and Hefei and Vibeke Wern (Berlingske Tidende) covered Hefei, Shanghai and Xi'an. See list of press (9.1). No resources to follow up on the successful trip upon return.

A series of interesting radio programmes in DR/Danish Broadcasting Corporation as well a 2-pages reflective article in the national quality daily newspaper Berlingske Tidende, by the two participating journalists Lone Nyhuus and Vibeke Wern, summarised many aspects of this project's mission and reality.

5.2. IN CHINA

The programme brochures, produced in Denmark, were mostly useful in Beijing and Shanghai where they supplemented the cities' own well-designed brochure and poster. In the provincial cities they produced local material with design which mostly had a more fairytale like emphasis.

The overall press- and media coverage was impressive especially in Xi'an and Hefei. These two cities had also produced massive banners decorating the theatres and often also the hotel where we stayed. The festival was clearly visible in the cities.

We had newspaper coverage in all cities, sometimes with full pages of photos. The written press was mostly reduced to previews and 'welcoming' texts, very few proper critics, apart from a couple of interviews, which is quite normal for cultural events of this type.

TV media were very active in Hefei and Xi'an. The regional Shaanxi TV (Xi'an) came to Beijing to do a series of interview with directors and managers which turned into a daily slot for 10 days. In Xi'an the festival was covered twice direct on the main news.

In the responses to the questionnaires the Chinese partners rate the most useful tools of marketing (see 7.2.) and it's clear that Beijing varies from the other cities. In Beijing it's posters, flyers and direct mail. In the other cities the TV and other news media are a decisive factor.

It comes in most cases down to resources. In China most publicity must be paid for. You often have to pay, not only for the marketing products, but also for the press release, the TV slot, the radio.

6 Finances

6.1 FINANCIAL KEY FIGURES

The total budget of the project is estimated at some **1.309.000 DDK**.

This includes the Danish programme costs covered by The Danish Art Agency (DAA) and The Danish Arts Council (DAC), the in kind support from the Danish companies (reduced fees, manpower etc). In addition to this comes the estimated budget on the Chinese side. This includes the primary costs of the tour organisation and management, local transport, hotels, food all of which were covered in cash and estimated at 500.000 DKK (670.000 RMB). Plus a secondary budget for venues, technical facilities and publicity which was in some cities offered in kind. This is estimated to 174.000 DKK (230.000 RMB).

Primary budget DAA/DAC	450.000	34%
Secondary budget Danish partners (estimated)	185.000	14%
Primary budget, Chinese partners (estimated)	500.000	38%
Secondary budget, Chinese partners in kind (estimated)	174.000	14%
Total budget (in DKK)	1.309.00	100%

Danish grants:

The Danish Arts Agency (Steering Committee for Int. Collaboration)	250.000
The Danish Arts Council's Committee for Performing Arts	100.000
Danish Arts Agency/Centre for Performing Arts	100.000
Total	450.000

Estimated costs per full-length performance: 32.000 DKK incl. cash & in kind costs

Grants from Danish Arts Agency & Arts Council per performance: 11.000 DKK

Estimated costs per audience member: 81 DKK

Grants from Danish Arts Agency & Arts Council per audience member: 27,50 DKK.

6.2 DANISH PROGRAMME COSTS (BUDGET AND ACTUAL COSTS):

Budget Costs

22.03.07	Travel	Cargo	Fee	Insuran/visa	PR	Other	Total
Batida (10)	75.000	10.000	100.000	7.000			192.000
Corona La Balance (4)	30.000	10.000	0	6.400			46.400
Teatret TT (2)	15.000	15.000	30.000	5.400			65.400
J.C. Holland (1)	0 *	0	8.000 **	700			8.700
Jimbut (1)	7.500	0	10.000	600			18.100
Turnéleder (1)	7.500	0	0	100			7.600
Assitej prep. Travel						10.000	10.000
Assitej fee						30.000	30.000
Seminar/wshops						10.000	10.000
General					10.000		10.000
Diverse						50.000	50.000
Total	135.000	35.000	148.000	20.200	10.000	100.000	448.200
Actual Costs							
02.07.07 (see below)	157.422	44.713	185.000	9.802	29.300	22.791	449.028

Note * Sun Spirit pays Holland's travel

Note** plus a suppl. fee from Sun Spirit (500€)

Actual Costs

02.07.07	Travel	Cargo	Fee	Insuran/visa	PR	Other	Total
Batida (10)		3.000	100.000	4.500		2.184	109.684
Corona La Balance		4.513	0			355	4.868
Teater TT		2.200	30.000	1.002		751	33.953
Holland			10.000			2.500 props	12.500
Jimbut			15.000				15.000
Journalists							
ASSITEJ (Jan. 07)	12.887		30.000				42.887
General	144.535 ¹			4.300	29.300 ³	9.001 transp. + gifts	187.136
Reserve		35.000 ²				8.000 ³	43.000
Total	157.422	44.713	185.000	9.802	29.300	22.791	449.028

¹⁾ Deducted 1 1/2 travel, covered by Sunspirit

²⁾ Estimated cargo to pay in July 07

³⁾ Reserve for unforeseen expenses

7 Reflections

The following views have been compiled after focus group meeting with the Danish participants and are based on direct statements of the members.

7.1 MEETING THE CHINESE AUDIENCE

The growing Chinese Middle Class (200 mill.) has an ambition that their children should participate in culture as a meeting place with the modern world. With well developed cultural backgrounds themselves they dream of giving their own children access to exclusive, international culture which will enrich and inform them. With relatively few international, contemporary programmes offered in China, there is a huge demand for international and quality art and culture for children. In other words, there is both growing interest and the growing financial base to attract cultural activities which can reflect the contemporary world and children's theatre ranks high on this list. Danish children's theatre was therefore received with openness and curiosity.

This underlines the growing potential to present Danish children's theatre which definitely could play a role in China and the Chinese society. There are some problems regarding the physical/ technical conditions for children's theatre but when the conditions are right, there is no doubt that the productions function well and the audiences react very well indeed.

Tickets prices were from 30 to 130RMB and a teacher earns 2.400 RMB per month which means that the audiences prioritise these events highly. One local organiser (in Hefei) bought performances to ensure that the whole community had the opportunity to become involved. Perhaps could one encourage more communities to participate in this way.

7.2 MEETING OUR PARTNERS

Dissemination of tours and productions functions very differently from Denmark. The local contacts are usually independent agents who have to act on the basis of the market economy in this state controlled liberal society.

The keen TV & media interest gives the organisers an exceptional opportunity to increase their 'visibility', but it also runs the risk to move the focus from the artistic substance to the event itself. The sometimes very visible promotion of the event before and after the performance can be a very distracting factor for the artists. Such situations could be taken into consideration already during the contract phase.

In order to balance and fulfill the many different expectations, the Chinese partners advocated (ideally) staging larger and more diverse programmes with more productions suitable to be performed for larger audiences of 500 plus.

The integrity of the scenic presentation is still an issue at stake. Some of the Danish participating companies regretted not to have brought the full set design to China (too much hassle to find e.g. a dance floor), while some Chinese partners were persuaded that less will do, or recommended to actually produce some of the heavier props in China.

All in all, the collaboration with our Chinese partners went extraordinarily well, the differences in culture and language taken into consideration. A couple of them grew very quickly into fruitful professional meetings.

See also 'Summary of Chinese partners' response to the questionnaires (7.4).

7.3 MEETING OUR COLLEAGUES

There was limited opportunity to see and meet local Chinese children's theatre. Much of what was seen – apart from a great classical shadow theatre - was influenced by the large scale popular American shows. Nevertheless we saw evidence of China's highly skilled actors, with extraordinary technical ability as we sat in for the rehearsals of Beijing Children Art Theatre (for a production about Hans Christian Andersen's life). The visit to Hefei's Peking Opera was an uplifting experience and convinced us that China's unique traditional form of theatre, dance and music is exceptional. It is clear that the two very different ways of producing theatre for children can learn from each other.

Another prime goal was to generate individual, professional contacts and to test the meeting of two very different cultures. This was in particular evident in connection with some of the workshops and seminars which were held.

During the workshops and the seminars the Danish directors were positively surprised to meet Chinese artists in an open and creative atmosphere and they all agree that there is basis for a long term process-orientated exchanges.

However, it is clear that there could be a higher degree of two way communications in future programmes. A balanced partnership is the basis for any successful collaboration and the "export perspective" should be replaced by an "intercultural perspective" as the starting point. As part of this, it is important in this process that Chinese partners from the theatre sector are continually invited to Denmark in order to see, meet and engage in dialogue and in concrete projects with their Danish colleagues.

The Danish participants agree that the experience has given a useful knowledge base re. theatre and the arts in China which means that they are far better equipped to be able to operate in this field, in order to ask the right questions and also, not the least, understand the answers.

7.4 SUMMARY OF CHINESE PARTNERS' RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRES

A 3-pages questionnaire was sent to all 8 partners in China. All returned the questionnaire or sent comments otherwise.

The **Beijing** response was very positive about the overall programme, although the income from the performances did not at all cover local costs. The most useful marketing tools were public flyers, posters and direct mail/outreach to schools. The only serious problem was the lack of information about technical requirements and the cargo, a lesson has been learnt by all involved.

The responses from **Hefei**, **Fuzhou** and **Chongqing**, all contracted by Marina Guo, are fairly similar. They are in general positive towards the quality of the programmes but found it too small and recommended a larger and more diverse programme. The performances more or less matched the target age groups, the quality and level of information were as expected (apart from the cargo transportation), the most useful marketing tools were posters and banners, direct mail/outreach to school and media (TV, newspaper).

The view of the basic financial model varied from organiser to organiser and reflected their very different operating platforms. These varied from acceptable to problematic as the income in some cases did not cover the local costs. The local organisers were largely positive as to considering taking part in a similar project in the future.

The response from **Marina Guo** concerns **Shanghai** but also sum up overall reactions and provides some valuable **proposals for improvement**. Here are her main proposals:

Re: the programme

- 4-6 theatres with 6-8 productions would be the right size of a touring festival for China. 400-600 spectators shall be average number for better presenting and tour in China.
- 8-12 actors on stage & 60 min. show shall be popular.
- 3-10 years age group are the majority of children theatre audience in China.

Re: the seminar

- invite Chinese theatre professionals and local partners to join the panel discussion in order to create a two-way communication, sharing information and exchanging viewpoints.

Re: the impact of the project

- to ensure a give and take process, the Danish partner shall consider promoting and exchanging Chinese culture and theatre to Denmark.
- a further step would be producing a co-production of children's theatre. The Danish Children's Theatre Festival could consider presenting one show/workshop from China.

Re: Contact to Danish partner

- The challenge is how to across the cultural difference and to transfer the message from the Danish partners to Chinese partners, and help to build up understanding of Danish theatre by presenting performances in the best possible way to the local audiences.

Re: the financial model

- since the Danish children's theatres only will accept a limited number of audience, commercial operation e.g. by box office only will not work in China.
- government supports, with sponsored funding plus media involvement should be the main financial model for Chinese partners.

8 Collaborations and future initiatives

June 2007

A working group with members of the participating Danish companies of the recent tour has set up a small committee who will continuously develop the network with Chinese colleagues and explore the possibilities of developing the Chinese-Danish exchange project already in 2008.

July 2007

Meridiano Teatret will present "Genesis" at Shanghai International Children's Theatre Festival and tour to Fuzhou and Wuhan (July 19 –Aug. 7).

April 2008

A number of Chinese professionals (probably a mix of theatre professionals and regional government politicians) will be invited to the coming Children's Theatre Festival in Næstved in order to strengthen the professional exchange with future concrete projects in mind.

May/June 2008

Theater Batida has been invited back for a 10 day long presentation at Shanghai's prestigious Dramatic Art Centre.

Within other areas of performing arts there has been an increasing contact since 2005, which until now has resulted in a Live Art performance weekend at Louisiana museum and Beijing artists' contribution to the Biennale "Metropolis", organised by KIT (Copenhagen International Theatre) in August 2007, a collaboration between Kulturhus Aarhus and BeiLab (Beijing) and a collaboration between Holland House and Thinking Hands/DIAF Festival (Beijing).

9 Conclusions

There is a clear potential for Danish children's theatre in China on different levels

- as pure touring programmes to major cities providing necessary funding available
- as more complex residencies, including workshops, seminars as well as performances
- as potential collaborators for co-productions using actors /directors/set designers/ musicians from both countries.

The participating Danish theatre companies and ASSITEJ all expressed their interest in developing future projects and have for that purpose set up a working group "Real Tales". There is a keen interest among the Danish directors to set up a series of workshops and in the longer perspective to co-produce with their Chinese colleagues.

An infrastructure of agents, local organisers and venues had been established who are all interested to develop programmes and to support programmes with own funding, facilities. However, it is clear that in order to allay the Chinese demand for bigger audience performances and the Danish wish to stay small, government and/or sponsor play a key role.

And even if the financial means could be found, it's still an issue how to relate the Chinese demand for large audiences to a Danish children's theatre tradition that rarely wants more than 200 in the theatre.

The finances of the project are encouraging and show that co-funding models can be found and that costs can be kept to an acceptable level as regards Danish funding.

The project has created a good resonance in the media in China and to a lesser extent in Denmark.

As regards specific follow up activities, it is advised:

- to investigate possibilities to work with The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Asia programme) and DCCD (Danish Centre for Culture and Development) regarding co-funding, potential transfer of knowledge and competence regarding children's culture.
- to investigate the possibility to engage selected cities or regions in Denmark who are interested to develop programmes of exchanges with children's culture in particular the twin cities (Århus/Harbin, Ballerup/Wuzi, Ålborg/Hefei a.o.).
- to investigate the potential of tailoring programmes to meet the Chinese reality and to be able to perform for larger audiences in the mainstream venues.
- to investigate the potential to engage another art forms in a broader project, including film, visual arts, music as there is a huge need and potential for programmes which engage and activate the Chinese children and also extend their knowledge of contemporary world. This could indeed also be a new platform for Denmark which would fit well with Denmark's competence.

10 Documentation

10.1 LIST OF PRESS AND TV COVERAGE (IN CHINA AND DK)

Press Release – Media List – China

City	Media	Column	Time	Times
Beijing	Beijing Weekly (Engl. Ed)	Culture	May 12	1
	Beijing Morning Post	Events	May 16	1
	BeijingYouth Daily	Events	May 23	1
Xi'an	Chinese Business View	Culture	from May 18-June 3	7
	Xi'an Evening News	Culture & Entert.	from May 18-June 3	8
	Shan Xi TV	City Express	from May 17- June 4	12
	Xi'an TV	Life Xi'an	from May 17- June 4	11
	Xi'an Radio	Travel & trafic	2007-5-31 3:00pm	1
	Shan Xi TV	Hotline	May 27 evening	1
	Shan Xi TV	Talkshow Theatre	May 31 11pm	1
	Shan Xi TV	Hello	May 31	1
Shanghai	Shanghai Daily	Culture & Entert. (whole page)	May 24 C2	1
	Shanghai Theatre	Magazine	Aug. edition	1
	Kiddy Time	Magazine	July edition	1
Hefei	Hefei Evening	Front page	May 25	1
	Hefei Evening	Culture News	May 24	1
	Anhui Market Post	Culture	May 24	1
	XinAn Evening News	Hefei Service	May 24	1
	Anhui Business News	front page	May 26	1
	Jianghuai Morning Post	Entertainment	May 26	1
	XinAn Evening News	Real Estate News	May 31	1
	Anhui Business News	Real Estate News	May 31	1
	Jianghuai Morning Post	front page	May 25	1
Fuzhou	Fujian News	Culture	May 31	1
	Fuzhou Evening News	Culture & Entert.	May 31	1
	Channel City News	Entertainment	May 31	1
	Fujian TV	all-around channel	May 30	2
	Fujian TV	News channel	May 30	2
	Fujian TV	Children channel	May 31	2
Chongqing	Chongqing Morning News	Culture	May 30	1

Press in Denmark

City	Date	Event	Media/Organizer/ Address	Participants
Denmark	May 14	Article (web): Dansk Kulturbombardement i Beijing http://www.dankultur.dk/Default.aspx?ID=18&M=News&PID=50&NewsID=78	Det Danske Kulturinstitut	
Denmark	23 6:53- 7:00	Radio P1 Morgen		Lone Nyhuus (direct line), Søren Ovesen (recorded in DK before the trip)
Denmark	June 5 7:50	Radio. P1 Morgen	DR P1 Morgen	Peter Manscher, Jørgen Carlslund

City	Date	Event	Media/Organizer/ Address	Participants
Denmark	June 5 14:00	Radio. P2Plus Tema (live interview Sus Hauch etc., 45 min.)		Sus Hauch
Denmark	June 13	Newspaper article http://www.berlingske.dk/kultur/ artikel:aid=906744	Berlingske Tidende	Vibeke Wern
Kina (web)	June 14	Internet: http://www.zzcc.gov.cn/zzcc/ articles.asp?nid=8604		Lene Thiesen etc.
Denmark	June 24 14:03	Radio. P2 Teatermagasinet Special (30 min.)	DR P2	

10.2 VIBEKE WERN'S ARTICLE (BERLINGSKE TIDENDE) IN CHINESE

儿童高度上的文化出口

(《柏林时报》2007年六月13日。第二版，期刊第六页。作者：维贝卡·威尔恩)

丹麦儿童剧团在中国的先锋之行。尽管有着文化对峙的考验，剧团成功地达成了与观众们的沟通、与专业人士的对话并且把丹麦的儿童艺术观展示给了中国孩子和儿童剧团。

西安：中国人认为儿童剧应当是宏大而壮观的。我们在丹麦则认为亲密和小型的才是好的，而丹麦的儿童剧恰恰是因为孩子们和表演者们的亲密遇会而闻名于世界的。从五月17日到六月4日，在丹麦儿童剧团到中国作先锋性的巡回演出时，恰恰对于大小的看法构成了文化上的差异碰撞，但这也是很有意思的挑战。因为，在中国，人们觉得，为孩子们作演出最好是每次至少有一千个孩子坐在观众席上，而在丹麦，为儿童演出，剧目往往是为一个至多一百五十个孩子的观众席而创作的。在中国，通常要找一个小、给人密切感觉的剧院都会是一个问题，人们当然更愿去让观众占满大剧场的观众席。

另一个本质的区别是丹麦儿童剧和中国儿童剧对儿童的态度。

芭提达剧团的索伦·欧瓦森说：丹麦儿童剧是直接展示儿童的世界而不是隐藏它。在中国的巨大变化发展中成年人不曾进入一种儿童的文化，我觉得商业化和科技崇尚使得成年人忘记了实质性的方面、忘记了孩子也是有着精神生活的独立个体。

上海女图解家王菲在“乐队狂想曲”之后，用流畅的英文说：

“对于我们，看丹麦儿童剧是一种革命。中国儿童剧在近几十年是在沉睡。在共产主义之前，京剧是普遍的家庭表演。今天的儿童剧不是迪斯尼剪贴就是老生常谈，人们总是去避开所有令人不适的感情，诸如死亡。在中国的儿童剧中，过于把孩子看成一种备受保护的小娃娃或者小宠物。因此，对丹麦儿童剧的体验是奇妙的，比如说它谈论死亡、包容本真和戏剧性，同时适合于儿童和成年人。”

这一丹麦儿童剧的先锋之行的组织者一方面是丹麦的 ASSITEJ，——UNESCO 之下的国际儿童青少年戏剧组织的一个部门；一方面是中国的玛丽娜·郭（郭梅君），她是上海儿童戏剧节和文化组织天旭文化发展公司的负责人。巡回的城市有北京合肥上海福州西安，得到丹麦国家艺术委员会舞台艺术委员会和丹麦国家艺术局、中国合作者和诸儿童剧团自身的支持。参与这一旅行的除了芭提达剧团之外，还有 TT 剧团和国家剧团皇冠拉巴朗斯，在这一旅行中各剧团除了作演出之外，还组织了座谈和工作坊，有中国的戏剧学生、教师和各方面艺术家参与。对于就观念和工作方式的讨论和交流（主要是从丹麦艺术家出发而进入中国人们）而言，座谈和工作坊恰恰成了非常重要的交流平台。而在合肥，在一次中方的特别演出中，丹麦儿童剧团的人们则获得了一个对于传统京剧的非常好的介绍。一种将音乐、歌唱、抒情诗、表情、杂技和武术混于一体的艺术形式。在这里，通过《大闹天宫》的表演显示出了中国艺术家们除了去将许多艺术性表达结合在一切的能力之外，还必须具备怎样奇特美妙的规则和技巧。

苍蝇（飞翔）引人入胜

在合肥——一个有差不多七百万人口的现代化城市，西方人在这里是特别的景观——，在我自己参与这一巡回团中时，一个年轻的研究学生贝贝——毕业的演员和主持人而现在继续就读并就读上海戏剧学院，她来机场接我。她翻译并一路帮忙。她站在那里怀里抱着大水杯装有四条游动的金鱼。它们将参与 TT 的第二天的人体小丑剧《苍蝇》，她刚去市场买下它们。

在合肥，市政府楼剧场中的灯光设置通常是用于开大会，现在要改装它们就成了一个大问题。在这由托基尔德·林德比尔格和芬·瑞·彼特森两个人要开始上台演《苍蝇》之前的半小时中，预先订下的舞台地铺仍然没有到达。而在它们终于到达了的时候，他们发现它们是由碎橡胶制成的，他们只好不用它们而继续演出。

在这巡回演出中，这样的实际问题和妥协有很多，就好像预先约定好的事情总是被改变一样。在一个有六百观众的市政剧场中，这两位演员也被迫去放大表情和动作，因为这样他们才能够被最后一排的观众看见，——在最后一排，人们大约能够看见鱼缸里好像是有鱼。

但是中国孩子们是被《苍蝇》吸引住了，尤其是在表演中的两个孤独的人在他们对幸福和友谊的追求中游戏于那红色的蹦蹦球时，孩子们都笑开了怀。

中国的家长们常提出这样的问题：在丹麦儿童剧的演员年龄有多大？他们很奇怪五六十岁的演员为孩子演出。芭提达的“狂想曲”甚至让所有演员带上白发苍苍的假发来展示年龄之大。

在中国，儿童戏剧通常只是年轻的演员——尤其是年轻女演员——在他们进入成年人戏剧生涯的途中所作的演艺。因此对于中国人，看见儿童剧在丹麦是一种所有年龄层的人们都可以演出并且以等同于成年人戏剧的严肃来对待自己的观众，这也是一种打开眼界。

场子里的噪音

丹中戏剧文化和观众态度的明显差异。人们可以大声说话、吃东西、走动、跑动，甚至在演出中穿着溜冰鞋进进出出，家长们可以打手机。然而另一方面，一个简短的、对孩子们友好的讲解和让观众关掉手机和在座位上坐好的要求就像变戏法一样地能够达成我们在丹麦所期待的戏剧关注。

皇冠拉巴伦斯的约尔根·卡斯伦在合肥表演非常动人的《多罗在路上》（该剧表达家居的安全与探索世界的愿望间的分裂）时，他也经历了到这样的事情。节目的观众是受邀的学校几个班的学生以及随着独生子女一同看戏的家长，演出中的小提琴手和贝司手在这里就创造出了一种这样的临近，他们通过在席间走动、在观众之中演奏而很巧妙地打破了舞台和观众席间的界限。

但是，巡回途中的演出地点不仅仅只是剧场。剧场的票价相当于一百丹麦克朗，尤其是富有的中产阶级有买票的可能性。比如说，在合肥的人工湖边的舞台和沙滩上，剧团也为广泛和迷醉的观众们进行免费的室外演出。

在文化古城西安，丹麦剧团也加入了国际儿童节前后的国际童话艺术节。芭提达除了在不同的剧场演出之外也在各大商场和公园演出。炙热的阳光，35度气温，戴着假发假鼻和黑戏服。在西安的一所寄宿学校，TT 剧团为全校学生——三岁到二十二岁聋哑孩子和年长班的学生演出。虽然聋哑，这些学生却非常善于对各种细节进行观察和作出反应。作为致谢，一些聋哑学校的少女也作了非常出色的中国舞蹈表演，在他们的舞蹈教师指挥下的令人钦佩的音乐同步。

“安徒生！”

所有中国的孩子都知道安徒生童话。因此，在整个有着“来自丹麦的现实童话”标题的前锋之行中的一个重要开门者和建桥者就是言斯·克里斯蒂安·荷兰德的小小的安徒生演出，——这一演出作为许多别的节目的引子。

一旦这个二米零四的丹麦演员在一米六三高的居住丹麦的中国诗人京不特（他是巡回演出中不可缺的翻译）的协同下进场，马上就到处都引发人们的注意力，并且使得中国人们发出“安徒生”的兴奋呼喊。

这一表演间断地描述出了安徒生生平以及不同艺术表达，终结于“孩子是人”的宣言。丹麦 ASSITEJ 的彼得·曼谢尔在巡回结束时总结道：

“丹麦人带给中国人的东西中一部分最重要的就是：一种通向孩子的切入口和关于创建一种亲密世界的知识。当然，挑战是有的，——中国多得可怕的人众和噪音。但是，在中国人们习惯于在噪音环绕之中仍能够很好地集中注意力，中国观众肯定能够比丹麦的我们更善于在大环境中体验人际间的密切关系，而在丹麦我们则是那么集中于个体。”

皇冠剧院约尔根·卡斯伦强调：“我们并不是到中国来告诉中国人怎样做儿童剧。重要的是我们遇上了许多专业人士，能够展开许多想法。我的希望是，我们在一个缺乏为孩子而创造的当代艺术但在同时又具有着创造现代儿童戏剧的巨大空间的社会里播下了一颗种子。”

10.3 VIBEKE WERN'S ARTICLE (BERLINGSKE TIDENDE) IN ENGLISH

Cultural Export at Child Level

Danish children's theatre has undertaken a pioneering visit to China, where, despite some cultural clashes, they succeeded in establishing good contact with the audience and a dialogue with professional theatre people, and communicated a Danish view of children and children's theatre.

When it comes to children's theatre, the Chinese feel it should be large and spectacular. Intimacy and closeness, on the other hand, is what is preferred in Denmark, where our children's theatre has achieved world renown for the intimacy of its encounters between the child and the performer.

This contrast in attitudes to the large and the small produced some cultural clashes, but also some fascinating challenges, when Danish children's theatre went on a pioneering tour of China from 17 May to 4 June. For while the Chinese are happy to perform for more than 1,000 children at a time, Danish children's theatre performances are usually created for an audience of at most 150 children. And in China, where it can actually be a problem to find small and intimate stages at all, the organisers were naturally interested in packing out the large venues.

Another significant difference between Danish and Chinese children's theatre lies in their respective attitudes towards the children themselves.

"In Danish children's theatre, we try to show children the world as it is, rather than disguise it. In its tumultuous rate of development, China has not yet had time to develop children's culture. With their one-child policy, rapid commercialisation and enthusiasm for all the new technical possibilities, my feeling is that the Chinese may have forgotten the essential substance and the fact that children are also independent individuals with a cultural life," says Søren Ovesen from the Batida theatre company.

And after having seen Batida's delightful musical family performance "Grande Finale" in Shanghai, the female Chinese illustrator Wang Fei commented in her fluent English: "It is revolutionary for us to see Danish children's theatre. Chinese theatre has practically lain dormant in recent decades. Before Communism, Peking Opera was a very popular kind of family show, but today, our children's theatre often consists either of copies of figures from American cartoons, or else old-fashioned, glamorous stories which avoid all unpleasant emotions and subjects, such as death. Chinese children's theatre is far too inclined to treat children like small cosseted babies or pets. That's why it's fantastic to experience Danish children's theatre, which can deal with subjects like death, possesses originality and drama, and can be enjoyed by both children and adults."

The idea for the pioneering Danish children's theatre tour of China came partly from ASSITEJ Denmark, the Danish branch of UNESCO's international organisation for children's and youth theatre, and partly from Marina Guo, the director of the Shanghai International Children's Theatre Festival and the cultural organisation Sunspirit Cultural Development. The tour, which visited the cities of Beijing, Hefei, Shanghai, Fuzhou and Xi'an, was subsidised by the Danish Arts Council's Committee for the Performing Arts and the Danish Arts Agency, as well as by the Chinese partners and the children's theatre ensembles themselves.

In addition to the Batida theatre company, the tour included the Teater TT group and the National Danish Children Theatre Corona La Balance. Besides the actual performances, the ensembles presented seminars and workshops at which Chinese theatre students, schoolteachers and various artists participated. The seminars and workshops, in particular, comprised highly

important forums for discussions and the exchange of ideas and working practices, which however mainly came from the Danes to the Chinese.

However, at one theatrical production in Hefei, the Danish children's theatre people received a very fine introduction to traditional Peking Opera – an art form which blends music, song, poetry, dance, mime, acrobatics and martial arts. Here, the performance of "The Monkey King Wreaks Havoc in Heaven" clearly revealed the fantastic discipline and technique of the Chinese artists, as well as their ability to combine many forms of artistic expression.

"The Fly" catches attention

When I join the tour in Hefei – a modern city of around seven million inhabitants, where westerners are a rare sight – I am met at the airport by a young student, Beibei, who is a trained actress and TV host, and is now pursuing further studies and teaching at Shanghai Theatre Academy. She is an interpreter and helper on the trip, and stands waiting for me holding a large jar of water in which four goldfish are swimming around. The goldfish are to play a role in Teater TT's physical clown performance of "The Fly" the next day, and she had just been to the market to buy them.

In Hefei there are major problems with the lighting in the Town Hall Theatre, which is normally used for conferences. Half an hour before the duo Torkild Lindebjerg and Finn Rye Petersen are due to go on stage in "The Fly", the stage underlay they had ordered has still not arrived. And when it finally does come, it turns out to be made of crumbling rubber, so they have to perform without it.

There are many such practical problems and compromises on the tour, as well as agreements which are continually being altered. Since the Town Hall Theatre has room for 600 spectators, the two actors are also obliged to exaggerate their facial expressions and gestures so that they can be seen in the back rows, where the goldfish in the jar can only barely be glimpsed. But the Chinese children are absorbed by "The Fly" and laugh, particularly when the two lonely men in the performance, in their search for happiness and friendship, play with a big red bouncing ball.

How old can you be in Denmark and still act in children's theatre? The question is asked by many Chinese parents, who wonder at seeing men aged 50-60 performing theatre for children. And in Batida's "Grande Finale" the phenomenon of ageing is actually highlighted, inasmuch as all the actors wear grey wigs.

In China, children's theatre is usually something that rather young actors – typically young female actors – do on their way to a career in adult theatre. It is thus an eye-opener for the Chinese to see that in Denmark, children's theatre is a genre that all age groups can perform in, and which takes its audience just as seriously as adult theatre.

Noise in the hall

There are also marked differences in the whole theatre-going culture and attitude of the audiences in China, as compared to Denmark. The children talk loudly, eat, walk around, run or even roller-skate in and out during the performance, and parents talk on mobile phones. On the other hand, it turns out that a brief, child-friendly introduction and a request to turn off mobile phones and remain seated during the performance can work wonders in creating the kind of concentration that we would expect at home.

Jørgen Carlslund of Corona La Balance discovered this in Hefei, when he performed the very moving dance performance "Tolo on His Way" – the story of a boy who is torn between domestic security and a desire to explore the world. The performance's violinist and bassist

created intimacy and effectively broke down the barrier between stage and hall by going around and playing among the audience, which consisted both of invited school classes and parents visiting the theatre with their only children.

But the venues on the tour were not just confined to theatres where the ticket prices corresponded to around DKK 100 and the audiences were mainly drawn from the prosperous middle class. On a stage by the artificial lake and beach in Hefei, for example, the ensembles gave a free performance for a broad and enthusiastic audience.

In the old cultural city of Xi'an, the Danish theatrical companies took part in the International Fairytale Art Festival, which took place in the period around UNICEF's International Children's Day on 1 June. Besides playing in various theatres, the busy Batida group also performed at a shopping centre and in a parking lot, in the baking sun and in temperatures of 35 degrees, while wearing wigs, plastic noses and black costumes. In a boarding school for deaf children and young people aged 3-22 in Xi'an, Teater TT performed for all the pupils, who were very good at seeing and reacting to the small details. As a thank-you to the Danes, some of the teenage girl pupils at the deaf school gave a very fine performance of Chinese dance, impressively co-ordinated with the music under the direction of their dancing teacher.

"Antusheng!"

All Chinese children know about Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales. Accordingly, a very important doorway and bridge-builder between Danish and Chinese culture during the whole pioneering tour has been actor Jens Christian Holland's little Hans Christian Andersen performance, under the heading of "Real Tales from Denmark" and which introduced many of the programmes.

This performance attracted attention everywhere, and caused the Chinese to joyfully exclaim "Antusheng!" ("Hans Christian Andersen" in Chinese) as the 204 cm tall Danish actor made his entrance with his top hat and suitcase, assisted by the 163 cm tall Chinese poet Jimbut, who was an indispensable interpreter on the tour.

The performance gave a brief introduction to Hans Christian Andersen's life and various forms of artistic expression, ending with the manifesto: Children ARE people. And as Peter Manscher of ASSITEJ Denmark concluded at the end of the tour:

"One of the most important things the Danes have passed on to the Chinese has been an approach to children and the knowledge of how to create an intimate universe. The challenge has naturally been the fact that there are an awful lot of people and noise in China. But the Chinese are good at concentrating even when there is a lot of noise around, and Chinese audiences are probably better at experiencing intimacy in a broader context than we are in Denmark, where we are so individually oriented."

And as Jørgen Carlslund emphasises: "We did not come here to tell the Chinese how they should create children's theatre. The most important thing is that we have met theatre professionals who can develop some ideas. I hope that we have sown a seed in a society which lacks contemporary art for children, but has room to create modern children's theatre."

10.4 POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS IN CHINA

Beijing:

Eric Messerschmidt

Director of The Danish Culture Institute in Beijing. Has great knowledge as to handling cultural affairs in China. Has widespread contacts in the cultural China and is a keen networker. Very supportive as to children's theatre projects. He made the first contact between Marina Guo and Denmark.

B r n ce Angr my

Director of the DIAF Festival and the cultural organisation 'Thinking Hands' in collaboration with artistic director Huang Rui, based in 798 Dashanzi Art District. A central figure in the young Chinese art world. French of origin, based in Beijing since 1990'ies.

Fu Weibo

Artistic Director of the National Theatre (with a staff of 400 actors) incl. it's trendsetting Oriental avantgarde theatre. Very influential figure in contemporary Chinese theatre, called "The father of China's mini-theatres" (100-400 seats). Previously liaised with Peoples Art Theatre a.o. as director of actors' dept. Very interested in opening up for international collaborations.

Shanghai:

Marina Guo

Arts administrator, Director of Shanghai Sunspirit Cultural Development Co.,Ltd. and Operation Director of Shanghai International Children Theatre Festival. Paid visit to the Danish Children's Theatre Festival in 2006 and 2007. MG is the core link between the Danish participants of the China Tour in 07 and the Chinese partners. A skilled and highly dynamic administrator with international experience, university educated with a keen interest in children's culture.

Beibei Shao (Cathy)

Assistant to Marina Guo. MA of Shanghai Theatre Academy. Major in theatre acting and TV host. Acting teacher of STA. Interpreter of SPIARC (Shanghai Performing Arts Center). Participated in a number of international workshops. Will be invited to the coming Children's Theatre Festival in N stved in 2008.

Nick Yu

Director of Programming & Marketing and playwright at Shanghai's most important theatre, Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center and Chief Director of Asia Contemporary Theatre Festival. Very open and keen on developing foreign contacts. Paid visit to Denmark as part of the international showcase "Part.dk" in 2006. Hosted performances, workshops and seminar of 'Real Tales of Denmark'. Has proposed a new project with Danish children's theatre in 2008.

Guo YiAn

Professor in acting studies at the Theatre Academy at the Shanghai University. Has ongoing collaborations with teachers and academics from Europe and USA.

William Sun

Professor at The Theatre Academy at the Shanghai University. Has great authority in the facultet. Paid visit to Copenhagen in 2005, no particular interest in children's theatre. Still an important resource person for any theatre project in Shanghai. Many of his students took part in the workshop.

Wei Dongxiao

M.A. Associate professor, Dept. of Dramatic Literature. Paid visit to Children's Theatre Festival in DK in April 07. Brought many students to the workshop.

Xi'an:

Lilly Li

Director of private culture bureau 'Beautiful' which has been given a 3 year task by Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Dept. to develop new theatre for children. A very committed local partner in Xi'an, eager to develop future international collaborations. Has visited Denmark and Sweden as puppeteer in the Shaanxi Folkloric Theatre Company.

Denmark:

Jimbut

Jimbut alias Jun Feng. Chinese poet and translator living in Odense, previous dissident from 1980's poetry-movement. MA in philosophy in DK. Translator of S ren A. Kierkegaard and Danish modern literature (incl. a biography of Hans Christian Andersen). Has important contacts to the present performing art scene in China. A very committed mediator and communicator between China and Denmark.

10.5 LIST OF THE PROJECT'S PARTICIPANTS

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11 Statements, thoughts and memories

Did it succeed?

Yes, it did – it succeeded to precisely the degree we had anticipated. China is a “new” country in relation to qualified children’s culture. Chinese theatre certainly commands some impressive machinery which, for up to several thousand children at a time, can present extremely elaborate performances of a high technical standard: colourful, noisy, sugary and very, very skilful. It is all a very long way from the Danish concept of “theatre at eye level”, with everything that that implies of intimacy and challenging forms and content.



Although Hans Christian Andersen is familiar to all Chinese people, and thereby epitomises Denmark – the Kingdom of Fairytales – the seriousness of his tales, as well as their political edge, their complex world image and, in particular, their solidarity with the inquiring child are obscured here by pastel-coloured simplicity.

Nonetheless, or perhaps for precisely this reason, the performances we presented possessed such clear qualitative differences that several Chinese spectators and professionals received a quite unexpected ‘aha’ experience: “So it can be done like this, too!!”

Besides the rather missionary attitude of “Now we will show you how to create proper children’s theatre”, the festival also had the completely different and more humble mantra of “We would like to get to know you, absorb some of your culture, and bring something home with us!”

As we had hoped, we made progress in both areas. We demonstrated something, opened some doors and some eyes, and acquired some important contacts. And for our part, we received an insight into a world that we barely knew existed, and which provided a much-needed contrast to our own standards and self-understanding.

It is a process we would like to continue in the future.

As China does not enjoy the kind of state-subsidised support for children’s theatre and culture that exists in Denmark, everything we did in China was based on private and commercial initiatives. This was not a particularly secure basis, but it had at least the virtue of being concrete in nature, though it was naturally a prerequisite for success that the cultural entrepreneurs should regard money as the means rather than the end.

However, economic circumstances forced us to enter into a number of compromises with regard to audience size, and to accept some practical and working conditions which in Denmark would almost have resulted in a prosecution – all to make ends meet and to create the economic basis upon which to present small, loss-making performances, as well as for workshops and seminars, and to pay hotel bills, subsistence allowances, and rail and air tickets.

We were aware of this beforehand, and it was on these conditions that we came.

The travelling festival has created the beginnings of an important network, and has at the same time provided us with experiences which, together, encompass great potential for future projects. It is true that the festival did not achieve to present Danish performances under optimal conditions. Nonetheless, our efforts in the direction of the general idea, as tirelessly presented by the festival participants, brought about a number of crucially important breakthroughs.

The festival was intended to function as a pilot project, and as such it has been a real success story.

However, if we fail to follow this up within a year, the money will to some extent have been wasted. In China, the world is moving forward with giant strides. If we hesitate too long, we will not be able to recognise the country we visited.

We should open up the possibility of a continuation which will seriously expand the co-operation that we dream of achieving.

How about June 2008?

Søren Ovesen (Theatre Batida)



>> Statements, thoughts and memories

"Why fly twenty Danish theatre people to China TO tour the country and play for less than 0,001 % of the population?"

Is it necessary to justify our tour? Not necessarily. It is of course as good and as important as the work of thousands of businessmen from the Western world who go to China to trade and get goods produced. Still, I'm looking for reasons that make it sufficiently important for myself. Here are three of them:

- To experience the intensity of those moments where the contact between the audience and myself on stage is perfect. This experience eliminates the need for consciousness of where in the world I perform, or what the nationality of the audience may be. I found such moments in China.
- The opportunity to meet a Chinese theatre professor who expressed his hopes for the living art of the theatre, and the belief that non-commercial art is necessary in our society, something I also believe. I met him in China.
- To experience a culture which is so radically different that I'm forced to reflect upon values, norms and political systems. That's how it is to be in China.

No need to legitimize it more."

Jørgen Carlslund





In Shanghai we held three workshops at the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre, the most well-regarded theatre in this city of 20 million people. I held a workshop with students from the Shanghai Drama Academy about "The body as story-teller" which also included work with improvisation and clowning. The students worked intensely; for them, it was a new experience to work with their own creativity in relation to bodily expression, and to use their personal history as the starting-point for telling a story with universal validity.

For me this workshop was one of the greatest experiences of our tour. Via concrete work with professionals, we were able to initiate personal and professional discussions on what it means to perform theatre for children, as well as on the view of children held by the surrounding society, and the kind of subjects that can be presented to children through theatre.

Danish children's theatre largely strives to accept that life as a child can be both frightening and chaotic, and that children are very much concerned with the "big" questions in life, such as death and love. In China, performing in children's theatre is often merely a springboard to roles in adult theatre, and just meeting people who had consciously chosen to work in children's theatre awoke a certain amount of wonder.

In Denmark, we emphasise close and intimate theatrical experiences for children. In China, "small" performances for children are rare, and it could be a struggle while on tour to place the child and intimacy in the centre.

Everyone wants to be useful in their lives, and that day in Shanghai with the students was probably the day when I felt I did most good on the whole tour.

Torkild Lindebjerg





One thing that positively surprised me was the great desire to provide comments and questions at the seminars. The Chinese participants were particularly inquisitive about the rise of Danish children's theatre at the end of the sixties and its anti-authoritarian approach to subjects and theatrical forms, as well as our simple, intimate and relevant theatre, often created "on the floor", and sometimes in collaboration with the audience. The work of quality enhancement and the close collegial relations between theatre people also inspired many questions and comments.

Another surprise of the more curious kind was the many events at which, although they had no immediate relevance to children's theatre, our commitment and participation was nonetheless desired (speeches, singing games, peace dove releases, opening ceremonies, etc.). There were, indeed, many radio and TV programmes, family events and official reception ceremonies, with cultural figures and sponsors whose "agenda" sometimes had very little to do with our profession.

We hope and trust that the future will bring more opportunities for more professional study and exchange. The Chinese theatre that we saw possessed many fine professional qualities. It is not difficult to imagine that we could learn from their theatrical and artistic skills, or that we, with our experience, could contribute to making the material simpler and more relevant for an audience of children.

Peter Manscher



The greatest success experience by far was improvising in front of 1,000 schoolchildren (7-10 year-olds) in Chongqing. Old Hans Christian Andersen would have been glad to see it. The head teacher was moved to tears, but she had also done some fine preparatory work. In front of the school we were welcomed like royalty when we got out of the airport taxi. Ten children in smart school uniforms with outstretched arms declaimed a welcoming poem, after which I bowed and was given a red scarf like the ones the children wore. We were then given an enormous bouquet, while 15 TV people and press photographers bustled around us. Standing there in our street clothes, we were told that we would be performing for 1,000 children in fifteen minutes' time! Fifteen minutes? I needed a mirror and an electric socket for my curling tongs and hair-drier. How about the watchman's glass box over there, 1 1/2 x 1 1/2 m² and full of old plastic coffee cups and other junk? Err ... okay!!

It was also a kind of theatre to sit and put on make-up and change into our costumes in front of the whirring and flashing cameras. 14 1/2 minutes later, I was transformed into Hans Christian Andersen, and we walked up an enormous staircase, climbing 250 steps to an inferno of cheering. The ruler-straight rows in which the children had been arranged held only for a couple of microseconds. We spent 10-15 minutes in that inferno on the roof terrace, and then moved on to the theatre where another 350 pupils sat waiting. We gave our first show there and went around shaking hands, and everything we had learned gave the atmosphere an extra lift.

All in all a fantastic day, and one that we will never forget! That evening we took a restaurant boat cruise along one of the world's longest rivers, the Yangtze Jiang. Here, close to the world's largest dam, at the world's biggest city, Chongqing with its 30 million inhabitants, we commemorated the world's most famous writer, Hans Christian Andersen. A thousand thanks for the experience in China.

Jens-Chr. Holland



"It's difficult for me to say anything about my China tour, as I'm an old Chinese myself who now and then drinks 'Old Danish'. I'm happy about the trip, because it was different from all my previous trips, when I travelled with the children's theatre companies – it gave a special kind of spirit of community.

Xi'an surprised me. I would have thought it might be a difficult place for the Danes, but in reality the colleagues of Xi'an were good to work with compared to Hefei. Before leaving Beijing my friend Guangtian said that Beijing was the easiest city, because there were good artists, and Xi'an, Chongqing, Shanghai were also fine, but Hefei – 'It's a strange place, you need your emergency antennae when you have to face a problem.' But it was okay in Hefei, and although the area we lived in looked like a futuristic planet or vampire city, we didn't face any catastrophic problems.

It was also my debut as an 'actor'. Well done. But something did not work – the cheap USB-sticks of 'Quinghua Violet-light' proved to be a fiasco. But never mind, I bought some nice clothes there.

Now I already feel like returning to China with all the people from the tour."

Jimbut



“Enriching experiences:

To see deaf children of Xi’an dancing to the music under the direction of an exceptional dance teacher who sat in front of them and conducted. Xi’an as a city, and not the least, the Terracotta Warriors. To meet grown-ups and children in Hefei who never before had seen or talked to a foreigner. To see The Peking Opera very close up – and be grateful for them having done the performance just for us.

Important conversations:

With the performing arts student Beibei and the female illustrator in Shanghai, about children’s theatre and art and culture in general. The many important conversations and questions during the workshops.

Opulent meals:

The official farewell dinner in the old town of Hefei and the welcome dinner in Xi’an.

Wonderful ambience:

When we all had dinner in the street restaurant in Xi’an, invited by Marina, who also asked the street musicians to entertain us.

Surprising audience reactions:

In general surprising that the audience was so noisy – as seen through our eyes. Happily, an introduction sharpened the concentration.

Vibeke Wern



On a street corner near the Gate of Heavenly Peace sits a blind, white-bearded beggar playing on his three-string violin and singing an old melody. His voice, like his face and hands, is wrinkled and rusty, but the melody is full of small, elegant phrasings which speak of a long life with music. He sings quietly, gently and easily, his face revealing nothing of his thoughts and feelings. He does not notice when I place some coins in his battered tin - the street bustle almost drowns him out, too, and only the steady beat of the wooden bell attached to his foot cuts through the traffic noise.

I sit down a short distance away for a while and allow myself to be drawn into his song, while I try to imagine just a fraction of the many upheavals he has witnessed during his lifetime. He was probably born a decade or more before Mao’s troops succeeded in forcing the Kuomintang across the straits to Taiwan. He has lived through the entire period of change from oppressive feudalism to the dictatorship of the proletariat to heady, nouveau-riche industrialisation. He has made his living from his violin, as well as he could, and probably with great difficulty at times.

When I observe him more closely he seems in no way pitiable. He sits up straight on his little wooden stool in his worn jacket, wearing a little apron to protect it and his trousers from the resin of the violin bow. Humbly, but in no way humiliated, he sits there like the middle kingdom itself, accompanying the rise and fall of dynasties.

Christian Glahn



"Now a Danish artistic seed has been sown in Chinese soil. Will it find a fruitful environment here, will it find gardeners here who will have the diligence to feed it and make it grow? Even though the Danish children's theatre's China-tour in six cities is finished now we're left with an example of how the cultural differences between the West and the East can be transcended and how a genuine cultural exchange works. A real deliberation about the tradition and the modernity, about the heritage and the new-creation, has just begun."

Marina Guo



