



History

1990 - 1998

The Festival Commission of the
American Association of Community Theatre

(AACT)



AACT International History



In June of 1990, AACT made its first foray into the realm of sanctioning international festivals. AACT FEST International took place in Des Moines, Iowa and was co-chaired by John Viars and Burt Routman. Serving as adjudicators were Annette Procnier (Canada), Oslin Boekhoudt (Aruba) and Mort Clark (USA). Following a keynote address by Susan Strasberg, the festival showcased theatrical work from fifteen different groups from around the globe. Shows varied from two productions of *The Lesson* (Compania Del Real Coliseo De El Escorial from Madrid, Spain and Bungeiza from Toyoma, Japan) to *The Bald Soprano* (Theatre 2000 from Ville De Bron-Lyon, France). Representing the United States at the festival was the Civic Theatre of Central Florida with their revealing production of *Doubles*.

First Place

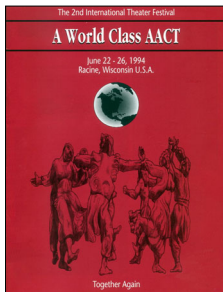
Recipient	Show	Country
Orebro	The Maids	Sweden

Second Place

Recipient	Show	Country
Bungeiza	The Lesson	Japan

Third Place

Recipient	Show	Country
Civic Theatre of Central Florida	Doubles	USA



The second AACT sanctioned international festival was held June 22-26, 1994. A World Class AACT (subtitled Together Again) took place on the shores of Lake Michigan in Racine, Wisconsin. Co-chairs Stan and Dawn Sutherland hosted groups from eleven countries spread throughout the world. From Columbia in South America to the US and Canada in North America to Japan, theatre people gathered to celebrate their craft. The Racine Theatre Guild continued the home hosted dinners, pioneered at the 1979 National AACTFest. They proved to be even more of an adventure when dealing with language barriers. But eventually all of the salt got passed, all the food was consumed, new friendships were struck and the festival begun. It was then on to three days of performances ranging from Denmark's raucous *The Three Cuckolds* to the dark and mysterious *The Moisture* from Poland. All in all, the three adjudicators, Michael Fortner (Fort Wayne, IN), Brid McBride (Dundalk, Ireland) and Chua Soo Pong (Singapore) had their work cut out for them in trying to assess the incredible variety of work presented.

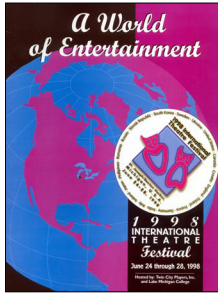
First Place

Recipient	Show	Country
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Theatre Group Ashibue	Gauche, The Cellist	Japan
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Second Place

Recipient	Show	Country
Stockport Garrick Theatre	Two	England



The 1998 International Theatre Festival was hosted by the Twin City Players (TCP) of St. Joseph/Benton Harbor, Michigan. The group was a first time host for an AACT event but had hosted two state-wide spring conventions and a Region III AACT Fest before being awarded the opportunity to host the third international theatre festival under the auspices of AACT. The festival was also recognized by IATA/AITA, which scheduled a board of directors meeting during the weekend. Lake Michigan College Mendel Center (LMC-MC) assisted TCP in the sponsorship of the festival. LMC-MC offered a state of the art theatre, conference and dinner venue without rental fees. Eighteen amateur theatre groups were accepted to perform from over 50 applications received by TCP. TCP credits the Internet with the large number of applications as the festival's home page complemented invitations sent around the world. The group members from India were denied visas shortly before the festival when political tensions between India and Pakistan erupted and the USA ordered a stop on all visas into the country. The Philippine entry was struck out of the skies when TWA, their sponsoring airline (free flights for 18 people), went on strike and the group was unable to secure other flights within their budget. Another group that had been accepted went on tour and allegedly developed internal problems and the group dissolved before making their appearance. That left 15 wonderful groups to perform (more than at the 2 previous festivals) for adjudicators Madeleine M. Nicolas (Philippines), Una Joseph (Canada) and Ross Rowland (USA). Other interesting notes from the festival were the difficulties of the Russian, Ukrainian, and South Koreans in getting to the USA. The state department was worried about organized crime infiltrating the Russian and Ukrainian troupes and the scrutiny was long and hard before they were granted entry. Single women from South Korea were denied entry at the last minute and they altered their performance to fit those who made the festival. It was very hot in southwestern Michigan during the festival and Lake Michigan accommodated many as they enjoyed swimming at local beaches. One sponsored "breakfast on the beach" was closed during a brief but furious summer storm. The breakfast was driven indoors – to the home of the Twin City Players. All in all, the experience was great for TCP and the group benefited greatly for years after. Contributions, prestige and self-pride were some of the benefits.

Awards for Meritorious Acting

Recipient	Role	Show	Country
Sarah Southwell	Indian Woman	On the Rim of the Curve	Canada
Lloyd White	Lieutenant Buchans	On the Rim of the Curve	Canada
Boris Svrtan	Harlequin	Pierrot, or the Secrets of the Night	Croatia
Derek Hyder	Harry	The Collection	England
Hanna Kirchherr	Queen Hannalore	Konig Ubb	Germany
Janine Tuma	Mother Uba	Konig Ubb	Germany
Grazia Tomasichia	Harlequin	Zanni	Italy
Hiroshi Koizumi	Bookseller	The Sound of the Tree	Japan
Kyung Tai	Poor farmer	Bom Bom	South Korea
Yury Tomchouk	Monkey	Poppy and Houahhow	Ukraine
Melissa E. Taylor	Playwright	Sistas' in Heat	USA

Technical and Direction Awards

Award Area	Show	Country
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Outstanding Sound/Music	Romeo and Juliet	Russia
Outstanding Lighting	The Sound of the Tree	Japan
Outstanding Costumes	Love Forever	Finland
Outstanding Set	Romeo and Juliet	Russia
Outstanding Choreography	The Sound of the Tree	Japan
Outstanding Overall Technical Effect	Romeo and Juliet	Russia

Outstanding Performance by a Youth

Recipient	Show	Country
Satu Kettunen	Love Forever	Finland
Satoshi Nakagawa	The Sound of the Tree	Japan

Outstanding Performances

Recipient	Show	Country
Vadim Khomyak	Poppy and Houahhow	Ukraine
Fergus Mullen	Someone Who'll Watch Over Me	Ireland
Stephen Burns	Someone Who'll Watch Over Me	Ireland
Annie Grezoux	Yineka	France
Jackie Dawe	On the Rim of the Curve	Canada
LaRuca Rusu	King Dies	Romania

Best Acting Ensemble

Show	Country
Konig Ubb	Germany
Yineka	France

Michigan Award

Show	Country
Poppy and Houahhow	Ukraine

Board of Director's Award

Show	Country
Someone Who'll Watch Over Me	Ireland
The Sound of the Tree	Japan

President's Award

Show	Country
Romeo and Juliet	Russia