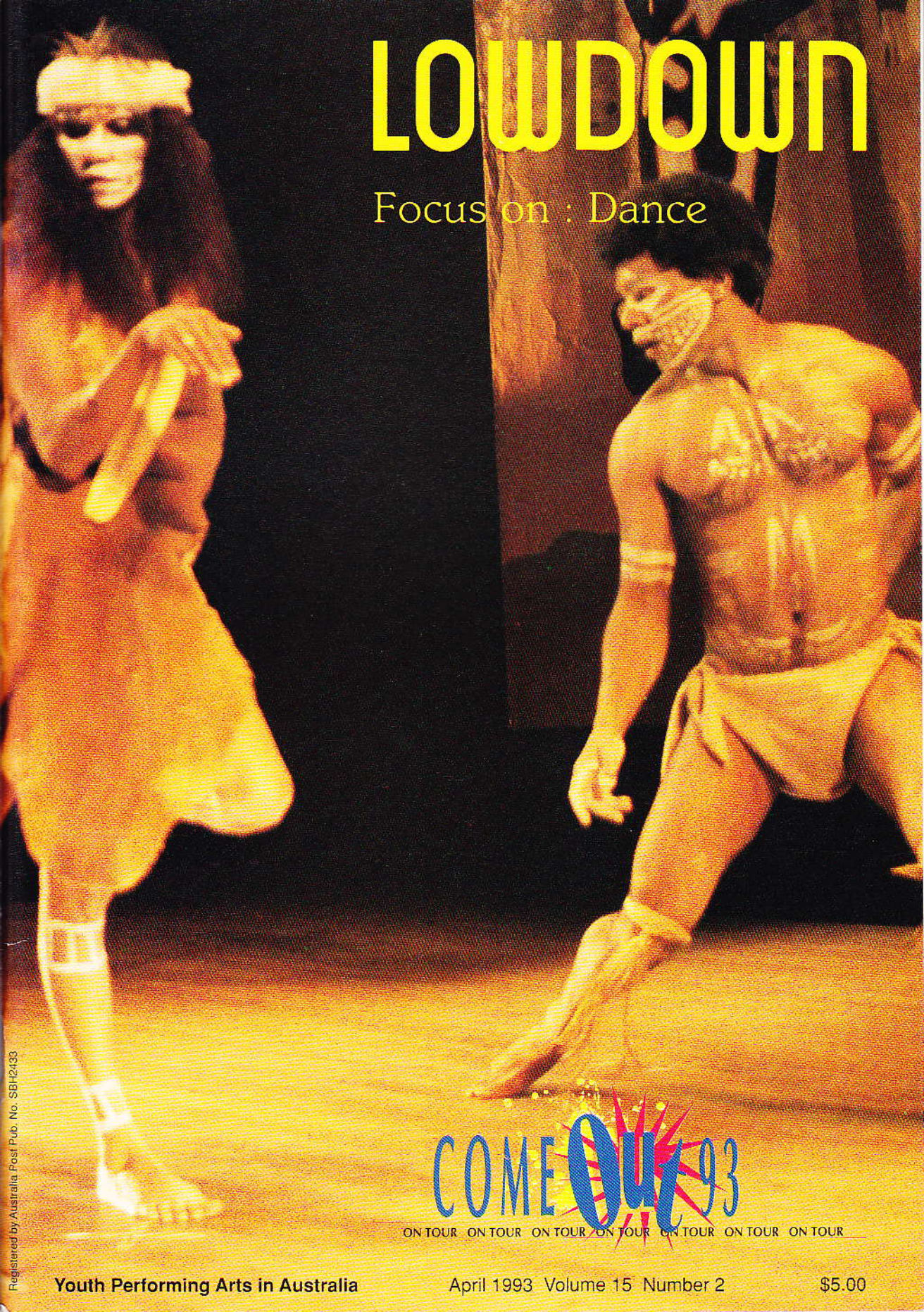


LOWDOWN

Focus on : Dance

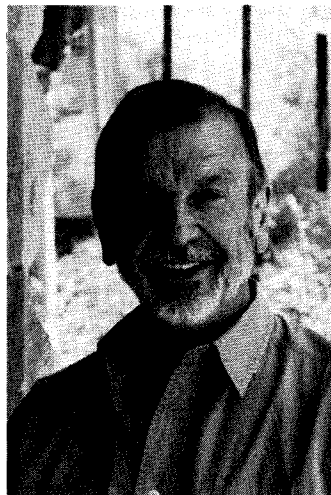


COME OUT 93

ON TOUR ON TOUR ON TOUR ON TOUR ON TOUR ON TOUR ON TOUR

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He's a man of great passion and feeling and a certain cheekiness beneath the eyes. Loyalty and warmth are words that readily spring to mind. No wonder it is **MICHAEL FITZGERALD** whose turn has come.



ASSITEJ : CONGRESS SPECIAL

The Man Who Would Be King

speaker on minority culture, Steven was a panellist discussing cultural identity and Mary, thanks to the generous support of the Literature Board, was one of only 3 international playwrights invited to speak about their work. As Michael said in his presentation of Australia for election to the Executive Committee the delegation truly represented Australia in all its creativity, diversity of practice, multiculturalism, Aboriginality and gender equality.

Member countries for the period 1993-96 are **Australia** (President), **Canada** (Vice President), **Cuba** (Vice President), **France** (Vice President), **Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Norway, Russia, Slovakia** and **Vietnam**. It is interesting to note that for the first time 3 Asian countries now sit on the Executive. The USA holds the position of Treasurer and, again, thanks to the extraordinary financial generosity of the Nordic countries, Michael Ramlose, Secretary General Extraordinaire, continues for a second term.

Two very important proposals were adopted by the General Assembly which will have significant consequences for future directions of ASSITEJ. The first was **amendments to the constitution** which allows for its modernisation in terminology, practical procedures and membership (a critical break-through); and an inspired new **subscription system** which is \$US100 annual base for all members, a maximum up to \$US500 for centres able to pay so, a suggestion that centres paying the current rate (\$US250) continue to do so and that centres in financial difficulties may apply to the Executive Committee for exception.

The Havana Congress and General Assembly was the most assertive and productive of any Congress experienced by Australian delegates in that questions and discussions from the floor were many, positive and progressive. The retiring Executive Committee presented a number of serious issues for consideration and after discussion and refinement the Assembly has given a very clear mandate of the work

Epoch-making news! Michael FitzGerald was elected World President of ASSITEJ at the Havana Congress in competition against bids from Russia and Cuba. This election was in recognition of Michael being a driving force in shifting the ASSITEJ focus from a predominantly European view of the world and theatre to one which embraces Asia, Africa and developing nations. This shifting emphasis reflects the innovative nature of Australian theatre for young people and Australia's role as a leader, especially in its region. This Presidency is the second-only one outside Europe since ASSITEJ was founded in 1965, the other being the USA from 1972-75. Michael will hold office until the next Congress in Rostov-on-Don in October, 1996.

An undoubted factor in the election was the 10-person Australian delegation at the Congress headed by Michael FitzGerald. Other delegates, most with support of the Australia Council were **Angela Chaplin, Gabriela Cabral, Fille Dusseljee, Wesley Enoch, Grahame Gavin, Steven Gratton, Maggie Miles, Mary Morris** and **Colin Schumacher**. Their energy, commitment and participation were prodigious and nobody could but be aware of the Australians and their presence - be it in the Congress, the Assembly or the dance places! In particular Angela was a moderator of discussion on artistic matter, Wesley was a triumph as a key-note

it requires the Executive to undertake to continue the move forward to make ASSITEJ a truly international organisation with a relevance and significance to its constituents, actual and potential, in the 21st century. This mandate was set out in a **Working Programme 1993-1996** and includes:

(i) the *artistic theme* for the next period is **Theatre for Survival**. This is not meant in the physical sense of day-to-day struggle or hand-to-mouth existence to endure. Rather it is to be interpreted in the artistic sense of developing cultural identity. It allows for a multiplicity of sub-themes, one of which is recommended *theatre and disability*.

NB ASSITEJ encourages all countries, including Australia, to develop, produce and record work under the theme. This not only applies to companies and organisations but extends to Festivals, seminars and other specialist events

(ii) the setting-up of a commission to examine the *problem of languages* and to present a recommendation on this issue to the General Assembly in 1996

(iii) the setting up of a commission on public relations to **promote and publicise** ASSITEJ at an international level and including the *creation of a logo*;

(iv) the setting-up of a commission on publications to investigate the possibility of a **periodical, a newsletter, an ASSITEJ brochure and operations manual, a year book, an ASSITEJ video** and the **use of new technology**

(v) the continuation of a **finance commission** with additional responsibility to investigate the possibility of a patron, major and project sponsors, support from foundations and multi-nationals

(vi) the continuation of an **artistic commission** with a particular brief to assist the programme of the 1996 Congress

(vii) the continuation of a **statutes commission** to find constitutional ways by the next Assembly of allowing African countries to become full members of ASSITEJ.

As well, the ASSEMBLY has given the Executive Committee other tasks which are: the presentation at the '96 Congress of a selection of countries which undertake projects of a practical nature under the Artistic Theme; the presentation at the 96 Congress of a selection of the work of networks of countries of any projects which promote ASSITEJ and its aims eg. artistic, technical, administrative, promotional; a survey of the provision of theatre for children and young people in minority languages; the involvement of a wider participation of all members and, where appropriate, non-members in the provision of advice, information and participation to assist its endeavours.

The new Executive Committee held its first meeting on the morning after the Congress concluded and with great energy and determination divided itself into the various commissions, defined the tasks, co-opted members (Tanzania, Venezuela), appointed counsellors and began to get on with the work. It all augurs very well!

In a Congress jam-packed with incident, some outstanding highlights were: the Japanese presentation of *Curtains Up*, Volume I of an Asian Newsletter with articles and contact information from 12 countries within the region; the lyrical and emotional address by Carlos Jimenez of Venezuela on *Transition and Maturity in IberoAmerican Theatre* (delivered on his behalf in his absence); the arresting paper delivered from the Assembly floor by Slovakia on *With Culture Against Culture*; Wesley Enoch's practical presentation and illustrated address which advanced the remarkable generosity of Nat Eek (USA) in presenting a gavel for the President's use in a box engraved with the names of ASSITEJ Presidents; and in releasing details of the tri-ennial Patricia Fulton Eek Honorary Presidents' Award for an individual or group achieving noteworthy artistic excellence, the prize being \$ US1,000, an engraved silver goblet and a bottle of champagne!; the Danish afternoon which launched an excellent video promoting young people's theatre in Denmark (an example that all countries could emulate!) and presented in an ambience of style, distinction and hospitality that is a Danish trademark; the universal appreciation of *Lowdown* which saw some 100 copies of the latest issue disappear like hot cakes with demand for more; and the warmth, friendliness, tactility and bodies born to dance

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