



International Call for Performing arts performers

Small size Network candidates for Babel Creative Workshops 2025

BABEL – or The Art of Listening in TYA is a European large scale cooperation project, that pursues the rights of children and youth to full cultural citizenship, and it aims to investigate the communication process, intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding in TYA and more extensively the Performing Arts for Young Audiences.

The BABEL project entails a variety of interwoven activities all connected to allow a synergic development helping BABEL to coherently pursue the targeted objective and priority, while setting out the specific aims to reach the goals the partners have established. Reflections on the project's core themes will be interwoven with those on cross-cutting priorities to specifically address issues such as environment, inclusion, diversity and accessibility, continuously sharing them with the whole sector.

Call for participation in training workshops

BABEL is seeking performers to participate in 'BABEL Creation Work Groups' – training workshops on the theme *"The Art of Listening, the sensitive relationship between performer and child/adolescent spectator"* during the performative act. These are artistic work encounters where performing artists from different language communities, directed by artistic facilitators, will interact on stage with other artists and the audience through creative and experimental workshops.

Small size, as well as the other ASSITEJ performing Networks, can present one artist for each workshop path (see below).

The workshops

The workshops are composed of four steps following the Babel Training Dramaturgy: *'Opening up, Getting close and Communicating, Actions and reactions, and Balance'* and pursue *"The art of listening to the audience"* and *"The art of Listening to the other performers – fellow on-stage"*. The workshops are led by four highly experienced directors in TYA: **Brigitte Dethier and Ives Thuwis**, who focus their workshops more on physical theatre, dance, gesture, movement; and **Alex Byrne and Gregory Hall**, whose workshop is more music and storytelling oriented. All the workshops take place during Babel festivals.

The workshops are divided into 'rounds' (the 4th is the one mentioned in this call) and each round is composed of two 'paths'. Each path is led by one of the above-mentioned directors.

Each applicant selected will participate in a **path composed of two workshops**. The applicants will furthermore have the opportunity to participate in other festival activities taking place around the workshops in coordination with the organising partner.

Each path involves 12 performers, working together for two times during 5 days sessions, encountering each other and the young audiences. The participants will be selected from different areas:

- 1 from a Next Generation call (artist under 36 years old)
- 8 from Babel partners
- 3 from the ASSITEJ International performance networks (Small size, IIAN, Young Dance Network).

Each workshop lasts 5 full days: arrival is scheduled for the day before the workshop begins and departure for the day after it ends.

BABEL will provide participation in the workshops along with:

- travel expenses up to 350€
- meals and accommodation for 6 days and nights.

4th Round – Path 7 led by **Alex Byrne** assisted by **Gregory Hall**

- **Bologna, Italy**, Festival Visioni di futuro, visioni di teatro: 13-17 March 2025
- **Galway, Ireland**, Baborò Festival: 11-15 October 2025 (these dates might slightly change, so allow a bigger period for availability)

4th Round – Path 8 led by **Brigitte Dethier** and **Ives Thuwis**

- **Denmark (city to be defined later)**, KLAP (AprilFest) Festival: Dates of the festival: 30 March - 6 April 2025 (specific dates of the workshop to be defined later)
- **Brussels, Belgium**, Export/Import Festival: 6 - 10 November 2025

Who can apply?

The proposal is open to **two Small size practitioners**, who are performing arts performers from all countries and working with all genres and techniques.

We encourage people from minority backgrounds in their national context to apply as a part of the BABEL project strategy, that aims to ensure a diverse and inclusive participation, including diversity regarding age, gender, ethnicity, disability or ability, sexual orientation, cultural identity, national origin, or political or religious conviction.

How to apply

If you are interested in this offer, please [fill in the form](#) with the following information by **31 August 2024**.

You will need to outline your personal information, country of origin and residence, experience within performing arts, motivation towards this experience to participate in the two workshops of the Babel Training path. Additionally, a short CV, focused on your experience in Theatre for Young Audience.

In the form you can indicate which path you are interested in attending.



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ANNEXES

Babel Training Objectives and Dramaturgy

- **The first objective is "The art of listening to the audience"**

This is perhaps an important objective for any type of audience, but it is even more necessary when there are children and adolescents in front of the artist, subjects with rhythms, sensitivities, perceptive and cognitive qualities that are extremely different from those of adults.

To meet this objective:

A specific training program for performers led by artistic facilitators, based on a dramaturgy in four successive steps, each of which will develop into two on-stage workshops of one week each. Two parallel paths will be activated, to facilitate a comparison and a richer collection of data, so that during the 46 months of the project, the 16 editions of international festivals will host 16 workshops on stage for a week each.

The four steps that make up the dramaturgy are:

- **1st step: Opening up**

Bearing in mind the differences of languages between the audiences and the artists, the first step is about opening the door of the relationship between the artists and the children.

- **2nd Step: Getting close and communicating.**

The sensory-based connection will help enhance the intensity of the relationship between artists and children. To listen and to be open for mutual interchange and sharing. To offer audience and artists - strangers to one another before the artistic encounter takes place - the surprise of perceiving themselves as **close and communicating**.

- **3rd step: Actions and reactions**

As the artists make the proposals, and as these proposals entwine, different reactions take place: the reaction of the children/adolescents spectators and the reaction of the artists. Reactions generate other reactions. The sensory-based involvement changes for both children/adolescents and artists.

Children change the quality of the expectancy, whereas artists will have to face the unexpected and be able to master their own emotions.

- **4th step: The balance**

Balance is necessary for the artist to feel the sensory-based connection at its fullest, without losing control of the artistic proposal, so that they can measure out the inputs and avoid the easy "looking-for- approval" way.

- **The second objective is "The Art of Listening to the other performers, the fellow on-stage"**

It is focused on the sensitive relationship and professional exchange between the artists themselves. Although the theme is part of every shared staging experience, in the project we will focus particularly on the difficulties of communication in sharing work between artists of different language communities within European cultural cooperation projects. Therefore it will investigate:

- How to deal with the difficulties of a multilingual communication between artists and the problems related to frequent misunderstandings, partial or total.
- How to seek mutual understanding and build verbal and non-verbal relational bridges that allow a real sharing and osmosis of the different "know-hows".
- How to develop new and innovative approaches in the creation of artworks for children, through transnational and interlinguistic collaboration.

- How to really listen to the other person, to his or her personal and artistic subjectivity.

Babel hopes that the innovative process implemented in the project will feed the TYA cultural operators with new creative and generative ideas, and many critical questionings. It will provide the artists with original tools, reflections and inspirations to enhance the quality of their work both in terms of artistic productions and in the sensitive relationship with children and young people. This artistic project believes that all children and young people have the right to participate in quality artistic and cultural events from an early age and to do so continuously and not just occasionally.

It is a project that wants to reaffirm that **children and young people are not spectators of the future, but spectators of today**; human beings with the right to full cultural citizenship, regardless of their linguistic, cultural, economical and social background.

Workshop leaders

Alex Byrne - Biography



Alex is the Co-Artistic Director of **New International Encounter**, the company that he founded in 2001. **New International Encounter** produces national and international touring theatre for young people and adults, since 2008 **New International Encounter** has been regularly funded by the Arts Council of England.

Alex's work for **New International Encounter** has been invited to appear at young audience festivals all over the world and won prizes at numerous international festivals.

As well as directing and leading **New International Encounter**, Alex has worked with UK touring company's **Hoipolloi** and **Shifting Sands**, with **Divadlo DRAK** and **Dejvice Divadlo** in the Czech Republic, with **Theatre Nordkraft**, **Fair Play**, **Odsherred Theatre**, **Theatre Patrasket**, **Dansk Rakkerpak**, and **Theatre Mollen** in Denmark. With **Riksteatret** in Norway and with **JES** and **Theatre Mummipitz** in Germany. He has led theatre workshops in the UK, the Czech Republic, Norway, Poland, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Denmark, Poland, Ireland, Sweden, and Bosnia.

Brigitte Dethier - Biography



Brigitte founded **JES** in Stuttgart in 2002, for which she was awarded with **the Verdienstorden (order of merit)** from Baden-Württemberg, and has been its artistic director until summer 2022. During those 20 years she directed the biennale festival *Schöne Aussicht* organized by JES.

For many years Brigitte has been active in cultural policy for improving the artistic quality and the standing for theatre for young audiences. She has been a member of the board of **ASSITEJ Germany** before taking its Presidency in 2018.

Today she is working as a **freelance director** for several theatres. She works for all audiences and her interest is in **putting the arts together**, especially dance and drama. She also works with professional and non-professional artists.

During the next two seasons Brigitte Dethier will direct drama, opera and dance theatre in **Darmstadt, Luzern, Bielefeld, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Essen.**