

FINLAND/CONFERENCE PREVIEW

THE ITI TO MEET IN HELSINKI

In May 89 Helsinki will be the site of the 23rd World Congress and Festival of the International Theatre Institute. Ralf Langbacka, president of the Finnish Centre of the ITI, states the Congress's purpose: "To see, in this world of ours, the theatre as an important bridge builder over political, cultural, linguistic, ethnic and other gaps, is the message and task which we want the Helsinki Congress to deliver to theatre people all over the world."

The World Congress will take place from May 27-June 3 at the Finlandia Hall. Delegates from all of the ITI's 76 member nations, from Argentina to Zambia, have

been invited to the convention. "This will create an opportunity for theatre people to discuss the road ITI is on and where it should go in the future," says Martha Coigney, the president of ITI. "Subcommittees such as music theatre, dance, theatre education, communications, new theatre, and playwrights, will meet to carry on a dialogue on the state of the theatre in their respective homes."

The theme of the Helsinki Congress is "Theatre as a Cultural Bridge." The aim of this colloquium is to analyze theatre's role as a bridge between different cultures, political and social systems and ideologies. In line with this, seven directors from around the world will be given the same short play to stage, according to Anneli

Suur-Kujala, secretary for international affairs at the Finnish Centre of the ITI. "A performance of these plays—the same play with a different cultural perspective—will give us great insight into the cultural role expressed in theatre."

Among the highlights of the Congress is the International ITI Festival. "Throughout the month of May, Helsinki will become the center of the theatre world—playing host to international theatre and dance groups from China, the Ivory Coast, the USSR, Tunisia, the United States, and more," says Suur-Kujala. "Groups will play in Helsinki and then tour throughout Finland."

ITI was founded in Paris, 1948—in the aftermath of World War II—under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scien-

tific, and Cultural Organization. Its stated goal: "To promote international exchange of knowledge and practice in the performing arts. To stimulate creation and increase cooperation between theatre people." In a world fragmented by war, the guiding premise was that since theatre is an art which links large groups of people, it should have a voice in the world.

For further information on the ITI Congress in Helsinki, contact the Finnish ITI Centre at Vuorikatu 6A8, SF-00100 Helsinki, Finland, Tel:358-0-665-067, or ITI/US, at 220 West 42 Street, 1710, New York, NY, 10036, Tel: 212/944-1490.

USA/COSTUMES

FROM QUEEN TO EMPRESS: VICTORIAN DRESS 1837-1877

Queen Victoria and a way of life that existed in Great Britain and America during the mid-19th century is on view in The Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City through April 1989. "From Queen to Empress: Victorian Dress 1837-1877" is an exhibition of more than 100 examples of women's, men's, and children's costumes plus accessories, paintings, photographs, and engravings of the Victorian Age. (1837 was the year Victoria became

Queen of England; in 1877 she was proclaimed Empress of India.)

The exhibition includes major loans from the Museum of London and photographs from the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, as well as costumes and accessories from The Costume Institute.

Corsets, crinolines, pantaloons, skating costumes, evening dresses, bridal costumes, and mourning clothes are among the outfits displayed among the five galleries dec-

orated in the highest of Victorian Gothic style. The costumes abound in silks and satins, laces and ribbons, flowers and embroidery.

Included in the exhibit are two gowns worn by Queen Victoria herself—the dress she wore to open the First International Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park in 1851 and the one she wore for her state entry into Paris in 1855.

All items are accompanied by explanatory text panels of the period, using quotes from magazines, letters, and diaries.

