

## **International Theatre Institute ITI**

**World Organization for the Performing Arts**

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### **André-Louis Perinetti 1985**

On 27th March 1985, the International Theatre Institute will celebrate the 24th World Theatre Day. It was in fact in 1962, on the 27th of March, which happened to be the opening of the season of the Theatre of Nations, that this day of commemoration was first declared. It could seem somewhat surprising that theatre people feel it necessary to celebrate their art on a given day of the year? And do we not each day bring to it the same enthusiasm and find in it the same enjoyment? Indeed, World Theatre Day is a privilege and exceptional moment we have fixed in time to enable each of us, in this unique profession, to come together across borders, ideologies, generations and disciplines. This day enables us to focus on all that unites us, that links us to one another, through our daily joys and cares. But above all, it provides an opportunity to look on the other, on another culture, at the other end of the planet. If, kindred in poetry, theatre artists often anticipate the reality of tomorrow and have a foreboding of the destiny of humanity, they also represent its memory!

The Second World War ended 40 years ago. The world of theatre remembers. Theatre, so often harassed, persecuted throughout the ages, has become the symbol of resistance to all types of oppression; theatre which identifies itself to life, for creation is life, is witness to this renascent life.

From the end of the nightmare a great hope emerged: that of mutual understanding between peoples.

The great international organizations, founded on the premise of equality among states and people, were created. Each people has, at one moment or other of its history, made its own significant contribution to the progress of humanity and all felt that they had to unite to give full expression to their potentialities.

All must be linked by solidarity. But theatre people did not have to invent this solidarity for they had always practiced it in their art. The creation of the International Theatre Institute, which followed shortly after that of the big organizations and was inspired by one of them, UNESCO, appeared to be an assertion of an identity; of a will to build together a future equal to the hopes of artists. Our profound cultural similarities, our same vision of mankind, woven over the course of centuries, has awakened in us this feeling of belonging to one and the same world. Each man of theatre, each woman, participates in this universality. Concerned by the fate of our community, we are no less so far that of the world.

All the efforts of creation and of invention undertaken by intellectual communities the world over, to increase opportunities for exchange and contacts, are indissociable from our own action. Our theatres are places of encounter and of exchange, an opening onto the contributions of all of us to the heritage of knowledge and of art.

Reflections of different societies, theatre puts aside all that separates us and brings to light what humans have in common: the desire for peace.

Therefore, how could we not feel concerned, on this World Theatre Day, when the principle of universality is threatened in one of the main international organizations.

This principle is the guarantee of the protection and the respect owed to each one, individual or community.

But in this year 1985, devoted to youth, another duty claims us. We, men and women of present-day theatre, have received an inheritance from the past and we are accountable for it to the artists of tomorrow.

Youth aspires to participate, to share responsibilities. It believes in solidarity and wants to be associated with activities linked to great causes and it is capable of so much love...

But it demands the truth.

It is up to us not to conceal it so that the hope which youth embodies can become the safeguard of peace and friendship amongst peoples.

Its ideal, and ours, is not a fantasy of the imagination but an unfailing claim of the conscience of artists.