

International Theatre Institute ITI
World Organization for the Performing Arts



World Theatre Day 2014
Brett Bailey's Message

Wherever there is human society, the irrepressible Spirit of Performance manifests.

Under trees in tiny villages, and on high tech stages in global metropolis; in school halls and in fields and in temples; in slums, in urban plazas, community centres and inner-city basements, people are drawn together to commune in the ephemeral theatrical worlds that we create to express our human complexity, our diversity, our vulnerability, in living flesh, and breath, and voice.

We gather to weep and to remember; to laugh and to contemplate; to learn and to affirm and to imagine. To wonder at technical dexterity, and to incarnate gods. To catch our collective breath at our capacity for beauty and compassion and monstrosity. We come to be energized, and to be empowered. To celebrate the wealth of our various cultures, and to dissolve the boundaries that divide us.

Wherever there is human society, the irrepressible Spirit of Performance manifests. Born of community, it wears the masks and the costumes of our varied traditions. It harnesses our languages and rhythms and gestures, and clears a space in our midst.

And we, the artists that work with this ancient spirit, feel compelled to channel it through our hearts, our ideas and our bodies to reveal our realities in all their mundanity and glittering mystery.

But, in this era in which so many millions are struggling to survive, are suffering under oppressive regimes and predatory capitalism, are fleeing conflict and hardship; in which our privacy is invaded by secret services and our words are censored by intrusive governments; in which forests are being annihilated, species exterminated, and oceans poisoned: what *do* we feel compelled to reveal?

In this world of unequal power, in which various hegemonic orders try to convince us that one nation, one race, one gender, one sexual preference, one religion, one ideology, one cultural framework is superior to all others, is it really defensible to insist that the arts should be unshackled from social agendas?

Are we, the artists of arenas and stages, conforming to the sanitized demands of the market, or seizing the power that we have: to clear a space in the hearts and minds of society, to gather people around us, to inspire, enchant and inform, and to create a world of hope and open-hearted collaboration?