

## **International Theatre Institute ITI**

**World Organization for the Performing Arts**

UNESCO, 1 Rue Miollis, FR-75732 Paris Cedex 15

info@iti-worldwide.org / www.iti-worldwide.org



### **Antonio Gala 1987**

The International Theatre Institute today celebrates World Theatre Day. But how can one token day of tribute pay off the debt we all have to Theatre? Theatre which, throughout the history of mankind, has so much helped us. We have used it as our weapon and as our shield. It has continued to fascinate man, since not so tender infancy, with its magic and its multi-faceted personality. It has been, and remains, a carnival that unmasks and a disguise that reveals, a demanding hand that places before a face, unknown to itself, its own, sometimes more, sometimes less pleasant reflection. It has comforted the human being, disentangling him from his own contradictions, laughing boisterously in the face of those who would try to oppress it; reducing to the dimension of creatures the terrible gods that man has invented to fear and love. It has deepened the knowledge we have of ourselves, perhaps the greatest and most difficult, yet the most rewarding task. It has consoled our despair, awakened our fantasy, tempered our excesses, tongue-lashed the powerful, and given hope to the humble.

Each people, throughout the centuries has expressed its vision of life and of death by means of the Theatre. Through the Theatre each people has recorded and documented its identity. For the identity of a people is not formed by its history but by the wisdom and the lessons that it draws from it. In the same way as Art is the best means I know of assimilating history, it would also be impossible to find a more collective, more participatory art form than the Theatre with all its splendid facets.

Today, as always and perhaps more than ever before, theatre depends on the society in which it was born and to which it is dedicated. For this reason, my dear friends, all over the world, we must keep the sacred and speak in its favor. For in each people theatre was born, grew and flourished and in the theatre each people is represented. And if you do not wish it- it will not have to die. Take responsibility yourselves for its life and its fate, it expects nothing more. From its diversity will be born our wealth and from its differences our brotherhood.

This is why, together we must forge the spirit of those who will follow us. Let us leave open for them the paths of peace, ready the scenarios of peace, attentive the ear, valiant and sincere the impulses and alive the feeling for peace. Let not our successors think that we allowed our Theatre to decline for lack of culture, or be betrayed by lethargy, pettiness, disenchantment or resentment. The theatre has been, is and will always be like a homeland, a religion, a common culture which unites all peoples of the world. Let us commit ourselves, therefore, on this World Theatre Day, to defend it together to enrich all our tomorrows which we hope will last longer than ourselves.