



The International Theatre Institute ITI

An indispensable bridge-builder for the process of
worldwide peacekeeping and mutual understanding
– through the international theatre community

The International Theatre Institute / ITI

«The International Theatre Institute is an international non-governmental organization in the field of the performing arts in formal associate relations with UNESCO.

ITI, UNESCO's main partner in the field of theatre, seeks «to promote international exchange of knowledge and practice in the domain of the performing

arts, to stimulate creation and increase cooperation between theatre people, to make public opinion aware of the necessity of taking artistic creation into consideration in the domain of development, to deepen mutual understanding in order to participate in strengthening peace and friendship among peoples, to join in the defence of the ideals and aims of UNESCO.»

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© 2005 ITI, Paris, France

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www.theatersammlung.ch

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Introduction

The **International Theatre Institute** (ITI) is a non-governmental organization in formal associate relations with UNESCO. Its General Secretariat is based in Paris at UNESCO headquarters and cooperates closely with the UNESCO Cultural Sector. ITI promotes world-wide cultural exchange and dedicates itself to the consolidation of peace and friendship between peoples.

Currently the ITI is the largest international network for the performing arts, with National Centres in more than 90 countries and thousands of members world-wide mainly theatre, opera and dance artists.

The ITI promotes encounter between theatre professionals through its visitor programmes, symposia, workshops and festivals, and by publishing news periodicals, international encyclopedias and anthologies.

ITI's cultural bridge-building is of extraordinary importance. As in the time of the Cold War, ITI works to overcome the lack of communication between world cultures and, through its theatre projects, to foster relations and encounters in regions of conflict. For this reason the network is also active in political 'hot spots' throughout the world.

The collaboration of artists from all over the world is indispensable for the process of worldwide peacekeeping and mutual

understanding, as this was defined in the Charter of the organization founded at UNESCO's initiative in 1948.

The goal of this booklet is to give you an overview of what the ITI is.

Any questions and ideas for collaboration and support are welcome. We invite you to get in touch with the ITI through the General Secretariat or your National Centre.

Dr. Manfred Beilharz
President, ITI Worldwide

ITI: History and background

The International Theatre Institute was officially inaugurated during the meeting of its first World Congress in Prague, 1948, organized on the initiative of UNESCO and a group of international theatre experts.

Already in 1924 *Firmin Gemier* had had the idea of the Universal Society of Theatre, as a place where theatre people of all countries could meet and communicate fraternally. This organization, a forerunner of ITI, held congresses and international seasons from 1927 until 1938.

It was just after World War II that the growing feeling that peace needed to be constructed above all in the minds of men through exchange, international cooperation and dialogue gave the impetus that led to the birth and influence of the various United Nations' organizations.

UNESCO came into being in 1946, and a Sub-Committee on Arts and Letters which included distinguished writers and dramatists met at its First General Conference.

It soon became clear that there was a need for an international clearing-house for theatre arts, a non-political, non-commercial association in which theatre artists and administrators of all countries could work out a practical programme to facilitate exchange and circulation of playscripts, current theatre information, performing companies, and young artists.

The first ITI Congress met in Prague in June 1948, with twelve Centres in operation: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, United Kingdom, USA.

The first Executive Committee of ITI, chaired by *Armand Salacrou*, was made up of the signatories of the constitution except for *Niklaus Aeschbacher* (Switzerland), who was replaced by his compatriot *Emil Oprecht*. *J.B. Priestley* was appointed ex-officio advisor. The Secretary General was *Maurice Kurtz*, a member of the UNESCO secretariat.

The governing body of the ITI is constituted by a **General Assembly** of members. Between Congresses the Institute is run by an **Executive Council** composed of 20 members elected during its biennial Congress.

The **ITI Central Bureau** is based at UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

Presidents of the ITI

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Axel-Otto Normann, Norway
Jean Darcante, France
Milan Bogdanovic, Yugoslavia
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André Josset, France
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Jennifer M. Walpole, Australia

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ITI's partnership with UNESCO

From 1962 ITI had relations of consultation and association with UNESCO, being among its A-Category Non-Governmental Organizations. In June 1996 following UNESCO's review of its relations with NGOs, ITI obtained a new status, being one of a limited number of umbrella NGOs admitted to formal associate relations with UNESCO. That same year, UNESCO signed a Framework Agreement with ITI for six years, which was renewed in 2002.

Through the UNESCO/ITI Framework Agreement ITI is contracted to advise UNESCO on matters of theatre and cooperate with UNESCO in the following areas:

- The exchange of information and expertise in the field of theatre
- The promotion of contemporary theatre creation and production
- The sensitizing of young people to theatre arts
- The improvement of the status and the training of actors and writers

Since the beginning of the Framework Agreement, invaluable seed money and moral support has been provided to the ITI network by UNESCO through its Culture Sector's Division of Arts and Cultural Enterprise. These relate to the above mentioned areas and include festivals, workshops for young professionals, conferences, congresses and creative work throughout the world.

The UNESCO support to ITI projects is a

major means of sustaining cultural diversity. It is a vital contribution to the growth of cultural and artistic activities and industries in developing countries and emerging democracies. UNESCO support also functions as a catalyst and enables ITI Centres organizing international events and activities to attract further support of all kinds, thus multiplying their initial resources.

ITI is convinced that nurturing the performing arts is an absolute necessity if cultural heritage is to remain a living asset and not become a museum piece. There is widespread agreement that preserving cultural heritage in the performing arts is not simply labelling, stocking and preventing degeneration of ancient forms. It is also encouraging growth and evolution of performing art forms in accordance with their inner dynamic, the vision of their creative artists and the needs of contemporary audiences.

ITI has always recognized the essential role of culture and the performing arts in development.

Today, like UNESCO, ITI sees the need to emphasize even more strongly the complementarity of the cultural and economic aspects of development.

«Since culture is one of the mainsprings of development, the cultural aspects of development are as important as its economic aspects, and individuals have the fundamental right to benefit from both.»

UNESCO Preliminary Draft Convention on the Protection of
the Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expressions

The ITI Worldwide Network

Guided by UNESCO's ideals and priorities, ITI constantly seeks to consolidate and expand its international network. Today, there are 89 ITI **National Centres**, in all parts of the world:

- Africa 18
- Americas & Caribbean 11
- Arab States 10
- Asia and the Pacific 14
- Europe 36

12 **Cooperating Members**, national or international institutions in Australia, Canada (Quebec), India, Mexico, Portugal, Wales, have also joined.

A **National ITI Centre** is made up of professionals active in the theatre life of the country and representative of all branches of the performing arts. Its activities are conducted both on a national and international level.

Between 1996 and 2005 ITI increased its membership by over 25%. A dozen new National Centres have been formed recently in developing countries and emerging democracies.

ITI **Regional Bureaux** coordinate ITI activity in their respective regions:

- Africa (Burkina Faso)
- Latin America & the Caribbean (Venezuela)
- Gulf Countries Regional Bureau (Kuwait)
- Asia-Pacific (Korea)

Other regional ITI organisations include:

- A Documentation Centre and Archive Centre for Asia (Bangladesh)
- An Interregional Liaison Bureau (Tunisia)

There are also two permanent bases of the **Albert Botbol University of the Theatre of Nations** (UTN):

- Tunisia
- Venezuela

ITI maintains close relations with a number of other **international organizations** in the field of the performing arts :

- International Association of Theatre at the University / AITU
- International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People / ASSITEJ
- International Association of Theatre Critics / IACT
- International Amateur Theatre Association / IATA
- International Federation of Actors / FIA
- International Federation for Theatre Research / FIRT
- International Puppeteers Union / UNIMA
- International Society of Libraries and Museums for the Performing Arts / SIBMAS
- International Organization of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians / OISTAT



National ITI Centres

Angola	Czech Rep.	Korea Rep.	Senegal
Argentina	Denmark	Kuwait	Sierra Leone
Armenia	Ecuador	Latvia	Slovakia
Austria	Egypt	Lebanon	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	Estonia	Macedonia F.Y.R	Sudan
Bangladesh	Finland	Mali	Spain
Belarus	Georgia	Mexico	Sri Lanka
Belgium (C.Fl.)	Germany	Moldova	Sweden
Belgium (C. Fr.)	Ghana	Monaco	Switzerland
Benin	Greece	Mongolia	Syria
Bulgaria	Haiti	Morocco	Togo
Burkina Faso	Hungary	Nepal	Tunisia
Cameroun	Iceland	Netherlands	Turkey
Centrafica	India	Nigeria	United Kingdom
Chad	Iran	Norway	U.S.A.
China	Iraq	Palestine	Uganda
Colombia	Ireland	Papua New	Ukraine
Congo Dem. Rep.	Israel	Guinea	Uruguay
Congo Rep.	Ivory Coast	Peru	Venezuela
Costa Rica	Jamaica	Philippines	Vietnam
Croatia	Japan	Poland	Zimbabwe
Cuba	Jordan	Romania	
Cyprus	Kenya	Russia	

ITI: International Activities

The ITI network contributes to fulfilling its own and UNESCO's goals through its various activities. These include colloquiums, conferences, workshops, training courses as well as publications and the diffusion of international information concerning theatre. A panorama of its most important activities follows.

Days

World Theatre Day: 27 March

World Theatre Day is an occasion for all to celebrate the power of the performing arts to bring people together, and an opportunity for theatre people to share with their audiences a certain vision of theatre and its capacity to contribute to peace and understanding.

It was first in Helsinki, and then in Vienna at the 9th World Congress of the International Theatre Institute in June 1961 that President *Arvi Kivimaa* proposed on behalf of the Finnish Centre of the International Theatre Institute that a World Theatre Day be instituted.

Ever since, each year on the 27th March (date of the opening of the 1962 «Theatre of Nations» season in Paris), World Theatre Day has been celebrated by theatre people throughout the world. Events in connection with World Theatre Day include awards for excellence, international festivals, free performances, appeals for solidarity with artists in need, theatre open days, galas and rallies. But the most

important event is the «World Theatre Day International Message».

Each year a figure outstanding in heart and mind, usually from the field of theatre, is invited to share his or her reflections on theatre and international harmony. This International Message is translated into more than 20 languages, read for spectators before performances in theatres throughout the world, widely published in newspapers and theatre journals and discussed on radio and television.

Jean Cocteau was the author of the first International Message in 1962.

The author of the 2005 International Message is *Ariane Mnouchkine* (France), celebrated director and founder of the internationally acclaimed theatre company «Le Théâtre du Soleil».

International Dance Day: 29 April

In 1982 the Dance Committee of the ITI, UNESCO, founded International Dance Day to be celebrated every year on the 29th April, anniversary of *Jean-Georges Noverre* (1727-1810), the creator of modern ballet.

The intention of «International Dance Day Message» is to celebrate Dance, to revel in the universality of this art form, to cross all political, cultural and ethnic barriers and bring people together with a common language - DANCE.

Every year a message from an outstanding choreographer or dancer is circulated throughout the world. This year the author

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is *Miyako Yoshida*, UNESCO Artist for Peace.

ITI World Congress

Every two years the delegates of the Centres and associations in relation with ITI meet in a different city at the invitation of the National Centre of the country. The Congress includes the General Assembly of the ITI as well as a number of artistic events (performances, demonstrations, workshops, symposiums) organized by the host Centre and the Committees of ITI. The 31st Congress is scheduled to be held in Manila (Philippines) in 2006.

ITI World Congresses 1948-2004

Prague, Zurich, Paris, Oslo, The Hague, Dubrovnik, Athens, Helsinki, Vienna, Warsaw, Tel Aviv, New York, Budapest, London, Moscow, West Berlin, Stockholm, Sofia, Madrid, East Berlin, Montreal & Toronto, Havana, Helsinki, Istanbul, Munich, Caracas, Seoul, Marseille, Athens, Tampico.

Prizes

The International Theatre Institute in collaboration with its Japanese Centre, awards the annual **Uchimura Prize**, created in 1992 in homage to playwright *Naoyo Uchimura*, a former president of the Japanese Centre. The Prize, worth approximately 3000 euros, is endowed by the Uchimura family and rewards a work or activity bearing a relationship to Japanese theatre.

Inaugurated in 2002 during the 29th ITI World Congress in Athens, the **International Playwriting Competition** is organised by the ITI International Playwrights Forum to encourage contemporary writing. The winning plays, selected anonymously by an international jury of professionals, are published and the playwrights awarded monetary prizes. The official announcement is made during the ITI Congress with a performed reading of the winning plays

Publications

Main publications of ITI Worldwide:

News from the ITI Secretariat (Three issues a year): International theatre information, in French and in English. The News is published by the ITI General Secretariat with the support of UNESCO, Division of Arts and Cultural Enterprise, and freely available on the ITI website.

The World of Theatre This major biennial ITI publication contains articles by ITI National Centres and provides a vast panorama of theatre productions and recent developments in each country over the past two theatre seasons.

The World Theatre Directory is an ITI internet database which provides information on Centres' activities as well as practical or historical information on theatre in the Centre's country. Rubrics include the-

ITI: International Activities

atres, festivals, theatre training, resource centres and publications. The Directory may be freely consulted on the ITI Website.

World Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Theatre, Vol. I Europe, Vol. II The Americas, Vol. III Africa, Vol. IV The Arab World, Vol. V Asia/Oceania. Published under the auspices of ITI, IACT, FIRT, SIBMAS, with the support of UNESCO. Publisher: Routledge.

ITI / UNESCO Chair

The UNESCO-ITI Chair «Theatre and Culture of Civilizations» was set up in 1998 within the framework of the UNITWIN–UNESCO Chairs Programme, by UNESCO and the International Theatre Institute.

Under the direction of Prof. *Corneliu Dumitriu* – appointed by the ITI Executive Board – the Chair works in close partnership with the ITI Theatre Education Committee, the ITI General Secretariat as well as with the ITI network of National Centres and Cooperating members. The ITI/UNESCO Chair is based in Romania and operates with the support of Romanian governmental authorities and institutions.

The objectives of the UNESCO Chair are «to offer a means of coordinating research, documentation and publication activities in the area of theatre and film education, initiating and organizing work-

shops, festivals and international coproductions between theatre schools and academies and to serve as a 'centre of excellence' for postgraduate and advanced training.»

Events organised or hosted by the Chair include:

- International Workshops for Tertiary Level Theatre Schools, and a World Conference of Theatre School Directors, both conducted regularly in Sinaia (Romania)
- International Theatre Schools Festivals, held biennially during ITI World Congresses.

The Chair is currently developing regional programs in Asia, Africa, Latin America and North America.

Committees, Groups and Forums

In order to deal with certain specialized areas of the performing arts in depth, the Institute has created 10 International Committees or Forums each with their own organizational structure and programme of activities:

The **International Dance Committee** seeks to develop the study and practice of Dance, through activities such as the patronage of international festivals, the organisation of workshops for young professionals and events in connection with

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International Dance Day – in particular the diffusion of the International Message.

The **Music Theatre Committee** seeks to initiate or coordinate activities in the world of musical theatre, conducting workshops such as its triennial «International Music Theatre Video Workshop» and the awarding of the «Wolf Eberman Prize» in collaboration with the German ITI Centre.

The **International Playwrights' Forum** is involved in projects and networking for and with playwrights. It also organises a biennial «International Playwriting Competition».

The **Theatre Education Committee** is concerned with the teaching of Theatre (especially at tertiary level) and with teacher training. It accomplishes its task through themed meetings and workshops aimed especially at young professionals. It works in partnership with the ITI-UNESCO Chair of Theatre and is represented on the Chair's Board.

The **Communication Committee** studies the role of media communication in promoting theatre, and also edits publications such as ITI's biennial volume of «The World of Theatre» and the online database «World Theatre Directory».

The **Committee for Cultural Identity and Development** focuses on promoting

dramatic forms and expressions which are essential components of cultural identity. Current CIDC projects deal with such wide ranging themes as peacemaking and conflict resolution through artistic collaboration («My Unknown Enemy»), and a study of the diverse mythical representations of the origins of Humanity («Where Do You Come From, or Different Ways To Create a Man»)

The **Dramatic Theatre Committee** aims at promoting the scholarly and professional dimensions of dramatic theatre today. The DTC hosts seminars, festivals and workshops, amongst which currently a series on «The Fool on the World's Stages».

The **New Project Group** seeks to stimulate the development of new alternative theatres through the collective production of new works. The current NPG project is to assemble a multinational team to produce a series of short pieces adapted from a work by *Jorge Luis Borges*, «Circular Ruins», to be premiered during the World Congress in the Philippines in 2006.

The **One Man Show Forum** is a network of theatre festivals around the world which promote the art and artists involved in productions with a single performer.

The **Young Practitioners' Committee** was founded during the ITI World Congress in Tampico, June 2004. It has two main axes of work: 1) to encourage

ITI: International Activities

and facilitate the presence of a new generation of theatre artists, to develop new forms of artistic participation and to contribute to the transmission of the ITI legacy during the World Congresses. 2) to build up an international network of young performing arts practitioners in order to facilitate international mobility, exchange ideas and maintain the contacts made at a World Congress.

University of the Theatre of Nations

What became known as the Albert Botbol University of the Theatre of Nations (UTN) was founded in 1961 by directors of the annual «Theatre of Nations» festival in Paris. Young professionals from all disciplines and countries attending the festival were attracted to the UTN's dynamic and multicultural workshops, which facilitated international exchange and understanding. From 1961 to 1973, more than 1000 participants, from 54 different countries, attended UTN sessions which varied in length from one to six months, in Paris.

In 1984, *André-Louis Perinetti*, Secretary General of the International Theatre Institute and last director of the UTN again took up the project, transforming it into an itinerant event. The sessions were shorter and their themes in relation with the culture of the host country. Since 1984, UTN

sessions, hosted by the National ITI Centre and its partners, often with the support of UNESCO, have been held in France, Jamaica, Korea, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, U.S.A., Venezuela, etc.

The original UTN principles and goals of have retained their relevance and attraction today and form the basis of ITI workshops:

- International participation and exchange between young performing artists
- Interdisciplinarity
- Encounter of different cultures,
- Development of a common theatre project
- Presentation of work

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National Centres

National ITI Centres and **Cooperating Members** are actively involved in the following national and international activities:

- Helping visiting foreign performing arts professionals by providing contacts with their counterparts and supplying them with all non-financial help likely to facilitate their artistic visit.
- Organising cultural events such as seminars or colloquiums, festivals, press conferences, exhibitions, etc.
- Forming study committees charged with examining the most important local or regional problems affecting their sector of activity
- Organising regional or international events, meetings, seminars, festivals, workshops for young performing arts professionals and tertiary level theatre schools
- Sending a delegation to the biennial ITI World Congress and to other international ITI events, festivals, conferences or workshops
- Publications: Many Centres publish a national newsletter and some circulate this to other Centres as well. A number of Centres also produce other theatre publications, etc.
- ITI National Centres have the opportunity to make their work and their country's theatre known through the two ITI network publications «The World of Theatre» and the Internet database «World Theatre Directory».

ITI: Collaboration / New Centres

How to collaborate with or support the International Theatre Institute

The International Theatre Institute is mainly financed by its membership and other sources connected to the activities of the ITI or its National Centres.

Individuals seeking to engage in international activities sponsored by the ITI are encouraged to become members of their National Centre.

Institutions wishing to participate in ITI activities are invited to consider applying for Cooperating Membership.

Theatre professionals seeking to establish an National ITI Centre in countries without an existing centre, should contact the General Secretariat for advice.

Sponsors, foundations, organisations and institutions seeking to collaborate with and/or support the ITI should contact the General Secretariat.

How to set up an ITI National Centre

Following the holding of a meeting attended by representatives of all sections of the theatre community, a Steering Committee of about 10 members should be set up. The following documents should be sent to ITI General Secretariat:

- Minutes of the meeting setting up this Steering Committee
- CVs of members of this committee

- Draft constitution – in conformity with the ITI Charter.
- Commitment to organize a General Assembly bringing together members of the performing arts community which would approve the constitution and designate the Board of the new Centre.

Although it may be housed and/or supported by an already existing national organization such as a Theatre, a National Theatre Centre, a Theatre School or a Festival, an ITI National Centre should have its own independent structure or board elected from among the country's theatre community.

The Centre's board should include, as far as possible, representatives of all the various branches of the live performing arts (playwrights, composers, singers, choreographers, actors, dancers, producers, set designers, theatre managers, etc.) It may have individual (persons) and collective (institutional) members from each of these branches. ITI Centres should be involved in both national and international activities.