

International Theatre Institute ITI

World Organization for the Performing Arts



Message for World Theatre Day 2023 – 27 March

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English (Translation)

World Theatre Day Message 2023 by Samiha AYOUB

To all my friends the theatre artists from around the world,

I write this message to you on World Theatre Day, and as much as I feel overwhelmed with happiness that I am speaking to you, every fibre of my being trembles under the weight of what we all suffer - theatre and non-theatre artists - from the grinding pressures and mixed feelings amidst the state of the world today. Instability is a direct result of what our world is going through today in terms of conflicts, wars and natural disasters that have had devastating effects not only on our material world, but also on our spiritual world and our psychological peace.

I am talking to you today while I have the feeling that the whole world has become like isolated islands, or like ships fleeing in a fog-filled horizon, each of them spreading its sails and sailing without guidance, not seeing anything on the horizon that guides it, and despite that, it continues to sail, hoping to reach a safe harbour that contains it after its long wanderings in the midst of a roaring sea.

Our world has never been more closely connected to each other than it is today, but at the same time it was never been more dissonant and farther from each other than it is today. Herein lies the dramatic paradox that our contemporary world imposes on us. Despite what we are all witnessing in terms of the convergence in the circulation of news and modern communications that broke all the barriers of geographical borders, the conflicts and tensions the world is witnessing exceeded the limits of logical perception and created, amidst this apparent convergence, a fundamental divergence that distances us from the true essence of humanity in its simplest form.

Theatre in its original essence is a purely human act based on the true essence of humanity, which is life. In the words of the great pioneer Konstantin Stanislavsky, "Never come into the theatre with mud on your feet. Leave your dust and dirt outside. Check your little worries, squabbles, petty difficulties with your outside clothing – all the things that ruin your life and draw your attention away from your art – at the door." When we ascend the stage, we ascend it with only one life within us for one human being, but this life has a great ability to divide and

reproduce to turn into many lives that we broadcast in this world so that it comes to life, flourishes and spreads its fragrance to others.

What we do in the world of theatre as playwrights, directors, actors, scenographers, poets, musicians, choreographers and technicians, all of us without exception, is an act of creating life that did not exist before we got on stage. This life deserves a caring hand that holds it, a loving chest that embraces it, a kind heart that sympathizes with it, and a sober mind that provides it with the reasons it needs to continue and survive.

I am not exaggerating when I say that what we do on stage is the act of life itself and generating it from nothingness, like a burning ember that sparkles in the darkness, lighting the darkness of the night and warming its coldness. We are the ones who give life its splendour. We are the ones who embody it.. We are the ones who make it vibrant and meaningful. And we are the ones who provide the reasons to understand it. We are the ones who use the light of art to confront the darkness of ignorance and extremism. We are the ones who embrace the doctrine of life, so that life may spread in this world. For this, we exert our effort, time, sweat, tears, blood, and nerves, everything we have to do in order to achieve this lofty message, defending the values of truth, goodness, and beauty, and truly believing that life deserves to be lived.

I am speaking to you today, not just to speak, or even to celebrate the father of all arts, "theatre," on his world day. Rather, I invite you to stand together, all of us, hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder, to call out at the top of our voices, as we are accustomed to on the stages of our theatres, and to let our words come out to awaken the conscience of the entire world, to search within you for the lost essence of man. The free, tolerant, loving, sympathetic, gentle and accepting man. And to let you reject this vile image of brutality, racism, bloody conflicts, unilateral thinking, and extremism. Man has walked on this earth and under this sky for thousands of years, and he will continue to walk. So take his feet out of the mire of wars and bloody conflicts, and invite him to leave them at the door of the stage. Perhaps our humanity, which has become clouded in doubt, will once again become a categorical certainty that makes us all truly qualified to be proud that we are humans and that we are all brothers in humanity.

It is our mission, us playwrights, the bearers of the torch of enlightenment, since the first appearance of the first actor on the first stage, to be at the forefront of confronting everything that is ugly, bloody, and inhuman. We confront it with everything that is beautiful, pure, and human. We, and no one else, have the ability to spread life. Let us spread together for the sake of one world and one humanity.

Samiha Ayoub

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