

ITI General Secretariat Team Report 2017–2020

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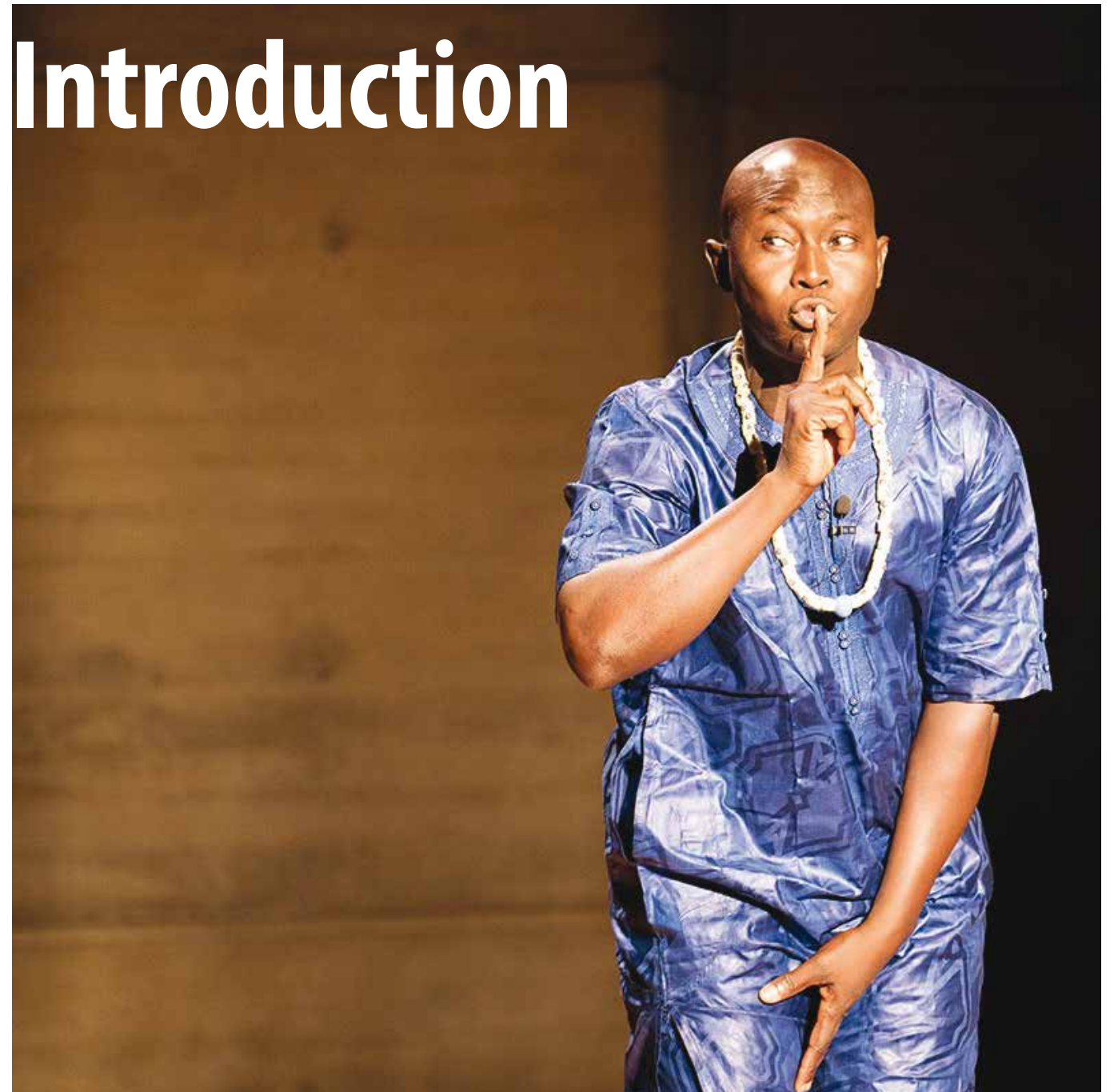
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Introduction



Dear Member and Friend of ITI, Dear Reader

It is with great pleasure and pride that we present this General Secretariat Team Report 2017–2020.

This publication has been created for you. With it, we hope to grant insight to the work which the General Secretariat provides the International Theatre Institute and the performing arts communities on a global level. It is conceived as **an invitation for you** to communicate with the members of the Team of the General Secretariat directly.

We wish to express our appreciation to all who have engaged with ITI to this point, and hope to continue these joint ventures, while adding many new ones, in the coming years.

Stay safe, in good health, and in touch with us.

The Team of the General Secretariat ITI



The **General Secretariat**, also named the Headquarters of ITI, is the central global administration unit for the International Theatre Institute ITI.

The General Secretariat's primary duty is to serve the ITI Centres, the ITI Committees, Forums and Networks, the Regional Councils as well as the Cooperating Members of ITI – and in doing so, serve all the members of ITI. The members of the General Secretariat are selected by the Director-General whose duty it is to make sure that the work of the Headquarters is in the alignment of the Charter of ITI.

The General Secretariat is accountable to the Executive Council and the General Assembly of ITI – and thus to the ITI Centres and the individual members of ITI.

The focus of this four-year report is on the work that the General Secretariat has done – including its events, celebrations, conferences, and so forth. Work carried out by the ITI Centres will be presented by themselves during the General Assembly Special Edition 2020, and may be found in a future edition of the Director-General's Report before the next ITI World Congress.



Daily Work

The daily work of the ITI General Secretariat Team consists of a multitude of detailed professional actions which help “keep the show on the road”. These include, but are not limited to:

- Writing and sending letters and official documents on behalf of ITI and its members to authorities;
- Assist in issues relating to ITI Centres or individual members of ITI;
- Create official documents for a session, meeting, assembly, authority or potential sponsor or donor;
- Construct strategic or conceptual plans to be discussed by the Executive Council in a Session;
- Provide all the necessary publication materials for an event;
- Issue Newsletters in English and French;
- Create, translate, and update the different ITI websites;
- Having documents translated to French or English on behalf of members;
- Keeping accounts in good and lawful order;
- Be in close contact with organizations with similar goals;
- Support and work together with UNESCO – the founder of ITI.

In all what has to be done for ITI, the team of the General Secretariat is guided by ITI's noble goals as well as the bright vision and the vital mission of ITI.



The Main Focus: ITI Centres

In the General Secretariat's everyday work, its main focus is, and always will be, on the ITI Centres and its members. While this may look very administrative, the primary foundation of this being carried out successfully is direct human communication between an individual and a member of the Team of General Secretariat. This communication is based on mutual respect.

Each Centre deserves the attention of the General Secretariat, and it should receive answers in due time. Sometimes an answer needs an Executive Council decision and is brought to the attention of the members of aid council.

Sometimes a Centre needs a letter to assist in acquiring funds, or to procure recognition from an authority in its country, in which circumstance it can rely on the General Secretariat. Likewise, sometimes a Centre needs advice. It will always get the best attention possible so that the Centre can be helped swiftly.

Sometimes a Centre is interested in creating and hosting the main celebration of World Theatre Day or International Dance Day – that would be an ideal and preferred collaboration for the General Secretariat and will get the full attention of the members of the Headquarters right away.

According to the Charter of ITI, neither the Director-General nor the Team of the General Secretariat are allowed to give preference to one Centre in opposition to others. This rule is applied strictly.



Intensifying the Assistance for ITI Regional Councils

To intensify the collaborations in a given continent, ITI has created Regional Councils in Africa, the Arab Countries, the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific. The Headquarters of ITI assist the leaders or coordinators of all Regional Councils, in collaboration with the President and the four Vice- Presidents of ITI.



Information Exchange between the ITI Centres & the ITI General Secretariat

It is an essential ongoing for the General Secretariat to keep in active contact with the Centres, a key task pertaining to this involves participating in the meetings organized by Centres and/or Regional Councils. Surveys are and will be launched to gain full knowledge of the Centres needs so that the General Secretariat can offer professional support. Furthermore, the General Secretariat intends to inform the Centres of the services and information a Centre may receive from the Headquarters in Shanghai.



Importance of Communicating

Effective communication between the bodies of ITI is essential to the continued success and growth of the organization. To aid this, the General Secretariat works to:

- Publish a monthly Newsletter containing prospective information about what is of interest for the members and friends of ITI. The ITI Newsletter is available in English and French.
- The creation, management and upkeep of the main ITI website with important events. It is available wholly in English and French, and partially in Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese.
- The management and updating of the World Theatre Day website
- The management and updating of the International Dance Day website
- The management and updating of the ITI Congress website – in 2020 this platform has been used to spread information regarding the General Assembly Special Edition, in English and French.

- Creating a website and Newsletter for the ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts (to be outsourced to a specialized Network unit).
- Creating information booklets about reports of major ITI events, including the translation of the brochures into other languages.
- Social media updating: Facebook for ITI, ITI/UNESCO Network, World Theatre Day & International Dance Day.
- Preparing to be more active on Twitter and Instagram.

The General Secretariat is at the moment conceiving a new Communication plan.

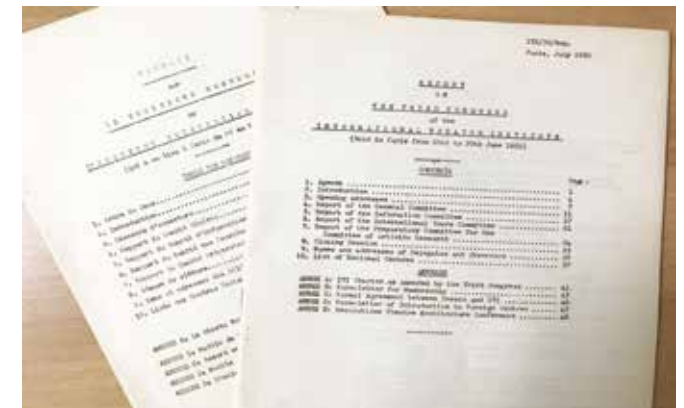


ITI Archives

As an organization with a history of more than 70 years, ITI has an extensive historical archive which continues to gain documents each year. While all the recent archives have been adequately documented both on paper and digitally, the older ones, which can date back to the beginning of ITI, need special care and attention. The General Secretariat Team has been doing this important work since 2019.

The substance of these older archive materials consist primarily of ITI Executive Council meeting minutes, ITI Reports and ITI World Congress Reports since 1948. These valuable documents mark the organization's history.

The archiving of these materials is crucial to bearing witness to ITI's ongoing activities and how they have related to the history of human society and demonstrating the active role of performing arts on social developments. This makes the ITI archives a body of remarkable historical significance.



For a long time, these archives of ITI have existed on paper, stored in various locations without being systematically categorized. Since 2019 the General Secretariat has been working on the digitalization and systemization of these archives. The aim is to create an easily accessible integrated digital database, which makes a fixed framework for future data storage.



Member Card of ITI

Part of the regular work of the ITI Headquarters is the promotion and the service of printing individualized cards for the members of an ITI Centre. After the relocation of the Headquarters to China, the printing and mailing of the card and the year stickers was organized from Shanghai. Due to the mailing costs, the cards are now sent from Europe.

[Do you need to include contact/how you can get a card?]



Special Focus: UNESCO

The ongoing relationship of UNESCO, the founder of ITI, has been the concern of the General Secretariat, significantly when the management relocated to Shanghai. ITI intensified the care for UNESCO projects and has built up regular meetings with the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture as well as regular communication with the Director-General.

The World Theatre Day and International Dance Day events, held at UNESCO, are strengthening the ties and increasing the visibility of ITI among the different sectors and levels of UNESCO.

Moreover, the ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts and the ITI/UNESCO World Performing Capital are building are joint initiatives between both organizations, which work to create an atmosphere of inspiration in alignment with the fundamental shared goals of the two bodies.

The importance of these and other projects, has seen the General Secretariat moved into a bigger, better established office with the Headquarters of ITI at UNESCO.



Special Focus: Key Performing Arts Figures

The General Secretariat put a special accent on maintaining relationships with important figures of performing arts all over the world. These figures include ITI Honorary Members, Honorary Presidents, World Theatre Ambassadors and World Dance Ambassadors, World Theatre Day and International Dance Day Message Authors, etc. With the help of good communication,

The General Secretariat puts special accent on maintaining relationships with important performing arts figures all over the world. These figures include ITI Honorary Members, ITI Honorary Presidents, World Theatre Ambassadors and World Dance Ambassadors, World Theatre Day and International Dance Day Message Authors.

ITI is honoured to benefit from the invaluable and enthusiastic support of these distinguished figures. The General Secretariat always considers inviting these persons to be present or to speak at ITI events, seeing them as significant players who can reinforce the mission of ITI.



First row: Sabina Berman, Gladys Agulhas, Ariane Mnouchkine, Cristina Hoyos. Second row: Anatoli Vassiliev, Werewere-Liking Gnepo, Jessica Kaahwa, Gregory Maqoma. Third row: Lemi Ponifasio, Peter Sellars, Maya Zbib, Robert Sturua. Fourth row: Carlos Celdran, Marianela Boan, Pu Cunxin, Simon McBurney. Fifth row: Shahid Nadeem, Karima Mansour, Ram Gopal Bajaj, Ferdausi Majumdar. Sixth row: Nikkole Salter, Brett Bailey, Teresa de Keersmaecker, John Malkovich. Last row: Isabelle Huppert, Ernesto Ottone Ramirez, Mourad Merzouki, Sasha Waltz



Special Focus: Shanghai & China

Since having moved its management to Shanghai, the ITI Headquarters work in close contact with the Chinese Centre of ITI. Especially in Shanghai, the General Secretariat is strengthening the cooperation and communication with the Shanghai Theatre Academy, the Shanghai Municipality and other local authorities, institutions and individuals.

The General Secretariat is continuously in good communication with the relevant personalities of China, be they cultural leaders, artists, administrators or any group or individual that is of interest to ITI and supports the goals of ITI. This includes maintaining permanent contact with existing or potential donors and sponsors.





Introduction

The work the General Secretariat undertook in 2017 was largely dominated by the preparation of the 35th ITI World Congress.

In addition, the two annual flagship events of ITI proceeded as usual, with the Celebration of World Theatre Day at UNESCO in Paris and International Dance Day in Shanghai. The International Dance Day Celebration 2017 was the biggest Dance Day gathering to date, in terms of the number of activities and participants.

Furthermore, the General Secretariat helped organize, or directly participated in, the various events or meetings undertaken by the ITI Committees and Project Groups throughout the year, including those carried out by: the iSTAN International Stage Arts Network, the Music Theatre Now Network and the ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts.



iSTAN Exhibition: Gunilla Palmstierna-Weiss

iSTAN, the International Stage Art Network, is a joint-venture between ITI and the Central Academy of Drama (CAD) Beijing. It is a network which concentrates on the artistic values of the stage arts and innovation in the stage arts.

After the successful first iSTAN event at the end of 2016 organized by ITI and the CAD in Beijing, the exhibition of the first iSTAN Lifetime Award Winner, the Swedish scenographer Gunilla Palmstierna-Weiss opened on the CAD campus in Beijing on 22 November.

The event was opened in the presence of the Swedish Ambassador to China as well as the leaders of the Central Academy of Drama, the president and board of iSTAN, and many local scenographers and educators from China.

World Theatre Day

at the Main UNESCO Hall, Paris

The World Theatre Day main ceremony was held at UNESCO Hall in Paris on 27 March. The event took place under the patronage of UNESCO.

During the Ceremony, performances from Togo, Poland and China were presented. More than 700 persons participated in the Celebration.

Isabelle Huppert, the outstanding French actress, authored the World Theatre Day Message for the year. She attended the event and read her message on stage.

Eric Falt, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, was present at the Celebration. This World Theatre Day Celebration in UNESCO Hall increased the visibility of ITI in the performing arts community and international media.

The Team of the General Secretariat of ITI shouldered the preparation and on-site organization, including the coordination with UNESCO, the message author, global media agencies, the participating artists and VIP guests.





International Dance Day in Shanghai

Of all the celebrations of International Dance Day, the event of 2017 in Shanghai was by far the largest and most outstanding. The three-day event was held from 27 to 29 April in the newly built Shanghai International Dance Center and the Fosun Art Center. The event included a conference with more than 30 dance experts from different countries, around 40 dance workshops for students, professionals and amateurs, two gala performances and one main celebration evening. Dance artists and educators from 20 countries participated in the event.

Trisha Brown, the US dancer, choreographer and founder of the Trisha Brown Company was the author for the International Dance Day message. The Gala Night was a tribute to her, as she passed away some weeks before the event. Her work "If You Couldn't See Me" was performed by a dancer from her Company.

The International Dance Day Celebration 2017 was under the theme of 'We, Dance Together!' This theme was picked up by speakers and artists alike, and underlined dances ability to unite people from around the globe. For the Gala Night, the organizers invited a US and a Chinese group with disabled performers to demonstrate that dance must be inclusive for all.



Moreover, the event promoted the importance of communication and exchange between dancers, dance lovers, artists and dance educators from all over the world, to let everyone enjoy dance for its own sake. The event received the patronage of UNESCO. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, sent a special message for the Gala Night which was read by Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, UNESCO Artist for Peace and President of the Philippines Centre of ITI.



35th ITI World Congress in Segovia, Spain

The 35th ITI World Congress in Segovia was the top priority for the team of the General Secretariat in 2017. As the Congress location of Manaus was cancelled due to political problems in Brazil, the Spanish Centre of ITI offered to hold the event in Segovia (Spain) from 17 to 22 July. The whole Congress started with the Student Festival from 14 to 16 July as a prologue. There were more than 150 students and educators from 10 academies, all of which were members of the ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts.

The students and educators were offered to stay afterwards for the main Congress. Most of them took this opportunity. More than 500 participants and 200 performing artists from all over the world took part in this unique flagship event of ITI.



Congress Preparation Work

The preparatory work for such a big congress was a huge task. The General Secretariat started with launching the advanced registration for the Congress. The team focused on the preparation of the documents for the General Assembly, coordinating with the Spanish Centre on the schedule of the activities during the Congress, and liaising with the various theatre and dance companies, performers, workshop leaders, keynote speakers, teachers, students and special guests who would be participating.

To create more space for the young, the General Secretariat team launched a call sent out to all the Centres and coordinated travels of the emerging artists and their artistic performances during the Congress.

For the Student Festival of the ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts, the General Secretariat team was in charge of the coordination works with the leaders of the participating academies and the Spanish Team (Spanish Centre of ITI) on all the arrangement of their travel, stay and programme.

Other administrative work, including the design of timetables, memorabilia, gift bags, and official documentation were also carried out by the General Secretariat in Shanghai.



Work During the Congress

The General Secretariat's duty during the Congress was the role of coordinator between the host, the locations, and the participants.

It needed to ensure that the appropriate materials and a fitting environment were provided for all the diverse activities of the Congress. Suitable venues for meetings, workshops and presentations had to be secured; technical support needed to be organized, documentations needed to be created and disseminated. Appropriate settings for performances, their timely organization, procurement of stage props and assured comfort for the performers had to be undertaken by the General Secretariat.

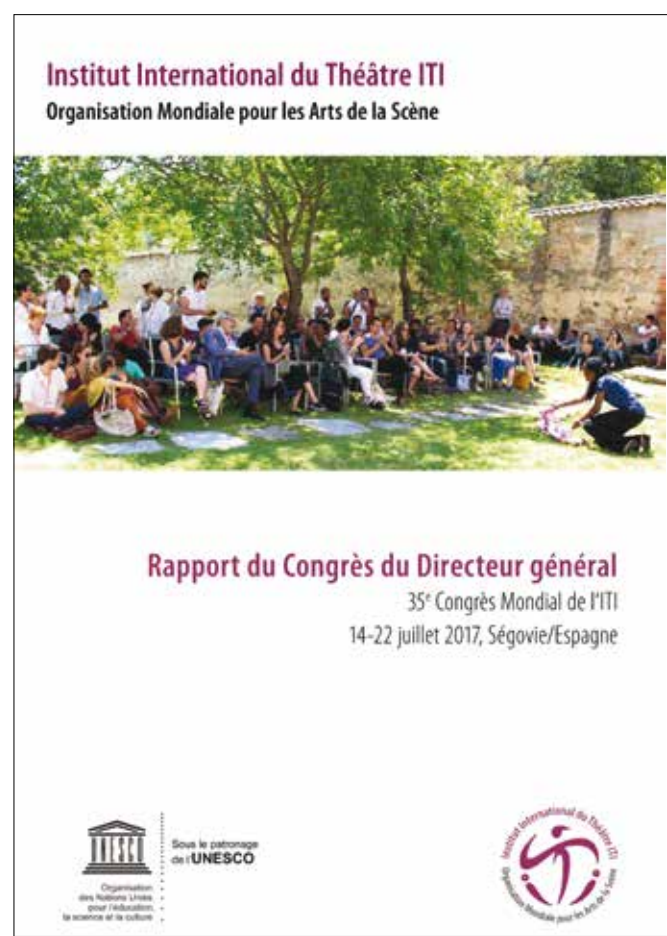
Beyond all this, and in a more general sense, the General Secretariat were also there to provide public on-site assistance to all congress attendees, helping them wherever possible, by answering any questions or queries they might have.





Post Congress Work

The General Secretariat team designed and launched questionnaires targeted at all the Congress participants in order to receive direct feedback. The Director-General's Congress Report was assembled and made available in English and French online on the Congress website in digital form and on-demand as a printed version.



In view of the feedback and debriefing, a document entitled 'Criteria and Requirements for Hosting an ITI World Congress' was assembled for the first time and is available in digital form. The document was presented to the Executive Council during its 147th session in Rome. The General Secretariat team had put a lot of effort on how to better organize a Congress so that the tasks of the city, the host Centre and ITI is more clearly defined.

2018 - The Year of ITI



2018 - L'année de l'ITI



Preparation for the 70th Anniversary of ITI in 2018

The General Secretariat was closely involved in the development in the series of special events that were to happen during the year of 2018 to celebrate ITI's 70th Anniversary. The duties for the General Secretariat were defined in the following way...



Creating a Concept: “2018, the Year of ITI”

As the year 2018 was to be the 70th anniversary of ITI, it was decided during an ITI Executive Council session that the whole year of 2018 should be dedicated to various events to celebrate the historic milestone.

The General Secretariat Team proposed to name the year “2018, the Year of ITI”. This was done to mobilize the whole in celebration, and thus enhance the communication and connection between members and friends of ITI all over the world.

In this spirit, ITI made special arrangements for the 2018 World Theatre Day and International Dance Day Message Authors: Five were selected for each event from the five regions of ITI (Africa, The Americas, Arab Countries, Asia Pacific and Europe) , to harbour a feeling of global togetherness.

In addition, a special commemorative logo was created for ITI in its anniversary year, which was shared with all members to use in their own celebratory events.



Planning World Theatre Day & International Dance Day 2018

For both flagship events of ITI – World Theatre Day and International Dance Day the Executive Council decided that there should be five message authors for each day – taking into the account of the five regions in which ITI is active: Europe, Africa, the Americas, the Arab Countries and Asia Pacific.

- It was also decided that there should be an open call published in the ITI Newsletter so that members and friends of ITI could submit nominations for who the Message Author should be.
- More than 50 Message Author nominations for World Theatre Day and more than 30 for International Dance Day were received.

- During the 147th Executive Council Session in Rome a priority list was decided, according to which potential authors should be asked if they agree to write the message.
- Coordination with UNESCO began in order to book the venue for World Theatre Day Ceremony.
- Coordination with the Cuban Centre of ITI to see if it was possible to celebrate International Dance Day Ceremony in Havana (Cuba) also began.



Planning the Main 70th Anniversary Celebration in the City of Haikou, on Hainan Island, China

The General Secretariat explored the possibility of having a flagship anniversary event in Hainan, Assisted by the Chinese Centre of ITI (China Theatre Association) and Shanghai Theatre Academy. The government of Hainan Province was interested to help ITI to create this main event. Several trips to Hainan concerned discussions about finances, visas, and the organization of a grand ceremony and additional events in Haikou.

The Director-General and the Deputy Director-General of ITI met the head of Hainan Province in October 2017, and together it was decided to plan the event to happen in November 2018. Further meetings occurred in Hainan and the ITI Headquarters in Shanghai, and the event was developed together with the Representatives of Haikou (city) and Hainan (province) as well as with leaders of the China Theatre Association and Shanghai Theatre Academy.



Meetings

Organized at the ITI Headquarters in Shanghai

146-2 Executive Board Session

The General Secretariat organized the 146-2 Executive Board Session on 13 and 14 October in the ITI Headquarters in Shanghai, with the planning of the 70th Anniversary of ITI events in 2018 as the main topic.

Additionally, most of the Executive Board members, including the President, DG and Deputy DG of ITI were able to follow the invitation of Songchen Group in the city of Hangzhou. Songchen is a well-known culture group which had shown great interest in cooperating with ITI. During this preliminary communication, the leaders of ITI and the Songchen Group had the chance to discuss possible areas of collaboration.

A second communication between ITI and Songchen Group occurred on 7 November in the ITI Headquarters in Shanghai. Both entities believe that cooperation in a performing arts training centre located in an old South-China water town (Songchen's property) seems to be very promising. ITI and Songchen agreed to develop this idea further.





Music Theatre Now Network Board Meeting

From 22 to 26 October, the General Secretariat coordinated a meeting between the board of Music Theatre Now Network (MTNN) and Shanghai cultural organizations selected as potential partners of MTNN, for example, Shanghai Theatre Academy, Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and others.

During the meeting on 24 October, MTNN presented its plan to hold events in China to the gathered local guests. A first planned event could include workshops and a conference and have the Music Theatre Now competition award ceremony in Shanghai. The General Secretariat is assisting MTNN in the future development of such an event in China.



Meeting on Assessment Systems for Performing Arts Higher Education

At the end of 2017 the General Secretariat assisted the ITI/ UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts together with the Shanghai Theatre Academy to organize a meeting to explore an Assessment System for Performing Arts Higher Education Institutions. The brainstorming meeting took place from 30 November to 4 December and include experts from the Network and associated organization.





The Year of ITI -70th Anniversary of ITI

Introduction

The year of 2018 marked the 70th Anniversary of ITI. The whole year was filled with various celebration events, ceremonies, conferences and festivals organized by the members of ITI – the Centres, the Committees, Networks and Forums, the partners of ITI, the individual members, including the Executive Council and the General Secretariat. Under the umbrella of the “2018, the Year of ITI”, ITI members organized different events all over the world, to celebrate the history of the organization. These events, happening throughout the whole year, greatly increased the visibility of ITI.

The 70th Anniversary of ITI also provided an excellent opportunity for ITI members to gather, communicate and exchange. The main celebration of the year, happening in November in Haikou/China, gathered more than 150 guests of different ITI family members and friends plus plenty of local guests and audiences. Through this occasion, ITI was able to show its gratitude to those figures who contributed a lot to the development of ITI and the performing arts by organizing an award ceremony.

Overall, the anniversary year offered an excellent summary of ITI's 70- year history and a new beginning for the future.



Art Speak for Peace Festival and Forum in Manila (Philippines)

Under UNESCO and ITI patronage, a Festival and Forum were held from 20 to 23 May in Manila. The Philippine Centre and its members and friends, as well as international performers and guests, were celebrating the 70th Anniversary of ITI with an event called Art Speaks for Peace. It was the occasion of the global launch of the International Peace Movement: Not by Force but by Art. The event was praised by the UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay for “showcasing the dynamic possibilities of art mediation and cultural understanding.”

The event was organized by Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, UNESCO Artist for Peace and President of the Philippines Centre of ITI, in association with the Filipino Senator Heherson Alvarez and with the assistance of the General Secretariat of ITI. This cultural, diplomatic initiative consisted of a Music-Dance-Theatre-Arts Concert with participants from different countries that were subject to zones of conflict.





World Theatre Day

at UNESCO in Paris

On 27 March, the General Secretariat organized the main Celebration of World Theatre Day in the largest hall of the UNESCO building in Paris, France. It was one of the key events of the whole year's celebration. World Theatre Day received the patronage of UNESCO and the new DG of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay sent an appreciation message for this grand event. To highlight the intercultural and international aspect of theatre, five message authors were selected - one from each of UNESCO's five regions. The authors were Ram Gopal Bajaj (India, Asia Pacific), Maya Zbib (Lebanon, Arab Countries), Simon McBurney (United Kingdom, Europe), Sabina Berman (Mexico, the Americas) and Werewere-Liking Gnepo (Ivory Coast, Africa). All five Message Authors were present and read their messages during the celebration. More than 900 guests participated in the event on that night.





International Dance Day
in Havana

To celebrate the 70th Anniversary of ITI and to underline the cross-cultural and international aspect of this common language of dance, the Executive Council and the International Dance Committee of ITI in association with World Dance Alliance selected five message authors to write a message for 2018 – one from each of the five UNESCO regions. The chosen message authors for International Dance Day 2018 were: Salia Sanou (Burkina Faso, Africa), Georgette Gebara (Lebanon, Arab Countries), Willy Tsao (Hong Kong, China, Asia Pacific), Ohad Naharin (Israel, Europe) and Marianela Boan (Cuba, the Americas). The main Ceremony of International Dance Day was held in the Gran Teatro Alicia Alonso in Havana, on 29 April. It was the first time that the main Ceremony of International Dance Day was happening in Cuba. The event received the patronage of UNESCO and a congratulation message from Audrey Azoulay, DG of UNESCO. The Ceremony was co-organized by the Cuban Centre of ITI, Consejo Nacional Artes Escenicas of Cuba and the General Secretariat of ITI.





Emerging Scenes in Africa in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

As part of the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the International Theatre Institute, the ITI Centre of Burkina Faso organized, in collaboration with the ITI Regional Council of Africa and with the support from the Minister of Culture, Arts & Tourism of Burkina Faso, an artistic and educational event from 22 to 30 September 2018 in Ouagadougou Burkina Faso.

The event, lasting for ten days in Ouagadougou, brought together artists from America, Asia Pacific, Europe and 26 African countries around a series of workshops, round tables, professional meetings and performances.

Around ten workshop leaders from Asia, Europe and Africa held more than 40 sessions, covering significant areas of the performing arts, including; directing, acting, dance and choreography, stage design, arts administration, and visual arts. The local and international guests of the event, plus the participants from the African Centres, took part in the above workshops.

The 7th Session of African Regional Council Meeting was held on the 28 September at the Espace Culturel Gambidi. Representatives from more than 10 African Centres were present. A round table discussion on the topic of Social Theatre and 'How to Bring Theatre to People' was organized on 29 September with international experts from different countries sharing their thoughts on this very topic.



A conference on The History of ITI and the Gala Closing Ceremony were dedicated to the ITI 70th Anniversary during which speeches, music, dance, humour, storytelling, screenings and the presentation of certificates by the Burkina Faso Centre to personalities for their participation and support for the event.

The Educational Week "Scènes émergentes" was a key celebration event of the ITI 70th Anniversary in Africa. The event contributes to the strengthening of the artistic, technical and managerial capacities of performing artists in Africa and thus facilitate their access to the world stage. Three members of the General Secretariat (Director-General, Deputy Director-General and the Communication Officer) were present. The event was

initiated by Hamadou Mandé, Vice-President of ITI & President of the Burkina Faso Centre; the event was attended by Ali Mahdi Nouri, the Secretary worldwide, UNESCO Artist for Peace and Honorary President of the Sudan Centre of ITI.



Celebration in Mexico City

On 4 and 5 November 2018, the Mexican Centre ITI UNESCO organized the Celebration for the 70th Anniversary of ITI with two events at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. The building is a landmark of the city, and it hosts permanent and temporary art exhibitions and a large hall for music, dance and theatre events. The events were a collaboration between the Mexican Centre of ITI UNESCO, the National UNESCO Commission and the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA). It is of interest that this Anniversary was also the 70th Anniversary of the Mexican Centre of ITI which was founded on the initiative of Maurice Kurtz, the first Secretary-General of ITI by the National Commission of UNESCO in Mexico on 3 November 1948.

Maestra Isabel Quintanar with the assistance of the DG of ITI gave the Award of Excellence “Mi Vida en el Teatro” (My Life in Theatre) to the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico de Amalia Hernández, a world-renowned ballet group, created in 1952 by Amalia Hernández, an outstanding Mexican dancer and choreographer.

Amalia Hernández spent many years rescuing the dance traditions of Mexico to project to the world the beauty of the universe in motion, through pre-Columbian cultures, Spanish influences in the time of the Viceroyalty and the popular force of revolutionary times.



Currently the company is run by Salvador López and by Viviana Basanta Hernández in the artistic direction, who are grandson and youngest daughter of the recognized founder – to which the Award of Excellence „was handed over during their outstanding and unique production of the Ballet Folklórico de Mexico de Amalia Hernández, in the Palacio de Bellas Artes.

Part of the two-day event was the Award Ceremony where outstanding organizations and personalities of the dance and theatre community received the Award of Excellence “Mi Vida en el Teatro”.

The National Commission of UNESCO sent a video in which the representative of the National Commission of UNESCO in Mexico underlined the long-lasting collaboration with the Mexican Centre and the immense value it has for UNESCO and performing artists in Mexico. From the General Secretariat, the Director- General was present and participated in a multitude of side events organized under the leadership of the President of the Mexican Centre, Maestra Isabel Quintanar.



The Grand ITI 70th Anniversary Celebration in Haikou, Hainan, China

In order to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of ITI appropriately, to highlight the charm of performing arts, to promote the international exchange of ideas, to strengthen the connection among ITI Members, and to appreciate the work of those predecessors of ITI, the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of ITI was held during the first Theatre Week in Haikou, Province of the Island of Hainan from 23 to 26 November 2018.

More than 290 guests and performing artists from all over the world and China were invited, including 150 international guests from 51 countries and regions. The four-day activities included the Gala event on the first day, emerging artists performances presented by four different international theatre and dance academies on the second day, Chinese Xiqu Performances featuring the top Chinese performers that received the highest recognition in the Performing Arts of China, the Plum Blossom Award, on the third night, and a drama by Shanghai Theatre Academy on the last night.





On the second day, a Conference themed on Performing Arts Community Development was organized and on the third day eleven seminars and workshops on theatre training and traditional Chinese culture were offered. On the last day, the guests celebrated the Anniversary with a colourful party. The entire event attracted around 4,000 local people to watch and participate, most notably as audience to evening matinees.

Summarizing the 70th Anniversary Celebration, held under the motto of 'Protect Cultural Heritage, Pursue Artistic Innovation, Unite in Diversity', the following was achieved:

"Through this celebration, the organizers intended to build a bridge of between different countries with the help of performing arts, to promote international cooperation, achieve artistic innovation and promote the development of the performing arts. Furthermore, it sought to highlight the charm of performing arts, the diversity of global culture, create unity through diversity. It furthermore intends to build a platform for making the performing arts an excellent carrier for telling stories from all over the world, and to promote the world's and China's rich culture to the world while elevating the local atmosphere of Hainan." Tobias Biancone, DG ITI
Participating ITI members and local persons appreciated

the event. The overall feedback from all the partners and guests was excellent. The event received strong TV and media coverage in Hainan and also in the national television channels of China, due to the number of outstanding guests internationally and nationally.



ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts

Conference & Second General Assembly in Shanghai

The second General Assembly of the ITI/UNESCO Network was also carried out as part of ITI's 70th Anniversary celebrations. The event was planned for 17 to 22 October 2018, with the primary target to open a dialogue on issues that the previous Assembly of the Network had raised, namely to attract new member institutions and galvanize the Network, to hold a conference to enable a transfer of knowledge and practices, and of course to hold a General Assembly which would approve future goals and events of the Network.

Thanks to intensive communication and coordination work, 54 representatives from 34 different universities (23 of whom were non-members) from all over the world were invited to attend, ensuring existing and new institutions to participate.

The three-day Prologue, held from 17 to 19 October 2018, was open only to the existing members of the Network and selected experts in the field of performing arts education. The Prologue's goal was to discuss some issues which the Network had already been working on, namely how acting and directing teaching systems are taught in different regions of the world and how they can be made commensurate with one another, comparing and contrasting how performing arts faculties are assessed and ranked within their national education systems.

The first day of the Assembly revolved around presentations from the participating academies, in which old members could re-strengthen their ties, and new members could get acquainted with the existing members of the Network.

One of the key parts of the gathering was the Conference On Performing Arts in a Globalized Environment, the main activity in the Network's desire to be a platform of know-how exchange and transfer between students and professionals in the performing arts. The General Assembly was held as an obligatory statutory aspect of the event. As such, it was compulsory for existing members to attend, and was led by the President of the Network, Tobias Biancone. The General Assembly included the following issues: Proposal of a new management structure, approval of the new members (24 new members were approved), the election of the new board members and the acceptance of the projects.



Mapping Project of the ITI/UNESCO Network

Under the framework of the ITI/UNESCO Network, an expert meeting was held from 3 to 5 April 2018 in Shanghai. Specialists from Georgia, Levan Khetaguri and Iuri Mgebrishvili, plus experts from Shanghai Theatre Academy and the General Secretariat, were present at the meeting. The Mapping Project aims to build a database for performing arts academies all over the world.

The meeting focused on the discussions on the process, the methodology of the above projects and Shanghai Theatre Academy also expressed their needs, as a performing arts academy, on this project.



Meetings

Organized in Abidjan, Prague and Haikou.

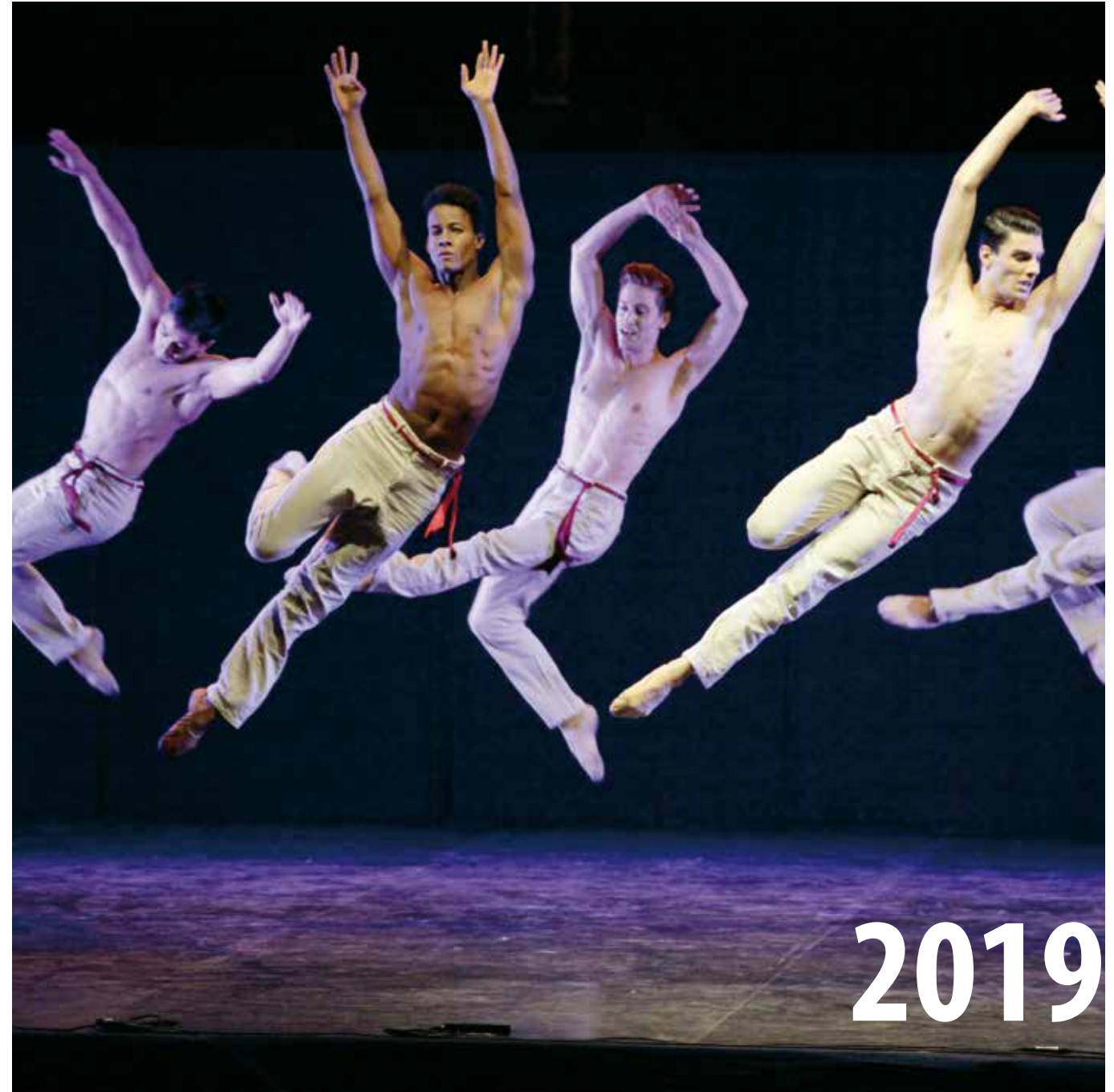
148th Executive Council Session of ITI

The 148th EC session was held on 10 March in Abidjan (Ivory Coast). Eight Executive Council members and two members of the General Secretariat were present. The Session covered the past and planned activities of ITI, including the 70th Anniversary events, the educational projects, and the administrative tasks including personnel and finance. The most important task of this Session is to check the open calls for the host city of 2020 ITI World Congress. It was decided that the open call will be sent out in May.

149th Executive Council Session of ITI

The Session was divided into two parts. The first part was held on 16 September in Prague (Czech Republic) on the invitation of the Czech Centre of ITI. It was a celebration of the founding of ITI 1948 which took place itself in Prague.

The second part took place on 25 November in Haikou (China), during the Anniversary event. Besides discussing regular issues which are covered in each Executive Council Session, the first Session mainly focused on the 36th ITI World Congress location selection and the World Theatre Day and International Dance Day Message Author 2019 selection. The second Session in Haikou mainly covered the budget issues and some further discussion on the ITI World Congress 2020 location.





Introduction

The year 2019 marked the fifth since ITI relocated its headquarters from Paris to Shanghai while still keeping an office at UNESCO in Paris. At the beginning of the relocation, the General Secretariat mainly focused on establishing an office, hiring personnel and adapting itself to the new work environment in Shanghai, as well as continuing its international tasks.

The years from 2016 to 2018 were the years of developing stability. This was achieved through the activities of the General Secretariat in collaboration with the ITI Centres and ITI Committees in using international events such as World Theatre Day and International Dance Day to increase its visibility. Parallel to this, and due to having a stable Headquarters and dedicated staff, the professionalism of services for the Centres and Committees were intensified.

The year 2019 was a challenging year for ITI and its General Secretariat. So far, no international organization in the cultural and non-governmental sector has relocated its Headquarter in China.

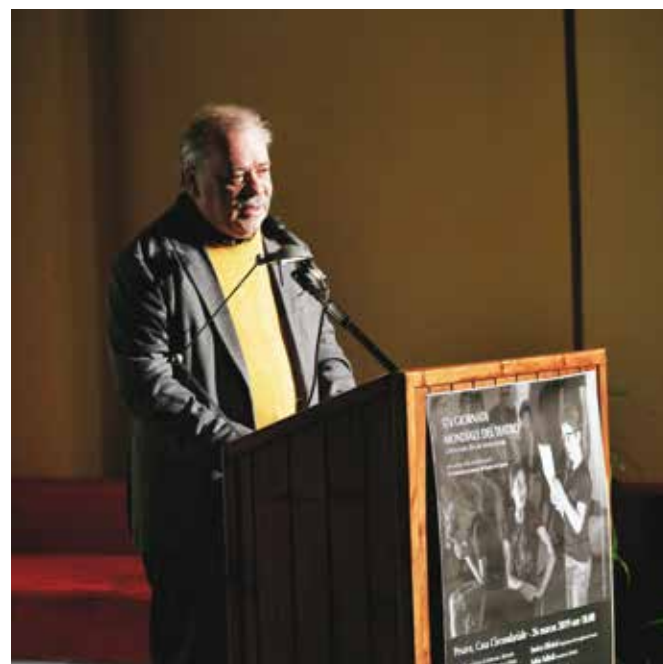
While the intention of the authorities and official partners of ITI were always keen for ITI to be based in China, and numerous opinion leaders have given their appreciation for the work that the General Secretariat has so far carried out from China in China, it has transpired that China itself has not yet established the means, laws or regulations that are needed to host an international NGO – meaning that the majority of the work has been of an administrative nature to determine proper precedents and working relations with the local hosts.



Thanks to the flexibility of the partners of ITI, its Director-General, its Deputy Director-General and the General Secretariat itself, a temporary solution was found so that the financial support of the Shanghai Municipality was secured and the services for the more than 80 Centres could be given.

These topics and challenges for a second five-year plan of the ITI General Secretariat are currently being explored by ITI and its partners in China consisting in active communication and a spirit of respecting the current situation and overcoming difficulties.





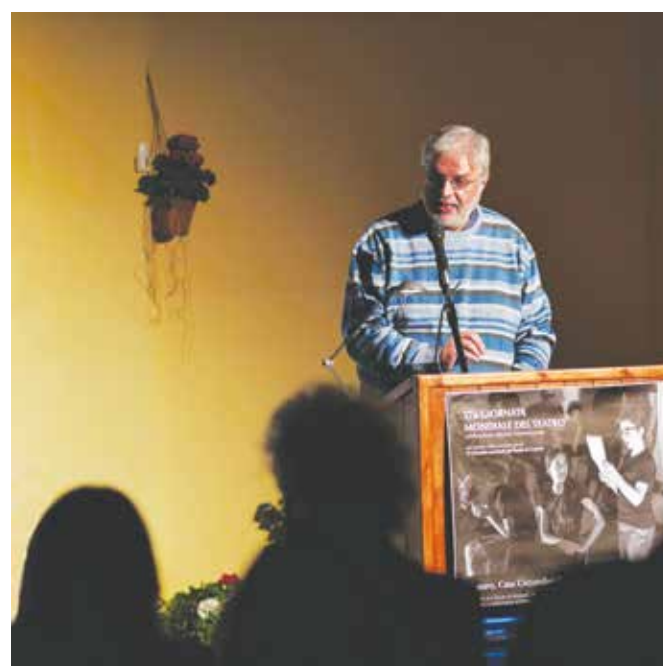
World Theatre Day

Pesaro & Rome, Italy

In 2019 the World Theatre Day event focused on the social impact of theatre. In collaboration with the Italian ITI Centre, the International Network of Theatre in Prison (INTiP) and the Italian Commission of UNESCO, the main World Theatre Day Celebration was held in two cities in Italy – in Pesaro and Rome.

On 26 March, for the first time, the official international celebration of this event was held inside a prison. The place chosen was the Pesaro prison, where the Aenigma University Theatre Urbino, together with the National Association for Theatre in Prisons and the Italian Justice Ministry, had started a National Day for the Theatre in Prisons in 2014 (now in its sixth year) coinciding with World Theatre Day.

The goals of the event in the prison of Pesaro was to underline the importance of bringing theatre to the people and opening the door to theatre for people – independent of their socio-economic status, age, gender, cultural roots, ethnicity or religious beliefs. Carlos Celdran, World Theatre Day Message author 2019, participated in the event inside the prison, as well as prisoners, leaders and personnel of the prison, local authorities and a catholic priest, Fabio Tolledi and Roberta Quarta from the Italian Centre, the coordinator of the International Network of Theatre in Prison (INTiP), Vito Minoia, the DG of ITI and Atsushi Kakomoto of the Japanese Centre of ITI.



Scrivere il Teatro

Part of the World Theatre Day Celebration was the project that the Italian Centre of ITI is organizing with the National Commission of UNESCO in Italy. It is a competition called “Scrivere il Teatro” for different levels of school classes in Italy. School children and students were invited to write a short play on a theme.

The winners of each of the four categories are coached to create an artistic performance under professional supervision, and finally able to present their performance in front of an audience where they also receive their awards.



International Dance Day Seoul, Republic of Korea

The main celebration of International Dance Day 2019 was held in a building of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North Korea and South Korea. On 28 April a conference and festival were convened by ITI, the International Dance Committee (IDC) of ITI and World Dance Alliance (WDA) of South Korea – under the title Peace & Unity: Dance for Social Change. Experts of North and South Korea participated in the conference, including members of ITI, IDC, WDA as well as Karima Mansour, the author for the International Dance Day message for the year 2019. After the conference, the audience was invited to watch an open-air dance performance which started in a solemn way and ended in a joyful dance to which the members of the audiences were invited to participate.

On 29 April, local and international guests were invited to the Garden of the Shilla Hotel in Seoul where traditional dance performances, as well as modern dance performances with emerging dancers, were presented. After the showcase, the host guided the guests into the Garden Pavilion of the Hotel for dinner and for attending an award ceremony where outstanding personalities of South Korea were honoured. Part of the Ceremony was the reading of the International Dance Day message by Karima Mansour.





Partner Organizations Event

Shanghai

In the past, ITI has always cared for the organizations that share the same or similar goals and are working in the field of culture and the performing arts. In 2019 the team of the General Secretariat organized a gathering of these organizations in Shanghai from 18 to 20 December 2019. The goal for such partner organization meetings stayed the same as before: strengthening communication and the flow of information between the present bodies while exploring common ground for active cooperation.

During a three-day event, fifteen local and international partner organizations attended a two-day meeting with an extra day added to visit the offices of local Shanghai partner organizations. The event was organized by ITI and the Shanghai Theatre Academy. The participants were glad to be able to present themselves and to find common points and projects. ITI took the occasion to renew the collaboration with a new Memorandum of Understanding between ITI and each partnering organization. The number of Partner Organizations has meanwhile grown to 20 partners.





Preparing for the Future: Developing the first edition of the ITI/UNESCO World Performing Arts Capital

The World Performing Arts Capital is a joint initiative of ITI and UNESCO. The title is bestowed by both organizations to a city in recognition of the quality of its programmes to promote the performing arts, education in the performing arts and related professions as well as the use of the performing arts for humanistic purposes. 2019 was a significant year for launching the project.

Due to the involvement of the ITI General Secretariat and the leadership of Chen Zhongwen, Deputy Director-General who took responsibility for developing the first edition of the World Performing Arts Capital, remarkable achievements in the progress of the project has been achieved.

The General Secretariat selected the team members who would work on this project and formed a task force to which an Executive Council member was added. The plan was to start with a first edition in the form of a pilot project.

Wroclaw, a city in Poland, and Shanghai were interested in taking part in such a pilot project. The team of the General Secretariat were in close contact with both cities and their authorities. A delegation consisting of members of the authorities of Shanghai and the DG of ITI visited the city of Wroclaw to connect with the authorities of the city of Poland. Parallel to contacting the cities, the Director-General of ITI and the Deputy Director-General of ITI visited Mr Ernesto Ottone, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture and planned the future involvement of UNESCO.



The General Secretariat developed documentation in English and Chinese, which explained the expectations of UNESCO and ITI and the value, meaning and importance of this unique project.

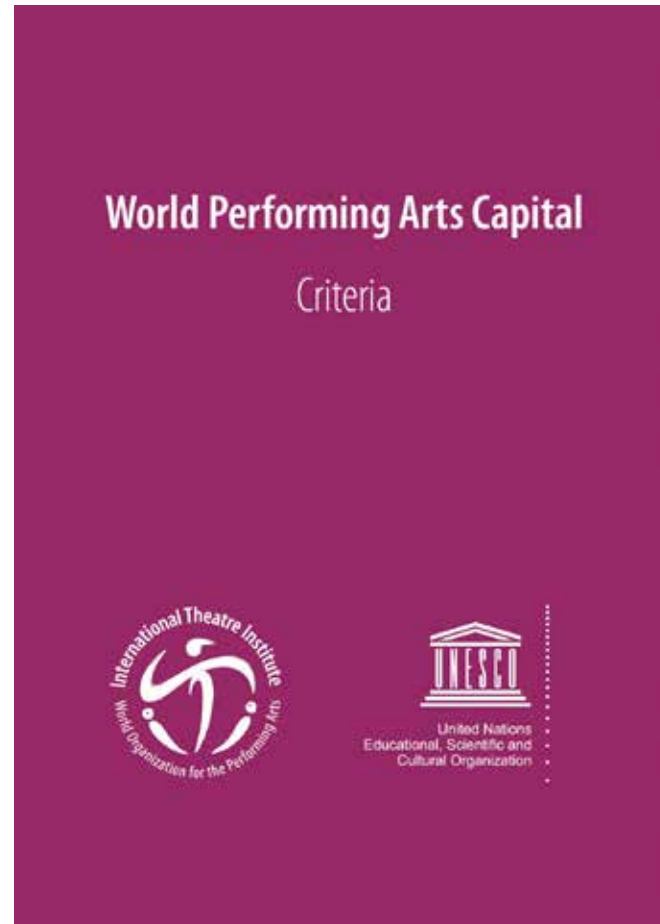
The General Secretariat organized the first Advisory Council meeting at UNESCO, Paris, which served as a platform for connecting the two authorities of Shanghai and Wroclaw, as a platform for the presentations of each city's World Performing Arts Capital project group. Guidance was given to both cities from ITI members, and the future milestones in the development were set. Present at the meeting was the UNESCO Assistant Director for Culture, a member of the Education Sector of UNESCO and a member of the Culture Sector.



The Advisory Council consists of the President of ITI, the Director-General and Deputy Director-General of ITI, a member representing Music Theatre, an International Dance Day Message Author, and three persons from four Partner Organizations of ITI. The Expert Committee offered their feedback and guidance to each city after hearing the presentations.



Finally, the General Secretariat was ready for the official Announcement Ceremony of the first edition of the World Performing Arts Capital 2021. It was planned for 24 March 2020 at UNESCO during the World Theatre Day Celebration. However, due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was postponed for a year.



ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts

Partnering with UNESCO in a bid to connect universities, academies and research institutions, the Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts has proven to be a wise decision by ITI which increases the value of ITI itself. The General Secretariat offers its service to develop the Network. In the first four years of this Network, it has become an important platform for all participants.

In October 2018, the Second General Assembly elected its Board Members in Shanghai. In May 2019, the first Board Session happened in Moscow on the invitation of the Konstantin Raykin Performing Arts School.

During this board meeting, the Board Members and the representatives of the Piccolo Teatro di Milan pledged to hold a second Student Festival of the Network from 16 to 23 July 2020 in Milan, Italy.

In 2019, the General Secretariat, working in the name of the Secretariat of the Network, undertook the following tasks: Setting up the framework and creating the content of the Network website www.iti-unesco-network.org (online in English); Organizing the first Board Meeting of the Network in Moscow; Putting together the Jury for the second Student Festival, and releasing the call to members of the ITI/UNESCO Network; Coordinating the jury members for the online selection of the applications; Planning an offline discussion meeting on the choice of the applications in February 2020.


Luca Ronconi
 fondata da Giorgio Strehler
Diretta da Carmelo Rifici



The major work in 2020 was to revolve around coordinating and organizing the second Student Festival, together with Piccolo Teatro of Milan.

The ITI/UNESCO Network is developing nicely and has 56 members consisting of educational higher education institutions, universities, academies and research institutions (as of 2020). The plan is that the ITI General Secretariat will continue to serve as the Network Secretariat until finances for a dedicated managing body are procured.

2020





Introduction

The year 2020 has witnessed the sudden strike of the Coronavirus, and with it a tremendous impact on all human beings on Earth. It developed into a global public health crisis and has influenced the whole of society, from the economy, to culture and education. The international performing arts community is now facing significant challenges, with venues remaining closed around the world. Events are cancelled, postponed or held online.

Under the circumstances of a global pandemic, the International Theatre Institute has swiftly adapted its working content and methods accordingly and has increased its operating hours to serve the performing arts community and ITI members better. Since February 2020 the members of the General Secretariat responded to requests from Centres of ITI around the globe, which enabled ITI to strengthen the communication among its members.



Seeing that people around the world are restricted in quarantine, cloaked in a mist of sorrow, fear, or even hatred, ITI has started multiple initiatives, propelled by online events. ITI is trying to fuel the spirits of people through the power of the performing arts. Actions done shows the support and care of ITI and its members for artists around the world and demonstrates that we need to help each other.

The tremendous impact of Covid-19 for the global performing art community has made it clear that ITI needs to look closer into the strategies for future developments –as an organization and as serving unit for the performing arts community as a whole.



Expressing Support, Enhancing Communication

At the 151st Executive Council Meeting in Fujairah, which took place just prior to the global outbreak in February 2020, most of the Executive Council members created a video intended to be sent to Chinese authorities and people who were suffering from the sudden strike of the Covid-19 in China.

The leaders and individuals of China expressed their thanks to ITI for this video of gratitude and appreciation. In March, as Covid-19 became a global pandemic, the General Secretariat of ITI created an initiative for sending out a message to the performing arts community. What was asked for were statements of love, encouragement and support. These were communicated and used as a dialogue and exchange to fight against the pandemic.

The messages received were letters, statements, videos, pictures and so on. The call was sent to all the Centres, Cooperating Members, individual members and friends of ITI as well as to the Honorary Members and Honorary Presidents of ITI, World Theatre Ambassadors, World Dance Ambassadors, World Theatre Day and International Dance Day Message Authors.

A particular page on the ITI website serves the purpose of sharing these encouragement videos, letters, and performance clips to the people across the globe.



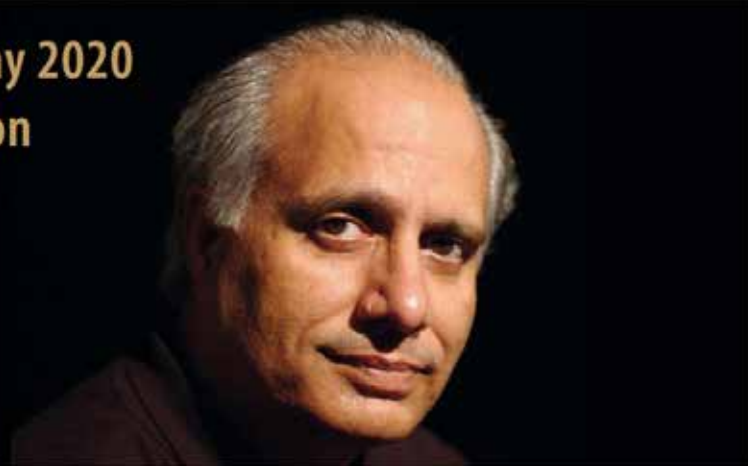
During this time of isolation, frequent communication with ITI members to share information was the priority for the ITI General Secretariat. Since February, ITI has organized two Executive Council Sessions (22-23 February & 9 May), two ITI Regional Council Meetings (17 April for European Regional Council & 13 May for African Regional Council) and one ITI Committee Office Bearers Meeting (6 June) - all of them online.

Another session for each of five ITI Regional Council Meetings, together with ITI Committee Office Bearers Meeting and an Office Bearers Committee Meetings happened in September and October. These online gatherings of ITI Executive Council members, office bearers of ITI Committees, and representatives of ITI Centres offered the ITI General Secretariat important knowledge of the impacts of Covid-19 on the ITI bodies, their current situations and their responsive measures. They also served as a platform for ITI members to exchange messages and offer help to each other.

The ITI Newsletters served, in 2020 more than ever, as an essential tool for information exchange and communication during the pandemic. Since February, ITI has released around 20 newsletters (more than 2 times the usual), sharing the information of events and initiatives launched by ITI members as well as recent news from the UNESCO.

World Theatre Day 2020 Online Celebration

World Theatre Day 2020



Organizing Online Events for Continuous Encouragement

World Theatre Day

The difficult situation of the pandemic left the General Secretariat Team no choice but cancel the offline event of the World Theatre Day Celebration. An open call was sent out to friends and members, and partners of ITI to celebrate the Day. The feedback was extremely strong. The Message Author, Shahid Nadeem, sent his message not only in writing but also as a video. Theatre artists as

well as friends and members of ITI translated the message; videos were sent in with messages of encouragement, love and support (65 letters, videos and statements in total). The General Secretariat promoted World Theatre Day over the main ITI website and the World Theatre Day Website as well as the World Theatre Day Facebook page. Centres and Committees of ITI promoted the Day on their website and Facebook pages. It was the most significant response to World Theatre Day ever.

International Dance Day 2020 Online Celebration

International Dance Day 2020



International Dance Day

Similarly, it became evident that the planned International Dance Day Celebration 2020 could not occur offline, in Angers, France as intended due to the health crisis that hit France. Again, the General Secretariat decided to organize International Dance Day to be celebrated online. The team in Shanghai agreed to send out an open call for Encouragement, Love and Support to members. The feedback was overwhelming. First, the message author, Gregory Maqoma, dancer, choreographer and dance educator from South Africa sent a video – reading his text to the international online audience. Moreover, dancers, dance lovers, choreographers and

dance specialists and members and friends of ITI sent videos, statements, and letters for encouragement - 58 in total. Friends and members of ITI translated Gregory Maqoma's message into their language.

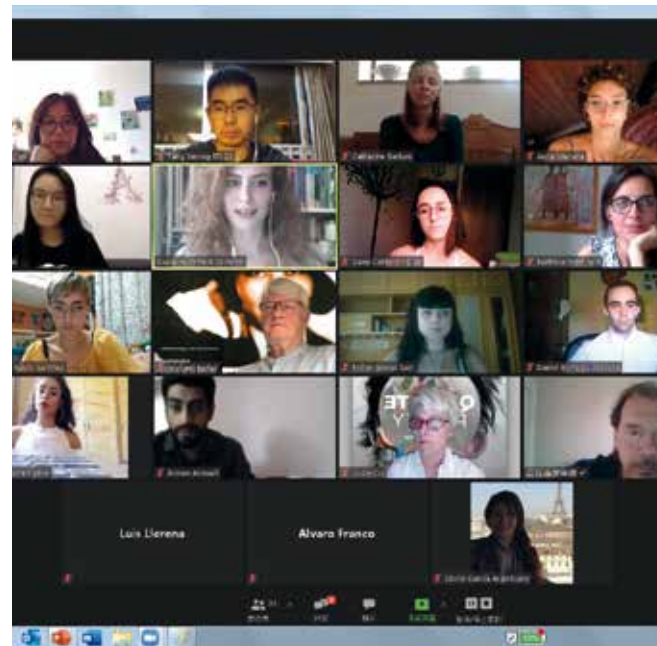
The General Secretariat of ITI informed the dance community and the performing arts community over the ITI Newsletter, the main ITI website and the International Dance Day website, as well as over the particular Facebook page that is dedicated to this Day. Again the statistics of the website provider and Facebook showed that the message was read by an avalanche of people, more than ever.



In Dialogue with Remarkable Persons

Initiated by the Director-General Tobias Biancone, together with the team of the General Secretariat in Shanghai, ITI launched a series of online interviews in the name of "In Dialogue with Remarkable Persons". In each edition, one to two persons are in dialogue with the host. The talk concentrates on a central theme such as theatre, dance, education, social theatre, culture and the arts.

Videos and pictures of their work illustrate the dialogue. It lasts about 1 to 1.5 hours, and the language spoken is English. The first edition of "In Dialogue with Remarkable People" was scheduled on Saturday, 25 July, 15.00 Paris Time. The Host was Tobias Biancone, and the Guests were Gregory Maqoma (dancer and choreographer, International Dance Day Message Author) and Aja Jung (dancer and choreographer, artistic director of the Belgrade Dance Festival).



ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts

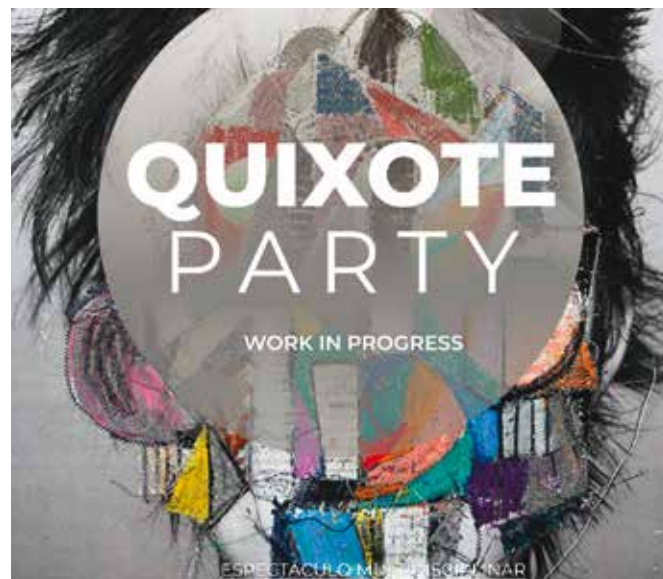
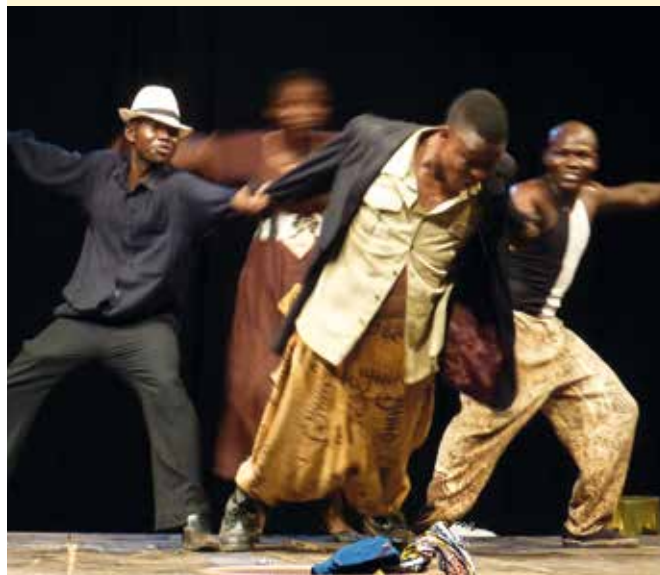
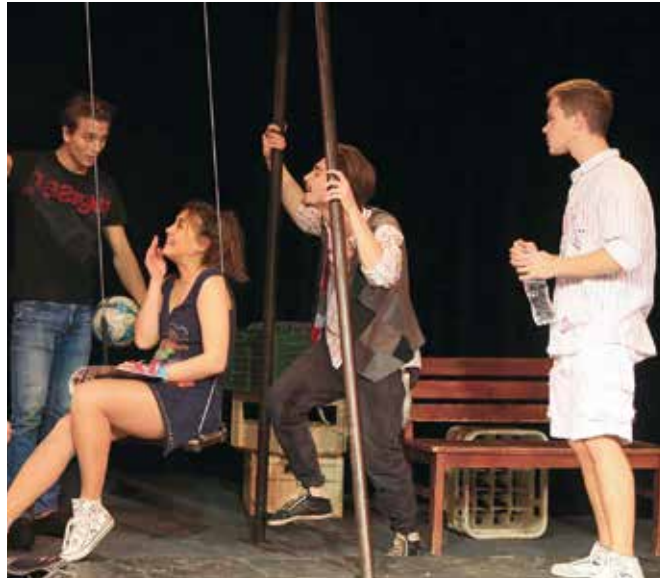
The ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts did not stop its work during the pandemic either. Even though the planned Second edition of Student Festival of the Network (July 2020 in the Piccolo Teatro, in Milan) had to be cancelled due to the severe pandemic situation in Italy, an online version of the Student Festival was organized. The ITI General Secretariat and its team functioned as the Secretariat of the ITI/UNESCO Network, coordinating with the participating schools. To promote the event, the existing website of the ITI/UNESCO Network received an add-on, focusing on the eight Student Performances, after-show discussions and the Conference.



ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts



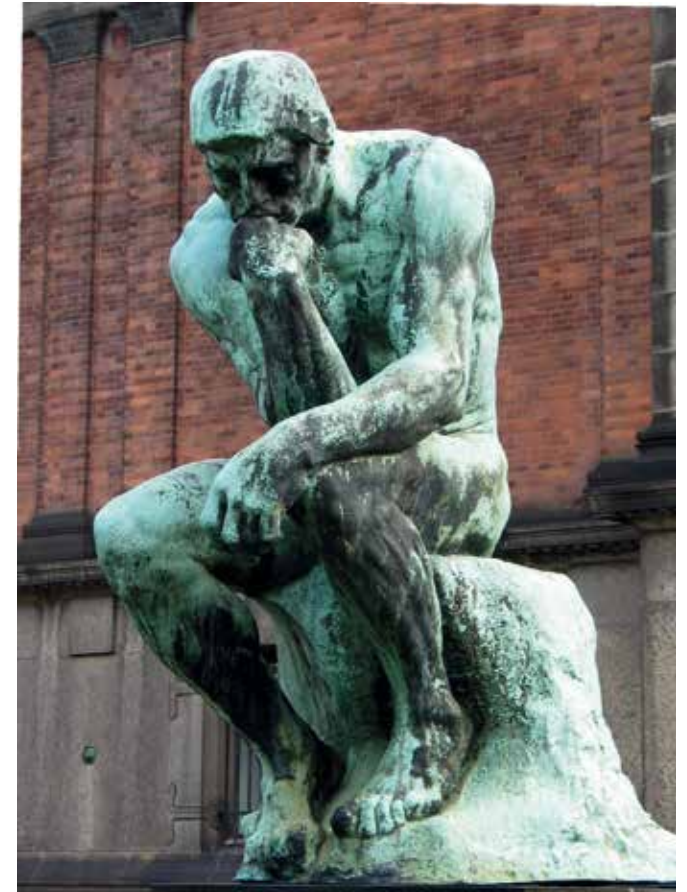
The **Online Student Theatre Festival** (13-19 July) consisted of 8 online performances, two sessions of after-show discussions and one student conference. The Student Conference offers a platform for the students to express their voices on the impacts of the pandemic and all the new situations they are facing. With students as the moderators and key speakers, the participating students shared their experiences during the pandemic and their expectations on the future of the performing arts. The series of events from this online Student Festival constitutes a highlight in the history of the Network; it is not only a virtual gathering online, but also a presentation of what performing arts can do for students during this hard time.



Evaluating the Impacts, Rethinking the Future

There is no doubt that culture is facing unprecedented upheaval due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as UNESCO has pointed out. UNESCO launched the ResiliArt Movement, instigating a high-level discussion on different aspects of culture, aiming to shed light on the far-reaching impact of Covid-19 on the cultural sector. ITI fully supports and participates in the movement, with the President of ITI Mohammed Saif Al-Afkham invited as a panellist on the second session of the discussion (14 May), focusing on the road of recovery for culture. ITI took this opportunity to share with the world the perspectives from the performing arts community on this issue.

The General Secretariat realized the importance of good policy for the recovery of the performing arts community and wished to reveal the real needs of the artists in the pandemic to the decision-makers. In order to do this, the General Secretariat of ITI designed a survey collecting information from its 85 Centres. It asked the Centres about the impact the pandemic had on them. It also wanted to know of the Centres what they need from the General Secretariat. The survey is an opportunity to strengthen the connection between the Centre and the General Secretariat. The information supports ITI's endeavours to create strategic plans for the future of ITI.





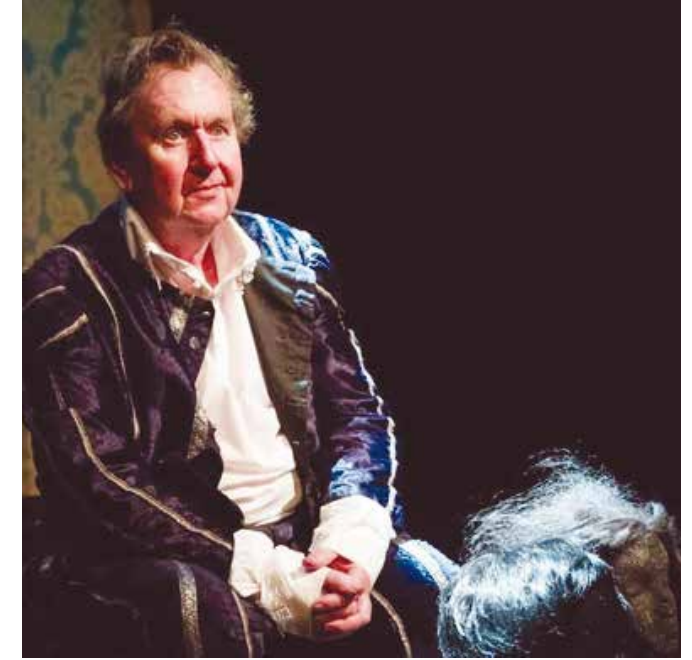
Preparations for the Next ITI World Congress

The call for the host city of the 36th ITI World Congress started at the beginning of 2019. During the 151st Executive Council Session in February 2020, the Executive Council members approved the decision that the next ITI World Congress is to be held in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates. This will mark the first ITI World Congress to take place in an Arab Country. Moreover, the Congress will coincide with the (now delayed) EXPO 2020 DUBAI, which will occur during the same period. The platform of the EXPO boosts the international exchanges in the global performing arts community.

Opportunity, Mobility, Sustainability & Innovation of Performing Arts

At the same Executive Council Session, the theme of the next Congress took form: Opportunity, Mobility, Sustainability and Innovation in the Performing Arts. This theme echoes the sub-theme of the EXPO.

Based on the theme, an event plan was drafted, containing artistic, educational and humanistic activities as well as communication events and statutory meetings. The General Secretariat checked the potential Congress spaces, including meeting and performance venues, hotels and so on. It drafted plans on the allocation of the venues. All the preparation work for the Congress is so far proceeding well.



Pandemic Covid-19 – EXPO & ITI Congress postponed

As mentioned above, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the EXPO has been postponed for one year. The General Secretariat team and the Executive Council members have been working hard to decide another reasonable Congress date and form: to ensure both the member's wellbeing, the ability to travel and the opportunity to have face-to-face exchange with other members. Due to the situation, the Executive Council members decided that the next ITI World Congress is scheduled for February 2022, in alignment with the new date of EXPO 2020 Dubai that is scheduled to open in October 2021 and last until April 2022.





ITI General Assembly Special Edition 2020

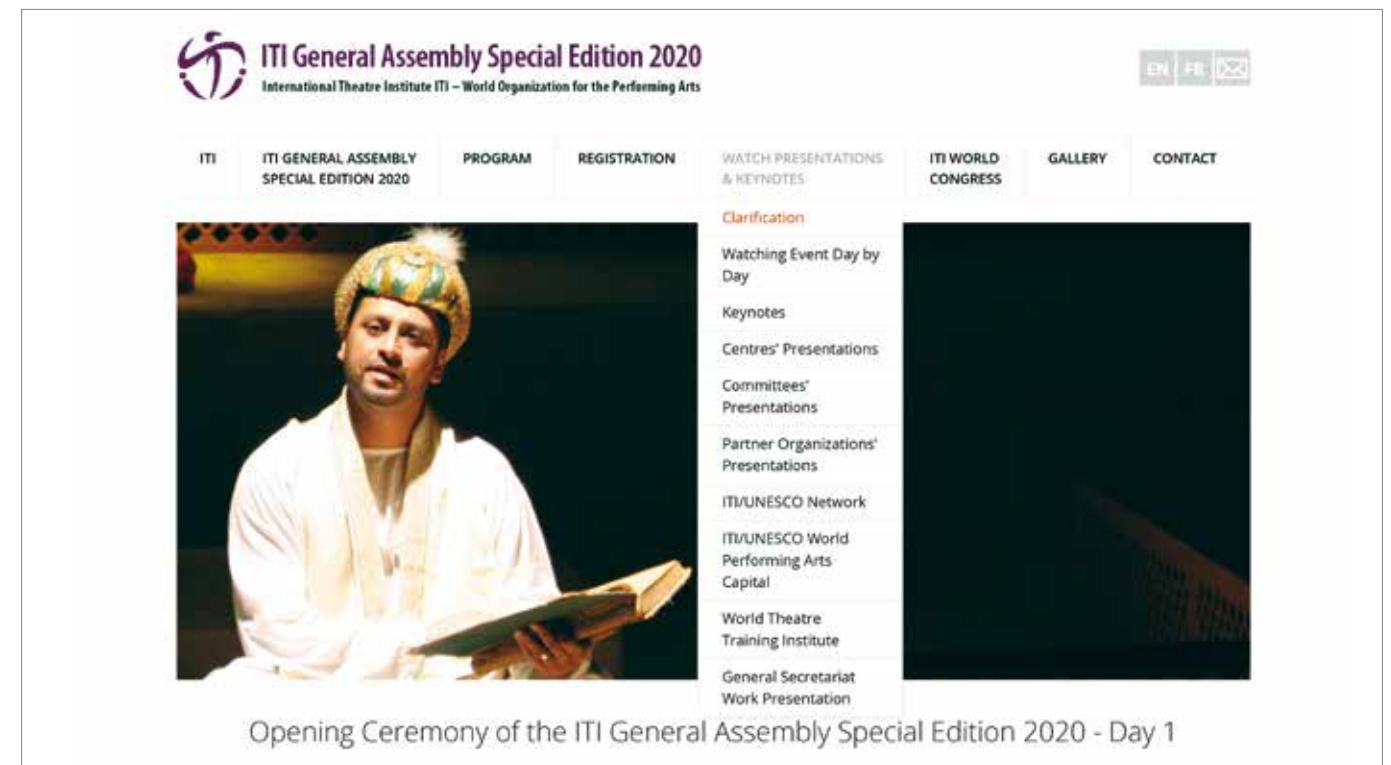
Presenting the Work of ITI Members and Friends to the Performing Arts Communities of the World

With the new date of the next Congress in 2022, the gap between 35th and 36th ITI World Congress has grown to five years. This gap affects the sense of unity between the members of ITI. It is therefore of paramount importance for the General Secretariat to create more opportunities for communication among the ITI Centres, the ITI Committee, Networks and Forums as well as the Partner Organizations of ITI

For this reason, the Executive Council of ITI decided to organize a Special Edition of the IGeneral Assembly online, from 10 to 15 December 2020. At this online meeting, members and partners of ITI can exchange information and ideas with each other as well as sharing their experience with the worldwide performing arts community.

Informing the Members and Partners of ITI about the Special Edition

In order to better communicate with the ITI Centres and ITI Committees on the content and form of the General Assembly Special Edition, the General Secretariat organized a new round of ITI Regional Council meetings and a second Committee Office Bearers meeting from September to October. During these meetings, the General Secretariat introduced the concept of this online gathering and how the ITI Centres and Committees participate in the Special Edition. With the help of these meetings, all the possible participants were informed about what is expected from them for the General Assembly Special Edition.



Call for Participation

From October to December, the General Secretariat focused on the communication work with all the possible participants of the event. Several open calls were released, calling for congratulatory messages from ITI Honorary Presidents, Honorary Members and World Theatre Day and International Dance Day Message Authors, and for the video presentations of ITI Centres and ITI Committees, which will be the major content of this online event. Invitations were also sent to all the ITI Partner Organizations in November.

Special Website for the Special Edition

A special website for this online General Assembly of ITI was created. In the middle of November, an online registration channel was opened on the website. Programmes and other necessary information for participating in the event (especially the technical guidance for participating an online meeting) were released on the website before the end of November. Meanwhile, the General Secretariat team also helped five ITI Centres who needed assistance with putting together a video for their presentation. The General Secretariat publicizes all the speeches and video presentations on the website.



Day 1 – Opening Ceremony with Inspiring Speeches

The first day of the event (10 December) was an opening ceremony with the inspiring statements:

Introductory Speeches

- Tobias Biancone (DG ITI)
- Mohamed Saif Al-Afkham (President ITI)

Keynote Speeches

- Ernesto Ottone (Assistant DG for Culture of UNESCO, picture above)
- Carlos Celdran (Stage director, playwright & World Theatre Day Message Author)
- Karima Mansour (Dancer, Choreographer & International Dance Day Message Author)
- Lupwishi Mbuyamba (Musician, Executive Director of the Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa)
- Pu Cunxin (Actor, President of China Theatre Association)
- Nikkole Salter (Actress, Writer, Educator & Advocate)
- Anatoli Vassiliev (Stage Director, Theatre Educator & World Theatre Ambassador & World Theatre Day Message Author)
- Werewere-Liking Gnepo (Word Theatre Message Author).

Day 2 to Day 5 – Presentations and Interactions

From 11 to 14 December, the event got into its main content, namely a presentation & interaction session. ITI Centres, ITI Committees, Partner Organizations of ITI and Special projects were invited to present their current situation, past work, future plans to all the audiences with videos. In the four days, 65 ITI Centres all over the globe, 15 ITI Committees, Forums and Networks, 20 Partner Organizations of ITI focusing on different areas of performing arts, plus three special projects of ITI (World Theatre Training Institute, ITI/UNESCO World Performing Arts Capital and ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts presented themselves during the event. That makes 103 presentations in total.

Day 6 – Internal Assembly for ITI Members

The last day of the event (15 December) saw the internal meeting of ITI. A video presentation of the General Secretariat's work 2017-2020 was presented. With an open call for the international projects of ITI Centres and Committees in advance, 15 International Projects were presented and discussed during this session. What is more, the President of ITI gave a brief introduction to the next ITI World Congress which is planned to happen in the beginning of 2022 in the United Arab Emirates during the Dubai World EXPO 2020.



The Result – Increased Visibility & Collaboration between ITI Members and Friends

With around 700 participants this six-day ITI General Assembly Special Edition is an important gathering of ITI Centres, ITI Committees, Forums and Networks, Partner Organizations and ITI members and friends during an unprecedented time when the global performing arts community is under a lot of pressure from the pandemic. It marked a continued exchange of ideas, collaboration and most importantly, the building solidarity, at a uniquely trying time.

As Ernesto Ottone, Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO pointed out in his speech: “The theme of this General Assembly Special Edition We, Act Together! Empowering the Performing Arts and Artists!”embodies the spirit of mutual support and appreciation of the performing arts community.”

“The strong feedback from members and friends of ITI shows that the idea that the Executive Council and General Secretariat developed yielded excellent fruits. Through the presentations, members from different part are now connecting with each other, a ministry approached a Centre for future collaboration and so on. Even after the event, positive feedback is coming in. That means the humongous task that the General Secretariat in alliance with the ITI Centres, ITI Committees, Forums and Networks and Partner Organizations has undertaken, was worth doing. It definitely gave hope in a difficult time.” Tobias Biancone, DG ITI



The Traditional Performing Arts Forum of ITI Bengbu & Shanghai, China

Another important event that the General Secretariat planned and organized in January 2020 in Bengbu and Shanghai (both cities in China) was to organize a three-day forum on traditional performing arts.

Under the title Promoting the Inheritance and Innovation of Traditional Performing Arts, the General Secretariat invited nine experts from different countries (Greece, Bangladesh, Georgia, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong China, and China) and discussed the following issues: The difficulties that traditional performing arts are facing and opportunities for their future development; A series of a new publication each focusing on one form of traditional performing art; The possibility of holding a traditional performing arts festival in Bengbu and Shanghai; setting up an organizing committee for the Festival and an editorial board for the publication series. Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, this project is on hold.





Development of the ITI/UNESCO World Performing Arts Capital Project

The General Secretariat is now paying close attention to the situation of the pandemic, and planning to resume work at a proper time. So far, it appears likely that the launch of the World Performing Arts Capital in 2022 will be announced during the World Theatre Day Celebration in 2021 with a global press conference, Advisory Council meeting and a meeting presenting the cities' plans – though obviously confirmation of this is dependent on what is appropriate in the wake of the pandemic.





The achievements of the General Secretariat of ITI are the result of the efforts of each team member, and their dedication to ITI and the way they collaborate with each other and with all the members and friends of ITI.

I want to express my great gratitude to **Chen Zhongwen**, Deputy Director-General of ITI who plays a significant and unique role in creating the

excellent results as well as to each of the past and especially the current team players: Tang Yiming, Chen Simin and Du Mengxuan.



Tobias Biancone
Director-General
International Theatre Institute ITI

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CHEN Zhongwen



TANG Yiming



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DU Mengxuan
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