



# How to Celebrate World Theatre Day

## Guidelines





# World Theatre Day in a Nutshell

World Theatre Day was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute ITI. It is celebrated annually on 27 March by Centres, Cooperating Members and Partner Organizations of ITI as well as the international theatre community. Various national and international theatre events are organized to mark this occasion.

One of the most important of the Celebration is the circulation of the World Theatre Day Message through which at the invitation of ITI, a figure of world stature shares his or her reflections on the theme of Theatre and a Culture of Peace. The first World Theatre Day Message was written by Jean Cocteau in 1962.

Ever since, each year on 27 March (date of the opening of the 1962 edition "Theatre of Nations" in Paris), World Theatre Day has been celebrated in many and varied ways by ITI Centres - of which there are now more than 90 throughout the world. Moreover theatres, theatre professionals, theatre lovers, theatre universities, academies and schools celebrate it as well.

Each year an outstanding figure in theatre or a person outstanding in heart and spirit from another field is invited to share his or her reflections on theatre and international harmony. What is known as the official Message is translated into more than 50 languages, read for tens of thousands of spectators before performances in theatres throughout the world, and printed in hundreds of daily newspapers. Colleagues in the audio-visual field lend a fraternal hand, with more than a hundred radio and television stations transmitting the Message to listeners in all corners of the five continents.

*Cover Photo: Theatrical surprise from Simon McBurney, Actors from Théâtre du Soleil company: Serge Nicolai, Olivia Corsini, Jacques Martial, Simon McBurney and Jean-Jacques Lemètre, World Theatre Day 2018 in Paris, France*

# Goals of World Theatre Day



*World Theatre Day 2012 in Paris, France*

The main issue of World Theatre Day is to promote “theatre” in all its forms to professional and people all over the world. Further goals and purposes include:

- to make people aware of the value and importance of the theatre;
- to enable the theatre community to promote their work on a broad scale, so that opinion leaders, government and municipal entities are aware of the value of the art form and are support it;
- to share the inspiration that a theatre performance has;
- to bring the cultural diversity of theatre performances to audiences;
- to open the door for the idea and benefits of mutual understanding and peace in the minds of people.

# Brief History of World Theatre Day



*International Theatre Institute*

World Theatre Day has been created by the International Theatre Institute ITI, the world's largest organization for the Performing Arts, and was celebrated for the first time on 27 March 1962.

Ever since, each year on the 27 March (date of the opening of the 1962 edition "Theatre of Nations" in Paris), the day is celebrated all over the world.

One of the most important actions is the circulation of the World Theatre Day Message through which, at the invitation of ITI, a figure of world stature shares his or her reflections on the theme of Theatre and a Culture of Peace.

The first World Theatre Day International Message was written by Jean Cocteau. The World Theatre Day Message is translated into the different languages of the world and distributed widely.

[www.world-theatre-day.org](http://www.world-theatre-day.org)

# World Theatre Day Message Authors 1962-2026



All the (international) Message authors from the beginnings of World Theatre Day in 1962 were selected by ITI, respectively by the Executive Council of ITI. The aspects that are considered by the council by selecting a Message authors are diversity of regions, gender, professions and countries. In exceptional cases an outstanding figure that was not part of the theatre community but had a great interest in theatre were asked to write the Message. The Message authors that were selected so far, all of them played an important role either in their country or worldwide.

Some Centres of ITI also select a local Message author and celebrate World Theatre Day in reading the Message of both.

# World Theatre Day Message Authors 1962-2026

## List of the Message authors from 1962 to 2026

- 2026 Willem DAFOE, USA  
2025 Theodoros TERZOPOULOS, Greece  
2024 Jon FOSSE, Norway  
2023 Samiha AYOUB, Egypt  
2022 Peter SELLARS, USA  
2021 Helen MIRREN, United Kingdom  
2020 Shahid NADEEM, Pakistan  
2019 Carlos CELDRÁN, Cuba  
2018 Ram Gopal BAJAJ, India  
2018 Maya ZBIB, Lebanon  
2018 Simon MCBURNEY, UK  
2018 Sabina BERMAN, Mexico  
2018 Werewere-Liking GNEPO, Ivory Coast  
2017 Isabelle HUPPERT, France  
2016 Anatoly VASILIEV, Russia  
2015 Krzysztof WARLIKOWSKI, Poland  
2014 Brett BAILEY, South Africa  
2013 Dario FO, Italy  
2012 John MALKOVICH, USA  
2011 Jessica A. KAAHWA, Uganda  
2010 Judi DENCH, United Kingdom  
2009 Augusto BOAL, Brazil  
2008 Robert LEPAGE, Canada  
2007 Sultan bin Mohammed AL QASIMI,  
Sharjah, UAE  
2006 Victor Hugo RASCON BANDA, Mexico  
2005 Ariane MNOUCHKINE, France  
2004 Fathia EL ASSAL, Egypt  
2003 Tankred DORST, Germany  
2002 Girish KARNAD, India  
2001 Iakovos KAMPANELIS, Greece  
2000 Michel TREMBLAY, Canada  
1999 Vigdís FINNBOGADÓTTIR, Iceland  
1998 50th Anniversary of ITI - Special Message  
1997 Jeong Ok KIM, South Korea  
1996 Saadallah WANNOUS, Syria  
1995 Humberto ORSINI, Venezuela  
1994 Vaclav HAVEL, Czech Republic  
1993 Edward ALBEE, USA  
1992 Jorge LAVELLI, Argentina/France  
- Arturo USLAR PIETRI, Venezuela  
1991 Federico MAYOR,  
Director General of UNESCO, France  
1990 Kirill LAVROV, Russia  
1989 Martin ESSLIN, United Kingdom  
1988 Peter BROOK, United Kingdom  
1987 Antonio GALA, Spain  
1986 Wole SOYINKA, Nigeria  
1985 André-Louis PERINETTI, France  
1984 Mikhaïl TSAREV, Russia  
1983 Amadou Mahtar M'BOW,  
Director General of UNESCO, Senegal  
1982 Lars af MALMBORG, Sweden  
1981 national messages  
1980 Janusz WARMINSKI, Poland  
1979 national messages  
1978 national messages  
1977 Radu BELIGAN, Romania  
1976 Eugène IONESCO, Romania  
1975 Ellen STEWART, USA  
1974 Richard BURTON, USA  
1973 Luchino VISCONTI, Italy  
1972 Maurice BEJART, France  
1971 Pablo NERUDA, Chile  
1970 Dimitri CHOSTAKOVITCH, Russia  
1969 Peter BROOK, United Kingdom  
1968 Miguel Angel ASTURIAS, Guatemala  
1967 Hélène WEIGEL, Germany  
1966 René MAHEU,  
Director General of UNESCO, France  
1965 Anonymous  
1964 Laurence OLIVIER, United Kingdom  
Jean-Louis BARRAULT, France  
1963 Arthur MILLER, USA  
1962 Jean COCTEAU, France

# Who Can Celebrate World Theatre Day?



The Centres and Cooperating Members as well as the Partner Organizations of ITI are the driving force behind the celebration of World Theatre Day in their country or region.

But Celebration on World Theatre Day (27 March) or around this date can be organized and promoted by anyone and everyone who estimates the art form theatre and is caring for theatre and a world with mutual understanding, a world in peace.

For instance:

- Centres of ITI
- Cooperating Members of ITI
- Partner Organizations of ITI
- Theatre Venues
- Theatre Associations
- Theatre groups
- Theatre lovers / Theatre aficionados
- Theatre Institutions
- Ministries of Culture or other government entities
- Theatre universities, academies or any educational theatre institution
- Schools (primary, secondary, colleges, etc.)
- Prisons (as done by the International Association for Theatre in Prison IATiP)
- Individuals
- Etc.

ITI recommends that individuals or institutions who want to celebrate a World Theatre to coordinate it with the ITI Centre or Cooperating Member in their country or region. The list of the Centres and Cooperating Members can be found in the directory online at [www.iti-worldwide.org/centes.html](http://www.iti-worldwide.org/centes.html)  
[www.iti-worldwide.org/cooperatingmembers.html](http://www.iti-worldwide.org/cooperatingmembers.html).

# Promoting the Message with a Special Event



*From left to right: Tobias BIANCONE, Julian Sands, Mohamed Saif AL-AFKHAM, John MALKOVICH; World Theatre Day 2012 in Paris, France*

The types of events organized around World Theatre Day are as numerous as there are ideas. Here is a short list of the major ones:

- Special Theatre Award Ceremony
- Charity Performances for organisations, people or specific issues connected with theatre
- Fundraising for a Special Project with a gala, ball, dinner, etc
- Open Doors for Theatre Universities, Theatre Academies or Theatre Schools
- Free Tickets during World Theatre Day to selected performances
- Conferences, special performances, symposia, colloquia and round tables, discussions
- Meetings with the Message author, meetings with local actresses and actors
- Street Theatre Event
- Demonstration/Procession for theatre
- Flash mob on World Theatre Day
- Competition for school children to write a text connected with the theme of World Theatre Day ending with performances for children played by children

# Promoting the World Theatre Day Message by Reading it



Anatoly VASILIEV, World Theatre Day 2016 in Guangzhou, China

## Reading the Message in Venues

To read the Message in a theatre or any venue can be done in different ways such as:

- In front of the curtain or just on stage before the performance begins. An actress or actor reads the Message to the audience.
- In the lobby, before the performance or in the intermission, an actress or actor reads the Message to an assembled audience.
- In the audience, done by the Message author or by an actress or actor, before the performance.
- At a separate time in the venue with discussions, round tables, etc.

## Reading the Message in Universities, Academy and Schools

- Often the Message is read in schools (any level), read by the pupil or the teacher or even by an invited theatre person, with discussion afterwards.
- In Italy in different levels of schools the pupils are invited to select a theme, write a play together and perform it together during World Theatre Day – whereas the theme can be taken out of the Message or chosen by the organizers, a theme that is important for the boys and girls of the schools.

# Promoting the World Theatre Day Message by Reading it



*World Theatre Day 2019 in Pesaro, Italy*

## Reading the Message in Prisons

- Similarly, the theme of the Message of World Theatre Day can be read by prisoners and may even led to performances created by prisoners.  
Link International Network Theatre in Prison INTiP: [www.theatreinprison.org](http://www.theatreinprison.org)

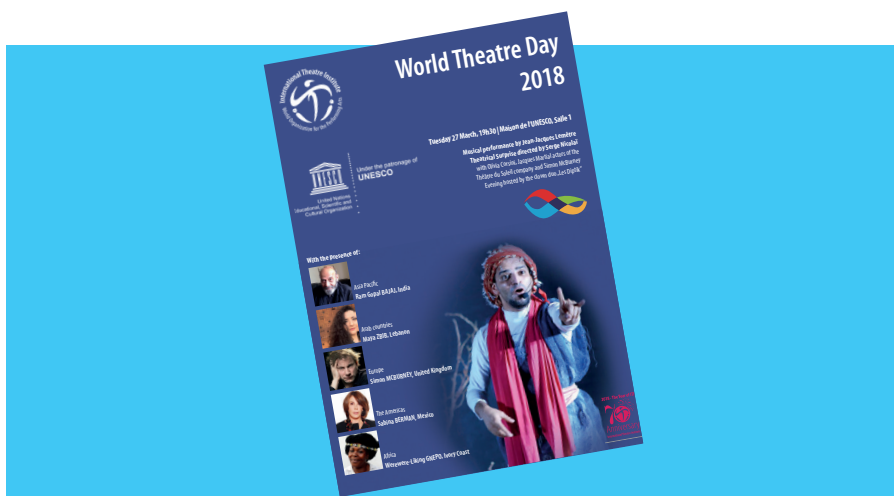
## Reading of the Message in a Community

- Any group or any community can select the Message to be read in a small to large group with ensuing discussions.

## Reading the Message on Radio

- In many locations an actress, actor or other theatre aficionado reads the Message in Radio and thus may inspire a large audience through this.

# Promoting the World Theatre Day Message by Printing and Distributing it



## Promoting the Message by Distributing Leaflets

In some countries the Message is printed in leaflets that are distributed. This may happen;

- In a venue where the leaflets are handed out at the entrance, place on seats, etc.
- in a public place (preferably near the theatre) where the leaflets are distributed to passer-by's
- in a train station (may need legal permission) where the people are waiting for their train
- in parks, even with an actress or actress in costume who is reading the Message to the people, leaflets can be distributed.

## Promoting the Message in Newspapers, Periodicals, Magazines, etc.

- Additionally, to distributing leaflets with the Message and the biography of the Message author, the Message can be sent to newspapers and magazines for publication. This has to be coordinated with the General Secretariat, as soon as the Message is available in the original language and in the language required by the newspaper or magazine.

# Promoting the World Theatre Day Message by Printing and Distributing it



*Ceremony "Scrivere il Teatro", World Theatre Day 2019 in Rome, Italy*

## Promoting the Message on Posters

A way of promoting the Message can be to put it on a poster and put on prominent locations throughout a city or even in a venue, in front of the venue, in a university or even in the building of the Ministry of Culture or other governmental agencies.

## Promoting All Existing Messages in a Book

Sometimes the latest Message is printed together with all previous Messages in a book form and released on World Theatre Day. This has already been the case in English, French, Bangla (Bengali), Arabic and Kannada (India), among others. If you would like to have all the Messages, that are available in English and French, please write to [wtd@iti-worldwide.org](mailto:wtd@iti-worldwide.org).

You may create occasions for such a publication yourself, or for instance choose an anniversary such as the 60th Anniversary of World Theatre Day on 27 March 2022.

# Promoting the Message with a Video and Putting it on YouTube



*International Theatre Institute*

## **Promoting the Message with the Author Reading it on Video**

A video of the Message Author reading his/her Message on YouTube has been a successful way to promote the Message. Possible is that the Message Author reads the Message in front of a camera or the Message Author is reading the Message without being seen and the Message is illustrated by presenting his work. In 2012, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui made a video that had over 30 000 hits on YouTube (beginning 2013).

To have the author read his/her Message on video that can be uploaded on YouTube and different websites is ideal. Usually this is done through an agreement between the author and the General Secretariat of ITI and the produced video is made available for use all over the world.

## **Promoting the Message with an Actress or Actor Reading it on Video**

Sometimes it is not possible to have the author read his/her Message. In this case, ITI asks its Centres, Cooperating Members and friends to select a personality, well known in a region or a country, to read the translated Message in his/her language and to send the video to the General Secretariat for post-production and publishing on the ITI websites and YouTube. More information: [wtd@iti-worldwide.org](mailto:wtd@iti-worldwide.org).

## Promoting the Message via Radio, TV, Press and Internet



*Werewere-Liking GNEPO, World Theatre Day 2018 in Paris, France*

ITI Centres, Cooperating Members and friends are encouraged to send the World Theatre Day Message to news media of any kind. The authors are in general willing to give interviews. If there is an interest of radio, TV, Press or Internet agency to interview the Message author, please get in touch with the General Secretariat over [wtd@iti-worldwide.org](mailto:wtd@iti-worldwide.org).

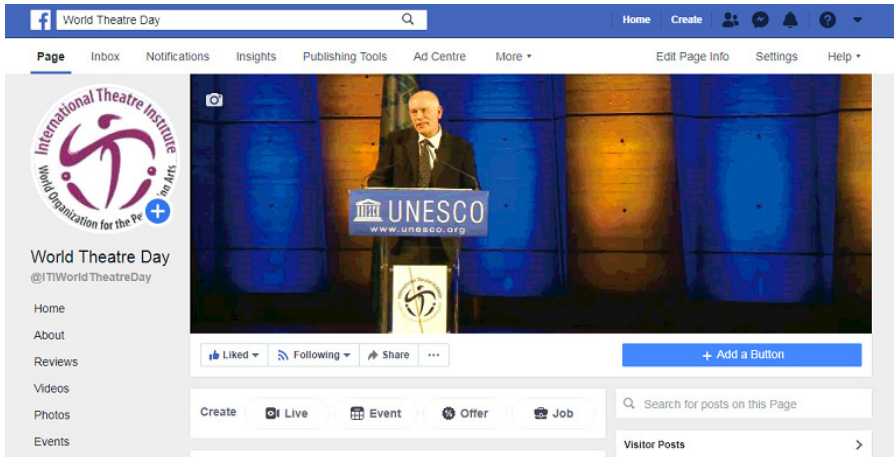
It is appreciated if you are posting the Message with biography and pictures on your website or send it to sources that may post it on their website.

### Event Map of World Theatre Day

The General Secretariat of ITI has created an event map. If you are holding an event, please send your information to [wtd@iti-worldwide.org](mailto:wtd@iti-worldwide.org) so that it can be put on the global map for World Theatre Day:  
[www.world-theatre-day.org/worldwideevents.html](http://www.world-theatre-day.org/worldwideevents.html)

Note, that the Message is available in in different languages. To find out which languages are available please check [www.world-theatre-day.org](http://www.world-theatre-day.org)

# Promoting the Message via Social Media and Blogs



Feel free to promote your actions in relation to World Theatre Day on Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. You also may participate in World Theatre Day blogs that individuals and organizations have created on the issue of World Theatre Day.

## World Theatre Day on Facebook

To show other what is happening on World Theatre Day elsewhere you may connect yourself on the Facebook page that the General Secretariat of ITI has created.

<https://www.facebook.com/ITIWorldTheatreDay/>

# Promoting the Message in a Way that is Appropriate to Your Ideas



*Concert by Jean-Jacques Lemêtre, World Theatre Day 2018 in Paris, France*

Your Creativity is Encouraged. Many ideas can be developed for the celebration of World Theatre Day. There are already blogs that you can find on internet.

Please send us your ideas and your kind of event that you organize, and also where and when you celebrate the day, so that we can put it on the Celebration Map on our website.

# Translating the Message



*ITI Sudan Centre 2016*

Due to the multitude of languages that exist all over the world, and because the Message should be understood by the people in a country or region, the Message of World Theatre Day is always translated into the country's language or languages and the same goes for the short biography of the author.

The translation serves for promoting the Message locally. It generally is used by the Centre or a theatre community for their audience.

If you would like to translate the message into your language, please contact the ITI Centre of your country. You will find the information about your Countries Centre on the ITI website: [www.iti-worldwide.org/centres.html](http://www.iti-worldwide.org/centres.html).

You also may contact the General Secretariat of ITI [wtd@iti-worldwide.org](mailto:wtd@iti-worldwide.org), to find out if there is already a translation being prepared.

If there is no ITI Centre in your country feel free to translate the message and send your translation to [wtd@iti-worldwide.org](mailto:wtd@iti-worldwide.org),

Please mention at the end of the message the name of the translator. After receiving it, it will be put on the ITI and World Theatre Day websites for further use.

# Copyright Issues



*International Theatre Institute (ITI event in 2010)*

## **Copyright of the Original Message**

The copyright of the original Message belongs to the author and ITI. The Message is made available for print or distribution free of payment and royalty.

## **Copyright of a Translation of the Message**

The copyright of the translation belongs to the author, the translator and ITI. By sending a translation to ITI for publication on the ITI websites [www.world-theatre-day.org](http://www.world-theatre-day.org) and [www.iti-worldwide.org](http://www.iti-worldwide.org) the copyright owners give their translation royalty-free for any publication, but the name of the translator should always be mentioned.

## **Copyright of the Photos**

The copyright of the photo or photos that are sent out by ITI, together with the Message belong to the photographer and is given royalty free for publications alongside the Message and biography. The name of the photographer or copyright owner should always appear together with the photo.

# Celebrating Dance on International Dance Day – 29 April



*Ella y él... siempre* by the Lize Alfonso Dance Cuba. International Dance Day 2018 in Havana, Cuba

The International Theatre Institute ITI created through its Dance Committee also International Dance Day.

It is celebrated since 1982 on 29 April all over the world.

More information: [www.interantional-dance-day.org](http://www.interantional-dance-day.org)

# What is the International Theatre Institute ITI?

The International theatre Institute ITI was created by UNESCO with the assistance of international theatre and dance experts, in 1948. Since then, ITI has developed into the world's largest organization for the performing arts with a raising number of more than 90 Centres and cooperating members all over the world. The goals are artistic, educational and humanistic.

ITI works on an international level with project groups that concentrate on Theatre. Dance. Music Theatre, Playwriting, Monodrama, Festivals, Publications Theatre Education, and uses theatre for the development in conflict zones, in issues of migrations, cultural identity and diversity, cultural heritage, community work and emerging artists.

The Secretariat of ITI is based at the headquarters of UNESCO in Paris and in Shanghai.

ITI is partnering with other international organizations dealing with theatre, dance, research, etc. Together with UNESCO, ITI has created the ITI/UNESCO Network for Higher Education in the Performing Arts.

For more information about ITI, please visit: [www.iti-worldwide.org](http://www.iti-worldwide.org)

For more information about World Theatre Day: [www.world-theatre-day.org](http://www.world-theatre-day.org)

For more information about the ITI/UNESCO Network: [www.iti-unesco-network.org](http://www.iti-unesco-network.org)

If you have any questions, need a logo, text or photo, please write to:

[wtd@iti-worldwide.org](mailto:wtd@iti-worldwide.org)

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