

To all the UNIMA Centres around the world

Dear friends,

At the occasion of the World Puppetry Day 2014, that we will be celebrated on March 21st, you will find below the International Message of the Argentine Master Eduardo Di Mauro, currently living in Venezuela. This very nice and profound message is preceded by a presentation of the author written by his son Daniel, deeply involved himself in the teaching and promotion of our art. I invite you to read it and send it to all your members and medias of communication of your city, province and country. I sincerely thank Master Di Mauro for accepting the UNIMA's invitation.

This UNIMA Message is the first one written by a Latin American and serves as an introduction to the important Meeting of all the UNIMA Councilors which will take place in Varadero - Cuba, from April 22nd to 24th. The limit date for the registration is March 20th 2014. For more information, please consult the following special website at: <http://www.unimacuba2014.info>

All my friendship !
Jacques Trudeau
UNIMA Secretary General

Eduardo Di Mauro

(born April 1928, Cordoba, Argentina)

His story is intimately bound up with that of his non-identical twin brother, Hector Di Mauro, in that both conceived a passion for the world of puppetry which they developed together, and with their wives, respectively Laura de Rokha and Rachel Venturini, through their company La Pareja (The Pair). Initially their inspiration came from the great puppeteers who had generated an important dramaturgy for puppets, among them Javier Villafañe, Pedro Ramos, César López O'Con.



The contribution of the Di Mauro brothers was the demonstration of how, with organization, goodwill and perseverance, it was possible to transform a more or less bohemian, amateur activity into a serious profession of prosperity and status. They took part in the world festival of 1960 in Bucharest (Romania), and won third prize among dozens of companies from all over the world. This recognition resulted in a tour of the Socialist countries, where they could see at close quarters the advantages of the permanent theatres. This made Eduardo determined to open similar spaces for puppets, based on criteria of social service, able to obtain state support for the purpose of systematizing the delivery of services, and thus giving birth to fixed places of work in, for example, Tucumán, Misiones, Mar del Plata, Tunja, Bogotá, Barinas, Guanare, Mérida, San Cristóbal and Guanare.

One could fill a book with lists of all their prizes and awards, but Eduardo's lasting importance comes from his ability to translate his thoughts into actions, communicating his ideas with vehemence, supporting his colleagues in their plans, filling rooms with excited children who worked tirelessly, always prioritising the under-privileged, and disseminating his ideas and actions throughout the world in forums and conferences.

His company, TEMPO, and the Latin-American Institute of the Puppet, now directed by Maritza Peña, are based in Guanare and may well serve as models for the world of puppetry. On the façade of the building is written: "For the artist culture is a service, for the State an obligation, and for the people an inalienable right". I consider that these premises are what has always kept burning the fires of passion and love for the puppet.

Daniel Di Mauro

Trans. P. Francis 2014

See the message on the following page



International Message from Master Eduardo Di Mauro for the World Puppetry Day 2014

The puppet draws its origins from one of the most primitive and original forms of art: the play, not the representation of the sacred, as it was sometimes understood. Puppetry is born from a genre of performance that is objective, spontaneous, transparent, naturally becoming increasingly complex as it has adopted various forms and contents.

Due to its transgressive nature, the puppet has been feared and persecuted by kings, emperors, emirates, czars and every other kind of abusive power, since this character of wood and cloth, however lovable and picturesque, is at the same time the carrier of a keen talent for condemnation and criticism, able to use sarcasm, irony and humour with talent, rhythm and biting effect.

Perhaps the period in life when we best identify with this age-old art is adolescence, because that is when young people are carriers of this same energy embroidered with a certain passionate irresponsibility, reacting with the same ardour to whatever they admire, judge or criticize. Perhaps that explains why it's the young who take a stand and aim their darts at the worldwide media who turn the essential into the banal and make excuses for the worthless.

For many decades our theatre has dedicated a good part of its efforts to the teenagers, promulgating themes that interest them, encouraging them to use puppets to express what moves and concerns them. So of course they themselves bring up taboo subjects like violence, the Mafia, alcoholism, corruption, child pregnancy, loneliness and others which they confront with candour and irreverence.

Puppetry is able, and should be able, to inspire their creativity, through reading, study, research and experiment with new forms, in a search for beauty and harmony in their productions, never forgetting that their relationship with puppet theatre must involve *compromise*.

Speaking of *compromise*, a word of many meanings and definitions, I am reminded of our responsibility to understand our real place in the world, what is our position when faced with the multiple examples of the abuse of power in the heart of today's society – who are today's kings, where the emperors, the sheikhs. Today they are not to be found seated on a throne adorned with finely wrought precious stones, they prefer to be where nobody can see them distinctly. They possess means of communication which they can reveal or conceal at their pleasure. This kind of king is a thing of a thousand heads, it is neo-liberalism corrupted and savage; these czars, they are the multi-national corporations which inflate their profits and their power, but care nothing about the destruction of the planet and the destruction of lives.

Puppeteers of the whole world, let us confront cruelty, inequality and injustice. Using the infinite variety of techniques and aesthetics to give form to that most expressive of personalities - the puppet - and endowing it with the most fiery language, let us denounce them and demonstrate to them with an admonitory finger how these young people, branded as lacking in ambition, are striving for the development of a better, more humane world.

Eduardo di Mauro
2014
Teatro Tempo
Venezuela