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The author of the Message of World Theatre Day 2015 is the Polish director Krzysztof Warlikowski!

More information about the message author

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World Theater Day Message 2015

The true masters of the theater are most easily found far from the stage. And they generally have no interest in theater as a machine for replicating conventions and reproducing clichés. They search out the pulsing source, the living currents that tend to bypass performance halls and the throngs of people bent on copying some world or another. We copy instead of create worlds that are focused or even reliant on debate with an audience, on emotions that swell below the surface. And actually there is nothing that can reveal hidden passions better than the theater.

Most often I turn to prose for guidance. Day in and day out I find myself thinking about writers who nearly one hundred years ago described prophetically but also restrainedly the decline of the European gods, the twilight that plunged our civilization into a darkness that has yet to be illuminated. I am thinking of Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann and Marcel Proust. Today I would also count John Maxwell Coetzee among that group of prophets.

Their common sense of the inevitable end of the world—not of the planet but of the model of human relations—and of social order and upheaval, is poignantly current for us here and now. For us who live after the end of the world. Who live in the face of crimes and conflicts that daily flare in new places faster even than the ubiquitous media can keep up. These fires quickly grow boring and vanish from the press reports, never to return. And we feel helpless, horrified and hemmed in. We are no longer able to build towers, and the walls we stubbornly construct do not protect us from anything—on the contrary, they themselves demand protection and care that consumes a great part of our life energy. We no longer have the strength to try and glimpse what lies beyond the gate, behind the wall. And that’s exactly why theater should exist and where it should seek its strength. To peek inside where looking is forbidden.

“The legend seeks to explain what cannot be explained. Because it is grounded in truth, it must end in the inexplicable”—this is how Kafka described the transformation of the Prometheus legend. I feel strongly that the same words should describe the theater. And it is that kind of theater, one which grounded in truth and which finds its end in the inexplicable that I wish for all its workers, those on the stage and those in the audience, and I wish that with all my heart.

Krzysztof Warlikowski

Translation: Philip Boehm

Supported by Theatre Communications Group and the U.S. Center of ITI

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