

World Puppetry Day

Message from Nina Malíková

The pandemic, the war conflicts and the escalating economic problems of the last few years have made life difficult for all of us, as all this unrest creates tension, fear and anxiety about the future. Worry has settled in our minds and on our faces.

Of course, I cannot imagine what it was like in previous centuries. But if we look a little closer at history, we see that similar situations – albeit in a different form and world order – have existed before. Despite all this, people believed in love, had children and still tried not only to survive, but to thrive.

Even in the darkest times, there was always something to help them, and we know from a number of historical sources that the puppet theatre and its age-old magical power was part of this. This power is in the very foundations of the puppet theatre. As a stylized theatrical form with its own metaphor, puppetry represents human activity but also searches – sometimes with humour, sometimes in all seriousness – for solutions.

In attempting to represent our lives, puppet theatre has often been there protesting against the immutable force of fate. As art, it reflects the most difficult life situations, whether personal or societal, through caricature or glorification. The possibilities of the puppet theatre have recently expanded, and its art is now recognised worldwide as an integral part of 20th and 21st century theatre culture.

Puppet theatre is as much about traditional expression as it is about the use of new technologies, exploiting their multimedia possibilities or their capacity to entertain and move us. However, it courageously defends its proudly acquired position.

The world will be a better place than it seems to us at the moment. We all believe that, and we all want to believe that. So let us not deprive ourselves of the joy of life because of our fears. Let us believe that Pulcinella, Punch, Guignol, Kašpárek, Karagöz, Vidushaka, Mobarak and our other heroes in this endless line of puppet characters portraying the human comedy are the ones we can still trust and, like so many generations before us, believe in their victorious struggle against death.

Let's not get bogged down in our worries but rather use the puppet theatre in its various forms to once again summon the joy and pleasure of creating and performing.

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