

## **In Memoriam | Santiago Garcia – World Theatre Ambassador of ITI**

20 December 1928 to 23 March 2020



### **Santiago García – Reinventor of the Colombian Theatre**

By José Assad

Santiago García, the inveterate reinventor of Colombian theatre, with his jovial, familiar presence, loaded with spontaneous humor as if he were any regular citizen of La Candelaria, the traditional Bogotá neighborhood, no longer lives there like any mortal being.

Now following in the footsteps of his own inventiveness, he will live from now on, in the universe of the collective memory of the great theatre of the world.

There, in this new scenario, his presence will endure for generations to come as an example of a creative industry, forged from the closest circles of co-creators, who without seeking it, transcended distances and cultural barriers, until reaching distant latitudes where actors of distant stages, together with playwrights, directors, audiences and researchers, they saw in that example, inspiration to explore their particular realities through the art of theatre in their own ways.

These imaginative occurrences, the result of exhaustive research made in light of the collective creation practice marked the path of a possible theatre built from group practice.

A delightful and at the same time deeply reflective stage play. Theatre par excellence of entertainment, as a convergence between the intellect and the creative impulse; Of course, irreconcilable with the so-called entertainment

theatre and deeply committed to the problems that his collective identified as a starting point for their research-creations.

Santiago García, researcher, trainer, actor, playwright and director, but also the most common and ordinary neighbor; neighborhood pedestrian, customer of the corner store and sidewalk conversationalist.

Above all, he was always a common and ordinary citizen who avoided reverence and who without wanting or pretending it transcended his surroundings to bequeath us his contribution to the profession of theater, despite his efforts to go unnoticed and as far away as possible from the fickleness of entertainment, reverence and personality cults.

He expressed it well with his scathing humor in the ceremony in which he was presented with the recognition of the International Theater Institute as a World Theater Ambassador: "*I promise to be a very bad theatre ambassador*".

What a teacher of teachers who could not fulfil this promise very reluctantly!

Santiago García, now behind the curtains, challenges us to give continuity to the theatre of the possible, of the unusual, the theatre of hope, even in the most difficult times.

To ask him to endure in order to be witness of the bewilderment we now live in was already asking too much of a man who never run out of the task of seeking an answer to the most heartfelt problems in the society he was a part.

The path of Santiago García drives us to reinvent the theatre as many times as necessary to re-think ourselves as a society; Only by transferring it can we say that the theatre survives above its protagonists of the moment to give us hopeful lights in the midst of uncertainty.