



First Yuri Lyubimov International Theatre Award 2018, Moscow

Dear Katalin Lyubimova, dear colleagues, dear friends, ladies and gentlemen

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to speak at the occasion of the first Yuri Lyubimov International Theatre Award that the International Theatre Institute (ITI) and the Yuri Lyubimov Foundation is awarding to an outstanding international theatre personality.

For any artist, to create a work of art, she or he needs a safe and free space to be able to convert the ideas into form. In an ideal country, this safe and free space would be secured by the government.

As such an ideal country most probably does not yet exist on Earth, in too many countries an artist needs to create such a safe and free space her- or himself. Only if such a condition is achieved great work of art is able to find form.

If an artist has to achieve this on his own and if the situation he lives in is restrictive or even obnoxious, it is obvious that such circumstances are not easy to bear and the freedom that an artist is fighting for, for the sake of his idea and his work, will bring suffering and troubles. It will consume valuable time of the creator of any art.

If you consider the life and work of Yuri Lyubimov, you know what he has achieved despite of some people who wanted to hinder that he can do his work.

It is with admiration and awe when I became aware what this man, Yuri Lyubimov, has achieved in his long life. It is sure that he believed in his work. He was convinced that it was the right decision, when he was doing his job.

Even he was acting or when he was directing dramas or operas – when he was working for the theatrical arts – he felt that it was valuable not only for him but for the world.

As a matter of fact, Yuri Lyubimov works were appreciated by the audiences in his home country as well as by all the audiences around the globe. What he achieved, enchanted and enriched the life of people – and thus the world.

One aspect that Yuri Lyubimov must have experienced is that – if one creates a work of art in an extraordinary quality – it not only gives an essential, non-material, rather spiritual value to the audience, like a precious gift, it also is rewarding the person who creates it with this essential, spiritual value. The power that is inherent in his theatrical work that he endorses to the public was giving him power.

It is obvious that what Yuri Lyubimov experienced in his life, is experienced by artists all over the world nowadays. That is the reason that the International Theatre Institute (ITI) and the Yuri Lyubimov Foundation have decided to create the Yuri Lyubimov International Award. Both entities wanted to award a theatre personality every year who is striving for high quality in the theatrical arts and is doing his work – despite of being deprived of the safe and free space by outer circumstances.

It should go to a person who incorporates integrity and courage – and persevered in doing his work despite the ugliness of the time. A person who believed in what she or he is doing. A person who

cares for high quality and used all the own wits and abilities to overcome barriers that could stop the work that he was doing what he wanted to do.

When thinking about to whom this first award should go to, the same person appeared immediately in the mind of the jury members.

It was a Russian, a person who worked relentlessly for the theatrical arts and enchanted with his work not only people in his country but all over the world; a theatre educator that have conducted workshops to hand over his knowledge to others; a man which is highly respected by theatre professionals and the audiences worldwide.

His name is known to all of you: It is Anatoli Vassiliev.

To honour Anatoli Vassilev, I would like to share with you, how I experience his work and him.

As the leader of the International Theatre Institute, the world's largest organization for the performing arts, I am able to experience plays on all continents.

I am able to see great works from different cultures – and this is something that I like and enriches my life. But when I am able to see a real masterwork it fills me with awe and admiration.

It not only lets me forget time when watching a play. It inspires me as a poet, it inspires me for my daily work for ITI that I am doing and it gives sense to what I do for theatre, for the performing arts.

For me personally, his work is one of the most outstanding performances I ever have experienced. As an example, when I was able to see Anatoli Vassiliev's La Musica and La Musica Deuxième in Paris – I was amazed by the quality of his work.

I was captured by the play. I was following the persons on stage becoming involved in their history, in their life. The actor or actress were being their role. I was enchanted. I was inspired. Throughout the first play – La Musica. And throughout the second play – La Musica Deuxième.

Those of you that have not been able the watch Duras' plays that were shown at the La Comédie Française in Paris, may have seen The Old Man and the Sea with Alla Demidova or other masterpieces and know what I mean.

For me, Anatoli Vassiliev is a true master of the theatrical arts. As a person he shows courage. He incorporates integrity. He shows perseverance. I am sure it is not always easy for him to do his work. But he continues to do his work relentlessly.

That is why am very happy that he accepted to receive the first Yuri Lyubimov International Award. He very well deserves it.

All of us are aware we are not living in an ideal world. I am sure most of the people that are inhabiting the world would like to be able to live in peace, have work and would like to have be able to have fun and be able to live a decent life. And all the artists would like to have a safe and free space to be able to create their work of art.

In giving Anatoli Vassiliev the first Yuri Lyubimov International Award, we want to value what he is doing for the theatrical arts and express our gratitude and appreciation to him.

Both Yuri Lyubimov and Anatoli Vassiliev give us hope, give us inspiration and motivation. They tell us that we never should give up to work for our dreams in life, and in theatre, and in the arts. We

never should give up to work for a safe and free space and environment for all of us, and that includes the persons who work for the arts.

(Followed by the Award Ceremony of Katalin Lyubimova and Tobias Biancone giving the certificate and flowers to Anatoli Vassiliev, the first Awardee of the Yuri Lyubimov International Theatre Award.

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