

Activities

Turkish Centre of ITI (Asia/Pacific)

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Final Performance of the French-Italian-Turkish EU Project in Istanbul.

Activities of the Turkish Centre of ITI

International Summer School

Training sessions, master classes, workshops, lectures as part of an International Summer School, under the coordination of ITI's General Secretariat, in partnership with Italy's Form 360, University of Salerno, and Astragali Teatro. Theme: Forms of Theatre between Turkey and the EU. Venue: Istanbul Kültür University. Participants in final performance in Istanbul Museum of Archaeology: Aristophanes' Birds, adapted and directed by Fabio Tolledi. Istanbul, June and July, 2012.

Escalating Controversy

Increasingly vehement dissension over the government's plan to establish an art council similar to European institutions of that order overshadowed all other matters in Turkey's theatre scene throughout 2013. Opponents accused the party in power of basic hostility to theatre, while ministry officials insisted that they mean only to reorganize subsidized theatres, not to abolish them.

Opinion affirmed by some Executive Committee members of ITI's Turkish Centre: "Our theatre is extremely lopsided, with the subsidized sector outweighing the private part abnormally. Change can be benevolent if it helps expand the latter without in any way harming the former."

Internal Problem within Centre

Osman N. Karaca, long-serving Executive Committee member and Treasurer of the Turkish Centre, died in January, 2014, further complicating its chronic governance problem. The acting president of the centre had agreed to serve as caretaker only because no other member was willing to do so. He has declared his irrevocable decision not to be a candidate during the next general assembly, citing advanced age as the main reason.

World Theatre Day National Message

Prominent figures were requested to prepare the 2014 national message, preferably to include an opinion regarding the art council project. All declined. Members of the Executive Committee of the centre undertook to do it on their own.

The message they signed called for empathy on both sides of the ongoing controversy. Direct quote: "Our subsidized theatres encompass an accumulation of talent, education and experience that would take years to replace if lost. Doing away with this cultural treasure must not even be on the agenda."

Possibly Superfluous Clarification

On World Theatre Day, 2014, Turkey's President, Prime Minister, and Minister of Culture issued declarations of admiration and support for theatre. This did nothing to quiet the tumult.

Seeing that their call for empathy was distorted in some media reports to mean acquiescence with any covert plot to abolish subsidized theatres, members of the Executive Committee of ITI's Turkish Centre solemnly decided in their meeting on April 24, 2014, to risk tautology and publicize this declaration: "Subsidized theatres must not be abolished."

Contribution to Peace

The Turkish Centre of the ITI has been enthusiastically supporting all efforts to activate the power of theatre in conflict resolution, both within the country and regionally. It has played a role in the encouragement of Kurdish dramatists to write and the acceptance of their works for production. It has urged the State Theatre to stage foreign plays that stress the need for peace. Plays like Greek Cypriot writer Giorgos Neophytou's „DNA“ and Israeli writer Boaz Gaon's „Prime Time“ are scheduled to be performed in the near future. The Centre will participate in the Yerevan World Congress. Its representatives hope to arrange theatrical production exchanges between Armenia and Turkey.

Executive Committee (June 2014)

Refik Erduran (Acting President)

Board: Engin Uludağ, Ayşe Emel Mesçi, Emre Erdem. (Osman N. Karaca, Treasurer, recently deceased.)

Submitted by Refik Erduran, Acting President of the Turkish Centre