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**TCG/ITI-US Sends National Theatre Delegation to
33rd ITI World Congress in Xiamen, China
September 19-24, 2011**

New York, NY –Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre and home to the United States Center of the International Theatre Institute (TCG/ITI-US), has assembled 14 theatre leaders to attend the 33rd ITI World Congress September 19-24 in Xiamen, China – the first ever Congress to take place in China.

“Empowering the Performing Arts: A Journey to *Xiqu*” is the theme of the Congress that serves as the meeting point for the 97 ITI centers globally to share projects and set the institute’s goals for the next two years. The group’s strong educational and artistic focus is explored in the diverse range of workshops, presentations and cross-cultural collaborations with local artists, in addition to a sumptuous showcase of *xiqu*, a general term for Chinese Music Theatre.

View the full Congress schedule: <http://www.iti-congress.org/congress.html>

TCG/ITI-US members joining the 300 Congress delegates from 70 countries and 500 participants from different parts of China include: Linda Bartholomai, freelance director and former TCG/New Generations Program participant; J Nicole Brooks, Fox/TCG Foundation Resident Actor Fellowship, Lookingglass Theatre Company; Martha Coigney, Honorary President ITI; Rick Dildine, Executive Director, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis; Julieanne Ehre, freelance director and former New Generations Program participant; Lydia Fort, New Federal Theatre and TCG/New Generations Program; Peter Goldfarb, Vice President, ITI Training and Education Committee; Derek Goldman, Artistic Director, Davis Performing Arts Center; Jeff Liu, Literary Manager, East West Players; Jorge Ortoll, Executive Director, Ma-Yi Theatre; and Jeffrey Sichel, permanent delegate and executive member of the UNESCO Chair for the United States. TCG leadership, Teresa Eyring, Executive Director; Emily Cachapero, Director, Artistic Programs and ITI-US; and Kevin Bitterman, Associate Director, Artistic and International Programs rounds out the US delegation.

“Bringing a diverse group of theatre-makers to the Congress is critical for cultural exchange, simply opening minds and hearts to new experiences and exposure to the international theatre scene,” said Teresa Eyring, executive director of TCG/ITI-US. “The exciting new shape of the Congress this year, with more artist workshops, practical sessions and networking sessions, like the intergenerational mentoring program and the Global Speed Dating program, provides an even greater opportunity for US practitioners to make new relationships and bring opportunities to their local communities.”

Xiamen, China's main port in the 19th century for exporting tea, was also one of the original Special Economic Zones set up in 1980 to attract foreign investment. In September, this historically international city, aspiring to become a cultural destination of world renown, already committed to music theatre and dance, will shine the spotlight on the larger field of the performing arts. ITI is intent on using the Congress to challenge preconceptions and better acquaint performing artists and aficionados around the world with the full spectrum of the organization’s work, goals and aspirations.

"I haven't missed a World Congress since I arrived at ITI in 1966 – and every time we go and get people together, it's chemistry," said Martha Coigney, former director of the US Center of ITI and former president of ITI Worldwide. "It's an opportunity to keep artists in touch with one another despite animosities or different backgrounds."

As part of the World Congress, ITI will also present *House-Home*, a multi-disciplinary work featuring artists from Bangladesh, Belgium, Cameroon, China, Cyprus, Germany, Luxembourg, Mexico, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Sudan and the US. The work is the latest creative project by ITI's New Project Group (NPG), led by Emilya Cachapero, current Director of ITI-US. NPG is a laboratory for performing artists to work internationally while retaining their individual identities. The focus is on making art, particularly the creative process, rather than the end result, by creating intercultural dialogue and emphasizing cultural diversity.

Additional sessions for Congress participants include an informed conversation about the protection of artists in association with the recent rise and global concern for violations of human rights and artistic expression; a Global Speed Dating marketplace to share artistic projects, master classes and international opportunities for performing artists; staged readings of new work by contemporary playwrights from mainland China and Hong Kong; master classes on Peking Opera techniques and introductions to the 300 Xiqu genres led by celebrated performers; and the inaugural Freedom to Create Exhibition, which brings global issues to local communities by illustrating how creativity is being used to drive social change around the world.

The **International Theatre Institute** (ITI) the world's largest performing arts organisation, was founded in 1948 by theatre and dance experts and UNESCO. The NGO advances UNESCO's goals of mutual understanding and peace and advocates the protection and promotion of cultural expressions, regardless of age, gender, creed or ethnicity. It works to these ends internationally and nationally in the areas of arts education, international exchange and collaboration, and youth training. Since 2008, the ITI has been undergoing a rigorous process of modernization, revitalising the organisation and reclaiming its role as the most important international performing arts network. It has attracted new members ranging from Puerto Rico to Qatar and Australia, and launched new initiatives including the ITI World Member Card. For more information on ITI, please visit the ITI website: www.iti-worldwide.org

For 50 years, **Theatre Communications Group** (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit American theatre. TCG's constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to nearly 700 member theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 13,000 individuals nationwide. TCG offers its members networking and knowledge-building opportunities through conferences, events, research and communications; awards grants, approximately \$2 million per year, to theatre companies and individual artists; advocates on the federal level; and serves as the US Center of the International Theatre Institute, connecting its constituents to the global theatre community. TCG is North America's largest independent publisher of dramatic literature, with 11 Pulitzer Prizes for Best Play on the TCG booklist. It also publishes the award-winning AMERICAN THEATRE magazine and ARTSEARCH®, the essential source for a career in the arts. In all of its endeavors, TCG seeks to increase the organizational efficiency of its member theatres, cultivate and celebrate the artistic talent and achievements of the field and promote a larger public understanding of, and appreciation for, the theatre. www.tcg.org

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