



Theatre
Communications
Group

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PRESS CONTACTS

Gus Schulenburg | gschulenburg@tcg.org | 212.609.5941

Jojo Ruf | joanna.ruf@georgetown.edu | 202.687.4435

Theatre Communications Group and the Lab's Global Theater Initiative Share Ping Chong's World Theatre Day Message

"The very act of theatre-making is a fundamentally utopian act. Creating ensemble is creating community in the rehearsal room; performance is creating community in public. Artists and audiences share collective human experience, contact, curiosity, and today perhaps more urgently than ever, connection."

New York, NY – The Global Theater Initiative (GTI), a partnership between Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and the Laboratory for Performance and Politics (the Lab), invites all theatres, individual artists, institutions and audiences to celebrate the 54th annual World Theatre Day on **March 27, 2016**. To mark the occasion, the International Theatre Institute Worldwide in Shanghai asked Russian director and educator Anatoli Vassiliev to craft the International World Theatre Day message. To provide an additional perspective, GTI invited **Ping Chong**, playwright, director, and artistic director of Ping Chong + Company, to write a U.S. World Theatre Day message. The full texts of both messages can be found [here](#).

"When I scan the world around me now, the word that comes to mind is 'displacement.' Our century and the last have seen the displacement of peoples and cultures on an unprecedented scale and with often tragic consequences. The root causes are well known: war, racism, poverty, environmental degradation, the desire for personal freedom, the dream of a better life."

Chong's message serves as a fitting launch for the *Finding Home* essay salon, which will feature essays inspired by the spirit of World Theatre Day and the themes of TCG's Global Pre-Conference, *Finding Home: Migration, Exile, and Belonging*. Curated by GTI, the Global Pre-Conference will include dozens of international guests from around the world in dialogue with artists and leaders from across the country. Through a dynamic and innovative range of performances, workshops, and discussions, attendees will explore together the value of meaningful cultural exchange in the context of an increasingly polarized world, beset by so many forms of conflict and crisis. Learn more about the *Finding Home* salon [here](#) and Global Pre-Conference [here](#).

In its role as the home of the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute, GTI invites all theatres, individual artists, institutions, and audiences to celebrate the 54th annual World Theatre Day on March 27, 2016 in the following possible ways:

- Share Ping Chong and Anatoli Vassiliev's messages on or around March 27 through program notes, curtain speeches, and online media.
- Read and submit essays for the *Finding Home* salon.
- Apply to attend the Global Pre-Conference in June in Washington, DC.
- Follow WTD updates on [Twitter](#), and tweet about World Theatre Day using hashtag #WTD16 with a message like, "Celebrate World Theatre Day 2016 on March 27."
- Register with the [Performing Arts Alliance](#) and take action by contacting your elected officials regarding the need for improved visa processing for international guest artists ([issue brief](#)) and

- increased funding for the Cultural Programs Division of the State Department ([issue brief](#)).
- Host a round table with your community to discuss the themes related to World Theatre Day.

Read more potential ways to get involved with World Theatre Day 2016 [here](#). Learn more about World Theatre Day and TCG's international programming [here](#).

Ping Chong is an internationally acclaimed artist and pioneer in the use of media in the theater. His theatrical works bring his unique artistic vision to bear on major historical issues of our times, and focus on bringing unheard voices and under-represented stories to the stage. Encompassing puppetry, dance, documentary theater, and other experimental theater forms, his works have explored a wide variety of subjects from a hidden genocide in Africa to class struggles in America to modernization in China to the experiences of Muslim youth in post -9/11 America. Throughout, the common thread has been a unifying commitment to artistic innovation and social responsibility. Since 1972, Chong has created over 100 productions which have been presented at major festivals and theatres including the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Lincoln Center Festival, La MaMa, the RomaEuropa Festival, the Singapore Festival, the Tokyo International Festival and many others. In 1992, he created the first *Undesirable Elements* production, a series of community-based oral history projects, working with real people to explore issues of culture and identity. The *Undesirable Elements* program now includes a youth programs in NY Public Schools and a training institute for artists and activists. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a USA Artist Fellowship, two BESSIE awards, two OBIE awards, a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award and a 2014 National Medal of Arts.

Anatoli Vassiliev is an internationally acclaimed theatre director and professor of Russian Theatre. He is the founder of the Moscow Theatre School of Dramatic Arts, a laboratory for experimentation on the voice and body of the actor. Vassiliev is known for his work with non-theatrical texts, music, and the materiality of sound. His notable productions include: Lermontov's *Masquerade*; Pirandello's *Each in His Own Way*; *Lamentations of Jeremiah* (recipient of Russia's national Golden Mask prize for best performance and best scenography); Pushkin's *Don Juan or the Stone Guest in the Cartouche*; Dostoyevsky's *Uncle's Dream*; Ostrovsky's *Coupables Innocents*; Heiner Muller's *Medea Material*; *From the Voyage of Oniegin*, adapted from Pushkin and Tchaikovsky; and Marguerite Duras' *La Musica Deuxième*. He is assisted by his long-time collaborator Natalia Issaeva, translator and theatre researcher, and by Boaz Trinker, a specialist in actors' training.

Past U.S. World Theatre Day messages have been given by Jeffrey Wright, Lynn Nottage, and Diane Rodriguez. The first World Theatre Day international message was written by Jean Cocteau in 1962. Succeeding honorees include Arthur Miller (1963), Ellen Stewart (1975), Vaclav Havel (1994), Ariane Mnouchkine (2005), Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi (2007), Augusto Boal (2009), Dame Judi Dench (2010), Jessica A. Kaahwa (2011), John Malkovich (2012), Dario Fo (2013), Brett Bailey (2014), and Krzysztof Warlikowski (2015).

The Global Theater Initiative (GTI) was launched in February 2016 by Theatre Communications Group and the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics (the Lab), based in Washington, DC at Georgetown University. By combining the unique reach of TCG's international programming with the Lab's distinctive experience in humanizing global politics through the power of performance, GTI strengthens, nurtures, and promotes global citizenship and international collaboration in the U.S. professional and educational theatre field. It also honors and intersects with the work so many theatre colleagues have invested in cross-cultural exchange and understanding. Through the alignment of programming and resources, the GTI partners serve as a hub of global exchange with three core areas of focus: connecting practitioners with resources, knowledge, and partnerships to strengthen their work; promoting cultural collaboration as essential for international peace and mutual understanding; and innovating new strategies to maximize the global theatre field's opportunities and impact. GTI also serves as the collaborative leadership of the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute (ITI/U.S.).

International Theatre Institute (ITI) was formed in 1948, when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) joined with world-renowned theatre experts to form an international non-governmental organization in the field of the performing arts. The mission of ITI is to “promote international exchange of knowledge and practice in theatre arts in order to consolidate peace and friendship between peoples, to deepen mutual understanding and to increase creative cooperation between all people in the theatre arts.” Today, ITI consists of approximately 90 Centers worldwide. An ITI Center is made up of professionals active in the theatre life of a country and representative of all branches of the performing arts. For more information, visit www.iti-worldwide.org.

The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics (the Lab) harnesses the power of performance to humanize global politics. We create and present innovative high quality work from around the world that is at the intersection of politics and performance. The Lab’s signature approach raises voices rarely heard in Washington DC through compelling, authentic narratives, and engages policymakers, as well as artists, students, and wider audiences in forums that cast critical issues in a new light. The Lab uses technology and live encounters to create a global community of artists, activists and policy makers, fostering new understandings and innovative collaborations. We are committed to relationship building beyond the lifespan of individual projects. We create substantive dynamic partnerships with individuals and with a diverse range of cultural and policy organizations. We are passionate about helping to train the next generation of innovators to use their artistry and voices to shape new understandings and to humanize others in pursuit of a better, more just world. <http://globallab.georgetown.edu>

For over 50 years, **Theatre Communications Group** (TCG), the national organization for theatre, has existed to strengthen, nurture and promote the professional not-for-profit theatre. TCG’s constituency has grown from a handful of groundbreaking theatres to nearly 700 member theatres and affiliate organizations and more than 12,000 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 U.S. 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 14 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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