Open Call to Young Writers

I. Introduction

Open call to young puppet theatre authors aged 18-30!

2019 marks the 90th anniversary of the creation of the Union Internationale de la Marionnette (UNIMA). To honour this date, UNIMA is holding an open competition for young writers interested in authoring a script or concept for puppet theatre that will be performed as part of the UNIMA 90th anniversary celebrations.

II. Objective

UNIMA is looking for a special script/concept for puppet theatre. This project will be workshopped into four distinct productions that will be performed in four separate geographical regions of the world: Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the Americas.

III. Theme

Authors are asked to use as theme, subject matter, point of departure, or inspiration for their work the story of Max Jacob and Jean-Loup Temporal: two puppeteers, one German, the other French, who found themselves on opposing sides and who suffered the horrors of World War II. A short synopsis of the story is attached at the end of this document. Additional information regarding these individuals can be found on the Internet, including on the following site: wepa.unima.org
This story is open to your individual interpretation. It can be adapted to any time period and to any historical or fictional characters. Keep in mind as you conceive your play that we also wish to promote the art of puppetry.

IV. Jury

One of the scripts/concepts will be selected by an international jury specially created for this project. The jury will be composed of 7 international authors, performers and/or puppetry specialists. Each jury member will read those texts written or translated into the official UNIMA language(s) (i.e. French, English, or Spanish) that they speak fluently.

The selected script/concept will be used as the basis for the four separate puppet productions workshopped by puppetry schools from the four geographical regions.

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L'Union internationale de la Marionnette est soutenue par le Ministère de la Culture, la Région Grand-Est, le Département des Ardennes et la Ville de Charleville-Mézières

V. Winner's Acknowledgement

The winner will receive a prize of 2,000 euros.
The winner will receive the opportunity to have his/her script or concept performed.

VI. Guidelines

1. Subject matter or theme: based upon or inspired by the story of Jean-Loup Temporal and Max Jacob.
2. Medium: appropriate for puppet theatre.
3. Duration: as guidance, your script or concept should not run to more than 40 minutes in production time.
4. Language: successful scripts/concepts are likely be more visual and less language-based, given that the production must work across a number of cultures and speech communities. We need a script or concept in the universal language of puppetry.
5. Scripts/concepts need to be in one of the official UNIMA languages – French, English, or Spanish.
6. Stagecraft: successful scripts/concepts should have minimal technical or staging requirements, as the ultimate productions will need to be portable and cost-effective.

VII. Deadlines & Timeframe

The deadline for scripts/concepts is 28 February 2018.

The winner will be announced on 15 May 2018 in Bochum, Germany, during the UNIMA International Council Meeting.

VIII. Where and What to Send

Please send your script/concept in French, English, or Spanish by e-mail to: contact@unima.org.

Please also provide in the e-mail the following information: your surname (family name), given name; date of birth; country; and phone number.

This personal information will not be shared with the jury but will be kept by the UNIMA committee coordinating the project.

UNIMA International will retain the selected script/concept and the rights for its use. It will be used only by this non-governmental organization, including its presentation in 2020 at the UNIMA Congress held in Bali, Indonesia.

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A war-proof friendship

The story is based on one of the episodes from the rich history of UNIMA, that of a deep friendship that transcended differences and origins, and which united people within a difficult context. This friendship led to a fruitful cooperation culminating in the creation and founding of the first Franco-German company after World War II.

Jean-Loup Temporal was born in Paris in 1921, the son of the architect and puppeteer Marcel Temporal. In 1929, the child Jean-Loup visited Prague with his father to participate in the founding of the world organisation UNIMA (the International Puppetry Union). In 1943, Jean-Loup, and others of his age, was obliged to leave for Germany for the Obligatory Labour Service: at this time, he crossed paths with the German puppeteer Max Jacob whom he had met in Prague in 1929, and who helped him.

Max Jacob recognised the young Jean-Loup and asked for the young French soldier to be allocated to him to assist with the specialised work needed to perform his shows. As it turned out, Jacob did not only enable Temporal to learn his job, but he also saved his life. The two men became great friends and shared unforgettable professional adventures. It should be remembered that Max Jacob was a controversial figure in Germany after the war, for his support of the Nazi regime; despite this, he anonymously provided support to puppeteers from all backgrounds throughout the years of the war.

Jean-Loup Temporal, meanwhile, ended up in Vienna in 1945, hosted and hidden by Austrian puppeteers: the Aicher. From the first days of the Fascist regime, the Aicher had adhered to Hitler's ideas in order to be able to continue their professional activities. When troops from the USA arrived, the Aicher were imprisoned. Due to an intervention on their behalf by Jean-Loup Temporal, however, they were required instead to give performances for the French as part of the process of repatriation.

The story of Jacob and Temporal has a sequel. A few years later, at the end of the war, the two men created the first Franco-German puppet company. Later, in 1957, the first UNIMA Congress of the post-war period took place in Prague again; friends from both sides were able to meet. The Presidium (or Executive Committee) of UNIMA was named and Max Jacob was elected president of UNIMA. His two vice-presidents were the Soviet Sergei Obraztsov (puppeteer and formerly, fighter) and the Italian Vittorio Podrecca (anti-fascist). Jean-Loup Temporal, meanwhile, alongside a varied, international and engaged group of people, became a member of the executive board. He is known as a great French puppeteer and important figure within UNIMA, occupying several posts and distinguished himself as a great transmitter of knowledge about puppetry.

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