



ASSITEJ International

International Association of Theater for Children and Young People
Association Internationale du Théâtre pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse

THEATRE FOR CHILDREN WORD DAY 2009.

Message from Roberto Frabetti
Testoni Ragazzi/La Baracca
Bologna, Italy

**Children have their own space and time.
It is not always the same as the space and time of adults.
Teenagers have another space and time.
And young children's space and time is also different.
Space and time define a dimension.
Space and time are at the basis of rhythm.
And rhythm is at the basis of theatre, as well as of life.
At the basis of communication, with ourselves and with the others.
Doing theatre for children - of any age -, or doing theatre for teenagers or
young people, means entering new spaces and times.
It means experiencing new rhythms to find a shared rhythm.
Searching a shared rhythm means searching a neutral territory.
Not a no man's land, floating in the middle of a conflict.
But a land that does not belong to anyone, and still free from conflicts, a
free land.
Where nothing has to be defended, but where it is possible to finally share
something.
A piece of knowledge, a question, a doubt, and even an emotion.
It is often said that one of the greatest illusions of man is to be able to share
their emotions with others.
To reach a state of fusion, of empathic communion.
It is also said that this is impossible in real life, except when a love begins.
Maybe we can be compassionate, live an emotion close to someone else,
feel emotions at the same time. Which are, in any case, different emotions.
I can be glad that you are happy, but I am not "happy", I am "glad".
I sympathise while you live an intense emotion.
I can be sorry for your sorrow. But what I feel is not sorrow; it is something
different, something lighter.
Maybe we can share an intense, collective emotion, just like the one that
unites us in supporting a sport team, but it is hard to share a personal, deep
emotion.
I like to think that the unattainable wish of the state of fusion is one of the
reasons that brought mankind to need to do and live art.**

In particular, a “live” kind of art; the art that needs the presence of actors and audience at the same time.

Like in music, dance and theatre.

In the fiction of theatre it may be possible to share deep, and therefore “real”, emotions.

If we watch Romeo and Juliet together, together we can wait for the sun to rise, knowing that it has already risen.

Being Juliet who detains, not wanting to; or being Romeo who stays, knowing what will happen.

If all alchemies work and if there is truthfulness.

Truthfulness is basic.

I mean the truthfulness of those who are aware they are living in a “free” land.

Which is neither mine, nor yours. It is a land of transit and meeting.

It is the truthfulness of a kind of theatre that does not celebrate actors and artists, but one where actors and artists live intensely what they do and the opportunity that life offered them: being able to set foot in free lands, where it is possible to glimpse fusion.

In doing theatre for children or young people, whatever their age, the free land is often visible. Because “they” have their own space and time. We cannot enclose them in our dimension, we should try to move and search for a new rhythm.

The rhythm of a meeting. The rhythm produced by trying and getting to know the others, their being unique, their being different.

This is one of the many and most important characteristics of theatre for children.

Which is not a “minor” kind of theatre, but a place of deep artistic and human research.

Because children have the right to interact with adults who respect them as human beings.

Art and theatre can represent a land where meetings are possible, where other spaces and times can entwine, full of amazement, allowing us to touch the chords of our deepest sensibility.

Roberto Frabetti

Roberto Frabetti
an actor, director, playwright

In 1976 he took part in the foundation of the theatre company La Baracca Produzioni teatrali - Teatro Testoni Ragazzi di Bologna - Italy , a structure which works in the field of the theatre for Children and Young People’s theatre.

He exclusively works in the structure as director, author, actor, workshop leader and theatre’s manager.

He is the project manager of Small size - European Network for the diffusion and development of performing arts for early childhood, a project funded by the European Commission-Program Culture 2000

Since 1987 he took part to the conceiving and coordination of the research “Il teatro e il nido (the theatre and the creche)” with the cooperation of pedagogists and teachers of the Municipality of Bologna and the artists from La Baracca. The starting point of the research was the devising of a show especially created for children

between 1 and 3 years. From 1987 to 2008 25 shows for children between 1 and 3 years old have been created.

He cares the artistic and the organizative direction of "Visioni di futuro, visioni di teatro... international festival of art and culture for the early years - Bologna", a La Baracca - Testoni Ragazzi project.

He wrote 44 theatre plays for children of different age (primary school, kindergarten and crèche).

The shows were represented in Italy and abroad. Many scripts were translated in Germany, Austria, Swiss, Spain and France.

Since 1980 he led workshops with children of different ages (kindergartens, nursery, primary school, secondary and high school), inside schools and in free time; besides training workshops for teachers of different schools orders.

He wrote the following books:

Un alfabeto di 21 lettere (2006 – about the theatre for early years)

200 e uno (2006 – about the theatrical workshops)

I musici ispiratori (1990 – about the workshops realized inside the Secondary School)

Il Nido e il Teatro (1996 - about the homonymous experience)

Naviganti (2000 - about the experience of workshop with young people)

Spettacolo/Azione (2001- about a workshop's experience in kindergartens and crèches)

Roberto and Veleria Frabetti were awarded with the ASSITEJ International **Honorary President's Award** for Artistic Excellence at the 17th ASSITEJ International Congress in Adelaide, Australia in May 2008, "for their creative and imaginative work for theatre for the very young. La Baracca is the "nido" of the new art form for the real next generation we are so interested in today. All the candidates make remarkable work in their own country, but La Baracca's work radiates internationally. This company has been a flagship theatre in moving the whole field of theatre for the very young forward. The company co-operates with other practitioners all over Europe, and has organized the first festival of early childhood theatre."