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Theatre Communications Group and the Lab's Global Theater Initiative Announce Ping Chong and Anatoli Vassiliev to Give World Theatre Day Messages

New York, NY – The Global Theater Initiative, 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**. Each year, a renowned theatre artist of world stature is invited by the International Theatre Institute Worldwide in Shanghai to craft an international message to mark the global occasion. This year the message will be written by Russian director and educator, **Anatoli Vassiliev**. Now available in an [English translation](#), the message will be translated into more than 20 languages and reach tens of thousands in the international theatre community.

Additionally, TCG is proud to announce that **Ping Chong**, playwright, director, and artistic director of Ping Chong + Company, will give the U.S. World Theatre Day message. Past U.S. World Theatre Day messages have been given by Jeffrey Wright, Lynn Nottage, and Diane Rodriguez. In GTI's role as the home of the U.S. Center of the International Theatre Institute (ITI-U.S.), TCG and the Lab encourage all theatre people to celebrate the power of theatre to strengthen cultural exchange and mutual understanding across borders.

"Ping Chong and Anatoli Vassiliev have not only modeled global citizenship over their noted careers, but through their passion and vision, they've forged new ways of making theatre and engaging with community," said Teresa Eyring, executive director of TCG. "With the launch this year of our Global Theater Initiative partnership with the Lab, this will be an especially exciting and auspicious World Theatre Day celebration."

"One of the issues that ITI is concentrating on is how to bring theatre and theatre education to the people--to everybody," said Tobias Biancone, director general, ITI. "High-quality performances are an integral part of such a strategy, and as an educator and director, Anatoli Vassiliev brings out the essence of actors to inspire great performances. ITI is pleased to feature his important voice through the 2016 World Theatre Day message."

"Ping Chong and Anatoli Vassiliev are inspirational forces in global theatre whose commitment not only to world-class artistry but to inclusiveness, pedagogy, and innovation make them exemplars for the next generation of global theater leaders," said Derek Goldman, co-founding director of the Lab. "We are especially honored to be part of the World Theatre Day celebration as we launch the Global Theater Initiative in partnership with TCG."

Additional World Theatre Day activities will be announced throughout the days leading up to March 27, 2016. Learn more about World Theatre Day and TCG's international programming [here](#).

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 Cartoucherie*; 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. Read his full message [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.

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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