

## WORLD THEATRE DAY MARCH 27<sup>th</sup> 2011

### QUEBEC MESSAGE



photo : Maxime Côté

#### Lights on the Horizon

**Our territory is the night. Our source – the dream.** Our sanctuary – lying under white crosses or in History's common grave - the hope for a better world. The machine of the unconscious works ceaselessly, never leaving us in peace – only forgetting allows peace. **In the middle of sleep, images glide to the surface of our desires,** sounds reverberate, echoing our anguish. A theatre takes shape and possesses our entire body; everything in us starts to move, for at night not a single aspect of the human escapes questioning : no boredom in the theatre of the dark hours, no superfluous or nasty intentions and even fewer opportunistic ones, no attempts to sell, no co-producing

contracts, no board meetings, just one activity – indispensable - for the survival of our species. Yes, at night we all dream, but we often forget; **at night we're all theatre artists:** we give voice to the dead, we give lines to the living, we stage ourselves, we cover our nocturnal creatures with multicolored cloth, we light their somber faces; and why do we do so if it's not in order to survive, that is to try to give meaning to what has none and, elsewhere, to diminish a surfeit of meaning.

Yet, every day, they keep on telling us the contrary. They want to make us the day's creatures, in sync with what's hot, operating under the sun star rather than the Moon's rays - rational beings who consciously pursue reasonable acts. Even before a smell or a sound makes its presence felt in our heads, the functional grids slam down like guillotines of the mind, with their set of questions understood as inescapable : how much, when, which space, to whom is one speaking, is it legal, will it hurt Mama's feelings. Do we ask these questions at night, even in the midst of our worst nightmares? Not at all: beings appear and people our head, out of range of every practical consideration. So I say that any question that can't stand up to the test of night's fire has no reason to exist.

**Let's shove the dream-breakers into time's waste bin.** The paralyzing agents are everywhere, we find them in every layer of society, even worse, sometimes in ourselves... Who hasn't already censured themselves in the name of well-intentioned pragmatism? What can we do to change the way things are if we can't even unstick our feet? Mired in the viscous grind of one dull day after another, the theatre artist – and all his contemporaries – is called upon by the Powers that Be to make do, before all else, with the real that's at hand; and to hell with the night, with the unreal, with the unexpected. With the unhopd-for.

And during this time, elsewhere, men and women are rising up, refusing the dictates of the quotidian. Yesterday, Tunisia, today Egypt, tomorrow, Libya, soon - who knows where; **as long as human beings blow on the embers of revolt, freedom's fire will keep burning.** What was formerly thought of as impossible, unthinkable is becoming the new reality: night's dream is taking shape in sun-gorged alleys. A visionary's dream begins to be palpable. **Revolutions are born at night in order to spark new lights on the horizon. We have only one possible response : Artists : Get to your beds! Intellectuals: Hit the sack! Citizens: Go to sleep! Set down your pencils, stop chirping over the airwaves, shut up if only for two minutes! And go back to sleep, all of you who think you're awake; the world needs your dreams in order to shine anew!** Leave death to those activists chasing insanely after profit, those who prefer to subject themselves to the violence of daily pressures, of normality, of the centrality of economics – they don't know it yet, but they're beckoning death with all their heart. **And for the love of art and of life, let us depart no longer from our origins : outside of dreams, the juices always end by drying up. ■**

Written by Olivier Kemeid  
Translated by Judith G. Miller

Olivier Kemeid is dramaturge, director and actor. Founding member and artistic director of the Trois Tristes Tigres, a theatre creation company, he wrote, among other things, **Bacchanale** (2008), **L'Énéide** (2007), inspired by Virgil. **L'Énéide** was a finalist in the 2009 Governor General's Literary Awards, as well as a winning laureate in the category of « New Canadian Play of 2008 » in Germany. Olivier Kemeid is also a member of the editing committee for the *Liberté* review.

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