

LIMA, 02 September 2019

Tribute to Ernesto Raez

Dear Ernesto,

27 years ago you and I were elected as members of the very first IDEA board, the Executive Committee. We both served as an Elected Officer from 1992-1995 and a second term up to 1998.

We met for the first time in 1992 in Porto, Portugal, then in September 1992 in Amsterdam, where you stayed in our home and played check with my son Ase. We met in 1993 again in Maastricht, the Netherlands, and in the same year also in Lima. You organised free housing for us here in Lima in the home of Liliana Galvan and her family who became friends for life, thanks to you.

And many other meetings followed, such as in 1997 for the preparatory meeting of the Kisumu Congress in 1998.

Here I can only share with you a few memories:

- Communication in that period was mainly by fax. I remember that sending a fax message of 2 pages from Amsterdam to Lima was difficult, as often the electric power in Lima was cut off, due to the attacks of the movement Sendero Luminoso. It took me sometimes half a night. Sending such a 2-pages-fax was also expensive: I remember that it costed 30 guilders, the value of about 14 Euro or Dollar now. And sometimes I needed to send a document of 20 Pages!
- In that initial period of IDEA the different visions amongst the membership and within the Executive Committee were sometimes difficult to handle.
For instance, one hand there was a strong call for Drama / Theatre **in** Education, emphasising the necessity of 'Drama-in-Schools', with sometimes a depreciation of the artistic quality in the drama and theatre work. On the other hand the need for Theatre/Drama **and** education in all kind of working fields and target groups was stressed, with an emphasis on aesthetic quality and sometimes with a depreciation of the education values of Drama-in-Schools.

- In these sometimes vigorous and tensed discussions your contribution was crucial. Because you brought the discussion always back to the underlying philosophical level of both visions and searched always for the common values. You made the Executive Committee and IDEA aware of the risk of prioritising the concept of the 'drama-in-schools' above the concept of 'theatre for popular education'. Or the other way around. You were able to disentangle the improper contradiction that some people made between the education goals and the aesthetic values.
- Coming from a South American context - where theatre clearly had and has a socio-cultural aim and where cultural-aesthetics forms are still alive in the minds and collective memory of the people - you showed us a path that could built a bridge between those differences in vision.

Perhaps this improper contradiction between education values and artistic-aesthetic qualities could be solved by the notion of 'education-in-drama' and 'education-in-theatre'...

- I learnt from you to take a more humble position about the achievements in Drama/Theatre in Schools in some of the European and Anglo-Saxon countries and to seek more active for a vivid connection with theatre in all its aesthetic forms.

I feel honoured to express on behalf of IDEA our gratitude for your contributions in the past and express my hope that the work and books you have produced more recently in Peru, in Spanish, will be disseminated widely in IDEA - and beyond.

With pleasure I give you this present symbolising your work in drama/theatre & education.

Maria van Bakelen

Founding President IDEA 1992- 1998

President of Honour of IDEA