



## The Czech Centre of UNIMA

### Report of Activities 2008–2010

The Czech Centre of UNIMA is one of the oldest in the organisation's history. Already in 1929, when UNIMA was founded in Prague, it were the Czech puppeteers who were among the initiators of the new organisation's many activities. And it were the Czech puppeteers again who were there in 1957 when UNIMA was renewed after the war.

Today, the Czech Centre has 182 members; its activities are directed by a board comprised of ten people who meet at least three times a year.

Apart from consultation services, mostly offered to guests from abroad, i.e. answering the questions the Centre receives in its office in the Institute of Arts – Theatre Institute, Prague, the Centre organises several regular events:

Since 1991, the most important of these has been the Přelet nad loutkářským hnízdem (One Flew Over the Puppeteer's Nest) festival, a showcase of Czech professional and amateur puppet theatre groups. In recent years, the festival also featured solo shows by guests from abroad (Damiet van Dalsum, Olaf Bernstengel, Michael Vogel, Nadras Lénart, Eric Bass, Frank Soehnle). Since 1997, the festival has also been the opportunity to announce the winner of the year's Czech UNIMA Centre Award, the ERIK, given to the most inspiring show of the year as selected by theatre critics and scholars (in 2008, the winner was the Forman Brothers Theatre's *Obludárium / The Freak Show*; in 2009, the Naïve Theatre Liberec's *Pohádka o Raškovi / The Tale of Raška*).

Apart from the festival, the most notable of the events organised by the Czech Centre to promote the organisation's activities and help increasing the prestige of the art of puppet theatre, the Centre organises another event for its members and invited guests at least once a year: the UNIMA Club, dedicated to contemporary as well as historical topics. In 2008, the Club celebrated the 80-year anniversary of the founding of UNIMA in the Empire of Puppets, Prague; in 2009, the UNIMA Club was focusing on the old puppetry clans and the screening of "The Last Caravan".

The year 2009 was the year when we celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of UNIMA in Prague. The celebrations took place in Chrudim and in Prague on 22–23 May 2009, with the participation of the President of UNIMA, Dadi Padumjee, the General Secretary Jacques Trudeau and other guests from abroad, members of the board of the Czech Centre of UNIMA, members of UNIMA and many friends of Czech puppet theatre. In Chrudim, the guests visited an exhibition dedicated to the anniversary in the Museum of Puppetry Cultures in Chrudim; the exhibition was open for the general public until 30 August, when it moved to Ostrava where it was shown as a part of the Spectaculo interesse festival (28 September – 2 October 2009).

The programme of the celebrations in Prague started on 23 May with a theatre performance in the Minor Theatre and a meeting with the actors. Since 5:30 PM, there was a rich programme running well into the night, including taking a group photograph of all the participants on the steps of the Rudolfinum and a gala evening at the Empire of Puppets. The main part of the programme was naturally dedicated to the history of the founding of UNIMA (showing rare photographs from the archive) and also setting a world record in the number of puppets of Kašpárek / Kasperle present on one stage. Thanks to the initiative of the Empire of Puppets and the effort of everyone present (including our foreign guests), there were altogether 155 Kašpárek puppets on the stage!

Two festivals were held under the auspices of the Czech Centre of UNIMA in 2009: the Mateřinka festival in Liberec in June and the Spectaculo interesse festival in Ostrava in September.

During the International festival of traditional puppet theatre Anderle's Radvaň, in September 2009 in Slovakia, the Czech Centre of UNIMA awarded an in memoriam honour to the important Slovak folk puppeteer, Anton Anderle – with gratitude for keeping the puppetry tradition and the Czech-Slovak friendship alive.

On 24–25 September, representatives of the Czech Centre of UNIMA (Stanislav Doubrava and Nina Malíková) visited the International Puppetry Festival in Charleville-Mézières, where they took part in the celebrations of 80 years of UNIMA, the ceremonial launch of the World Encyclopaedia of Puppetry Arts as well as the exhibition of 80 years of UNIMA in the General Secretariat. Among the exhibits, there were copies of historical documents pertaining to the founding of UNIMA in Prague in 1929, provided by the Czech Centre.

Czech and Spanish puppeteers have started an intensive collaboration several years ago thanks to Miguel Arreche and Idoye Ottegi; in 2007, they organised a large event called “A Window into Czech Puppetry” as a part of the international puppetry festival in Tolosa. There was a large exhibition of Czech puppets, old and new, as well as a lecture and shows presented by 5 Czech puppet theatres.

Representatives of the Czech Centre of UNIMA (Jaroslav Blecha, Stanislav Doubrava, Nina Malíková) were invited to the opening of the new cultural centre in Tolosa (TOPic – Centre international de la Marionette de Tolosa) on 27 November 2009. With them, they brought several puppets for the centre's collection.

News from UNIMA International and the activities of the Centre are regularly published in the Loutkář magazine; the 80-year anniversary of UNIMA was covered extensively in issues no. 4 and 5, 2009. Information about the Centre's activities can also be found on the web: [www.divadlo.cz/unima](http://www.divadlo.cz/unima).

Centre address:

České středisko UNIMA  
Celetná 17  
110 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic

email: [nina.malikova@divadlo.cz](mailto:nina.malikova@divadlo.cz) and [alena.kulhankova@divadlo.cz](mailto:alena.kulhankova@divadlo.cz)

telephone: 00420 224809131 and 00420 224809189 / fax: 00420 224809226

UNIMA Vice-president: Stanislav Doubrava

Chair of the Czech Centre: Nina Malíková

Councillors: - PhDr. Jaroslav Blecha  
- Stanislav Doubrava  
- Mgr. Nina Malíková

