

FERDINAND VEIKE
Nov 13, 1924 – Aug 14, 2015

With a great sadness we must send you a news, that the founder of the Estonian State Puppet Theatre, the Honorary Member of UNIMA Ferdinand Veike has passed away on August 12, 2015.

In 1946 F. Veike graduated from the Tallinn Theatre School, having trained himself also in different dance studios. In 1947 - 1950 F. Veike was a ballet dancer in the theatre "Estonia". Already during his studies he was also an actor and assistant stage manager of the puppet groups in the Estonian Youth Theatre and later in the Drama Theatre. In 1948 he staged there his first puppet-show, "Reinhardt the Fox". He also acted on the drama stage.

During the years 1950 - 1951 F. Veike attended the courses of stage production in Leningrad Theatre Institute, named after N. Ostrovsky.

On January 1, 1952 Ferdinand Veike became the first artistic director of the newly founded Estonian State Puppet Theatre (ESPT).

F. Veike has staged altogether about 100 puppet plays. Both original plays and classical fairy tales have an important place in his producer's work of a great fantasy and many interesting ideas.

Many of his productions have been successful in different festivals (Moskva in 1958 and 1962, Bucharest in 1960, the festivals of the Baltic Republics and Belarus from 1966 etc.) and guest performances in many countries (Finland etc.).

F. Veike has used his experience and knowledge also in educating young puppeteers in a Studio in the ESPT and also in Tallinn Pedagogic University.

After retrieving from the ESPT in 1981 F. Veike has been a solo puppeteer. He has played with many different types of puppets, many of them made by himself. He has performed with his puppets in Finland, Sweden, Norway, U.K., Germany, Japan etc. He also played in a drama theatre. During the years 1981 – 1985 F. Veike was an actor of the Estonian State Philharmonic Society.

Ferdinand Veike has got several state and national awards. He was a National Artist of Estonia. He was also given one of the highest awards of the Estonian Republic – the Order of White Star. He was also an Honorary Citizen of Tallinn.

Since 1953 the wooden doll Buratino has been his partner in many performances in TV, radio, puppet theatre and different show programmes. It became his *alter ego* for the Estonian people.

After many years away from the puppet theatre, he staged in 2001 a special programme "Ferdinand Veike and His Puppets". On Nov 13, 2014 we all celebrated his great Jubilee – his 90th birthday.

In 1958 Ferdinand Veike was elected the vice president of the Soviet Centre of UNIMA. He held the post until 1984. In 1980 – 1984 he was the member of the Council of UNIMA.

He has also been the member of the Board of UNIMA Estonia.

On the UNIMA Congress in Rijeka in 2004 Ferdinand Veike was announced an Honorary Member of UNIMA.

In the name of UNIMA Estonia,
Harry Gustavson