

# LET THERE BE LIGHT



**JELENA STOJANOVIĆ  
PATRNOGIĆ**



**EDIN KMETAŠ**



**MAGDALENA LUPI  
ALVIR**

As puppeteers, how can we help children who are losing their childhoods in wars around the world, while our fellow puppeteers are losing the threads they use to animate their puppets? The least we can do is to pick up those invisible threads and weave them into what we do best - a puppet show that, through unity, can provide some assistance in raising funds for survival for those most in need.

From a city with a bridge - Mostar, this idea simultaneously sparked towards Kragujevac and flowed towards Rijeka, finding fertile ground immediately. Because from our own experience of childhood and youth spent in the atmosphere of war and fear that struck our former country to which these cities belonged in the past, we know how much any kind of help means, and most importantly, human, moral help, the realization that you are not alone.

Later, in times of peace, these three theaters opened the doors of their theaters, worked on mutual cooperation, festivals, exchange of performances, worked on respect, understanding, unity. Therefore, on this occasion, the City Puppet Theater Rijeka presents its show about the colorful, peace-loving sheep Wanda, a symbol of diversity and acceptance of others in society.

Perhaps this initiative won't change the world, but as the music heroine Patti Smith says, "People have the power." And we puppeteers can add "Puppets have the power"! We are here to together weave the threads that firmly hold our puppets, which connect us, and thereby try to make the world a more sensitive and better place for everyone, even if only for a moment.

Magdalena Lupi Alvir,  
Director of the City Puppet Theater Rijeka, Croatia

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In November 2014, the official phone of the Theatre rang, it was the then-director Zrinka Kolak Fabjan, who took the first small step for all of us. That meeting between "Theatre for Children and Youth Kragujevac" and "City Puppet Theater Rijeka" at the "Puppet Theater Festival in Rijeka" that year was like our first offspring. Since then, we have focused on every step ahead of us. We proceeded slowly, and a long staircase gradually appeared before us. We knew then that we were needed for the future, not for the past.

Magdalena and I created a stimulating space for work, and the employees of both theaters made our collaboration stronger with support, hugs, and smiles. The structure we built was based on mutual trust, and our strength came from unity, not from division.

From Rijeka, we received the wings of a seagull, and we gave them a golden spark to shine even brighter. Edin and "Puppet Theatre in Mostar" further embellished and enriched this strength. We have known each other for a long time. Our names are often mentioned together. Through this collaboration, we have been learning from each other for decades, although there was a silent period... They returned to us quietly, with a dawn in their hands, and the collaboration with the theater in Mostar became like the Neretva River, unstoppable and pure.

Our puppetry creation has always drawn hope from the memories we have gained, but also from hopes of joint projects. Art has wiped away the dust of everyday life and allowed us to create and grow together.

Jelena Stojanović Patrnogić  
Director of the Theatre for Children and Youth Kragujevac, Serbia

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We live in a time of great challenges. We live in a world where differences often lead to distance rather than closeness, and every step away from this pattern is of epic proportions. Culture provides us with the perfect platform for pushing these boundaries. The outcome of what we leave for future generations inevitably shapes a clearer mission in which building new bridges is imperative.

Therefore, every new acquaintance and every new friendship contributes to shaping the vision of our future for the better, making the present, in all spheres of our lives and work, richer. Collaborating with colleagues from Kragujevac and Rijeka is the result of a shared desire to step into the world of bridge-building, which, alongside cities and theaters, connects hearts. In the end, that's all that matters.

Edin Kmetaš

Director of the Puppet Theatre in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

**UNIMA WORLD PUPPETRY DAY  
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