



LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Communications from the International Brecht Society. Vol. IX, No. 1-2 November 1979 / February 1980

[s.l.]: International Brecht Society, November 1979 / February 1980

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/M3HLL3GNJRCAF8S>

<http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/InC/1.0/>

Copyright International Brecht Society. Used with Permission.

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

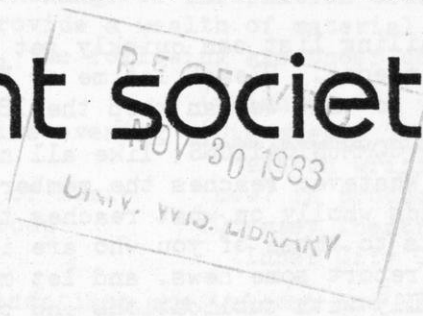
When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.

PR

communications

from the

international brecht society



U9, # 1-2

November 1979 / February 1980

from the (new) editor	2	report	7
symposium	3	theater review	8
announcement	3	productions	15
forum	4	publications	15
ibs membership	6		

from the editor

First and foremost: My sincere thanks and appreciation to Henry J. Schmidt for all of his knowledgeable assistance. He did a superb job of editing the COMMUNICATIONS of our Society for two years, and I shall try to maintain the same quality in forthcoming issues.

Second: My earnest apologies to all of the members for the very long delay in getting out this first issue under my editorship. A hiatus of three months in the COMMUNICATIONS is no one's fault but mine. To those who have been uncomfortable about the delay, I assure you that things will move more smoothly henceforth. A special apology to those who submitted things for this issue and must have wondered when, or if, they ever were going to appear. Your patience is much appreciated.

Third: With the exception of this double number (Vol. IX, Nos. 1-2, combining November 1979 and February 1980), the normal rhythm of three annual issues of the COMMUNICATIONS will resume in May 1980 with Vol. IX, No. 3.

Fourth: Our mailing list can quickly get out of date. Your help in updating it is much needed. Please let me or Karl-Heinz Schoeps know about any address changes, so that we can keep the IBS mailings coming.

Finally: These COMMUNICATIONS, like all newsletters, are no more than a funnel/pipeline. Whatever reaches the membership of the International Brecht Society depends wholly on what reaches the COMMUNICATIONS Editor. So: heart-felt thanks to those of you who are in the habit of firing off a card or letter to report some news, and let me encourage more of you to do the same, especially with publications and productions involving people who aren't connected to the IBS. Thanks in advance for your help.

--rjr

COMMUNICATIONS -- THE BRECHT NEWSLETTER -- Vol. IX No. 1-2 (1979-1980)

Published by the International Brecht Society

Editor: Richard J. Rundell

Correspondence concerning newsletter items, please send to: Richard J. Rundell,
Department of Foreign Languages, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88003

Correspondence concerning dues or yearbook, please send to: Karl-Heinz Schoeps,
Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures, University of Illinois,
Urbana, IL 61801

symposium

The next International Brecht Symposium,

BRECHT TODAY: THEORY AND PERFORMANCE

is being planned to take place in Los Angeles in the fall of 1981. It will attempt to begin building bridges between scholarly endeavor and practical application in performance, encouraging dialogues between researchers and artists. It is hoped that the College of Fine Arts at the University of California, Los Angeles, will host a series of performances (two or three, incorporating dance and mime, drama, and music--with additional workshops and film showings) by artists active in contemporary theatre. The productions will be new interpretations, stressing Brecht's relevance to the arts today.

We hope to establish contact between scholars and artists throughout the planning stages so that the symposium will represent a concerted effort. Panels of research papers will be planned related to the productions, film showings, and workshops. The exchange of information between writers/academics and practical artists should provide a wealth of material and experience for our entire membership. So far, the following are under consideration:

- one play (which one?)
- one dance/mime evening (Die sieben Todstünden and a sketch written for Lotte Goslar)
- one evening of music (new? in production form?)
- one guest group (Odyssey Theatre? Teatro Campesino? Inner City Cultural Center?)

Your suggestions and recommendations are welcome and NEEDED as it will take a great deal of effort to bring the conference into being. Mid-March is a tentative deadline for submitting ideas so that they can be incorporated into grant requests. Please send your suggestions for both theory and performance aspects of the symposium to:

Professor Emma Lewis Thomas
 Dance Department
 University of California, L.A.
 W.G. 205
 405 Hilgard Avenue
 Los Angeles, CA 90024

announcements

In response to Peter Beicken's article in Die Zeit of 8 June 1979, entitled "Brechts Schatten..." and stating that a Berlau biography will be published by Henschelverlag, Dr. Hans Bunge has sent the following correction:

Publication of Hans Bunge's book, Ruth Berlau erzählt, which has been announced by Henschelverlag several times in the last two years, will not be carried out for the time being. The Brecht heirs, through their lawyers, have informed Bunge that they do not consent to the publication of his manuscript in its present or any modified form. Were it to be published, they would consider Bertolt

Brecht's honor and reputation severely damaged. The lawyers, therefore, asked Bunge to confirm in a legally binding form that no steps are being taken to publish his book now, and that he will forgo any such attempts in the future. In case he does not submit this confirmation, the lawyers announced they would initiate appropriate legal measures.

forum

R.G. Davis writes from New York:

Richard Gilman's review for the New York Times Sunday Book Review Section, December 1978, praised Klaus Völker's A Biography: The Life of Bertolt Brecht. Gilman said:

Nearly everything "objective" which is to say unromantic and unsentimental in the contemporary theater stems in part from him (Brecht); aside from Beckett there is no recent playwright more "modern," less accommodating to the deadening past. Or so those of us believe who admire him without serious reservations.

What's so odd about this statement is that in 1971 Gilman wrote in the introduction to Irene Forness' plays Promenade and Other Plays: "For theater is the imagining of possible worlds, not the imitation of real ones." In 1970, in his book Common and Uncommon Masks, he wrote: "At present the only hope of life-giving heresy seems to rest in the hands of Jerzy Grotowski." And in essays written in 1963-1969 in The Confusion of Realms he wrote: "...art is outerhistory; the surprises, blessings, threats and transformations it offers are distinguished by the remarkable fact that they might not have been, that they have made their appearance as the result of a kind of struggling operation, that they stand outside history as a special alternative to it."

Either Gilman has moved radically from his earlier writings about theatre and art and has finally come around to Brecht's view. Or, more likely, that Brecht has a special place in the hearts and minds of those who do not practice anything of what he taught. That Gilman praises Brecht is nothing less than others have done, that he doesn't use him is also nothing new.

Let us look briefly at Brecht in the USA. James K. Lyon, in an unpublished biography of Brecht's years in the USA, 1941-1947, notes that Eric Bentley, the first to find Brecht while Bentley was a teacher at UCLA, became friends of the family in California and translated some of Brecht's works. When Brecht died in 1956 there was a request from the Estate (Helene Weigel) that everyone hold still until the rights were sorted out. Bentley rushed into print and copyrighted his translations of Brecht's plays and has continued to sell his stuff till Stefan Brecht, the son, took him to court in 1972-74. That Stefan stopped Bentley's Brecht association may well be good for all of us, since the John Willett-Ralph Mannheim (Vintage) translations and editions are much superior in language, structure and scholarship.

Martin Esslin's book, Brecht: The Man and His Work, is so well distributed that the inaccuracies in the text will be easily seen in comparison to Völker's A Biography or the careful other biography by Frederick Ewen, Bertolt Brecht: His Life, His Art, and His Times. The cold warrior Esslin is so obviously anti-communist that the scholarship is bizarre and offers Brecht up to be detested. Martin Esslin, in 1978, said to me at a conference in Santa Cruz: "Have you read Marx, Lenin and Brecht in the German as I have?" "No," I meekly replied. "Well, unless you have read and studied it as I have you can't talk about it!" I bowed my head ever so slightly and then went on humbly discussing Brecht from a Marxist point of view which was quite different than Esslin's. One can't read Esslin on Brecht without wanting to avoid the sick man. Brecht is made into a confused person who might have been a great lyric poet if he had only avoided the narrow political associations in his lifetime (even during the Fascist 30's in Germany). Esslin writing about Brecht is like Goering writing about tourism in Eastern Europe. Esslin's scholarship has been criticized elsewhere in various Brecht Society conferences and will be overcome in time by the other books mentioned, as well as Brecht's work itself. However, the damage is immense and one can't look at an intellectual's bookshelf without finding a copy of Esslin's book there.

If anyone wanted to devise a system by which a body of work was to be buried or used only for scholars' papers, small conferences and private secret collections of Brechtania, you would invent the International Brecht Society of the USA. This society functioned for years as a pocket business of Professor John Fuegi who began the organization claiming the need for a separate and "objective" society outside the influence of the German Democratic Republic--the last home of Brecht, the home of the Brecht Archives, the Berliner Ensemble, Brecht's tomb and the Brecht Zentrum. This society, primarily made up of German scholars, publishes a Brecht Jahrbuch once a year, a collection of essays, owned and managed not by the society but by Reinhold Grimm (Madison), Jost Hermand (Madison) and John Fuegi (Maryland). The private contract these three have with Suhrkamp-Verlag Publishers (largest house in West Germany) makes them editors and contractors of a volume that is sold to the Brecht Society membership in the name of the Brecht Society!

Brecht had a wonderful acronym for intellectuals who covered thought rather than uncovered it: "TUI" (In-tellectual-in). "Tuis" not only cover thought, they also are more subtle and raise it to impossible heights (Gilman), or beat it into its opposite (Esslin), or misinterpret and reinterpret (Bentley), or bury, secret, claim for private use (Fuegi and the Society).

A critical stance from Brecht is one that engages the subject with pleasure and kindness as well as a desire to use the subject for future production with others. Brecht, after Marx, made a fetish of reciprocal critical production.

Klaus Völker's A Biography uncovers the secrets of the great man and tells us stuff that may offend, clarifies his problems, makes him selfish, monstrous and useful. Gods can't be used except whole, spirits are undebatable. Real humans can be challenged and can return the challenge--the critical nature of Brecht's work, life, theory and production makes all the Critical Theorists (whom Brecht also called "Tuis") into so many

wordsmiths who end up resisting comprehensible culture, and fall to earth on the side of conservative politics both in West Germany and the USA.

Völker's book does not deify, rather it demystifies. Brecht comes alive as a tough shit, much like any other great person should one dig a little and separate the aura from the actuality and pierce the veil of the dead. Geniuses need to be turned over a couple of times and Völker does a fair job.

ibs membership

Thanks to Antony Tatlow's untiring efforts, we now have a Chinese description of the International Brecht Society. The text reads as follows:

The IBS, formed in 1968, holds regular international symposia on the place of the arts in the modern world, giving particular attention to the perspectives suggested by the work of Bertolt Brecht. The society has a wide international membership but especially welcomes membership and participation from outside North America and Europe, in the conviction that social and artistic problems can no longer be isolated and that truly international communication has become an urgent imperative. The IBS welcomes enquiries about its activities, about membership, and also welcomes contributions to its newsletter, Communications of the IBS. Enquiries can be addressed to any of the officers of the Society.

國際布萊希特學會

國際布萊希特學會自從一九六八年成立以來，經常舉辦國際性座談會研論近世的文藝思潮及影響，尤其著重於探討布萊希特作品中所提出的各種文藝觀點與見解。

國際布萊希特學會會員遍佈世界各地，並特別歡迎北美及歐洲以外的國家參加。此乃基於其堅信社會與藝術問題之密切關係及國際性思想溝通之重要。

國際布萊希特學會歡迎諮詢有關其各種活動及入會辦法。其會訊 國際布萊希特通訊 更歡迎投稿。

有關諮詢可致函下列任何幹事：

會長 (President): Gisela Bahr, Dept. of GREAL, Miami Univ.,
Oxford, Ohio 45056, U.S.A.

副會長 (Vice-President): Antony Tatlow, Dept. of English
Studies and Comparative Literature,
Univ. of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

秘書 (Secretary): Karl H. Schoeps, Dept. of Germanic Lang.
and Literature, Univ. of Illinois, Urbana,
Illinois 61801, U.S.A.

通訊主編 (Communications Editor): Richard J. Rundell,
Dept. of Foreign Langs., New Mexico
State Univ., Las Cruces, NM 88003, U.S.A

reports

Brecht in Peking, 1979

It is said that nowadays people sometimes queue overnight to make sure of securing a copy of the new editions of foreign literature on sale in Peking (Beijing). Brecht's Life of Galileo, which began in Peking on 31 March 1979, was sold out for months. It was the first foreign play to be produced for thirteen years, since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

One has only to read the following account to get some sense of what this production must mean in China. Who can tell what the consequences will be? In China there is now enormous curiosity about foreign literature. When we consider the Chinese potentiality and the sheer fact that they constitute one-fifth of mankind, it is difficult not to see the current and coming changes as potentially momentous.

A Brecht discussion is now taking place--a Brecht seminar was held recently, and such an event is wholly unusual--and one can imagine that other productions may follow. Since people are conscious of Brecht's own response to China and of certain affinities between his work and thought and their own, it is perhaps not so surprising that one of Brecht's plays should have been chosen as the first example of Western drama to be performed for so long. Neither does it surprise us, in view of the extreme cultural isolation of the past, that some of the critics' statements seem a little strange. We must remember to keep them in their Chinese context. We do, however, receive a lively sense of the excitement generated by this production.

In the Chinese context, the play cannot fail to make an enormous impact.

Here I am thinking not only of the stage conventions and dramatic style but also of the assumptions about character and beyond that, the whole critical underpinning of the play. These must all seem little short of "revolutionary" to an audience fed for thirteen years on the undialectical idealisations of eight model revolutionary operas. Maybe this production will lead the way towards more complex representations of reality on the stage.

We should remember that in the past, Western theatre made little impact in China beyond a more or less restricted audience in the "Westernized" seaboard cities. Part of the purpose of Mao's Yenan talks on literature was to insure that writers in China did not separate themselves from the experiences of the vast rural population. But times change, and with the communication aid of television, there comes the chance of reaching this vast population in a way that cannot be achieved by the live theatre.

Though it may seem superficially paradoxical, it is of course no coincidence that this interest in Brecht and Western theatre comes at a time of revival for the traditional Chinese "opera," which had been suppressed during the Cultural Revolution. At the moment there is simply the need to recapture the styles and refamiliarise the audience with that theatre. When this phase passes, the question concerning the value of the old plots is bound to recur, after first appearing in the 1950's. And here, in my opinion, China needs to learn everything that can be learnt from Brecht about historicisation. One thing that Brecht can certainly show is a means of fusing aesthetic pleasure, to be enjoyed for its own sake and as a stimulus to the imagination, the sense of the possible, with an awareness of historical responsibility. But in learning such a lesson from Brecht, they would of course in part be learning from themselves.

The first two of the following three reports were issued in English by the New China News Agency. The third report comes from the Guang Ming Daily of 7 April 1979, and in translating it into English, we have tried to convey something of the flavour of the original, since it is important that the particularities of the Chinese situation be understood outside China.

--Antony Tatlow
Hong Kong

theater reviews

"brecht's 'galileo' premiered in china"

beijing, march 31 (xinhua) -- "the life of galileo", a play by bertolt brecht, which takes science and democracy as its theme, opened this evening in beijing.

"the life of galileo" is the first contemporary foreign play to be staged in china since 1966. 73 year old huang zuolin, head of the shanghai people's art theatre, is the guest director, assisted by chen rong. it is presented by the china youth art theatre.

the new production is part of an attempt to introduce important foreign works and theatre techniques to chinese audiences.

the script was translated by ding yangzhong from the 1957 german edition. he studied theatre in leipzig and now teaches at the central drama institute of china.

the beijing production has been cut from 15 scenes to 12 scenes and the stress is laid on the spirit of humanism.

brecht's play centers on galileo galilei's proving the copernican theory that the earth is not the center of the universe, only to be persecuted by the catholic church. the play shows the great scientist's search for truth in the face of the church's opposition. later scenes show galileo's recantation under threat of torture by the inquisition, his admission of cowardice and his belief that "the only purpose of science is to ease the hardship of human existence."

director huang zuolin said: "we keep the play's central idea of the scientist's responsibility to society and of science breaking through superstition and at the same time emphasize the idea of democracy that runs through the play. i think this will be understood by our audiences who have gone through arduous struggle against the gang of four's fascist dictatorship."

the beijing production retains brecht's own practice of having no breaks between scenes. two folk singers have been introduced to provide linking music. they sing about galileo's life and his theories.

the designer xue dianjie also studied in dresden. he has made use of the brechtian half curtain and of projections describing briefly the scene to follow. black, white and grey only are used for the set which suggests italy of the middle ages, and the lighting uses stark white light.

the music was composed and selected by the central music conservatory and the central philharmonic society.

the china youth art theatre has a staff of over 200 including playwrights, directors, actors and scenic designers. it is one of china's major theatres and is well known for its wide contemporary repertoire.

du peng, 59, plays galileo. his galileo has rich inner life.

other plays by brecht that have been translated and published in china include "mother courage and her children," "the caucasian chalk circle," "fear and misery in the third reich," "the days of the commune," and "herr puntila and his servant matti."

"interview with theatre director huang zuolin"

beijing, march 31 (xinhua) -- the noted chinese stage and film director huang zuolin this evening presented his one hundred and first production to beijing audiences -- bertolt brecht's "the life of galileo."

in his 40 years of professional life huang has directed a total of 91 plays and ten films. now 73 years old and head of the shanghai people's art theatre, he was invited to beijing by the china youth art theatre to direct "galileo."

he recommended "galileo" as valuable in developing chinese drama. "it is succinct in language, simple in style, skilled in decor and ingeniously conceived. it provokes one to deep thinking and prompts one to action," he said on the night of its premiere.

huang zuolin's career with the theatre has been one of close connection with social struggle.

in 1939 huang directed his first play in chongqing, "the story of an q," adapted from lu xun's novel, which portrayed the exploitation of the peasants in semi-feudal, semi-colonialist china. in 1940 huang organized

one of china's first professional companies in shanghai, the "kugan troupe." "kugan" means "working under bitter conditions." he directed a number of progressive plays such as "sky rocketing bureaucrats" by chen baichen, "transmutation" by cao yu and "corrosion" by mao dun which sharply criticized the reactionary rule of the kuomintang government, corruption in official circles and the deplorable conditions for intellectuals in that period.

with the liberation of china in 1949, huang found far much greater scope for his talents. he threw himself into presenting on the stage the chinese people's struggle to build socialism. in 1951, he directed a living newspaper, "resist u.s. aggressors and aid korea" which encouraged the chinese people to fight in the defense of their country. in 1957, he directed the play "the cuckoo calls again," ridiculing feudal habits that remained in the chinese countryside.

a research student in shakespeare and stage directing in cambridge and london in the thirties, huang was among the first to study and introduce foreign plays into china. over a period of 20 years he directed gorki's "lower depths," shakespeare's "macbeth," brecht's "mother courage and her children" and pogodin's "the last days of lenin."

under the gang of four, huang was deprived of the right to work for ten years. he felt only revulsion for the gang's form of art and waged a head-on struggle with their followers whenever they subjected him to interrogation.

with the fall of the gang, the party central committee issued a call to carry out the four modernizations. huang zuolin responded by creating and directing the first stage play on the theme of the poetic work "symphony of the new long march." skillfully combining acting, dance, music, poetry and design, it covered the major events of the past hundred years' struggle of the chinese people, and shows how a country that lags behind in science and technology can be bullied, thus inspiring audiences to work hard for the four modernizations.

speaking of the future of the chinese theatre, he emphasized that "revolutionary realism should be combined with revolutionary romanticism.

"china needs to develop its own form of proletarian stage art to meet the demands of the era of modern science and at the same time retain a traditional chinese style. to be successful a play must be based on real life but rise above daily life through artistic re-creation, refinement of language, compression of movement and pruning of stagecraft. stage training should incorporate the experience of traditional chinese opera art."

"Brilliant Performance of a Dialectical Play:
A Commentary on the Play Life of Galileo and
its Performance"

Lin Kehuan

In a season when the theatre is flourishing with the vigour of spring, the artists of the Chinese Youth Art Theatre recently staged a performance of the outstanding work of the famous German playwright, Bertolt Brecht--Life of Galileo--, its first appearance in the capital.

The play made a deep impression on the audience who were greatly moved by its variegated colours, marvelous imagination, powerful emotion, profound thoughts and especially by its extraordinary form of the epic theatre and its unique artistic skills, all the audience being left with a feeling of surprise, wonder and delight.

Brecht was an innovator of the theatre who was never satisfied with himself. His life was spent in assiduously experimenting with various art forms, unceasingly exploring new ways of creating and searching for the newest kind of theatrical language. He based his aesthetics on the dialectics of Marxism, and he applied dialectics to the specific purposes of the art of drama. He introduced the narrative element of the epic in the field of the drama, added a narrator, broke down the "fourth wall" and, by means of a brand new perspective, employed and developed the technique of estrangement (or alienation). In order to break the ordinary norms and to provoke the imagination and therefore make people maintain a clear knowledge of social phenomena, he sometimes goes so far as to alienate ordinary things, which people neglect, to an extraordinary degree. Brecht believed that the audience should be presented with the true face of history, every decision about evaluating merits and demerits being left to the audience themselves. Accordingly, he made an historical and cool-headed presentation of the life of Galileo in his play.

Galileo lived in an age which saw the rapid collapse of the feudal system and the beginning of the growth of capitalism. In that atmosphere of revolution prevalent in the European Renaissance Age, he scorned the authority of the Church and confirmed the Copernican theory with important findings in astronomy, thus posing a challenge to theology. He was very serious when he declared: "Mankind writes in its diary: Heaven abolished." This voice that shook history also reverberated through the markets and street-corners of Italy. The play depicted vividly how Galileo disregarded the plague, the objections of the obstinate authority of the Church, the threats of the rich landlord's son Ludovico and even the happy marriage of his daughter, and calmly persevered in his new scientific study. The scientific enterprise to which he devoted his entire life was united with the destiny of the people, the class struggle and the historical movement, and that was when he showed his giant spirit that shook heaven and earth. The Italian people related their own revolutionary demands to his revolutionary astronomical theory, and observation of the sky was related to the transformation of heaven just as rotation of the earth was inseparable from changes in the mind. The change of interstellar relationships in the astronomical universe threatens to change the relationships in worldly property. The bankruptcy of the geocentric theory implies the bankruptcy of the religious superstition that the pope's throne is the centre of the universe. Riding on the east wind of people's revolution, Galileo became the fighter striding across the threshold of the new age and the esteemed "Bible-smasher" and in the people's eyes reached the zenith of his prestige.

Without doubt, Galileo was a hero of the new age, but after all, he was still a hero of bourgeois individualism. This makes him on the one hand want to knock on the door of the new age for the people, but on the other hand, he refuses to take the helping hand offered him by the people. To achieve his humane goal he makes use of an inhumane society, thus unconsciously degrading the level of his fight. In order to meet his financial needs, he claimed, playfully as if in a game, that a kind of telescope being sold on the Dutch marketplace was the fruit of his 17 years of patient labour, so that he could

cheat the ignorant, incompetent and avaricious senior statesmen of the Venetian great council. In order to gain more time for his research, he used vulgar and nauseating civilities to address the nine year old Duke Cosmo of the Church, not to propagandize Copernican theory, with eight years of silence. And finally, for fear of physical pain and threatened by the Inquisition's instruments of torture, he became a shameful traitor and the criminal of history.

Galileo faced the people, yet he betrayed himself. He encouraged people's hearts but also damaged their spirits. He searched for enlightenment, yet turned his back on truth. He undermined the role of theology, but also protected the authority of the Church. He promoted the advance of science, but hindered the development of society. These contradictions are so sharp, so complicated and entangling, yet at the same time they form a unified whole. By using the scientific method of class analysis, Brecht reveals the complexity of real life and political struggle and also the objective law of social development by stating very clearly and making people believe in the complexity and inevitability of Galileo floating and drifting on the historical currents.

Galileo is a clear-headed betrayer. He once said: "Not to know the truth is just stupid. To know the truth and call it a lie is criminal." He believed in the progress of society, but he capitulated to the evil force rampant in his time. That is why his betrayal, a wilful act, is so terrible. The fact that even a giant of the times can fall so far is the source of the play's sharpness, profundity and power to shock people. The audience is led to ponder questions like: what is the reason for Galileo's downfall, and who is to blame? This would be the very effect the epic theatre has tried to achieve.

Brecht starts from the perspective of historical materialism and thinks that Galileo's weakness was not his own fault. A man's behaviour is determined by his own will, character, and also by the social environment; after all, man's character is itself a product of society. The weakness of Galileo was determined by the class character of the bourgeoisie and therefore, as social behaviour, his betrayal was a social product. For Brecht, unhealthy social conditions were damaging to human nature and gave rise to unhealthy character. Galileo's character had been hurt and bruised by society, and how could anyone be harsh on him when society treated this scientific genius so cruelly? The audience should first detest an inhumane society before they hate Galileo's shameless act of betrayal. Brecht had already expressed very clearly his idea of tracing the social responsibility. Through the tragedy of Galileo, both playwright and audience deeply believe that a good society which does not fear where truth will lead, in which scientists are respected and academic investigations freely permitted and where the advancement of science benefits mankind, does not exist in Galileo's age but that it could come in the foreseeable and not too distant future.

Brecht did not use artistic images to elucidate classical Marxist theory, but he did expound in depth the dialectical relationship between man and society and between science and politics. No Marxist expressions are quoted in the entire play, but the play does embody correctly and realise the scientific spirit of Marxism. Brecht did not let his actors shout themselves hoarse with political slogans, yet the play abounds in the political passion of the proletariat. This historical and dialectical analysis contains the practical significance of the revolution. Now that the entire country is

making the great advance toward the four modernizations, the performance of the Life of Galileo could have a far-reaching educational significance. Just as Galileo said: "The pursuit of science demands special courage." The play will influence, inspire and educate the tens of thousands who started the struggle for science and truth and who fight for them now and in the days ahead.

In their direction of the play, the famous drama specialist Huang Zuolin and the Director of the Chinese Youth Art Theatre, Chen Rong, employed appropriately the essence of Brecht's theatrical art--alienation effects--and succeeded in realising on the stage what Brecht called for: "The unvarnished image of a new age." In the scene where Galileo was waiting for the verdict of the Church, there was a sun-dial placed in the centre of the stage, around which stood Andrea and the two monks waiting for news about Galileo. The great anxiety of the characters was revealed by extensive stage arrangements and strong external movements. These characters posed a sharp contrast to the man and wife ballad singers standing by the wall, as well as to the silent praying figure of Virginia kneeling in front of the Blessed Virgin's statue. The positioning of the three groups of characters created the effect of integrating silence and movement, differentiating clearly between the primary and secondary characters and forming a unified tableau with several independent but closely connected groups. Together they created the tension that emerges from the stage atmosphere whilst also being estranged from each other, thus expressing vividly and clearly the estrangement of sudden turns in situations.

The treatment of the ballad singers is especially successful. Brecht's epic play differs from the traditional kind in that it is divided into a number of episodes instead of acts and scenes. The director skilfully used the singing of the ballad singers to unify the play, linking the plot as well as commenting on and evaluating it, and maintaining its fluidity of narration. The singers were both characters and also assumed the role of narrator of the epic theatre. They and the plot are sometimes together, sometimes separate, being both inside it and also outside it. Their presence always reminded the audience to pay attention to the following: the scenes passing before their eyes are a distortion of real life, are dramatic art and not life itself. In this way, that audience is given the right, instead of it being usurped, to interfere with things reflected on the stage and the audience's thinking is helped to move dynamically beyond the visual boundaries.

Life of Galileo has been considered that play among Brecht's works most coloured by classicism and traditionalism. Its simple plot, slow tempo and serious tone are undeniably marks of traditionalism. But it is also Brecht's unique creation: namely the way in which the simple concentrated plot is interwoven with the fluctuating fate of man, the way the unhurried tempo serves as a foil to the rapidly changing relationship between characters, and the way the austere tone is fused with strong "image-interpretation." Because the director mastered these characteristics and alienation techniques in Life of Galileo, although the script made some considerable alterations to the original play and has made a slightly different "image-interpretation" of Galileo, it has nevertheless succeeded in conveying the epic theatre's contemplation and action, succinctness and intensity, rationality and passion.

The promising artistic designer, Xue Dianjie, designed a set with a large slope occupying most of the stage platform, and a pair of neutral, symmetrical "French windows," as accurate as a geometric pattern, and by changing the door decorations created different kinds of settings with some symbolic implications and achieved the effect of breaking down the spatial illusion created by the traditional European drama. At the same time, he placed the performances of all the characters in front of denotative curtains with astronomical patterns, city emblems, coats-of arms, revealing an historical and social content wider than the realistic setting.

Galileo was acted by the familiar veteran actor Du Peng. He did not use a high voice and exaggerated performance to turn Galileo's speeches into bombastic language, nor did he overstress Galileo's physical collapse after his betrayal through violent external movements. Instead he conveyed Galileo's spiritual collapse with dull eyes and the facial expression of a man who has lost. Throughout the play, he made use of an unhurried tempo, an accurate portrayal of the character and an historically objective attitude to reveal appropriately the clear image of this entrapped hero of the Renaissance.

This performance by the Chinese Youth Art Theatre has been another good attempt after the rehearsal by the Shanghai People's Art Theatre in the 1950's of Mother Courage and Her Children. It introduces to a mass audience and professional literary workers Brecht's superb theatrical art and provides them with an entirely new aesthetic pleasure, widens the scope of theatre and helps to destroy further dogmatism in the sphere of drama and do away with forbidden areas and prohibitions, and this is all highly beneficial.

At the present, in line with social development and scientific progress, dramatic theory, dramatic schools, forms of expression and artistic media all over the world have been making rapid progress. It is now high time for us to break through the paper curtain of our parochial arrogance and stick our heads out to look at the stage scenes of the world's drama. Of course, it is a very wrong idea to endorse foreign cultures indiscriminately, but it is equally wrong to pretend that one does not see, or even to assume a nihilist attitude of disdain. In order to promote the creation of socialist drama and to develop a science of drama, we should encourage dramatic performances of plays of different forms, styles and schools. We should also introduce exemplary plays of different schools from overseas step by step in a planned way, recommend the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend, recommend a democratic art, and work our best for the creation of a dramatic art of Chinese style and character.

translated by P. Nung, T.W. Wong, A. Tatlow

recent productions

The Caucasian Chalk Circle: Berry College, Mt. Berry, GA

2-4 November 1978. Director: Leroy Clark. Set Design & Lighting: Jerry Taylor. Original Music composed by Lane Anderson. Translation by Eric Bentley. Cast: Grusha--Constance Crofts, Simon--Christopher Bouchard, Azdak--Paul Miles. Note: Prologue omitted.

Life of Galileo: China Youth Art Theatre, Peking, PRC

see special report, pp. 8-14

Die Kleinbürgerhochzeit: Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT

26-28 April 1979. Director: Philip Boehm. Stage Designer: Norman Andrews. Music: Haydn. Performance in German. Faculty Consultant: A.S. Wensinger. Cast: David Van Biema, Sandra Eugster, Ingrid Röhl, Susan Magovern, Johannes Koch, Jeff Zorek, Alice Cronin, Joseph Blum, Richard Coomber.

The Threepenny Opera: Resident Theater, Jewish Community Center, Kansas City, MO.

May, 1979. Director: Geri Eicher. Sets: Howard Jones. Cast: Kip Gibson, Susan Parker, Michael Chapman.

recent publications

Eaton, Katherine B. "The Theater of Meyerhold and Brecht." Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1979.

Ley, Ralph. Brecht as Thinker. Studies in Literary Marxism and Existentialism. Illinois Language and Culture Series, 6. Normal, IL: Applied Literature Press, 1979.

Parmalee, Patty Lee. Brecht's America. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press (for Miami University), 1979. ISBN 0-8142-0307-8

see also in 1978 MLA International Bibliography, Vol. II, entries 11126-11221.

b.

I would like to join the International Brecht Society.
Dues payment is enclosed.

- \$ 7 (DM 15) Student Member
- \$ 10 (DM 20) Regular Member
- \$ 18 (DM 35) Senior Member
- \$ 18 (DM 35) Institutional Member
- \$ 25 (DM 50) Sustaining Member

Name _____

Address _____

Please mail to: Karl-Heinz Schoeps
Secretary-Treasurer, IBS
Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801 USA

I would like to join the International Brecht Society.
Dues payment is enclosed.

- \$ 7 (DM 15) Student Member
- \$ 10 (DM 20) Regular Member
- \$ 18 (DM 35) Senior Member
- \$ 18 (DM 35) Institutional Member
- \$ 25 (DM 50) Sustaining Member

Name _____

Address _____

Please mail to: Karl-Heinz Schoeps
Secretary-Treasurer, IBS
Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801 USA

I would like to report a change of address.

Name _____

Old Address

New Address

Please mail to: Karl-Heinz Schoeps
Secretary-Treasurer, IBS
Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinois 61801 USA

TO: Richard J. Rundell, Department of Foreign Languages
New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88003

I want to report a production of the play _____

Institution _____

Date of Premiere _____ No. of Performances _____

Director _____ Music _____

Stage Designer _____ Translator _____

Cast:

Please remember to send at least
one copy of the program to:

Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv
Chausseestrasse 125
DDR-104 Berlin GDR

TO: Richard J. Rundell, Department of Foreign Languages
New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88003

I want to report _____ Work in Progress _____ Own Publication
_____ Project Completed _____ Other Publication
_____ Dissertation _____ M.A. Thesis _____ Article _____ Book

Title or Subject _____

Author's Name & Address _____

Advisor's Name & Institution _____

Completion Expected By _____ Published In _____

Date _____

Signature _____

Please remember to send at least one
copy of typescript/publication to:

Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv
Chausseestrasse 125
DDR-104 Berlin
GDR

