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[s.l.]: International Brecht Society, January 1978

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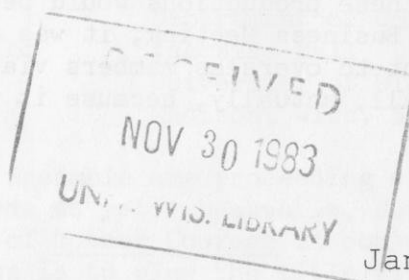
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communications

from the

international brecht society



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from the editor

John Fuegi is massively engaged in securing funds for what promises to be an outstanding Symposium. We're keeping our fingers crossed that the NEH will give him what he is asking for, and that the Berliner Ensemble will indeed be able to perform in the U.S. this year. Full details in the next Newsletter.

The IBS Business Meeting, held on December 28, 1977, was not as well-attended as we would have liked, but thanks to the many good ideas that were offered, we considered it to be a most productive encounter. Minutes were taken by Max Schmidt-Shilling. Instead of publishing them in a lump, I've divided the suggestions and implementations they contain among the categories to which they apply. For more information, contact one of our officers.

Speaking of officers, we need to hold an election. See p. 5.

Under "recent productions" you will find information about two American premieres: The Messingkauf Dialogues at Epic West and Downfall of the Egotist Johann Fatzer, produced by the Shelter West Company in New York. Reviews of these productions would be welcome.

At the Business Meeting, it was agreed that Newsletters should henceforth be sent to overseas members via airmail. This already had to be done last fall, actually, because it was the only way to circumvent the dock strike.

--hjs

b.

COMMUNICATIONS -- THE BRECHT NEWSLETTER -- Vol. VII No. 2 (1978)

Published by the International Brecht Society

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German Department, University of Maryland, College Park,
Md. 20742

symposium

The 1978 IBS Symposium will be held on November 28-December 2 on the campus of the University of Maryland at College Park, which is about nine miles from downtown Washington, D.C.

John Fuegi has applied to the NEH for funding. If his application is approved, the topics (selected by the Symposium Committee) will be:

Brecht's America
 Brecht's Philosophy
 Brecht's Relationship to the Stage and Film

Contributions to "Brecht's America" may focus on either biographical matters or on thematic aspects in Brecht's works; "Brecht's Philosophy"--an intentionally innocuous title--is oriented toward Brecht's relationship to Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Nietzsche, Me-Ti, or other Western or Eastern philosophers. Please direct all inquiries to:

Prof. John Fuegi
 Department of Comparative
 Literature
 University of Maryland
 College Park, Md. 20742

or

Prof. Reinhold Grimm
 Department of German
 Van Hise Hall
 University of Wisconsin
 Madison, Wisc. 53706

Negotiations with the Berliner Ensemble are proceeding slowly, and no definite commitments have been made as yet. Meanwhile, Howard University is planning a black production of Mother Courage in conjunction with the Symposium. A major black actress is to play the title role, and Joseph Walker, prominent black playwright and Tony Award-winner, will direct. His adaptation relocates the play in 19th-century South Africa during the war between the Zulus and the Boers.

theater committee

Participants at the Business Meeting agreed that, based on Lee Baxandall's suggestions in the last Newsletter, a "Yellow Pages" of IBS members should be initiated. They would contain a brief description of each member's specific interests/areas of expertise, so that members and non-members alike would know whom to consult if they seek advice for a project or theatrical production. To get this underway, we proposed that everyone who registers for the Symposium be asked to submit this information along with the registration materials. Members who are not planning to attend are encouraged to do this at any time, and another plea will most likely accompany our next dues notice. We expect eventually to make the dossier available to all members and to theater personnel who might benefit from it. Most important, we will finally know more about each other than addresses and zip codes.

announcements

As previously announced, Dr. Fritz Bennewitz will be available for lectures or workshops on Brechtian performance methods from February to the end of April. He is a former Chief Director of the Meiningen Theater and the State Theater at Weimar. He has done over 100 productions of Brecht, Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Ibsen, etc. in Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, and the United States. In 1966 he won the GDR Arts Prize for his interpretations of Brecht and Shakespeare; in 1967 the GDR awarded him a National Prize for his productions of works from the German classical period. He is a consultant for the Committee "Third World" at the International Theatre Institute. For further information contact:

Ms. Sanya Baevsky
47 E. Houston St.
New York, N.Y. 10012

From Laureen Nussbaum:

In Summer 1978 there will be an intensive six-week interdisciplinary workshop taught at:

Portland State University
from June 20-July 27 on
The Art of Bertolt Brecht

Students can earn 1-6 upper-division or graduate credits in Theater Arts, German, or general Arts and Letters, depending on what portion(s) of the cluster course they enroll in.

For more information write to:

Dr. Laureen Nussbaum		Bill Tate
Department of Foreign	or	Theater Arts
Languages		

Portland State University
P.O. Box 751
Portland, Or. 97207

W. Stuart McDowell (Artistic Director, Riverside Shakespeare Company) reports that he is currently touring universities with a lecture, "Acting Brecht," a two-part talk using slides and taped interviews with leading Brecht actors of the past half-century. Among the actors: Erwin Faber, Therese Giehse, Käthe Reichel, Hans Scheikart, Peter Kallish, Peter Lühr, Blandine Ebinger. The lecture also includes recordings and slides from Brecht productions, extending to the recent stagings by Richard Foreman and Richard Schechner in New York. English translations are projected on a screen while the interviews are being played. For more information, contact Mr. McDowell at:

Riverside Shakespeare Company
355 West 85th St.
New York, N.Y. 10024

meetings

The 1977 MLA Special Session on "Brecht's Theater as a 'Collective of Independent Arts'" was well-attended, and in contrast to many similar sessions, there was time for spirited discussion. Numerous slides accompanied the lectures by Herbert Knust and Richard J. Rundell. The talk on "Bert Brecht and Marc Blitzstein" was delivered by Sally Lou Todd, who co-authored it with Leonard Lehrman. She played taped excerpts from The Cradle will Rock and The Roundheads and the Pointedheads. Although I haven't asked them, I assume that the three speakers would be willing to furnish copies of their lectures to interested members.

The Special Session on Brecht at the 1978 MLA Convention will focus on "Brecht and the GDR," which includes the Brecht tradition after 1956. Please send inquiries, abstracts, or papers before April 1 to the Discussion Leaders:

Prof. Jost Hermand
Department of German
Van Hise Hall and
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisc. 53706

Prof. Betty Weber
Department of German
Box 7939
University of Texas
Austin, Texas 78712

elections

Walter Hinderer wishes to resign as Secretary/Treasurer as of May. So--here we go with an off-year election. The job entails keeping track of membership dues, outgoing funds, and mailing the Yearbook to members. That's by no means a full-time job, but it looks good on a vita. Please send nominations! But before you do, we'd appreciate it if you would obtain the consent of the nominee. If you nominate yourself, that's one step saved.

Please return this by March 30:

I wish to nominate for IBS Secretary/Treasurer:

Mail to: Henry J. Schmidt, German Department, 1841 Millikin
Rd., Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210

brecht—jahrbuch

The dominance of German in our Yearbook has been a controversial issue within the IBS, as past Newsletters indicate. At the Business Meeting, Jost Hermand said that about 95% of Brecht-Jahrbuch's sales occur in West Germany, and Suhrkamp would therefore not be favorably inclined toward a return to a trilingual format. Some alternatives were proposed:

--a second publication in English should be founded, which would allow our members involved in theater as well as research a publication outlet. Gisela Bahr said that funding would be impossible until the IBS becomes a non-profit organization, and this will take at least another year.

--to accommodate current or potential members who are not fluent in German, English abstracts of all articles appearing in the Yearbook should be published in the Newsletter. Participants at the meeting were not unanimous on this point, because we weren't sure how many members would actually benefit from this. If you have opinions either way, please let me know.

suggestions

Complaints were voiced at the Business Meeting that our listings in the following four sections are too hit-or-miss, too skimpy, and in the case of theatrical productions, often too late. This won't change unless IBS members contribute material in greater quantity. Specifically we recommend:

--that you send us notice of imminent productions in your area, even if you aren't connected with them;

--that you contact local theater departments to find out if they are planning any Brecht productions;

--that you send published reviews, write your own, or best of all, send me a summary of critical reaction to a particular production. For instance: how did the New York press treat Foreman's Threepenny Opera? Robert Kalvin's Happy End?

Concerning publications: the IBS cannot afford to hire a bibliographer, so we must depend on our members for information. Again, we ask that you not limit your contributions to your own work, but whatever catches your eye.

recent productions

The Messingkauf Dialogues and "Scenes and Songs from Brecht":
Epic West, Berkeley, Calif., October 7-24, 1977. American premiere. Directors: Carl Weber and R.G. Davis.
Set design: Gerald Slate. Music: Gunner Madsen. Translations by Carl Weber, with Bob Goss, Thom Goodman, Michael Dannenberg. Cast: Joe Miksak, Matthew Gottlieb, Paul Lofty, Robert Hurwitt, Alice March.

From R.G. Davis's program notes:

In our work over the last two years we have only begun to describe an approach -- an American approach -- to the production, organization and performance of Epic Theater. With the knowledge that we had to correct our false notions of Brecht and what is "brechtian," we have been careful to experiment and put on stage that which addressed fundamental problems in the theater.

In this production we have neither a play in the traditional sense nor a lecture-demonstration, but something between a naturalistic discussion and a demonstration with Epic intonations. Can we say that this is a new innovation? Well, yes, but the newness is in the heart of the lessons rather than in the form. Brecht's dialogues present the argument for a direction, an attitude, an approach to the production of theater in our society: no easy slogans, no simple political jargon.

--R.G. Davis

Downfall of the Egotist Johann Fatzer: Shelter West Company, at the Vandam Theater, New York City. American premiere on November 9, 1977 (12 performances). Director, stage designer, translator: W. Stuart McDowell. Music: Bruce Coughlin. Cast: Alexander Duncan, Peter Siiteri, William Mesnik, Michael Detmold.

Brecht on Brecht: Department of Theatre and Dance, University of Colorado at Boulder. Premiere on April 8, 1977 (4 performances). Director: Katya Bernheimer Scott. Stage Designer: Pieter Tackenberg. Translation: Georg Tabori, Katya Scott. Music by Kurt Weill. Cast: Marci Auerbach, Dan Conner, Lynette Foster, Yvonne Gombach, Jan Krelle, Leona Martinez, Laurie L. O'Brien, Carl A. Rahal, John C. Schmidt.

forthcoming productions

Der gute Mensch von Sezuan: Theatre Department, State University of New York at Albany. Premiere: February 21, 1978 (6 performances). Director: Edward Golden. Stage Designer: Bob Donnely. Translator: Eric Bentley. Music by Paul Dessau. Cast: Hillary Delman, Skip Rhodes, Dan Duross. Consultant: Thomas R. Nadar. Vocal Director: Richard E. Stanford.

Gordon Tracy (University of Western Ontario) writes that he has prepared an English translation of Ernst Schumacher's spectacle-play Die Untersuchung des Forschers oder Visionen aus der Realität. Ein Biophysical, to be performed in fall 1978 with the film, projections, and music prepared for the world premiere in Rostock, 1975.

recent publications

Schuster, Ingrid. "Reaktion und Ernüchterung: Thomas Mann und Bertolt Brecht." In China und Japan in der deutschen Literatur 1890-1925. Bern und München: Francke Verlag, 1977, pp. 177-85.

forthcoming publications

Brecht, Bertolt. Downfall of the Egotist Johann Fatzer. Translation and notes by W. Stuart McDowell. Performing Arts Journal, 3, No. 1 (Spring 1978).

Scott, Katya Bernheimer. "Brecht on the Contemporary American Stage." Diss. University of Colorado, 1978. Adviser: Albert Nadeau.

To: Henry J. Schmidt, German Department, 1841 Millikin Rd.,
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210

I want to report the production of the play

Institution:

Date of Premiere:

Director:

Stage Designer:

Music:

Translator:

Other:

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

Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv / 100 Berlin / Charloesstrasse 135 / DDR

To: Henry J. Schmidt, German Department, 1841 Millikin Rd.,
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210

I want to report () Work in Progress () Own Publication

Communications

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Columbus, Ohio 43210
200547-361

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