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## **Communications from the International Brecht Society. Vol. VII, No. 3 April 1978**

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

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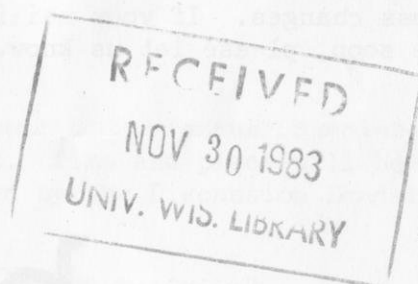
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# communications

from the

# international brecht society



UG #3  
April 1978

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## from the editor

John Fuegi is optimistic that funding will be forthcoming for the Symposium, but he is still awaiting a final decision from NEH. We will keep you informed of developments, possibly by issuing an additional number of Communications in June. In any case, I'm planning for an early mailing of our Fall Newsletter, which should reach you by the beginning of October. Meanwhile, we ask you to write to the Symposium directors if you wish to participate--see the reminder on the following page.

Please return your election ballots promptly; the transfer of our bureaucratic apparatus from our current Secretary/Treasurer to either Kay Goodman or Richard Rundell has to be done quickly to avoid interruption in our "service."

Eva Naetscher, Assistant to Walter Hinderer and John Fuegi, has just informed me that almost half of our membership has not yet paid 1977 dues. If you haven't received Brecht-Jahrbuch '77, then we haven't received your dues. Please send outstanding dues before the end of this academic year to the Brecht Jahrbuch/Univ. of Maryland address below--not to me at Ohio State, as some of you have done, because this delays matters. Also: I'm told that we lose touch with many members because they do not inform us of address changes. If your mailing address has changed recently or will change soon, please let us know.

--hjs

b.

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COMMUNICATIONS -- THE BRECHT NEWSLETTER -- Vol. VII No. 3 (1978)

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## symposium

A reminder: the Symposium will take place at the University of Maryland (College Park) on November 28-December 2. Contributions are being sought for the topics:

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

Potential participants should contact:

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

or

Prof. Reinhold Grimm  
 Department of German  
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## meetings

"Brecht and the GDR" is the topic of our annual Special Session at the 1978 MLA Convention in New York. Time and place will be announced in the fall. The program, as assembled by the Discussion Leaders Jost Hermand and Betty Weber, is:

John Fuegi:	"Brecht and GDR Politics"
Henry J. Schmidt:	"Brecht's <u>Turandot</u> and his Cultural Politics"
Marc D. Silberman:	"Brecht's Influence on GDR Theater"
Karl-Heinz Schoeps:	"Brecht and Buckow"

## announcements

Wesleyan University in Connecticut will hold a six-week Brecht Workshop this coming summer (July 7 - August 17th). Fritz De Boer will offer a Brecht production course which will culminate in a Brecht stage presentation (texts still to be selected). John Fuegi will offer a parallel set of lectures and colloquia on Brecht's actual staging of his own plays. Information on the Wesleyan summer program can be obtained from: Professor J. Steffenson, Jr., Director, Graduate Summer School for Teachers, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Ct. 06457.



(announcements cont.)

Responding to our call for IBS members who would be willing to act as consultants in theatrical productions, Wolfgang Roth wrote to say that he is available for lectures and practical assistance. Born in Berlin, Roth completed his apprenticeship in design and painting at Erwin Piscator's theater and collaborated in productions with Bertolt Brecht. After leaving Germany in 1933, he was a stage designer of dramas, musicals, operas, and operettas in Zurich and London. He became a U.S. citizen in 1945, and since then he has designed plays, operas, and films in the United States (Broadway, Off-Broadway, the Metropolitan Opera, the New York City Opera, etc.), Canada, and Europe. His earlier experience as a vaudeville and circus performer led him to produce and design a dance pantomime, "The Littlest Circus," which has toured North America and has appeared on American television. He has developed and performed "An Evening with Wolfgang Roth: Berlin Theater and Kabarett Songs from the Golden Twenties." Among the topics he offers are:

"Designing for Theater and Opera"  
 "Brecht and his Theater"  
 "Pre-Hitler German Kabarett and its Influence"  
 "Opera in the U.S. and Europe"

His letter ends: "Again I offer my help, wherever it can help and critical advice is not shunned."

His address:

405 East 63rd Street  
 New York, N.Y. 10021  
 212-TE2-9062

## reports

Gisela Bahr writes:

The 80th anniversary of Brecht's birth was marked in East Berlin by a week-long conference entitled "Brecht Dialog 1978: Kunst und Politik" on February 10-15. The event was organized by Werner Hecht and coincided with the opening, at 125 Chausseestraße, of the new Brecht Center, of which he is the director. The "Brecht Dialog" was attended by some 140 Brechtians from forty countries, in addition to an uncounted number from the GDR.

The six days of the conference were filled with simultaneous programs from morning to night, and selecting from among them was not easy. There were colloquiums and panel discussions

(cont. on p. 7)

## elections

We have two nominees for IBS Secretary/Treasurer. Please send me your ballots as soon as possible, in any case by June 5.

KAY GOODMAN, Ph.D. 1977, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Thesis on German women and autobiography in the late nineteenth century. Assistant Professor, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056.

I would like to see the Brecht Society become more active in spheres peripheral to academia and especially in theater and theatrical productions with the potential to activate critical response. As Secretary/Treasurer I would wholeheartedly support the efforts of Gisela Bahr to increase membership internationally and of Patty Parmalee to interest persons beyond academia in the Brecht Society. In addition to contacting potential members, there is also a need to keep in touch systematically with persons currently on our roster regarding their membership status. In cooperation with the other officers and the Society as a whole I would also like to work on developing guidelines for the use of IBS funds as well as to investigate other possible sources of funding for projects we cannot now undertake. My location in the same department with Gisela Bahr should enhance the efficiency of all efforts.

RICHARD RUNDELL, Ph.D. 1971, University of Colorado. Dissertation on aphoristic formulations in Brecht's works. Assistant Professor of German, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM.

Work in BBA during Fulbright to Berlin 68/69, member of IBS since founding, attended congresses in Milwaukee, Rutgers, Austin. Article "The Brechtian Influence and GDR Poetry of Political Criticism" in Weber & Heinen, eds., Bertolt Brecht: Political Theory and Literary Practice (Austin, to appear 1978); papers at IBS/Austin/76 on Brecht and GDR poetry of the 60's, and at MLA/Chicago/77 on Brechtian scene design and socrealism; reviews of books on Brecht in Brecht heute 3/73

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I hereby vote for:

\_\_\_\_\_ Kay Goodman

\_\_\_\_\_ Richard Rundell

as IBS Secretary/Treasurer.

Mail to: Henry J. Schmidt, German Department, 1841 Millikin Rd., Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 43210 by June 5.

and in MLJ 60, 4 (76) and MLJ 61, 5-6 (77).

The IBS is serving as an important funnel of information on all aspects of Brecht's work and its reception; numerous excellent suggestions have been made for ways to get much of this information to a broader interested audience. In addition to the actual IBS membership, which is steadily growing, information needs to be made available to people in theatre and literary circles who only occasionally deal with Brecht but can benefit from reliable scholarship. The productive tension between a scholarly society, a clearing-house for practical theatre experience, and a forum for political discussion should continue to make IBS publications and congresses highly worthwhile.

The membership of the IBS outside the USA should be expanded, with particular focus on countries besides the FRG. The secretary-treasurer should function primarily as the person who keeps the financial house in order and overviewable, as well as the source of steady recruitment of new active members. S/he should also work with the officers and editors to keep communication to the membership regular, open, and productive.



(reports cont.)

on Brecht and Socialist Realism, Socialist Theater in the Succession of Brecht, Brecht Reception in the Third World, the International Brecht Reception in general, Brecht and Film, Brecht Poetry, and at the conclusion of the conference, a critical evaluation of all the theater and film productions shown during that week.

The stage productions included guest performances by the Moscow "Theater at the Taganka" of The Good Woman of Setzuan and of Gorki's Mother, "Brecht Discoveries" by the State Theater of Schwerin, a multiple production of eight pieces (among them Days of the Commune and Man is Man) performed the same night on four different stages in the Volksbühne. Brecht's Mother was done by the Municipal Theater of Gera, and Antigone of Sophocles by the Youth Theater of Radebeul. The Berliner Ensemble offered the premiere of Galileo (the Danish version) and all current Brecht productions, (Edward II, Coriolanus, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Puntilla, Hofmeister) in addition to studio productions of Heiner Müller's Der Lohndrucker and Helmut Baierl's Die Feststellung. The Volksbühne performed Setzuan, the Komische Oper presented Mahagonny, and the Theater of the Palace contributed The Seven Deadly Sins. Other related offerings included Margarete Steffin's play Wenn er einen Engel hätte at the Theater of Friendship, and Der Untergang des Zentauren by Victor Carvajal, done as a studio production by Teatro Lautaro (Chile) in cooperation with the People's Theater of Rostock.

In the series "Film Retrospective," most existing Brecht films were shown, including Tod und Auferstehung des Wilhelm Hausmann and Happy End, both 1977. Also shown was a series "Brecht in Television," in which films from several countries dealing with the same Brecht play were shown in excerpts for comparison--for example, excerpts from Mother Courage films done in the GDR, Poland, Rumania, and Denmark, excerpts from The Exception and the Rule films done in some Arab countries, as well as in Portugal and Denmark, and so on.

The Institute for Theater Directors conducted several "Werkstattgespräche," and the Brecht Center arranged daily forums for scholars to present their most recent research. Song recitals were given by Gisela May, Renate Richter, and Sonja Kehler. The Academy of Arts presented a program called "Brecht in Thought, Reports, and Interpretations" and the Berliner Ensemble offered a "Volker Braun Evening." Two exhibits were opened, "Brecht Books of the GDR" and "Children Illustrate Brecht." Guided tours were conducted to the Brecht/Weigel house in Buckow and through the new Brecht-House complex at Chausseestraße, consisting of the expanded Brecht Archive, the Brecht Center, the former Brecht residence, and the new Brecht bookstore. Additional programs were provided by the Festival of Political Songs held in Berlin at the same time.



## forthcoming productions

"Eine Brecht Fibel (A Brecht Primer)": University of Connecticut. Premiere: April 28, 1978 (2 productions). Original bilingual adaptation, direction, and stage design: Herbert Lederer. Music: Dessau, Eisler, Weill. Cast: Robert Ammann, John Bradshaw, Claudia Esser, Elizabeth Farrin, Lorene Gilman, Becky Heerwig, Kenn Johnson, Donald Rohr, Barbara Stephens, Mary Wood. (Lederer's adaptation includes scenes from Threepenny Opera, The Good Woman of Sezuán, Galileo, Puntilla, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Mother Courage, as well as some poems and prose pieces.)

Georg Büchner's Woyzeck (in an adaptation with Brechtian overtones): Ohio State University. Premiere: May 19, 1978 (3 performances). Adaptation, direction, and stage design: Henry J. Schmidt. Music: Emile Ellberger. Cast: Larry Vellani, Michael Morris, Roberta Weintraut, Edward Weintraut, Ronald Smith, Richard Spuler, Eberhard Samlowski, Stanley Nuehring, Birgitta Oberle, Max Schmidt-Shilling, et al.

## recent publications

Conard, Robert C. "The Hidden Structure of Brecht's Baal." Studies in Language and Literature. Charles L. Nelson, ed. Eastern Kentucky University, 1976.

Weber, Betty Nance. Brechts "Kreidekreis", ein Revolutionsstück. Eine Interpretation von Betty Nance Weber. Mit Texten aus dem Nachlaß. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978.

Barbara Allen Woods writes to draw our attention to her review of Ronald Gray's Brecht the Dramatist in The Germanic Review, 52 (May 1977), 230-31. Her criticism of Gray's outdated scholarship climaxes with the statement: "In general, Gray seems oblivious of the work done by the members of the International Brecht Society (perhaps because he does not belong)." In her letter she says: "I was really dismayed by the sloppiness and obsolescence of Gray's presentation; and while I am not exactly a recruiter for IBS members, it does seem to me the epitome of negligence to ignore the many excellent articles in the Yearbooks which are after all available to all scholars and the public."

(reports cont.)

To sum it up, the "Brecht Dialog" presented a great variety of programs and events to meet the individual interests of the audience. It also provided a splendid opportunity to meet fellow Brechtians from other countries, or renew old acquaintances. On many occasions, the exchange of ideas and views was quite frank and critical. In the evenings, there was the opportunity to sample some of the culinary "Experiments" offered by the new restaurant in the basement of the Brecht Center. A daily conference paper entitled Notate summarized events from the previous day and announced upcoming ones. A complete documentation is in preparation and will be published by Henschelverlag, Berlin. The Brecht Center plans to offer a variety of events all year around.

## recent productions

The Jewish Wife: Wittenberg University. Premiere: February 3, 1978 (2 performances). Director: Amy Nebergall. Stage Designers: Corwin Georges and Amy Nebergall. Translator: Eric Bentley. Cast: Judy Swanson, James George.

Untergang des Egoisten Johann Fatzer ("Fatzerfragment"): Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg. Premiere: March 1978. Adaptation by Heiner Müller. Directors: Manfred Karge and Matthias Langhoff. (Review in Die Zeit, 24. März 1978, pp. 9-10 [U.S. ed.]..)

Galileo: Havemeyer Laboratory, Columbia University. Premiere: April 1978 (closes April 23). Sponsored by Columbia University and the New York Actors' Theater. Producer(/director?): Laurence Luckinbill. Cast: Laurence Luckinbill, Bernie McInerney, Richard Zavaglia, Jack Magee, Rudy Caringi, et al.

See Walter Kerr's "cute" review in The New York Times, Sunday, April 16, 1978, Section 2, p. 3. This review--written by a Pulitzer Prize-winning high priest of American theatrical criticism--is symptomatic, I think, of the antediluvian attitudes toward Brecht that prevail in our cultural sphere. Kerr's review proves that the IBS is sorely needed here as an educational medium, but it also shows that we have a long way to go before our influence becomes effective. It has been suggested before that IBS members should attempt to write and publish reviews of Brecht performances they have seen. Kerr's review might just stimulate you to do so.

--hjs

## forthcoming publications

Schoeps, Karl-Heinz. Bertolt Brecht. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1978.

Dukore, Bernard F. "Money and Politics in the Plays of Ibsen, Shaw, and Brecht" (book in progress).

P.S.: I just received additional material from Marjorie L. Hoover on East Coast Brecht performances. The Columbia University Galileo program lists Rudy Caringi as director, Ralph Mannheim and Wolfgang Sauerländer as translators, Howard Harris as composer, and sets and lights by James Tilton. Excerpts from a statement by the New York Actors' Theater:

"The New York Actors' Theater was formed as a non-profit corporation in January, 1978. Galileo is our first production. . . . We are an autonomous producing group. We intend to share, by turns, all of the multifarious tasks required by each of our projects. We believe we can only achieve our goal by taking responsibility as a group for what reaches an audience. What is our goal? First, we are actors. We want a theater where the actors share fully in deciding what a play should be. We want to work on an equal basis with playwrights, novelists, poets, anyone who will write for us, with our specific skills and potentials in mind. We believe that good theater comes from the rigorous and direct exchange of ideas and responsibilities. . . . We will not be a theater that intentionally presents an audience with hopelessly tangled ambiguities in the form of a "That's the way it is 'slice of life,'" then sends them into the street without clearly formed questions, let alone answers."

Also from Marjorie L. Hoover:

Man is Man: Yale Repertory Theatre. Premiere: February 13, 1978.

Director: Ron Daniels. Sets: Nancy Thun. Music: William Bolcom.

Translation: Steve Gooch. Cast: Joe Grifasi, John Shea, John Seitz, Michael Gross, Estelle Parsons, Patrizia Norcia.

(Please note, IBS members, that any programs/clippings you send me will be kept in IBS files until we establish a proper archive for them.)

## ibs membership

The membership list is printed as I received it from Eva Naetscher. Please check your address to see if it is current. If not, please notify the Jahrbuch office immediately. If the address on your mailing label (on this Newsletter) is correct but the address on the list isn't, please contact the office as well--this means that I think I know where you are, but the Society still needs to be notified officially. If you know of other members' addresses that are definitely out-of-date, please tell us. If you change your name, let us know, so we don't try in vain to track down your previous identity.

We need your help to keep our records current!



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