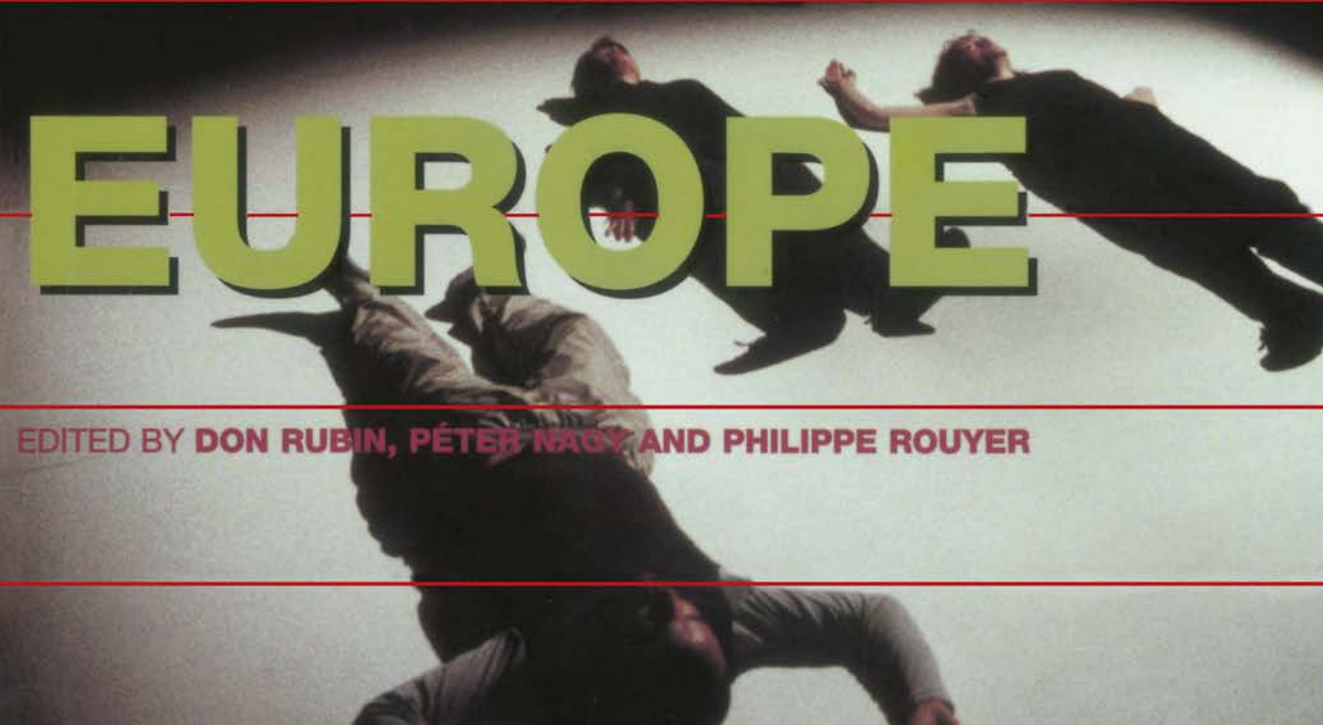
THE WORLD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CONTEMPORARY THEATRE



EUROPE

EDITED BY **DON RUBIN, PÉTER NAGY AND PHILIPPE ROUYER**

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DON RUBIN, PÉTER NAGY
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DEDICATION

This series is dedicated to the memory of Roman Szydłowski of Poland (1918–83), a former President of the International Association of Theatre Critics. His vision for all international theatre organizations was truly world-wide and his tenacity in the service of that vision was genuinely legendary. It was Dr Szydłowski who first proposed the idea for a *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre*.

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FORWORD

When the *World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre* project was begun in the mid-1980s, Europe was seen by the rest of the world to be something of a whole. Right across the continent stability was a word used without thinking twice. One could speak of the stability of western Europe with its established economies and cultural pluralism. One could speak of the stability of the franc or the pound. One could talk about the stability of eastern Europe, a stability which rested on the firm bedrock of an entrenched communism. One could also speak of the stability of central Europe, a geography anchored by the powerful West German mark and symbolized by the locked-in reality of two Germanys.

When the hardback edition of *WECT's* Europe volume finally appeared in the mid-1990s, stability had all but disappeared from the continent. So massive were the changes that certain parts of that earlier Europe had become almost unrecognisable. Europe was now Moldova as well as Manchester and few could identify with any certainty exactly where Moldova was. Europe was now Montenegro as well as Munich but was Montenegro part of Yugoslavia or not? Who could speak at that point with any certainty about the future of the uneasily unified Germanys and who would support the falling deutschmark. And who would be willing even to begin to predict the results of the break-up of the Soviet monolith into fifteen independent nations suddenly spread across Europe and Asia? Who would have dared to imagine the notion of ethnic cleansing less than five decades after Hitler in the former Yugoslavia? Less violent but nonetheless equally painful was the mediation of the cranky divorce of the Czechs from the Slovaks.

As the millennium turned and the twenty-first century came into view, Europe found itself changing yet again. A common currency for much of the continent was already on the financial books and the new Euro – despite the reticence of the UK to join in – was being closely tracked in world banking circles. How many countries would ultimately commit to a single currency? How many would commit to the notion of a united states of Europe? Would that single European currency lead to closer ties among the rapidly developing Economic Community? If the currency union failed would others withdraw from the EEC? Would the future be part of that pan-European utopia (see the introduction by Philippe Rouyer in this volume) spoken about for centuries by both politicians and poets? Catchwords such as globalisation and tribalisation began to be heard widely.

Given such profound questions at root, how could anyone be expected to come to grips with the future of the new Europe's culture? On the other hand, perhaps European stability had always been a chimera, a notion that gained validity the further one went from the centre. Had there, for example, ever really been a stable eastern bloc or had that too been simply a cold war shorthand created by public relations machines on both sides of the ideological divide.

Clearly, time is still the essential ingredient to even begin to assess the astounding changes in European theatre over the last half decade. Who could have predicted even in the mid-1990s the speed with which theatrical capitalism has spread across central and eastern Europe or the astounding numbers of cultural joint ventures now operative between east and west? Who could have predicted the staggering speed with which cultural budgets in eastern and central European Ministries of Culture were gutted, the damage done to many longstanding cultural organisations, the wounding of theatrical

energies that were nursed for half a century on levels of funding rooted deeply in political competition and cultural one-upmanship? The quasi-privatisation of theatres as distinguished as the Berliner Ensemble and the commercialisation of once proud state companies in many parts of what was formerly the Soviet Union set off shock waves that are still being felt across the continent.

I know of at least one major and quite distinguished eastern European publishing company that went from publishing plays to publishing pornography and were later content to survive by doing calendars and cookbooks. How many serious artists and cultural workers were suffering equivalent fates as the new century dawned? How many companies were struggling in real pain to find their new 'free' voices? Some certainly would have us believe that unbridled capitalism will be all to the good in the long-term. In the first years of the third millennium, however, all that could be said about the new Europe was that new cultural models were under construction.

Looking more widely, who could have predicted the growing dominance of English across Europe (and the rest of the world)? Now the working language in virtually all fields, English is as ubiquitous in international theatre negotiation as it is in the field of information technology. Is anyone in culture still working without e-mail? Can theatres afford to operate without the internet and without establishing their own web sites? Can they afford not to? And who is funding it all?

Europe's move to bottom line thinking, Europe's move to the political right over the last decade has had enormous impact on the arts. In many countries where state-supported theatres were the norm, commercial theatre production has increased significantly. All across the continent box office prices also rose enormously. In practical terms, people who attended theatre regularly (let's say up to a dozen times a year) found that on the same budget they could now attend only four or five times a year or, if they wanted to see the latest commercial success, perhaps only two or three times a season. Smaller audiences in subscription-based theatres often meant fewer productions. Fewer productions meant fewer opportunities for theatre artists. Fewer opportunities translated most often into the taking of fewer artistic risks. The cycle was clear.

When the paperback version of *WECT's* Europe volume was first discussed there was much talk about how much the volume should be revised. Should it be simply a less expensive version than the original hardback edition or should significant and specific changes and updates be made thereby delaying considerably the availability of a paperback version? Would a quickly published paperback with only partial revisions impact negatively on any future revised and updated second edition? To revise or not to revise? That became the question.

After much debate, a decision was made that the paperback be essentially the same as the critically acclaimed 1994 hardback edition. Ultimately, it was felt that, rather than tinkering with the major national essays, genuine revisions and more detailed research should be held off for any new edition leaving this volume at root simply more accessible, more popularly priced version of the original. But, though essentially the same, the 2001 paperback volume and subsequent hardback reprints, it must be noted, are not exactly the same as the 1994 edition. Some corrections have been made and this version includes a significantly expanded bibliography covering major books about European theatre that have been published world-wide between 1993 and 2000.

A few final words here about *WECT* itself. When this project was begun in the 1980s, we envisioned a six volume series of approximately 3,000 pages. Our estimate was surprisingly close. We wound up at 3,471 pages. We said a decade and-a-half ago we wanted to include some 150 countries in our collaborative work. We wound up with 158 national essays (some of them, such as the essays on the English Caribbean or on the South Pacific, covering more than a single entity) and we ultimately documented theatre activities in more than 180 countries.

For the record, this project was budgeted in 1985 at US$3 million. It finished having raised just over $1.5 million making it a miracle of economic efficiency. Yet that efficiency was achieved not so much through brilliant planning as it was on the financially-burdened backs of most of *WECT's* editors and, in several instances, some of its national writers who, in the face of economic reality, simply found themselves with no choice but to waive fees or see the project grind to a crushing halt before completion. The fact that these volumes have ultimately found a genuinely appreciative public worldwide and that they have been hailed from Scotland to China as groundbreaking is a testimony to all of those selfless scholars, critics and theatre professionals and, in some cases, to the organisations for whom they work or to whom they are connected. As one of those who was also caught in that same financial miasma,

I can do nothing more than offer to all of these committed individuals a sincere thank you here.

In terms of content, perhaps the difficulty and messiness of *WECT's* achievement was best summed up by the American scholar Richard Schechner, long a supporter of the *WECT* vision. When the series was finally completed, Schechner congratulated those involved calling *WECT* 'the first real roadmap we have of world theatre.' Schechner spoke positively of the ability to navigate almost any theatrical where with *WECT* as a guide. But, as with any first map, it is inevitable, he added, that some of the mountains may be in the wrong place or some of the rivers may be flowing the wrong way.

These problems are acknowledged with good grace. They can and will be corrected in future. The fact is that a dream deemed all but impossible less than 20 years ago – world-wide co-operation in the service of theatre communications and international cultural understanding – has now been shown to have been possible. It has been done from empty air, from blank pages, from a depressingly malnourished financial base. Now that it is real, it can be reconfigured and restructured to make it even more useful and even more accurate in the years ahead.

Theatre writers and theatre people of the world have united to make *WECT* a reality. Some found themselves in war zones; some found themselves caught in internecine organisational handcuffs; some thought such a project would be too costly; some felt the project was not costly enough. All, however, are now free to judge for themselves the value of the accomplishment and, hopefully, all will be looking forward to being an active part of *WECT's* ongoing vision and revisioning in the years to come.

Don Rubin
Sutton West, Ontario
Canada
October 2000

EUROPE

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AN INTRODUCTION

OF NATIONS AND THEIR THEATRES

The encyclopedia has been with humankind since the ancient Greeks. Aristotle's works are certainly encyclopedic in nature; that is to say, they encircle particular aspects of knowledge, some extremely specialized, some more general. Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79) compiled a thirty-seven-volume encyclopedia of natural science. The largest encyclopedia seems to have been edited by the Emperor of China, Yung Lo, in the fifteenth century. Called the *Yung Lo Ta Tien*, it required 2,169 scholars to write it and ran to 917,480 pages in 11,100 volumes.

The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre (*WECT*) is a somewhat less exhaustive encyclopedia than Yung Lo's. When complete, we expect it to run to only 3,000 or so pages in a mere six volumes. However, Yung Lo sought to cover a much wider range of subjects than *WECT*. His goal was to examine nothing less than all of Chinese literature from the beginning of time.

WECT makes no such claims about its comprehensiveness. *WECT* is specifically an encyclopedia of nations and their theatres. The starting point is 1945, the end of World War II, a time of change politically, socially and culturally for much of the world. Sketching out a social and political context for each of the countries being studied, *WECT* seeks to explore in a comparative fashion each country's theatrical history since that time. The assumption from the beginning has been that theatre is an art form which grows from its society and which feeds back into it through reflection, analysis and challenge.

No other international theatre encyclopedia has attempted such a comparative, broad-based, cross-cultural study. The fact that every one of our writers is from the country being written about adds still another level of authority and uniqueness to this work, which is attempting to present each nation's view of itself, a view not of politicians or propagandists but of each country's theatrical scholars and theatre artists.

It should also be made clear here that *WECT* is not intended as a guide to individuals, companies, festivals or forms. One will not find here analyses of Stanislavski, Brecht, Craig, Brook, Grotowski or Artaud. Nor will one find biographies of Soyinka, Fugard or Havel. *WECT* is also not the place to look for a history of the Comédie-Française or the Stratford Festival, Venezuela's Rajatabla or Japan's Tenjo Sajiki. Nor will readers find extensive documentation on the Carthage Festival or Edinburgh, on BITEF or Adelaide, on the Cervantes Festival or even Avignon.

The world of theatre is far too large and has become far too specialized for that. Information on the lives of everyone from playwrights to puppeteers, choreographers to composers, directors to designers can be readily found in a wide range of reference works available in every major language. There are book-length analyses and histories – some critical, some just documentation – of all the major companies and festivals that one could ever want to know about. There are also dictionaries available that focus on virtually every specialized theatrical subject from semiotics to cultural anthropology. Many fine theatre journals around the world maintain a valuable and continuing dialogue and documentation of current issues.

What has not existed before – and what *WECT* has attempted to create – has been a theatrical reference work looking at a wide range of *national* theatrical activity on a country-by-country basis from a specifically *national*

standpoint. As we near the end of the twentieth century, as nations in many parts of the world finally shed their colonial pasts, and as new nations emerge in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, such a gap in our cultural knowledge may seem curious. What, for example, does Romanian theatre look like to a Romanian in this post-modern world? Canadian theatre to a Canadian? What is of import to an Australian about his or her own theatre? To a Senegalese? A Brazilian? A Vietnamese? An Egyptian? And what of all the individual republics that once made up the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia? What is the self-perception of theatre professionals in the new Germany, where two totally different systems were uncomfortably reunited as the 1990s began?

To allow the reader to draw conclusions and to allow comparability, each of *WECT*'s writers was given the challenge of bringing together just such a national impression in a very specifically structured essay which would include not lists of names and dates but rather a context – in some cases, contexts – for international comprehension. That is, each of *WECT*'s extensive national articles – ranging from 3,000 to 30,000 words per country (small books in some instances) – has been written so as to provide theatrical professionals and those concerned with research on the profession with not only the basic material they would need if they were going to work in or visit a particular country for the first time, but also the basic material necessary to identify international trends and movements in the decades since the end of World War II.

Those who already know their own or some other country's theatre very well, no doubt, will find the information contained on those countries useful but probably too basic. Even at 30,000 words, these articles cannot possibly replace the library that would be needed to completely cover the theatre of any one country. In any event, encyclopedias historically have been intended only as introductions. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine them being anything more than that on any given subject. The philosopher and encyclopedist Denis Diderot (1713–84) argued that encyclopedias should be seen as basic libraries in every field but the reader's own. In this case, it is a theatre library for every country but the reader's own. To this end, we have asked writers to think of their ideal reader as a sophisticated professional from abroad.

In this light, we believe that *WECT* will be most important to readers for the breadth of its coverage; in this case, for the distance from home that each reader can travel through these articles. This is not in any way to suggest a lack of depth but rather to honestly recognize given limitations. *WECT* is therefore providing extended and extensive articles on every theatre culture in the world, more than one hundred and fifty countries by the time the project is concluded. Looked at as a whole, they will be more than able to help theatre professionals in every part of the world put plays, companies, policies and productions into a national context, and in our complicated world this seems an important and unique contribution.

WECT material can be accessed in one of two ways: by either reading vertically (from beginning to end in any particular country) or horizontally (focusing on only a single subject such as Puppet Theatre or Dramaturgy across several countries). Having suggested earlier that this is not an encyclopedia of individuals, companies, festivals or forms, the fact is that one *can* identify individuals, companies, festivals and forms by referring to the index at the back of each volume or to the comprehensive multi-volume index planned for the final volume. By going to specific pages, the reader will then be able to follow the influence and development of particular figures or groups within their own countries, within regions and ultimately in the world.

Whichever approach one is using, whether professionally focused or casual, it is probably useful at this point to understand the many section headings in each of the national articles and what each section is intended to include.

Each national article in this volume is divided into twelve sections: History, Structure of the National Theatre Community, Artistic Profile, Music Theatre, Dance Theatre, Theatre for Young Audiences, Puppet Theatre, Design, Theatre Space and Architecture, Training, Criticism, Scholarship and Publishing, and Further Reading. These sections are intended to provide the following information.

History: Each national article opens with basic geographical, historical and/or socio-political material. In the cases of countries whose histories may not be well known outside the immediate region, we have encouraged writers to provide a more extensive background than might normally be found. Included as well is a history of the country's major theatrical movements and events since 1945, treated on a decade-by-decade basis or treated thematically.

In each case the intent has been to give the national writer flexibility in interpreting the material being discussed.

Structure of the National Theatre Community: This is essentially a demographic section intended to offer information on the types of theatres (commercial, state supported, regional or municipal) and the numbers of theatres operating in a particular country, their geographical distribution and relative sizes (both in terms of employees and budgets). One will find in this section information on the various infrastructures that have developed (national associations, national and international linkages), unions, as well as information on the major festivals in the country and national awards.

Artistic Profile: Divided into sub-sections, this examination of the major artistic trends in each national theatre since 1945 begins with **Companies**, goes on to **Dramaturgy** and concludes, where writers did not already deal with these areas in previous sections, with a discussion of **Directors, Directing and Production Styles.** Because our intent has been to look at the relationship between theatre and society, readers of this section are urged to look as well at the first two sections. Once again, the intent has been to provide the *foreign* theatre professional with an understanding of which groups, writers and directors are the most significant in the country and to put them into a national perspective. The sub-section designated as 'Dramaturgy' was initially called 'Playwriting' but was changed to 'Dramaturgy' to allow *WECT* to recognize the many companies that have worked collectively during the period being examined and to acknowledge the significant role of the director in script development. In no way is this intended to demean the importance of the playwright whose work, we believe, still remains central to the process of theatrical creation.

Music Theatre and *Dance Theatre*: We start in both these sections with the assumption that there has long been a relationship between music and theatre, and dance and theatre; we have asked our writers to examine those relationships from a theatrical rather than from a musical or dance standpoint. In suggesting such differentiations we have proposed that the writer take into account the kind of training needed to perform the work (music/dance or theatrical) and how the work is professionally assessed (by music/dance or theatre critics). In cases where the answers come down firmly on the side of music or dance, we have proposed not including the material in *WECT* since it might more appropriately be included in a music or dance encyclopedia. In some cases writers have focused exclusively on the line where the forms connect – often in multimedia experiments; in other cases they have written about more traditional opera and important dance or music groups. Those specifically interested in mime will find it discussed – where it has some national artistic significance – in the **Dance Theatre** section.

Theatre for Young Audiences: In many countries – especially in the period since 1945 – theatre for young audiences has developed significantly. By including a separate section in these articles, *WECT* intends to acknowledge the importance of this very special area of contemporary theatre life. The light thrown on such work seems of significance in the long-term development of theatrical art generally since 1945.

Puppet Theatre: Sometimes linked with the **Theatre for Young Audiences** section but most often recognized on its own, puppet theatre is at once one of the oldest of the popular theatrical arts and, where it has been rediscovered by contemporary theatrical practitioners, one of the most avant-garde. Within this section we have asked writers to trace developments in the form from its theatrical mimetic roots (imitation of actions) to what has come to be known as Object Theatre in which things take on a dramatic life of their own thanks, very often, to black light techniques that emerged during this period in eastern Europe. We have asked our writers as well to look at experiments involving the interrelationship between live actors and puppets or live actors and objects. This is a fascinating and important area which theatre professionals ignore at their own imaginative risk.

Design: This section examines the work of each theatre community's visual artists. In some cases this has been done thematically; in other cases, on a decade-by-decade basis since 1945. Again, we have asked our writers to avoid lists. Instead of just naming names, we have asked them to choose a small number of representative designers and discuss their individual work.

Theatre Space and Architecture: When we began, this section was simply titled 'Theatre Architecture'. The words 'Theatre Space' were added as the articles began to arrive. Many of our writers originally interpreted this section as being only about buildings created specifically as theatrical venues. Clearly this would have eliminated many of the experiments relating to theatrical space which began in the 1960s and

are still with us today, experiments which seem to have begun in North America out of sheer desperation and which evolved in many parts of the world into the total breakdown of proscenium theatre with its visual accoutrements as an *a priori* requirement for theatrical events.

Training: This section discusses the most important theatre schools and other professional training programmes in each country, their types of curriculum and the traditions they follow.

Criticism, Scholarship and Publishing: The most important theatre research and documentation centres in each country, major performing arts museums and the types of critical approaches being taken by leading critics and theatre scholars are identified in this section. The discussions here range from journalistic reviewing to more analytical philological, anthropological, semiological, and/or other types of structural approaches. In some cases historical context is provided; in others, contemporary developments are emphasized. As well, writers have been asked to identify the most important theatre journals and magazines along with the major theatre publishing houses in their countries.

Further Reading: Each national article concludes with a brief bibliography identifying the major works available within the national language as well as the most important works about the country's theatre that the authors are aware of in other languages. We have tried to follow the bibliographical form recommended by the University of Chicago but in some instances writers followed their own scholarly form leaving us with certain Chicago-style omissions. Though we attempted to fill these gaps it was not always possible. In general, however, enough information has been provided to allow the diligent reader to find the works mentioned.

To some, this structure may seem overly complicated and perhaps even contradictory in terms of allowing each writer or team of writers to identify and define their national theatres. But in every instance, the key was to maintain comparability country-to-country and ultimately region-to-region. It is our belief that as interesting and informative as each national article may be, the real value of *WECT* will ultimately lie in its ability to provide comparability of theatres world-wide, in its ability to allow directors, playwrights, dramaturges, designers, critics, scholars and even those in government to look across a wide range of theatre communities.

Certainly this structure was not arrived at quickly or casually and it continued to be refined almost until publication. When this project was first conceived by the Polish theatre critic Roman Szydłowski (1918–83) in the late 1970s, it was seen simply as an opportunity to provide accurate and up-to-date documentation for theatre critics who were being confronted more regularly than ever before with theatre from all over the world as part of their daily reviewing duties. Visiting groups were no longer rare and exotic events on a critic's schedule. They were appearing with amazing regularity and the best critics simply wanted to do their homework.

But where could a working critic go to find quickly information on Turkish *karagöz*, on Thai *Khon* or South Africa's Market Theatre? Critics just seemed to be expected to know everything and everyone. Even when some information did exist, the sources were too often out of date or existed only in a language not widely spoken.

Most scholars would probably point to the nine-volume *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* as the standard reference in the field. Available, however, only in Italian, the vast majority of the documentation included there was gathered before World War II and was, to say the least, Eurocentric. Published after the war, this encyclopedia of world theatre history was certainly strong the further one went back in time. But despite the fact that non-European theatre generally and the twentieth century specifically were not especially well served, the *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* did become a standard. Most libraries found it essential for their reference sections. By the 1970s, however, it was clearly out of date even in its approaches to some of its early material.

Through the years, less ambitious attempts were made. Along with specialized individual volumes, these were very useful but, because of their specificity or, in some cases, their purely academic approach, they were not always useful to theatre professionals. It was at this point in time that Roman Szydłowski proposed a new type of world theatre reference work to the International Association of Theatre Critics, one of many international theatre communications organizations that had sprung up in the wake of two world wars.

At this organization's Congress in Vienna in 1979, Szydłowski, its president, received wide support for the proposal but no clear directions on how to proceed. Within eighteen months, however, he had convinced the International

Theatre Institute's (ITI) Permanent Committee on Theatre Publications – a loose association of editors of theatre magazines and journals – to take up the challenge. The ITI, it was felt, being affiliated with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at a higher level than the other international theatre associations, would be the right agency to bring the idea to fruition on the world stage. At its 1981 Congress, this committee (subsequently to be called the Communications Committee) endorsed the idea and recommended it to the organization as a whole. It was the ITI's new secretary-general, Lars af Malmborg from Sweden, who decided that the project would be a concrete contribution to world theatre communication.

Malmborg, with the support of the ITI Executive Committee, brought the idea forward and in early 1982 called a meeting of interested international theatre organizations and individuals who might be able to help realize the project. It was from this meeting, held under the aegis of the Fine Arts Museum in Copenhagen, that specific plans began to be made. Four organizations – the ITI, the International Association of Theatre Critics (IATC), the International Federation for Theatre Research (FIRT) and the International Society of Libraries and Museums for the Performing Arts (SIBMAS) – agreed to combine efforts towards the realization of what was now being called *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre*.

By 1983, with the support of the Faculty of Fine Arts at York University in Toronto and with the initial interest of a major Toronto publishing house, *WECT* was incorporated as an independent not-for-profit project under Canadian law. Initial grants came from York University, UNESCO and, the largest grant to that time, from the American-based Ford Foundation (thanks to a willingness to risk on a project that did not fit neatly into any previously established programme by its Theatre Officer, Ruth Mayleas). During 1984, representatives of the four sponsoring organizations met in Toronto (courtesy of Canadian philanthropist Floyd S. Chalmers) to set up parameters. Without this initial support and all the faith it implied in an unprecedented vision, *WECT* would never have gotten off the ground.

The year 1945 was established as a starting point though it was agreed that nothing ever really starts or ends neatly in the world of theatre. It was agreed that television and radio would not be dealt with but that music theatre and dance theatre would be included. It was agreed that a socio-cultural approach would be taken and that the relationship between theatres and the nations from which they grew would be explored. It was agreed that comparability would be emphasized and that writers should be chosen from within each country.

During 1984 an outstanding international team of editors was selected to coordinate the work and to advise in such specialty areas as theatre for young audiences (Wolfgang Wöhlert), music theatre (Horst Seeger), dance theatre (Selma Jeanne Cohen) and puppet theatre (Henryk Jurkowski) among others. Over the years the International Editorial Board would expand and contract as needs appeared or as particular individuals found themselves unable to continue the work. But throughout, the notion of self-identification for each national article was maintained and continued to be the primary reason why *WECT* searched for leading writers, critics, scholars and theatre professionals within each country.

The first full International Editorial Board meeting was held in Toronto in 1985 during the twenty-first World Congress of the ITI. There were five people present from North America, another five from Europe (including *WECT*'s two associate editors, Péter Nagy of Budapest and Philippe Rouyer of Bordeaux) and another six from Latin America, Africa, the Arab countries and Asia/Oceania. It was one of our Asian editors who put the first question to the gathering. 'What exactly do we think *we* mean when we use the word theatre?' he asked. 'I'm really not sure there's a definition we can all agree on. And if we can't come to an agreement on this basic question, how can we possibly agree on anything else?'

The apparently simple question led to an enormously involved discussion about the various types of spoken drama that had evolved in Europe and North America. Objections were quickly raised that we were ignoring musical theatre forms and forms involving movement. Others objected that we were locked into text while our puppet theatre editor was concerned that we were leaving out everything from Indonesian Wayang to Punch and Judy. Our African colleagues suggested that our preliminary definition seemed to be ignoring the social relationships in much African theatre, from wedding ceremonies to circumcision rituals. And what of traditional forms in Asia such as *Kathakali*, *Noh*, *Kabuki*, Chinese opera, or even the Vietnamese *Hat Boi*? What of folk

forms in so many parts of the world? What of contemporary experiments?

What had appeared to be a rather innocent question in the beginning quickly turned into a life-or-death debate on the whole future – not even to mention the international credibility – of the project. During the next few days, we turned to various standard texts on theatre in search of a suitable, internationally acceptable definition. It was a fascinating, though ultimately frustrating, exercise. To our amazement, we couldn't really find such a definition. Examinations of standard dictionaries – including the *Oxford English Dictionary* – were of even less help. Most simply defined 'theatre' as a building.

So we created our own international, intercultural working definition of the word. It is offered here not as a conclusion but rather as a starting point for a continuing consideration of what those of us working in the field mean when 'theatre' is spoken of in a contemporary global context.

> *Theatre*: A created event, usually based on text, executed by live performers and taking place before an audience in a specially defined setting. Theatre uses techniques of voice and/or movement to achieve cognition and/or emotional release through the senses. This event is generally rehearsed and is usually intended for repetition over a period of time.

By the time *WECT*'s International Editorial Board next met, it had become clear from discussions with the various international organizations that *WECT* would have to respect various national differences in approaching this work and would have to take, as the American poet Robert Frost once said, 'the road less travelled by' in seeking its writers; that is, it would go to source for its information and interpretation in every instance. Indeed, *WECT* has through the years taken pride in this unique approach, slow and costly though it has been. But it has also been an approach which has led the project to develop close working relationships with theatre people *in* each of the more than 150 countries now involved in what has become the largest international cooperative venture in the history of world theatre, and certainly the largest international publishing venture in world theatre today.

In focusing the work this way, it was obvious that the *WECT* project was taking many risks. The approach was obviously going to make this a much longer project than anyone had ever dreamed of. By the time this work is concluded, it will have taken almost fifteen years. The approach would also force us to find significant international funding at a time when economies were just beginning to go into recession in many parts of the world. As this volume goes to press, *WECT* is still seeking national and international partners to fund the subsequent volumes in the series: *The Americas*, *Africa*, *The Arab World*, *Asia/Oceania*, and the concluding *World Theatre Bibliography/Cumulative Index*.

But we believed when we started – and still believe – that our approach was one which would afford the best opportunity to ensure both the long-term goals and the highest standards of international scholarly excellence and accuracy. This approach was also one of the key reasons why UNESCO decided to support the project and why UNESCO ultimately named *WECT* as an official project of its World Decade for Cultural Development (1988–97). Such recognition is unusual for a scholarly work and we feel with some pride that it is an important model for future intercultural, interdisciplinary arts research.

A few words are needed here about world politics and its effect upon our work. For most people, political change is simply interesting newspaper fodder or the stuff to support opinions – pro or con – on particular subjects. The closer that politics gets to home, however, the more directly it impacts on one's reality and the more it affects how one goes about one's daily business. Political change has constantly impacted on *WECT*'s reality and profoundly affected its already complicated work.

To give but one key example, when work began on our European volume, there were only two dozen or so countries to deal with, and those in eastern Europe were guaranteeing they would cover all our writing and translation fees for the region. That was in 1985. By 1990, the two Germanys had become one (requiring a significant restructuring of our German material) while the USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia went from three separate national entities to twenty-three separate countries (fifteen individual republics from the Soviet Union, six from Yugoslavia and two from Czechoslovakia). Not only did the already completed major articles on the USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia have to be completely revised and turned into what we decided to call 'historical overviews' but also new writers needed to be found and new articles had to be commissioned on each of the republics, republics that were, in many instances, in the midst of social,

political or armed revolution. With such changes swirling around us, we read the newspapers each day with genuine trepidation. By the time of publication, the volume had expanded to some forty-seven articles. Suffice it to say here that trying to keep up with this ever-changing political landscape continues to be *WECT*'s greatest challenge, a challenge we are trying to meet through computerization and the establishment of *WECT* as an international theatre database.

It was precisely these political changes which Martha Coigney, president of the ITI, was referring to when she said, perhaps optimistically, at the opening of the ITI's 1993 World Congress in Munich that in the future it would no longer be wars between superpowers that people of peace would have to be concerned about, but rather confrontations between cultures. If this is so then we believe that *WECT* may well be able to make a real contribution in at least introducing those cultures to one another. *WECT*'s goal from the beginning has been nothing less than that.

In helping the project to achieve this end, many organizations, many theatre and government agencies, many foundations and individuals have played important roles. A list of the financial sponsors and those who have worked with us appears elsewhere but we would like to acknowledge specifically the ongoing help of UNESCO, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations (Rockefeller came to *WECT*'s aid at precisely the moment that recession and the enormous political changes in Europe threatened to kill the project), the Faculty of Fine Arts and the Office of Research Administration at York University, the Canadian and Ontario governments, the German Centre of the International Theatre Institute and particularly Rolf Rohmer, who has long served as president of the project's International Executive Board. This project would not have survived without the help of the Canadian Centre of the ITI (especially Curtis Barlow in the early years of the project) and the various members of the Canadian-based Board of Directors who worked to find funds to realize this work. The support of our two recent Board presidents has been particularly appreciated – Calvin G. Rand (founding president of Canada's Shaw Festival) and Professor Leonard W. Conolly, formerly of the University of Guelph and now president of Trent University in Ontario.

This project could also not have survived without the ongoing support of the Faculty of Fine Arts and the department of theatre at York University, its deans and its chairs (including Lionel Lawrence, Joyce Zemans, Joy Cohnstaedt, Ron Singer and Phillip Silver) and especially the sponsors of the Walter A. Gordon Fellowship, York University's highest research award, which allowed me the time to bring the European volume to fruition.

This project would not have succeeded had *WECT* not had the active support and understanding of all the members of its International Editorial Board, particularly the wisdom and advice of Péter Nagy, whose diplomacy in the face of *WECT*'s own political struggles was never less than brilliant. Nor would it have succeeded without the stubborn belief in this project of its Managing Editor and Director of Research, Anton Wagner, whose work was long funded by the Canadian Social Science and Humanities Research Council, and the project's indefatigable administrator Donna Dawson. Our editors at Routledge – Alison Barr, Michelle Darraugh and Robert Potts – have been most understanding in working with us on what must have appeared to them a mad dream at times. Without their personal commitment and the corporate support behind them, *WECT* would still be in the planning stages.

If I have personally been seen through the many years of this project as its architect, I can only say that the building would never have stood without the strength, determination and belief of my wife and too rarely recognized co-visionary, Patricia Keeney. Against all her writerly instincts and sometimes against all logic, she bravely sat through meeting after meeting of every one of this project's boards, a duty she took on because she believed in the work. Without her faith and goodwill, *WECT* might well have foundered.

There are far too many people to thank here by name. It would be remiss to try, for too many would be left out. But to all of them, particularly to all our editors, writers, national editorial committees, ITI Centres and translators, to all the sponsoring and other organizations which supported this work, thank you for believing with us and in us. We trust that your patience and support will have proven to be worth all the time, the pain and the effort.

DON RUBIN

Toronto, May 1994

THE NEW FRONTIER

AN INTRODUCTION TO THEATRE IN EUROPE SINCE WORLD WAR II

Is it proper to speak of eastern and western European theatre? Theatre with an individual, identifiable point of view representing a regional expression of art? Is eastern European theatre a separate entity or should one more properly speak now of a European theatre, without regional distinctions?

We believe the question valid even given the enormous cultural, political and social changes that have rocked Europe since the late 1980s. As a result, the answering of such questions is more complicated than previously and far too complex to be performed in a strictly political manner.

It's worth pointing out that the United Nations and its cultural affiliate, UNESCO, still recognize an eastern European region to which the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact nations belonged. This categorization was established during the Cold War's heyday for practical and political reasons, without philosophical considerations. The sole commonality was their belonging to the bloc of 'existing socialism' regardless of their specific relationship to the Soviet Union.

With Soviet imperialism now history, with political conflict between east and west all but eliminated and with differences now more economic than ideological, is it logical to speak still of a specific region? It might be argued that continuing such a concept simply proves that we cannot leave the past behind even when our best interest lies in looking to the future.

Nevertheless, a region is distinguished by various factors, the most readily identifiable and longest lasting being its culture, that which both connects and defines its boundaries. The three cultural philosophies of Europe – western Christianity, eastern Christianity and Islam – have long established and influenced everyday behaviour, society, art and belief in this part of the world. Without doubt, various sects within Christianity – Scandinavian Lutheranism, British Presbyterianism or eastern European Catholicism – are far less distinguishable from one another than an Orthodox Christian is from all those, or Islam is, say, from Christianity. Nevertheless, even within these sects, separate cultural and historical traditions subtly interweave seemingly disparate lives. The result is regular and unavoidable interregional and international cultural intercourse.

Looked at this way, it is obvious that we cannot view eastern and western European theatre any more as purely separate entities. Certainly countries like Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are more clearly connected to the west, while others like Russia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania are much more linked with eastern cultures. Regions of Albania, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia, along with several republics that emerged from the collapsed Soviet Union, are also influenced by Muslim traditions.

Yet in spite of the distances and the differences, in spite of the many interactions between these areas, it seems to us that there is still something that can be called specifically eastern European or specifically western European, something which cannot be easily identified, but which can be felt and sensed by everyone.

There is a great divide in Europe which really does split the continent into east and west from Tallinn to Dubrovnik. It is along this line that Byzantine heritage is separated from Roman

heritage, a cultural frontier separating, for one, eastern and western Christianity. As a result, most countries bordering or straddling this line position themselves on one side or another of the cultures. Nations are both separated and united by this divide. Those living along it become 'bridge' countries enriched by both cultures and, like everyone else, are seeking answers to their individual problems while assessing their own errors and achievements.

Eastern Europe

Geographically and historically, eastern Europe was influenced by three large empires and their cultures: the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg empires. All three, even today, maintain an historical influence on architecture and urban development, culture, morals, behaviour and dress. The links to the past are both liabilities and assets at the same time. On the one hand, the inhabitants of this region – as people living at the end of the twentieth century – may feel that they do not belong to any of these groups or that they live between them all the time. As they look to the west, some have had a different kind of spiritual thirst, a wish to assimilate or simply to create something different and independent and self-reflective. Perhaps such thoughts apply only to intellectuals and to those who are involved in politics. The people, on the other hand, those who live on the plains and the mountains, those who are integrated and mixed to the point of no return, have no wish but to exist peacefully under their ever-changing values, to preserve and protect their languages, religions and customs, their traditions, beliefs and tales. For these people, living and working together in the same villages, nothing in their everyday life really separates them; indeed, everything keeps bringing them together.

During the 1930s, many eastern European intellectuals recognized this and voiced it loudly, above all as a protest and as an attempt to balance increasing Nazi influences. After World War II, all eastern European countries came under the direct influence of Stalin's Soviet Union with various degrees of enthusiasm: the only road open to them was the type of socialism or communism which had to be copied from the Soviets. Though their fates became entwined, the various countries moved further from one another than ever before. During the 1950s, as the Cold War reached its peak, borders were impossible to walk through – or even approach – for ordinary people; only officials or members of official delegations were allowed to cross. They all spoke of their eternal friendship to each other but behind the scenes they simply tried to ensure better lives, a bit more breathing room for themselves at the cost of the others.

This relationship, held together by sheer force, started to decline after Stalin's death in 1953 and the process led to complete collapse by the 1980s. Every nation in the region went into shock, as in a national disaster, and has subsequently struggled to revive itself. The real question was whether or not they would recognize their shared fate and similar conditions and cooperate with and support one another, which would certainly get them further than they ever could go alone, certainly further than they would get by fighting one another. Along with their new-found freedoms came the recognition of possibly showing their teeth to one another. Without Big Brother to watch and interfere, these various nations suddenly had the opportunity to fight out their often secular differences, which were violently put under the bushel by the slogan of proletarian internationalism.

Clearly, togetherness is written into the fate and future of eastern Europe and the big winners will be those who first recognize this truth and are able to make it happen.

One of the most effective ways to express the implications of fate is through the theatre. It has long had the ability to point out the value of human cooperation from similar lifestyles – even if lived in separate ways – and that similar problems can develop, and can be mutually solved. This can bring cultures – and especially theatres – closer to one another.

Perhaps the most important common feature is the late awakening of the theatres of eastern Europe. One reason could be that eastern Europe is on the outskirts of Europe's central cultural plateau and is traditionally late to accept invitations or opportunities presented to it; or perhaps it is the influence of religion that was holding development back more than in western Europe. Whatever the reason – and one does not necessarily contradict the other – the fact remains that theatres and the theatre-going

public in the region are at least a century, if not more, behind western European theatre customs and achievements. Poland is where the difference is smallest; Albania is where it is largest; this is reflected in the theatre culture of these two nations.

In general, it was during the period of romanticism that theatres became lively cultural forces in the region. This is not to suggest that there were no folkloric roots and traditions of playacting; but there was little or no transition from these types of performances to performances by professionals. Maybe this is one of the reasons why romanticism in these countries remained vivid for such a long time; in some it lasted for over a century, dominating the fate and directions of the theatre and becoming the 'natural' form of national classic works.

What is also similar in the literature of eastern European countries and especially in their theatres is the mixture and joint appearance of art and politics. In more fortunate countries politics and art do not go together nor is it necessary for them to connect. In this part of the world, however, to a great extent because of the lack of democratic traditions and democratic experience, artists seem forced to take over some of the functions which in a normal society belong to politicians. This is why in eastern Europe every other politician seems to be a failed poet and every other poet is a politician who escaped into verse-making. This political dimension has greatly affected the public's appreciation and response to the art, especially during periods of overt or hidden dictatorship. Audiences were captured by the 'message', often accepting a lack of aesthetic value and a disregard for artistic achievement. From an artistic standpoint, the situation was the same: these people usually had more vivid connections with the major nations of the world than with their own neighbours. Thus, if theatre people from Budapest or Belgrade wanted to know the latest developments in their profession, they did not visit each other but rather went to Paris and Berlin.

This changed to some extent after World War II when each nation went through a period of self-discovery. This was rooted in the desire to catch up with achievements of more fortunate nations, but always while keeping an eye on changes in neighbouring countries. To this was added a burgeoning feeling of solidarity and brotherhood, especially among young people, with the hope that the direction was being followed by all the nations in the region. But the political system started to destroy solidarity among social classes and individuals. Various types of massive repression began to occur: ethnic and religious minorities were branded with 'collective guilt', jailed or forced to emigrate under the banner of the growing class struggle; injustice and fabricated accusations against individuals and social groups were the accompaniments of a growing terrorism.

Between 1948 and 1950, the hegemony and dominance of the Communist Party forced all these eastern European nations to turn introspective. The only external influence was from Soviet culture which demanded that all art be socialist-realism in style. From the west, only 'progressive' art – generally critical of its society – was recognized. Exposure to foreign literature was therefore limited to world classics and to other communist artists.

This blinkering, the aesthetics of which were strict and built on the new political theories, lasted only a few years. Almost immediately after Stalin's death, things began to open up once more. Nevertheless, its effects and influences are still felt – sometimes only in a negative way – but they clearly still represent that era and its art. This is one of the key signs which lets us justifiably state that eastern European art, specifically the art of theatre, is identifiable as a special, separate entity in this period.

But were all these changes in the period from 1948 to 1953 negative or not? This is an important question and in fairness one must say that not all the changes were negative. Yes, it was negative to accept the all-permeating influence of daily politics on art, something which made it impossible to look at creativity in the long term or even simply as a diversion. And it was negative to have political institutions actively and regularly, often aggressively, interfering in every theatre's affairs. On the other hand, state ownership of theatres guaranteed incomes, provided social benefits, and eliminated the worry about personal security. It was positive as well that the theatre community had the opportunity to study their art without charge in state schools and especially to become familiar with the Stanislavski method – the use of natural body movements and voice – even though some of them did not go further than a busy lip-service, continuing their trade as before. It was only later on that they felt the drawbacks: that artists became state employees and theatres began to resemble inwardly state bureaucracies.

Eventually, this closed and rigid system began to break up and everywhere a 'thaw' began, opening up the theatrical world to new

achievements and new values. As for the timing of these changes, it depended in each country on several contingencies, not least on the rigidity of the political leadership and the flexibility of the artistic milieu. In the world of theatre, one of the most influential in this movement was the German dramatist Bertolt Brecht. Through his art and his theories, communist theatre found a window on the modern and the contemporary. And the window stayed open through Brecht's loyalty to communist ideals. After his death, his influence became even stronger, effectively blending theory and practice in the service of art.

There is neither time nor space to deal with specific details here about how this all occurred in each country but happen it did, though not without difficulties, successes and failures, fights and setbacks. A more detailed picture can be found in the individual national articles in this volume. The essential point is that this process did take place in every country in eastern Europe with more or less similar results. By the 1970s and 1980s, a new sense of nationalism was added to the artistic search, an element that many hoped would strengthen theatre life further in both theory and practice.

As of 1993, it is virtually impossible to know if this new nationalism/individualism will result in a booming new theatre life with an intermingling of national and regional characteristics or whether it will develop into a vague type of homogenized art in which western forms generally and American styles specifically will simply take over from the earlier Soviet way. Each is a possibility and each has its own advantages and disadvantages. But rather than worrying about prophecies, it might be wiser to concentrate on the earlier question of what is and has been specific to eastern European theatre, what is unusual in it, what makes it different from other theatres?

This specificity can be found first of all in playwriting. From the end of the 1950s, a new direction could be seen in several countries – more or less independently – which could be called Eastern European Grotesque. Rooted in the existential notion of the absurd but following the social directions and moods of their time, these plays present their absurd plots as the sheerest banality of everyday life, in this way making the extraordinary banal and through banality discovering the absurdity of contemporary existence. In most cases, these plays have a clear allegorical dimension, an element generally missing from the western European absurd.

Clearly, this movement had various influences. Mrożek in Poland, Örkény in Hungary and Havel in Czechoslovakia could not have become dramatists without the earlier work of Kafka and Jarry, Roger Vitrac and Bruno Schulz, Beckett and Ionesco. But saying that it could not have happened without them does not mean that it happened through them. They simply made it easier for the Mrożeks, the Örkénys and the Havels to discover their own voices. Obviously, these creators of the Eastern European Grotesque did more than follow examples; they developed their own approaches.

It is also necessary to speak about two other movements which came out of eastern European theatre and theatrical art and which widely influenced many other countries in many parts of the world. The first is the Czech Laterna Magika; the other is the work in Poland of Jerzy Grotowski. Both were rooted in the 1920s avant-garde and both still have many adherents in the region, albeit more or less fading away. Each takes a different direction and uses different methods: the Laterna Magika was looking to create a *Gesamtkunstwerk* while Grotowski experimented to the point where simplicity – poverty in his terms – tried to achieve and create the metaphysical dimension of the theatre. Nevertheless, these movements can be seen as complementary and together gave something to the theatre which simply did not exist before. Both movements helped to create a new and specific face for the eastern European theatre.

Another difference worth noting was the connection between the professional and amateur theatres in the region. The relationship was specific and the exchange worked in both directions. Not only did leading amateurs (mainly students) find their way into the professional theatre but also professional actors, directors and even choreographers worked with amateur groups for varying periods of time during which they experimented with new ideas, renewed their artistic talents or simply experienced the life of a group which lived and worked purely for one another.

Finally, a word about the perception of eastern European theatre in the west and in other parts of the world. It is difficult to speak about this in a critically balanced way. Certain companies, playwrights, directors, actors and other individuals from this region have been recognized in many ways, most noticeably at international festivals. Obviously, the standard has been high during this period and eastern Europeans earned their place among leading theatre cultures. But one still senses that in the

eyes of the western public this theatre, taken as a whole, is still looked upon as simply exotic and often recognition is given more for that than for its real artistic achievements. Perhaps this will change in the years ahead.

Certainly what is most important to those who produce theatre in the region and what is most important for all these nations is the hope that even as Europe and the world change they will continue to grow and will not lose their identity either as individual creators or as a group of nationalities which have produced important work in the period under discussion. Whether this theatre will retain its exoticism and its piquancy as it becomes even more a part of Europe is a question only time will answer. One can only hope that its specific stages and its various colours will add new qualities to the European stage that may not have been seen before.

Péter Nagy
Budapest
Translated by George Hencz

Western Europe

Over 250 years, the idea of a common European culture has had its ups and downs for theological, political, social and aesthetic reasons; at the beginning of the eighteenth century Russia was considered outside the bounds of Europe by Britain, France and the Habsburg Empire. Things change.

With Diderot and the German philosophers, the Enlightenment, which was probably the first truly pan-European movement, gradually accepted into Europe the Russia of Catherine the Great (1729–96). By the beginning of the twentieth century, after the American and French Revolutions and with the effects of British and French imperialism, it had become a model to be exported to the rest of the world. The new frontiers of Barbaria had moved southeast with the rise of the Ottoman Empire.

The forces that shaped the Enlightenment were actually a mixture of acceptance and withdrawal from the previously accepted Christian ideal. With the rise of the individual, the commoner, the rational citizen, came the fight for and against royalty, republican and national ideals, federal and centralized structures.

The romantic movement taken in its broadest sense tried to establish individual and universal values at the same time. Its poets claimed that a new order, founded on merit (and wealth) was simply exchanging royalty for the bourgeoisie and was not enough; poets alone could unite liberal values (liberating them from the weight of reason), religious values (liberating them from theological tenets), thought and feelings in a new social order that accepted both universal and national ideas. Heinrich von Kleist's *The Prince of Homburg* (premièred in 1821) is a good example. It is also interesting to note that in the early 1850s Victor Hugo had proposed the creation of a United States of Europe.

Against a background of triumphant imperialism, the world changed. World War I was the result of profound changes in Europe from the Atlantic to Moscow; cities like London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin and Moscow – Rome and Madrid to a lesser extent – became symbols of cultural cosmopolitanism. The aftermath of World War I led to the creation of a utopian world structure: the League of Nations (established in 1919), and a Universal Society of Theatre was proposed by Firmin Gémier in 1924. Soviet communism and above all fascism made the dreams difficult to keep alive. At the end of World War II, a new world order was defined at Yalta. Again, plans for a United States of Europe were discussed by people like Churchill, de Gaulle and Stalin but by 1946, the Cold War again put an end to the dream. Eastern Europe came under Soviet influence – the czarist dream come true – while the Council of Europe was founded in 1949 as a loose union of countries which accepted a common identity based on liberal, socio-democratic values in pluralistic societies. Although the Council of Europe has had little power, it has been instrumental in developing a European idea of culture with the creation of the European Cultural Foundation in 1950, the *Tindemans Report* of 1975 and the Oslo Conference of 1976 which all advocated bridges and exchanges between European countries.

At the same time, the European Economic Community (EEC) was born (1950) which led to the Rome Treaty of 1957 and later to the Single Europe Act of 1987; in between, the Copenhagen summit meeting of the EEC in

1978 had published a 'Declaration of European Identity' which led in 1984 to the definition of 'European Culture'.

Jean Monnet (1888–1979), who tried to define the idea of a united Europe (six, later nine, and currently twelve countries), saw Europe (the EEC) as a means of going beyond economic and political issues; in the late 1950s he declared: 'If I had to do it again, I'd start with culture'.

One would obviously need more than an economic union to fight against the rapid globalization of culture occurring through the new communications technologies which were quickly turning the world into a global village. Culture, and more particularly theatre, were eventually looked to as forces to change the world. The rise of the developing countries in the 1950s and the student movements that affected the western world in the 1960s (culminating in the May 1968 events in France) demanded a revision of everyone's image of the world. The blockade of Berlin in 1961 and the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 once again postponed hopes of developing a European culture. Has the dismantling of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany in 1990 given new cause for optimism? A cautious 'maybe' is the only answer.

The European idea of culture has itself long been based on a view which developed out of political and social changes which occurred from the 1750s onwards. The picture frame stage and proscenium arch theatre with its box sets – a far cry from the Greek or Elizabethan models – became the modern European model and found its way to most parts of the world. It was to be illustrative, decorative and illusionistic. It clearly reflected the commercial values of a bourgeois society in which theatre could bring pleasure and entertainment through illusion while producing meaning to master the world at large. This new theatre, though, could also help define and disseminate social values and could become an ideological tool. The unrepenting romantic heroes could be used as negative or dangerous examples. Strangely enough a commonly shared idea emerged in Europe: theatre as a socially relevant art, even though relevant didn't mean the same for conservatives and revolutionaries, reformists and radicals. Against the all-encroaching influence of commercialism and cosmopolitanism, a feeling of revolt developed across western Europe between the 1880s and 1914: Antoine's Théâtre Libre (1887); the Freie Bühne and the Volksbühne movements in Germany; versions of the same idea in Norway and the Netherlands; the Irish Literary Movement. Theatre began to develop new ethical values, European values, which could incorporate new relationships between artists and audiences, European and non-European cultures. Theatre became the place to discuss the fate of humanity, its relationship to its time.

In half a century, however, from 1900 to 1950, the proscenium arch, the decorative box set and the well-made play gave way to experiments in which fragmentation and a whole new approach to stage and theatre design came alive. Theatre became a place where historical/chronological time could take on universal/technological time, where the backlash from various acculturation attempts would welcome other forms of theatre from other parts of the world. Theatre would now help bring down political barriers.

Gémier's idea of a Universal Society of Theatre came true in a sense with the creation of the Theatre of Nations Festival in 1954. For the next fifteen years it was to be one of the only points of contact between eastern European, western European and world theatre cultures.

Beginning in the early 1900s, but mainly from 1945, most European states began devising cultural policies to ensure that theatre was available, as the Dutch say, 'vertically and horizontally', that is, to all classes of society in every part of each country. The French decentralization movement was one among many of the same kind.

The question of state funding also became a major issue: should money come from the central government, from regional or county government sources or from municipalities? The question was asked, in western Europe at least, to make sure that theatre culture did not become state culture. The question of profits from aesthetic activity was also hotly debated. On this question the United Kingdom struck a delicate balance between private and public funding, between artistic and administrative management of the new cultural facilities that would soon be built.

André Malraux, the first French Minister for Cultural Affairs, in a famous speech in 1966 written for the formal opening of the Maison de la Culture in Amiens, said that he regretted that France could not follow the remarkable model of the Soviet Union in its organization of theatre and art, stopping short, of course, of mentioning its indoctrinational and censorship aspects.

A vast movement of theatre reconstruction

and building swept away the ruins of World War II. Multipurpose buildings with more than one stage – discarding the proscenium arch, the velvet curtain and horseshoe auditorium – brought audiences into better contact with the stage. Many were built by architects of fame using the Bauhaus ideal. The result was a series of huge palaces of brutal concrete with state-of-the-art technologies for sound, lighting and moving sets, not basically different from the much derided Soviet Palaces of Culture. Ironically, many of the artists turned to other types of spaces. By the 1970s, new theatre was being performed in such old churches, factories and warehouses (the Théâtre du Soleil in Paris or the Kampnagel site in Hamburg are telling examples).

This new theatre can be traced back to the intimate theatre of Strindberg, and the idea swept all over Europe. It became a way to experiment, away from mainstream art or its commercialized version – a way to bring down walls again. The development of theatre for young audiences and puppetry in the 1960s showed that theatre was definitely a socially relevant art.

Taking the optimistic broader perspective, it does seem that walls have been coming down between countries, classes and genres, from opera to dance; styles of productions, from the elaborate performances of both commercial and publicly funded theatre to the rich minimalism of Brecht and experimental forms; between acting practices, performers and audiences. The spectacular development of theatre training has brought amateur and professional actors closer and improved the social status of the acting profession.

Finally, looking at a century of theatre-making, a repertoire has evolved which can tell us much about theatre in western Europe at the end of the twentieth century. What we find on these stages are, first of all, the classics of world (generally meaning European) drama. Greek tragedy has long been a good test of changes in outlook and taste for both creators and audiences. We also find Shakespeare and the Elizabethan drama more so than Spanish drama of the golden age). There are Goldoni, Büchner and Kleist and what can be called the European national classics (Molière for one but very little Corneille, Racine or Hugo). We find Goethe; the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century classics – Chekhov, Ibsen, Strindberg, Hauptmann, Gorki, Synge, Shaw, Wilde and O'Casey; contemporary classics such as Claudel, Giraudoux, Sartre, Anouilh, Ghelderode, Genet, García Lorca, Valle-Inclán, Alberti and of course Pirandello, Brecht, Beckett and Ionesco.

Strangely enough, dramatists from eastern Europe like Molnar, and, to a lesser extent, Kohout, Mrożek, Havel, Babel and Bulgakov have been performed because they were socio-political critics of their own countries; Gombrowicz and Witkiewicz are also there. Only recently have important contemporary dramatists from the USSR like Erdman, Vampilov, Svarts and Slavkine been performed.

The contemporary dramatists that one can find performed in almost every western European country today include Frisch, Dürrenmatt, Zuckmayer, Schnitzler, Strauss, Bernhard, Kroetz, Dorst, Grass, Brasch, Fassbinder, Handke, Heiner Müller, Harald Mueller, M. Walser, Hein, Pinter, Bond, Arden, Enquist, Noren, Arrabal, Koltés and Obaldia. Quite obviously, German language dramatists (Swiss, Austrian and German) are in a very strong position.

Of course repertoire does not mean dramatists alone but companies and directors like the Théâtre du Soleil, the Grand Magic Circus, the Pip Simmons Group, Carmelo Bene, Luca Ronconi, Giorgio Strehler, Stein, Langhoff and Karge, and Catalan groups like Els Comediants, Els Joglars and la Fura dels Baus.

The creation of the Théâtre de l'Europe in Paris in 1983 has helped to showcase more directors from other European countries than before, although festivals like Edinburgh and Avignon have been better artistic encounters for much longer. Of course international tours are part of the various repertoires too all over Europe and dance is often incorporated into theatre seasons.

In a state of permanent reappraisal and fighting against the commercial power of television, the boulevard theatres all across Europe, mainly with imports from the United States and musicals such as *Cats* and *Les Misérables*, are also trying to survive.

With cautious optimism then, it can be said that European theatre in the 1990s is helping to build bridges between divided communities, opening new vistas and creating new networks (like the Informal European Theatre Meeting). It is at long last bridging the gap between the Council of Europe view of European culture and a strictly EC view of culture. It is, in fact, interweaving all of Europe's various hierarchies. Theatre may yet prove to be Europe's most fascinating frontier.

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MUSIC THEATRE

There are many forms of music theatre to be seen in Europe today. They range from plays with music to music dramas, musical comedies, chamber operas, comic operas, chancel operas, operas bagatelle and even children's musicals. Since the early 1980s, large-scale pop and rock concerts and related genres have also become increasingly theatrical. Given such variety, one would imagine that precise definitions would abound. The fact is, in European and North American theatre – and in other cultures influenced by those theatres – the terms 'music theatre' and 'musical theatre' (including their German, French, Italian and Spanish equivalents) have a wide variety of meanings and usages. No precise terminology defining the genre has, in fact, emerged. We can note, though, that in central Europe since the middle of the twentieth century, the term 'music theatre' has grown in use and generally refers to works growing out of the European tradition of opera and operetta in which music is used to interpret and emphasize the dramatic action.

Given this tradition – and while acknowledging these multifaceted musical forms – it should not be viewed as an exaggerated emphasis if we move opera here to the foreground of 'music theatre'. Traditional opera is itself both a musical and a theatrical genre as well as being exemplary for aesthetic and historical questions. It is also one of the greatest and most specialized achievements of European culture, invented in Europe and conveyed to the world from there.

This point of view is supported by the development of music theatre that we encounter in Europe since the end of World War II. The existence and survival of the 'musical' certainly connects to the basic form and inner structure of opera. The fact is, the *form* has been open to the influence and penetration of new developments since the sixteenth century; however, it also frequently resisted, indeed actively opposed, new developments at various points in its history.

Opera *practice*, on the other hand, recognized different opinions. It interpreted, explained and ultimately understood new works in their relation to earlier works. The opera displayed an especially impressive synthesis of various types of art. As well, it combined plot with both musical and spiritual abstraction, a combination which went beyond linguistic and national boundaries. It also contained within its form many individual forms of very diverse types. These might be just a few of the reasons why Baroque opera had such an enormous success (beginning primarily in Italy and Spain). One speaks here theoretically, but it was certainly far ahead of its time in historical terms.

In any event, it is possible to see from this that in whatever way a new musical stage-work presents itself, it is (be it in contrast or conformity) a part of the 'heritage' accumulated over four centuries which forms an inventory of works that can still be performed today. All are, of course, subject to varying traditions, rooted in fundamental musical and stage principles which in turn play a role in the specific development of the art. For example, the space in which the work is performed moved early on from the festive halls of the aristocracy to architecturally independent buildings, buildings which remain virtually unchanged today. A curtain still often separates the stage and auditorium and, between them, the orchestra. The proportions of the ground plan of both spaces correspond to those of the space above them. Together with the proscenium they are the main elements in the acoustics of the space.

Or take another example that even more

clearly establishes the relationship between the artistic and the organizational – the location of the conductor. It was an expression of the vocal soloist's superiority in opera that the conductor stood directly in front of the stage. In this way the singers saw the conductor most clearly, while the orchestra had to make do with a spatial relationship that corresponded more to the conductor's place in Wagner.

At the same time, the number of instruments grew and individual instruments became more independent. Thus they could bring to the eighteenth century – which had a considerably different understanding of the relationship between speech, song and acting – their own dowry of instrumental and thematic independence. When this was done it became not so much a change in dominance as a new partnership of equals – orchestra, auditorium and stage. Again, at this moment, opera moved forward. One can view nineteenth-century attempts by the instrumental groups to attain their own clarity and precision as similar to that of libretto seeking to approach spoken drama more closely.

Turning to musical stage-works created between the 1930s and the early 1960s, we see the situation change again: now the 'opera', or whatever the new work may be called, draws the instrumentation to itself. And it does so through an approach linked much more to later developments in chamber and ensemble music. In this instance, the stage action does not make use of either symphonic-theatrical or symphonic-chamber elements as interpretational but rather as an instrumental collective forming its own thoughts, creating its own themes much more independently and setting them down almost contrapuntally. In this way, they escape the holds of plot and the traditional musical-theatrical foundation.

The development of such an 'instrumental theatre' has led to the renunciation of plot, character development and even motivation in many instances. In their place have come attempts (mostly short ones), offering not only a more anecdotal form but also texts that deal with everyday issues. Authors and audiences quickly developed their interest in such stage realism. To that point, opera enthusiasts had favoured abstraction and fantasy but from then on, its authors led them into new approaches and much more contemporary themes. The medium was frequently chamber opera which was, if nothing else, certainly less expensive than full-scale productions. Through such works, the repertoire was renewed.

Today we can find side by side in the same theatre classical works like Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and modern works by Richard Strauss and Carl Orff; the many forms of music theatre exist almost as foils to one another. Each has its own ever-changing compositional vocabulary. Here, knowledge of structure not only is useful with respect to the many music theatre forms but at the same time allows one to see more easily the 'classical' connection.

The social function of these various forms of opera – both in the past and the present – connects to this as well. Classical opera was invented as a courtly entertainment and is still used in this way today by states and in diplomacy. In Europe it took, and continues to take, a leading role in the promotion of culture generally. Under dictatorships such sponsorship was carried out especially intensively because it was seen as supportive of particular governments. Opera was seen as carrying forward spiritual leadership and strength. There exists in this respect, however, a great difference between the national operatic creations of a Smetana or a Dvořák on the one hand and those of a Verdi or a Puccini on the other. The former aimed for artistic and spiritual independence of both people and countries. Thematically they used legendary heroes as well as real historical occurrences.

As for the latter, Verdi came to the view that longer subjects were required to develop theatrical possibilities fully if they were truly to move hearts and confirm social and public ideas. He wanted to build bridges to contemporary listeners by allowing them to make social and human connections. This development (now accepted as traditional) also forms a practical aesthetic and continues to connect to the development of the European and North American musical stage even in the 1990s. In this sense, opera and its still growing side genres, not only is maintaining its moral task, but also is still committed to such traditional elements as libretto, music, staging and, last but not least, artistic organization.

Of course, it is no coincidence that in the construction of late-twentieth-century cultural centres, there remains a not-so-subtle political and propagandist message aimed at forming ideological bonds between those who attend both large- and small-scale musical events. Aside from an interest in the music, they also

offer a chance for everyone to dress up and be seen, especially when admission prices were – as in the immediate post-war years – not so high.

The allegorical side – regularly utilized in earlier times – had as its task the imprinting on to a people of national symbols relating to happiness and freedom, victory and the essential goodness of humanity. It was no different from the tournaments and processions by which seventeenth- and eighteenth-century rulers sought to inculcate these same feelings and thoughts in their people.

Opera and its later developments also brought progress in the sphere of ideology which meant that plot and character had to link to the whole in the same way as did words and music. From the mid-nineteenth century, as connections to courts loosened, the form found new freedom. This change, in the German-speaking world especially, released imaginations to create a series of extraordinary works, from *The Magic Flute* to *Fidelio*. In Italy, the way was paved for the *opera buffa* and composers such as Rossini, Verdi and Puccini, the Italian stage composers who have – as can be seen in retrospect – remained at the very top of the bestseller list, not only in their time but also throughout the entire twentieth century. One need only mention the names of operas such as *The Barber of Seville*, *Rigoletto* or *La Bohème* to understand how familiar all of their major works are. These Italian stars were later complemented by Weber, Wagner and Strauss among many others all across Europe working in the form. The nineteenth century clearly developed both the national and the international opera repertoire.

From 1945 on, the form of musical theatre changed and continues to change. Chamber works grew in increasing numbers, partly because of budget constraints but also because of challenges by still newer forms. In the United States particularly, small opera groups became increasingly popular. In the 1950s, there were no fewer than 325 chamber opera premières in North America, mostly dealing with contemporary issues and ideas, and mostly done by student groups.

This may still be one of the qualitative differences between European and North American developments. In Europe, where there is no tradition of student or amateur work in this field (though there were attempts at creating amateur opera ensembles in the 1950s and 1960s in Bulgaria) such performances – with only piano or chamber accompaniment – would have produced head-shaking reactions.

Traditional European approaches to opera must be given their due. Certainly they have had their influence in many parts of the world – the Americas, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand to name just a few locales where opera was imported. But even then, opera was and still is presented only in a few of the major cities, cities perhaps in which art patrons, music lovers and the well-to-do with nostalgia for Europe managed to find enough money to build an opera house in the first place. And in some of these places, the form also changed. One could again speak of relationships to historic opera form, to features found in the traditional Italian *buffa* and the French *comique*. In this development, the United States again assumed a very dynamic, self-confident approach to both tradition and the development of newer forms including what has become known as the Broadway style of music theatre.

Suffice it to say here that these changes, supported by innumerable degree-granting university programmes in music, led to a situation in which young artists moved forward innovatively, without worry, yet with enough concentration so that the formalities of opera tradition became merely functional. In this sense, Europe fell behind. But in relation to the maintenance of tradition, European strengths can still be felt in the 1990s but perhaps with less conviction than they once possessed.

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Translated by Stephanie Gunther

DANCE THEATRE

The evolution of much of theatrical dance in Europe since the middle of the twentieth century can be characterized as a movement towards freedom. It was freedom conceived in various ways. One was as the liberty to say what one wanted to say, rather than what a cultural or political bureaucracy demanded be said. Quickly in some areas, more gradually in others, ethical and political restraints, which had narrowed the range of themes that dance could depict, were pushed away. Then there was liberty to move. Classical ballet technique had already been found inadequate to portray contemporary themes, but by mid-century even the then-accepted styles of modern dance were deemed insufficient. Further experiments were undertaken. In time, some choreographers found the exploration of newly discovered movements so absorbing in itself that they chose to reject subject matter altogether. They wanted only to devise movements that were interesting for their own sake.

The concept of the role of dance in the lives of people was changing also. For dance in eastern Europe, goals were dictated by the government, which meant that *Swan Lake* was acceptable because it was harmless, but new works had to exhibit proper, political content. In the west, a variety of aesthetic, ethical, social and political causes had been available, but entertainment took precedence. After World War II, artistic possibilities burgeoned. Though less welcome in the east, the well of the tide could not be stopped. By the beginning of the 1990s nearly all of Europe was seething with new dance ideas that were bringing larger, more diversified audiences into the theatres. And choreographers were ready to serve diversified tastes.

In most European countries, ballet groups had long held a secure but minor position in opera houses. Now ambitious choreographers wanted more. Restless with merely providing a few divertissements while the singers caught their breath, dancers started to form small companies of their own which could play in smaller houses to audiences eager to see something out of the ordinary. Many such groups were born and died, but a number lived on, not only in the major cities. Some, notably that of Pina Bausch in Germany, even acquired such status as to take over opera houses, without foregoing their experimental character.

The newly independent companies presented a wide variety of dance styles. In the early years of the century, new kinds of movement had begun to develop in Europe out of the innovations of Rudolf Laban and Mary Wigman, whose work was continued by teachers in Britain, Estonia, Germany and Yugoslavia. After World War II, American companies, exhibiting a variety of styles, began to tour Europe and their influence was soon felt. But European choreographers worked out their own versions of the American idea of 'moving from the inside out', of starting with feeling and then finding the most appropriate physical form to communicate it. What resulted was not merely imitative; it was creative.

The first and most powerful American influence was that of Martha Graham. While her success in Europe was not immediate, the establishment of the London School of Contemporary Dance in 1966 marked a turning point for the acceptance of her technique and the capacity of her ideas to inspire young choreographers. Also in the 1960s, European visits by the companies of Merce Cunningham and Alwin Nikolais stimulated fresh developments.

As early as 1975 Richard Alston broke from the London School of Contemporary Dance to form his own company, Strider. By the 1980s Carolyn Carlson and Viola Farber, from the Nikolais and Cunningham groups respectively, had trained dancers who went on to form their own branches in cities throughout France. Among those who followed, Jean-Claude Gallotta and Maguy Marin, most notably, evolved markedly individual styles.

From the beginning of the century, new techniques had developed in response to the need to depict new subjects. Contemporary life could not be well represented by the polite, restrained carriage of classical ballet. Rather, it demanded a taut, sometimes tormented, sometimes aggressive body that had to contend with a world pervaded by tensions. Graham had called it 'nervous, sharp, and zigzag', and the new techniques reflected those qualities. Even when the subject was not explicitly contemporary, dance movements became more incisive, more angular than rounded, more struggling with the pull of gravity than happily defying it.

The trend was not limited to companies oriented to the modern dance nor to works dealing with contemporary issues. The Soviet Union demanded productions that condemned cruel czars while they praised the revolution. In Russia, Yuri Grigorovich's *Ivan the Terrible* (1975) berated the monarch with strong, vigorous movements. In Belgium the works of Maurice Béjart, like his *Messe pour le temps présent* (1967) blended strong, dynamic movement, elaborate spectacle and mysticism. In Estonia, Mai Murdmaa's rendition of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1991) used innovative movement to stress the emotional tension of the protagonist's struggle.

News about interesting premières spread quickly, and a number of choreographers staged works for groups in other countries. While this had been happening for many years, the scale was now quite unprecedented. Especially notable were the works created by Juri Kilián and Hans van Manen in the Netherlands that entered the repertoires of US companies. Dominating the move from the United States to Europe were the works of George Balanchine for whom a special trust was established to ensure that the requesting company was capable of performing the ballet and that it would be staged by someone who knew and respected not only the steps but also the spirit of the choreography. Works from the repertoire of modern dance moved more slowly, but an important step was taken in 1990 when the José Limón company staged his *There is a Time* for the Mussorgsky Theatre in Leningrad.

The number of companies featuring mixed repertoires grew throughout this period. Typical was Alterballetto, which was established in the Bologna region of Italy in 1977. With Amedeo Amodio as artistic director, the repertoire also featured works by foreigners including the Americans William Forsythe and Glen Tetley. In Romania, Fantasio was founded in Constanta in 1979. The company performed classics like *The Nutcracker* along with original works by its director Oleg Danovski, who provided ballets on national themes, like *Vox Maris* to the music of Georges Enesco, and modern works, like *Study* to the music of Pink Floyd. Also in 1979, Iván Markó took over the Györ Ballet in Hungary, often choreographing to music by Hungarian composers such as Béla Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin* (1981).

Other companies were formed specifically to feature modern works. One was the Polish Dance Theatre in Poznań, founded in 1973 by Conrad Drzewiecki as a showcase for new choreography, often staged to music by contemporary composers. Another was the Contemporary Dance Theatre of Rome, founded in 1977 by Elsa Piperno, who was familiar with the Graham technique. A number of such private groups in various countries also featured ballets based on national folk themes. Companies specifically devoted to folk dance also flourished, especially in eastern Europe.

Many traditional ballet companies continued to perform the classics, while also commissioning new works. Germany, in particular, was able to do this extensively, since its many municipal theatres kept permanent ballet ensembles. Both native and foreign choreographers profited from this arrangement which made possible some worthy productions of ballets by John Cranko and John Neumeier.

So the classics survived, though often with changes geared to the tastes of a modern audience. *The Sleeping Beauty* was shortened, as lengthy passages of pantomime were deleted. After all, the viewers already knew the story and would be bored by its reiteration. Other variations involved changing the era or the setting of the story, an approach already used by opera directors. More drastic was Mats Ek's Swedish *Giselle* (1982) where in the second act the heroine's spirit dances, not in a moonlit grove, but in an insane asylum.

In other cases, however, important ballets

from the past were carefully preserved – or attempts were made to preserve them, since prior to the work of Laban no efficient system of dance notation existed. Still, for many years, person-to-person transmission kept some ballets almost consistently on view. The outstanding centre of such activity was Copenhagen where the nineteenth-century works of August Bournonville remained the proud possession of the Royal Danish Ballet. While some changes took place, special efforts were made to retain a distinctive style characterized by lightness and small, fast footwork. Along with its Bournonville heritage, the Royal Danish Ballet continued to commission new works from both native and foreign choreographers.

Other companies chose diverse paths in relating to their individual traditions. In Britain, London's Royal Ballet steered a largely faithful course, honouring the classical tradition created by Frederick Ashton. But Ballet Rambert was transformed into a modern dance company. One country that had chosen a distinctive identity all along was Spain, which continued to build on its remarkable styles of *flamenco* and *bolero*. Only in 1978 was a national ballet company finally established in Madrid. After all, in this time any country was free to establish its own dance identity, whether by preserving its past, or refining it, or discarding it in favour of some fresh, untried – possibly dangerous, but exciting – new path.

One rather new path that a number of European countries chose to embark on was that of dance publication. In the past half century the publication of dance books has multiplied, and many dance journals have come into existence. Their variety is now considerable. There are how-to books for the would-be ballet dancer or choreographer, biographies and histories, as well as books of criticism and dance analysis. Magazines range from the popular to the esoteric. Quality is equally varied. Within this period, dance scholarship has emerged as a viable discipline, its existence finally acknowledged with the formation of the European Association of Dance Historians in 1989.

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THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Theatre for young audiences as a specific form emerged in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century. Theatrical elements had been used for the education of young people centuries earlier, however, with school and Jesuit theatres attaining great significance in European theatre history during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These were performances by the pupils themselves intending to teach through impersonation. When staged for the public, they aimed at an audience of all ages. For in the large extended families of the time there was no distinction made between the lives of children and adults. So children as a matter of course were also members of the audience or participants in these theatre performances.

It was only when industrialization created a more bourgeois family unit, that the roles and way of life between the generations started to change. For children and adolescents, learning became the dominant occupation and school became the central means of attaining the no longer immediately accessible world of adults. A new literature for children and young people began to develop and finally a professional theatre for young audiences.

The staging of special performances for children and their parents initially had a purely commercial motivation. Theatres were traditionally poorly attended in the weeks before Christmas; in the late nineteenth century some enterprising theatre managers discovered that they could fill them with productions for children. Because suitable plays for young audiences did not yet exist, theatre managers simply created performances out of selections from the existing adult repertoire.

In Britain, the Christmas pantomime developed out of pantomime generally along with elements of the music hall and the burlesque; in the German-speaking countries, children's shows grew from Christmas fairytales, folk tales, children's ballets, the Parisian *féerie* and Viennese magic tricks. While the moralistic messages of these plays provided edification for young people, elaborate scenery, music and dance – usually without a real connection to the action – provided simple entertainment. Such Christmas performances spread very rapidly and remained the primary form of professional theatre for young audiences until late into the twentieth century.

At the turn of the century, the form began to be sharply criticized, particularly by those advocating reforms in teaching. But real change did not occur until reforms were initiated by socialists after World War I leading to the first state theatre for children being established in Hungary in 1919. Among its creators were composers Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály and literary critics György Lukács and Béla Balázs. In Czechoslovakia, Miroslav Disman attempted to establish a similar institution in 1918. In Germany, attempts were associated with the names of Edwin Hoernle, Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht, though in these cases it was for a theatre primarily *with* children.

Only in Russia did the theoretical concepts lead to widespread implementation. Already in 1918, the People's Commissar for Education, Anatoly Vaslievich Lunacharski, presented a comprehensive 'children's theatre programme' which, among other things, called for the founding of professional theatres specifically

aimed at young audiences. In 1920, the first state theatre for children was established in Moscow under the artistic direction of Henriette Pascar. The following year, the very young Natalia Satz (1903–93) founded the Moscow Theatre for Children and in the Ukrainian city of Kharkov, a state Theatre for Young Audiences was founded. In 1922, Alexander A. Briantzov founded the Theatre for Young Audiences in Petrograd. Satz, like Briantzov, saw her own work as a reflection of the new principles of education and creativity being espoused, an opportunity to give new focus to the countless children who had been neglected by war and revolution. For the youngest, they performed fairytales; for the slightly older, the Moscow theatre included plays with more contemporary topics. The Petrograd theatre also included plays based on themes from world literature (*Tom Sawyer*, *Til Ulenspiegel*, *Don Quixote*), as well as adaptations of classical works.

The Soviet models had significant influence across Europe. Professional theatres for young audiences following the Moscow prototype were established in Prague in 1934 and in Istanbul in 1935. In Glasgow, the Scottish Children's Theatre of Bertha Waddell emerged in 1925 and continued to operate as a touring company for decades. In Belgrade, Rodino Poriste was founded in 1938 by the dramatist Branislav Nušić, while in Zagreb, Djecje Carstvo was founded by the famous actor and director Tito Strozzi. From 1928 on, many companies formed in the Netherlands, the most significant being the Nederlands Theatre, formed in 1936. In France it was Léon Chancerel who, with his Théâtre de l'Oncle Sebastien, performed for children in the style of *commedia dell'arte* from 1929 on. In Portugal, Italy, Iceland, Spain and Sweden – though specific theatres were not established in the pre-war years – regular performances nevertheless took place for young audiences as they did in Austria (Theater der Jugend), in Denmark (Dansk Skoloscenen) and other countries, with student theatregoers paying next to nothing to get in following the precedent set by British groups. In countries such as Poland, Greece and Turkey – with long traditions in puppetry – children's theatre grew around that form as well.

World War II interrupted this development; it was only after the war that most companies could again operate. But as European politics were split into two camps after the war, theatre for young audiences also began to develop along entirely different paths. In western, southern and northern Europe, theatre artists simply took up again the type of work that had been so violently interrupted in 1939. In Belgium it was the Koninklijk Jeugdtheater Antwerpen, the largest such western European theatre; in the Netherlands it was the Scapino-Ballett of Hans Snoek, while in Britain many new groups formed doing what began to be called theatre-in-education. The fact is, though the adult theatre in western Europe grew and changed, theatre for young audiences remained almost the same as before the war.

Those under Soviet influence developed quite differently. In eastern European capitals and large industrial cities, state professional theatres for children and young people were established, technically and financially endowed as adult theatres, again following the Soviet prototype: from 1944 in Bulgaria, 1945 in Poland and Czechoslovakia, 1946 in the German Democratic Republic, 1950 in Yugoslavia and 1951 in Romania. Other theatres also received a mandate to open to young audiences. Where national traditions existed, they tied into *them*; where such traditions were not followed, Soviet plays were used as examples to create their own plays. Besides adaptations of folktales for very young audiences, plays with contemporary and historical subjects as well as dramatizations of classics were created. In addition, classic plays from each nation's own literature were brought into the repertoire.

Because of the structural and ideological similarities of theatres in countries which had been declared socialist, contacts grew between the various states from the end of the 1950s (there were, of course, similar contacts among the western European groups). This was to prove especially important for the exchange of experiences and developing new repertoire. In spite of their work, however, these youth theatres had great difficulty being recognized artistically. Too many performances were simply illustrations of ideology or pedagogical messages which, even in the eyes of their producers, had only negligible artistic worth.

In the early 1960s, contact between east and west was re-established and the founding of a world children's theatre organization discussed for the first time. At international children's theatre festivals in London and Venice in 1964, groups met, a constitution was outlined and on 7 June 1965, in Paris, the founding convention of the Association internationale du théâtre pour l'enfance et la jeunesse (ASSITEJ) was

created under the direction of Léon Chancerel. Representatives of twenty-five European and North American states became charter members. Among those present were, besides Chancerel, Rose-Marie Moudoues, the Czech Vladimir Adamek, Gerald Tyler from Britain and Sara Spencer from the USA. The goal was an organization dedicated to supporting 'a theatre for children and youth at the highest artistic levels'. Structures were established and a series of national centres was set up, centres which would guarantee cooperation without limitations. At the same time, the constitution closed membership to amateur groups or groups in which children or young people themselves performed. No one at that time suspected – or even had grounds to hope – that international cooperation and global diffusion of theatre for young audiences had begun.

Following the politicization of the west that began in the mid-1960s and which became known in Europe as the Student Movement after the May 1968 riots in Paris, the question of society's responsibility to its children came into sharper focus. State-school programmes could not be quickly altered but the theatre, going beyond institutional structures, could be more closely connected to its audience's realities. Young intellectuals – teachers, psychologists, sociologists and, of course, artists – embraced the notion of free groups and worked, mostly collectively, for audiences of young people. These plays were often set in classrooms, playgrounds or streets. Often they dramatized examples of daily repression by those in control of politics and society, as well as in the workings of school and family.

Unemployment and environmental pollution, hostility toward foreigners, sexual enlightenment and forced sexual stereotyping were other key themes. Both realistic and emancipatory, as some of its creators named it, this theatre sought to help children and young people to understand real-life situations and encouraged them to surmount problems and alter the world. The young people in these plays were always the victors and would make allies of those adults who supported them. The West Berlin Grips-Theater with its managing director and most important author, Volker Ludwig, would become perhaps the best known representative of the theatres attempting to stimulate the social visions of audiences with wit and nerve. Even today, Grips's plays are performed in many parts of the world.

Nearly all the theatres for young audiences that began after 1968 in western Europe – literally hundreds – had similar themes and goals. Most, though, existed only for a short time and rarely had permanent companies or spaces. Those in France (like Maurice Yendt's Théâtre des Jeunes Années), Italy (Carlo Formigoni's Teatro del Sole), Portugal (João Brites's Teatro o Bando) and Sweden (Suzanne Osten's Unga Klara) also began to develop alternative performance methods. Interest also began to grow among authors. Fantastic and symbolic styles were employed and later clowns and nonsense plays inundated the stages.

The generation of 1968 had become professionals and with their collective visions of a social utopia fading, the family itself became a subject for examination. As Alice Miller wrote, 'the first and worst damage a child can suffer is in the family'. But through Bruno Bettelheim it was also learned that folktales contained both pictures and symbols that corresponded to the often unknown inner reality of the child and these could establish help and courage for them. Thus was the fairytale rediscovered from the annual Christmas shows in the adult theatres. When it returned to use by theatres for young audiences, it was in a new form whose aim was to release children from their anxieties. In Sweden and Italy, this new exploration of fairytales was even rooted in existential approaches to children's fears of weakness, authority, sexuality, loneliness and death, using scripts from ancient Greece to today.

The changes begun in 1968 in so many western European children's theatres remained for a long time without any noticeable influence on eastern Europe. It was, of course, seen in eastern Europe in festivals and ASSITEJ activities. What was also seen were the obvious differences between the large and stately dramatic theatres for young audiences of the east with their well-trained artists (in the Soviet Union alone there were well over fifty such stages including a music theatre for children since 1965) and the small, barely subsisting, struggling free groups of the west. Nevertheless, during this time, while a self-chosen educational mandate was still the central theme for the western European companies, the theatre in eastern Europe was finally beginning to free itself from its ideological and pedagogical fetters and was beginning to make artistic criteria the guiding principle of its work.

Because it was still not permitted to question authority, western plays could not be used as models. Other approaches would have to be

found. Inspired by the example of the Soviet writer Yevgeny Svarts, a number of authors turned again to folk forms, making clear the modern analogies. Or they created their own fairytales and parables. Thus the theatre managed to keep alive the old traditions, revealing folktales as genuine classics for children's theatre, always being able to interpret them in new ways.

As well, music and dance works for children were created along with pantomime and mixed forms (often actors and marionettes). Especially brave experiments were done by small companies in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, experiments which were carefully observed by cultural authorities. That their influence on other socialist countries was only minimal was clearly due to political reasons but it was also in part due to the theatre buildings themselves with their traditional picture frame stages which limited experimentation. But slowly, such influences were felt especially when rehearsal spaces were converted to performance spaces and new theatrical methods and even texts of western European origin could be staged. One could see this process throughout the 1980s.

What effect political changes since the beginning of the 1990s will have on theatre for young audiences is not yet known. There is little hope that one will see the bringing together of the best of the two systems. Rather, the economic recession facing Europe in the first half of the 1990s and militant nationalism have caused many to believe that the financially cheaper western model will dominate.

The fact is, young people have no strong lobby anywhere on this planet which as a report issued in 1991 by the Club of Rome says, 'we seem openly determined to destroy'. Since the early 1980s, European theatre for young audiences has had an artistic variety and strength never before seen.

In the end, theatre for young audiences has been and continues to be a theatre of feeling and fantasy, a theatre that speaks most of all to the senses. And it is a theatre that from the beginning reached young people from all social levels. In this sense it has also been a folk theatre. All these qualities have made it increasingly interesting for adult audiences, not simply those parents and teachers who accompany their children to the theatre. The creation of a folk theatre for all generations, a folk theatre which has never given up its specificity as a theatre for young people, that is the achievement of theatre for young audiences in Europe. This has been a very real achievement because both young people and adults live in a world that no longer allows any real separation between the generations.

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Translated by Varya Rubin

PUPPET THEATRE

In its long history European puppetry has developed various forms, and their synchronic existence today has become one of puppetry's characteristic features. For centuries, puppetry also connected to different genres including Medieval Mystery plays, *commedia dell'arte*, opera, variety, circus and melodrama, and was inspired as well by narrative forms including the popular tales of chivalry. The majority of these were adapted by puppeteers into folk styles utilizing such comic figures as Pulcinella, Polichinelle, Punch, Petrushka, Hanswurst, Kasper, Kašparek, Guignol, Tchantchès, Woltje, Cassandrino, Gianduja, Gerolamo and many others. Generally created as string-puppets or hand-puppets, very occasionally they became rod-puppets (*Hänneschen*) or even shadow-puppets (*karagöz*).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, avant-garde artists took a new interest in puppetry which resulted in the foundation of several serious puppet theatres by such artists as Paul Brann in Germany, Geza Blattner in Hungary, Vittorio Podrecca in Italy, Josef Skupa in Czechoslovakia and Sergei Obraztsov in the USSR. Paul Brann conceived his as a theatre based on stylized movement, his puppets taken as artificial actors. Geza Blattner experimented with materials and forms influenced by modern trends in plastic art. Vittorio Podrecca established a style for the puppet variety show and musical revue which gained great popularity, with some referring to his puppets as *Übermarionetten* after Edward Gordon Craig's notion.

Josef Skupa was also a master of the variety show, but his fame was mainly due to his invention of two contemporary comic figures, Spejbl and Hurvinek, who in their many sketches helped make fun of the foibles of the middle classes. Sergei Obraztsov, as a soloist, satirized traditional songs and Gypsy romances, mainly using hand-puppets. He was the first to use his bare hands as puppets with small balls on the forefinger. As the director of the Central State Puppet Theatre in Moscow from 1931 he created a unique and original theatre with a repertoire of fairytales, contemporary plays and satirical programmes using mainly rod-puppets operated to imitate human beings.

Despite the experiments of Blattner, it was the homogenous, imitative style of Brann and Obraztsov which prevailed. Obraztsov's influence especially grew after World War II, when his theatre began to tour all over the world. It was particularly influential in eastern Europe where new communist regimes were applying to puppet theatre their overall policies relating to the promotion of culture generally as derived and imported from the Soviet Union.

In the past, puppet theatres had primarily been the business of individuals and only rarely did they become the concern of larger groups. Traditionally, puppet companies were privately run and financially independent. During the early part of the twentieth century, however, social associations or municipal authorities began to offer support to certain groups. In the Soviet Union, immediately after the October Revolution, the new government went so far as to adopt a special policy to protect and support activities in the field, founding a network of state puppet theatres in the process. The focus was on the Central State Puppet Theatre in Moscow which retained prime responsibility for finding a new, progressive repertoire and for developing new means of expression for the art.

The idea of having one leading theatre in each country was also applied in the satellite countries though, as the Polish experience proves, not always successfully. Massive state support

nevertheless accelerated the development of puppetry in eastern Europe through the foundation of an extensive infrastructure (a system of schooling, puppet theatre criticism, publications, and so on).

In western Europe, another system of protection and support developed but more slowly and, in some cases, more surely: the granting of modest subsidies by state, municipal and regional authorities, in most cases through the funding of individual projects. This system has been increasing to the point where in the 1990s, in such countries as France, Italy, Spain and Germany, the majority of puppet players now enjoy its benefits.

As a direct result of the great differences between these two systems, enormous variations in concept and structure developed in the puppet theatres of eastern and western Europe. In the west, for example, companies are generally small (two to six people), have a base in a workshop or rehearsal room and perform on tour in schools, arts centres and only occasionally in theatres. Only a few have their own theatres. In eastern Europe, however, most puppet companies have their own buildings with auditoriums, workshops, administrators and, if needed, their own means of transport. The average eastern European puppet theatre numbers about sixty employees and the larger ones, such as the Central Puppet Theatre in Moscow, as many as 300.

These structural differences were most clearly seen when Obraztsov's theatre started to tour throughout Europe and during the first international puppet festivals which began to be held in the 1950s. It was there – in Bucharest and Braunschweig – that western puppetry was first confronted with that of the east. Western puppeteers would often present refined ideas – Yves Joly's *Paper Tragedy* from France and his variety show items with gloves and hands, for example. But the strongest impulses came from the east, especially in the creative works of Margareta Niculescu of Romania and Jan Wilkowski of Poland, who produced large-scale shows in 'regular' theatres.

The most modern productions showed a wide variety of different sorts of productions and styles. Nevertheless, the inclusion of traditional forms was significant: the English continued to perform the comedy of Punch and Judy; the Italians – Pulcinella; the Romanians – Vasilache; the Hungarians – Vitez Laszlo; the Belgians – Woltje and Tchantchès; and the French – Guignol and Lafleur. German hand-puppet and string-puppet companies were still using the figure of Kasper, although his function as a folk representative was replaced by his function as children's entertainer and adviser. In France and Belgium, the traditional theatre was still using rod-marionettes sized according to their positions in the social scale (the emperor being the tallest); similar – though heavier – rod-marionettes in Sicily continued to present the adventures of Charlemagne's paladins.

The existence of all these theatres, however, was threatened by a falling-off of audiences who were turning to cinema and television for their entertainment. But with the help of historians and folklorists, tourist associations and municipalities, many of the companies survived, including the two major European shadow forms – Turkish *karagöz* and Greek *Karagiozis*.

Stylistically, large numbers of companies saw puppetry in the years after World War II as a derivation of actors' theatre and tried to adhere to the principles of homogenous stage reality. Puppetry itself was marked by the form of the puppets used, starting from their construction and type (hand-puppets, string-puppets or rod-marionettes) and finishing with the style of sculpting which in some cases was strictly imitative – even when stylized – and in others based on caricature. Some puppet masters achieved extraordinary results: Max Jacob and Carl Schröder in Germany with their hand-puppets; John Wright with his figures for the Little Angel Marionette Theatre in England; and Germany's Harro Siegel in his performances with carefully carved marionettes. The old variety show style slowly transformed itself into solo marionette cabaret such as those of Albrecht Roser with his famous German clown, Gustaf, and Gustaf's 'Ensemble'. Roser's puppet skills were matched only by his unique sense of theatricality.

By the beginning of the 1950s, eastern European theatre was obliged by the state to follow socialist-realism as both an artistic and a propagandist style. As well, companies were told to use the Soviet repertoire. The death of Stalin in 1953, however, relaxed these strictures and opened a period of relative freedom. Thus, at the end of the 1950s, Niculescu, Wilkowski and other eastern European artists were able to abandon the obligatory style of dramatic imitation and to undertake a new poetic and 'theatrical' theatre. Niculescu and Wilkowski especially emphasized the theatricality of their productions by often stressing the actual process of creation, sometimes focusing on the metaphoric use of different means of expression.

Wilkowski also exploited folklore as a source of inspiration, leading him to his greatest achievement (*Zwyrtala the Musician*, 1958). This interest in folk themes was common to many eastern countries (for example, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania), because it served as an instrument for the introduction of young audiences to national themes.

More and more, young artists joined the new trends. In Bulgaria, puppeteers found other modern ways to use folklore in such productions as *Krali Marko* (1967). In Hungary, the unique State Puppet Theatre in Budapest explored folk motifs and musical repertoires using compositions by Bartók, Kodály and Stravinsky. In Sweden, Michael Meschke founded a large-scale theatre and produced shows based on famous works of world literature using varying means of expression (notably in *Ubu Roi*, 1965).

In the 1960s, puppetry experienced another artistic boom, again led by eastern Europe. In Poland each of the various puppet theatres competed in terms of originality and inventiveness. In Czechoslovakia, puppets were used to overcome officially imposed styles, first through the technique of 'black light theatre' and later utilizing live actors as part of the puppet stage composition. Right across Europe, the old masters, those still working in the imitative tradition, were being quickly outstripped by creators from the new generation. Even in the Soviet Union, Obraztsov's artistic monopoly was being broken by the Leningrad Bolshoi Puppet Theatre and later by theatres from the Baltic and Caucasus Soviet republics.

Craigian and Brechtian theories of theatre also influenced puppetry and were themselves creative and theatrical in just the ways that Craig and Brecht wanted. In many productions, puppeteers even abandoned the traditional puppet booths or screens to show themselves in action and step by step transformed themselves into performers. The formerly homogenous unity of setting and puppets was replaced by a heterogeneous scenic world of humans, puppets, masks and props. The puppet – considered as stage subject in the old theatre – now became an object or an instrument in the hands of the new 'players'. From this it was only a short step to the total atomization of the puppet as stage character, which from then on was often presented by a puppet *and* its manipulator along with a speaker or narrator. Thus the model of the ancient Japanese *bunraku* began to appear in European puppetry and developed in still different ways.

The new tendencies could be observed most strongly in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Polish Poznań Puppet Theatre experimented with unusual deployments of space and a variety of means including 'object theatre'. In Czechoslovakia in the 1970s a new company, Drak, from Hradec Kralove, became a leader in puppetry due to the internationally acclaimed productions of its director, Josef Krofta, who enriched the language of puppetry with poetic and metaphoric images. Generally, his actors were visible generators of stage action in which the puppets took their place among several means of expression. Krofta's productions also briefly touched the poetic in object theatre but soon abandoned it for puppets alone.

The eastern European theatres have always tended to work in repertory with each group producing three or four shows a year, many more than the average western European group, which usually produced a series of projects according to their creative ability and financial means. Each of the projects would often take two or three years to prepare. Among the exceptions were some of the British and German permanent theatres.

As for repertoire, the subjects were similar everywhere: fairytales, adaptations of modern poetry and children's novels. In some countries writers were commissioned to write specifically for puppet theatres and young audiences. In this way, dramaturgy of a special poetic value was born and developed in Bulgaria. For adults the puppet theatres performed plays from other sources: Sophocles, Molière, Shakespeare, Corneille, Goethe, Büchner, Maeterlinck, Jarry, Dürrenmatt, Mrożek, Witkiewicz, and many others. In general, though, much of the repertoire consisted of adaptations of popular world literature including Asian epic narratives such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabarata*.

Western European puppetry in the 1980s started to give priority to a more 'visual' theatre, limiting the inclusion of 'literary' drama and thus being keen to accept the novelty of 'object theatre'. The replacement of the puppet by everyday objects resulted from the apparently overwhelming need for novelty experienced by a majority of artists. Object theatre productions also tended to emphasize the creative action of the performer who, in full view of the audience, suggested the fictional life of the presented object which thus functioned as a stage

character. This kind of theatre was practised in many countries but became a specialty of French and Italian players. However, the appearance of object theatre did not put a stop to the existence of other forms of puppetry. All over Europe, in fact, a multimedia theatre flourished while France became famous for storytelling forms of theatre, visual theatre and what was known as material theatre. This last form achieved particular note in the productions of the Philippe Genty Company.

Spain continued to draw on the dramatic repertoire in the 1980s and also produced a 'visual' theatre in productions by La Claca. France and Italy also revived shadow theatre with special achievements by the Gioco Vita company from Piacenza. Germany tended to focus on object and material theatre. Scandinavian countries in their turn, showed sensitivity towards the visual/fine art aspects of puppetry.

Due to new social and financial support, western European puppetry grew and enriched its artistic potential at this time. It competed successfully with eastern European theatres which in the 1970s and 1980s seemed to lose their innovative dynamism, though the professional level of the performances remained high. Exceptions could be seen in the Soviet Siberian theatres and in some of the East German theatres which in the 1970s had developed their own styles based on the synergistic relationship between players and puppets (an exemplary production being Strindberg's *Miss Julie* by the Neubrandenburg Theatre).

The collapse of the Soviet political bloc greatly changed the financial situation for eastern Europe. The impoverished states and societies created in its wake were clearly not able to continue the policy of the communist governments, and puppet theatres, like all theatres, were facing major changes in the 1990s. It may well be that these countries will very soon be forced to apply the same support system practised for so long in western Europe.

Looked at as a whole and despite the previous division of Europe into two political blocs, European puppetry is in the 1990s a fairly unified whole and puppet artists have together experienced all the changes of their art from homogenous scenic reality to the modern stylistic of a 'theatrical' theatre with the process of creation itself as focus.

In part, this unity has been possible through the cooperation and frequent meetings of European puppeteers. In the period after World War II, the first such meeting was the Puppetry Week in Braunschweig (1957) and later the World Festival of Puppet Theatres in Bucharest (1958). The Bucharest Festival in particular had a tremendous impact on the development of puppet theatre. Repeated in the 1960s, very soon other festival initiatives joined them: in London, in Bielsko Biala (Poland), in Varna (Bulgaria) and in Cervia (Italy) among other cities. By the 1990s, most European countries were seeing several puppet festivals a year, with the most famous being that of Charleville-Mézières in France, which every three years gathered together more than a hundred companies from all over the world.

International activities in the 1990s are coordinated by an international association of puppeteers (Union Internationale de la Marionnette, UNIMA), founded in Prague in 1929. Every four years, UNIMA holds a congress, usually in Europe. UNIMA has national centres in virtually every European country and promotes the global development of puppetry, supports its various traditions, and organizes courses, conferences and festivals.

The successful development of puppetry has also become possible due to its growing infrastructure – puppetry training schools and publications. In western Europe, puppet centres – institutions supported by state or local authorities – maintain libraries, collect documentation, deliver information and organize exhibitions, courses, conferences and festivals. Again the best known is that in Charleville-Mézières, with its extensive programme of information, schooling and research activities.

The first regular school for puppet players and directors of puppet theatre was founded in 1952 in Prague as a department in the Academy of Art. It offered a diploma course at the university level. Later on, similar schools were founded in Poland, Bulgaria, East Germany and the Soviet Union. Professional training in western European countries was previously obtained only by means of courses or apprenticeships but in the 1970s departments of puppetry were founded in the Theatre Institute in Barcelona, in the Theatre School in Stuttgart, and in 1987 Charleville-Mézières opened a National Higher School of Puppetry. An agreement signed in 1990 by a majority of schools encouraged their close cooperation.

The first puppet journals in Europe were founded at the beginning of the twentieth century and after 1945 many of them were continued. Among the oldest is *Československý Loutkař* (*Czechoslovak Puppeteer*). Very soon

other magazines appeared, such as *Teatr Lalek* in Poland, *Marionnettes* in France, *Animations* in Britain. There are also important specialist magazines in Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands. In many countries, criticism of puppetry is now given space in general theatre journals.

Puppet theatre has been systematically researched in Europe since the nineteenth century. Today there are numerous publications which include studies of traditional puppetry, particular genres of puppet theatre, the history of puppetry both in specific countries and in Europe as a whole. There are also theoretical studies of puppet theatre including both its phenomenology and its semiotics.

Henryk Jurkowski
Warsaw

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THE NATIONS AND THEIR THEATRES

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ALBANIA

The smallest country on the Balkan Peninsula in southeastern Europe, Albania is 320 kilometres from north to south and about 100 kilometres east to west (28,750 square kilometres or 11,000 square miles). Bounded on the west by the Adriatic Sea and the Strait of Otranto, on the north and east by the republics of former Yugoslavia and by Greece on the south, Albania's population of 3.3 million is divided into two major groups which form 98 per cent of the country: the Gegs in the north and the Tosks in the south. Greeks, Vlachs, Serbs, Bulgars and Gypsies make up the remainder. Tirana, the capital and largest city, has a population of about 300,000.

Located on important east–west trade routes across the peninsula, the territory that is now Albania has been invaded over and over again going far back into ancient history. The Turks invaded the country in 1385 and held it, except for a short period in the fifteenth century, until early in the twentieth century. Albania declared its independence on 28 November 1912. In 1939, the Italian dictator Mussolini invaded and in 1943, the German army took over the country. At the end of World War II, a communist government headed by Enver Hoxha (1908–85) took control and maintained power until 1985. Until 1961, foreign aid came primarily from the Soviet Union; after that date, the country turned to China for support. Through the 1970s and 1980s, Albania isolated itself more and more in an effort to achieve a pure form of communism.

Albania's theatrical history actually dates back to the fourth century BC when the country was known as Illyria. Its theatrical roots can be found in such ancient cities as Apolonia, Hexal (Bylis in Illyrian times), Klos (Nikaia), Finiq (Foinik), Butrint (Buthrotum) and Dyrrachium among others. It was during the fourth century that a rich folk tradition developed in both theatre and other arts, a tradition which can be seen even today in the country's many dramatic forms.

Albania's modern theatre traces its roots to the last quarter of the nineteenth century – a period known as the National Albanian Renaissance – when the first Albanian drama was written and produced, *Dasma e Lunxhërisë* (*The Wedding of Lunxheria*, 1874) by Koto Hoxhi (1824–95). Later, Leonardo de Martino's (1830–1923) *Christmas Eve* was produced (1879). This movement also saw Shakespeare's works produced for the first time in the country – *Othello* in 1889 in the city of Korça.

Politically, throughout this period, a national independence movement grew both inside and outside the country and a large number of nationalistic theatre clubs – all of them amateur – were established. Among the major Albanian plays produced at this time were *Besa* (*The Given Word*, 1875) by Sami Frashëri (1850–1904); *Emira* (1883–4) by Anton Santori (1850–94); and *Vdekja e Pirros* (*The Death of Pirro*, 1906) by Mihal Grameno (1871–1931).

When national independence was finally achieved in 1912, the country's theatres began an even more active period of artistic development, creating as well a number of national artistic theatrical associations including Atdheu (Homeland) and Bashkimi (Unity). The most influential of the companies at this time were the Association of Fine Arts in Korça and the Bogdani Theatre in Shkodra. Though the plays produced by these groups tended to be historical in nature, they also dealt critically with social and political problems of the period.

In the 1920s and 1930s, tragedies on mythological themes by Ethem Haxhiademi (1902–67), plays on national motifs by Gjergj Fishta (1871–1940) and short comedies on social themes by Kristo Floqi (1876–1949) enriched the tradition of Albanian dramaturgy with new artistic ideas and structures.

Although lacking technical means, schooling and financial support and disregarded by government and the wealthy, the theatre itself was distinguished at this time by its passion, critical sense and true-to-life spirit. Its ideal was social emancipation and national identity.

By the 1930s, however, social criticism had almost entirely disappeared from Albania's theatres due to the generally conservative nature of the government. In place of these earlier plays came a dramatic literature that, at its best, was allegorical and, at its least interesting, was both sentimental and melodramatic.

Under Italian occupation, a new National Liberation Movement developed as well as a Partisan Theatre Movement which was at its height between 1941 and 1945. The partisan theatres operated not only in the cities but also in the mountains among units of the National Liberation Army and even in prisons. Lacking scripts which could deal with the issues at hand, the partisan theatres turned to improvised musical sketches which were usually satirical in nature. As the war went on, more literary dramas began to be included as well. Yet even in the written plays, the movement remained essentially a political theatre, agitational as well as romantic.

By 1944, the fascists were losing control and the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Committee held a congress in the city of Përmeti. Among other things, it decided to formally recognize the Central Theatre in the capital city, Tirana, as the country's first 'professional' theatre and as Albania's National Theatre. On 25 May 1945, the Central Theatre was formally renamed the State Professional Theatre; in 1947, the name was changed again to the Teatri Popullor (People's Theatre). In 1989 the company formally became the Teatri Kombëtar (National Theatre).

Other groups were given similar professional recognition by the state after 1947 and over the next decade ten more professional dramatic theatres and another fifteen variety theatres (*estrada*) were set up across the country. As professional companies, these groups began to upgrade their performance skills. Though many approaches were examined, the most important were those of the Russian director and teacher, Konstantin Stanislavski.

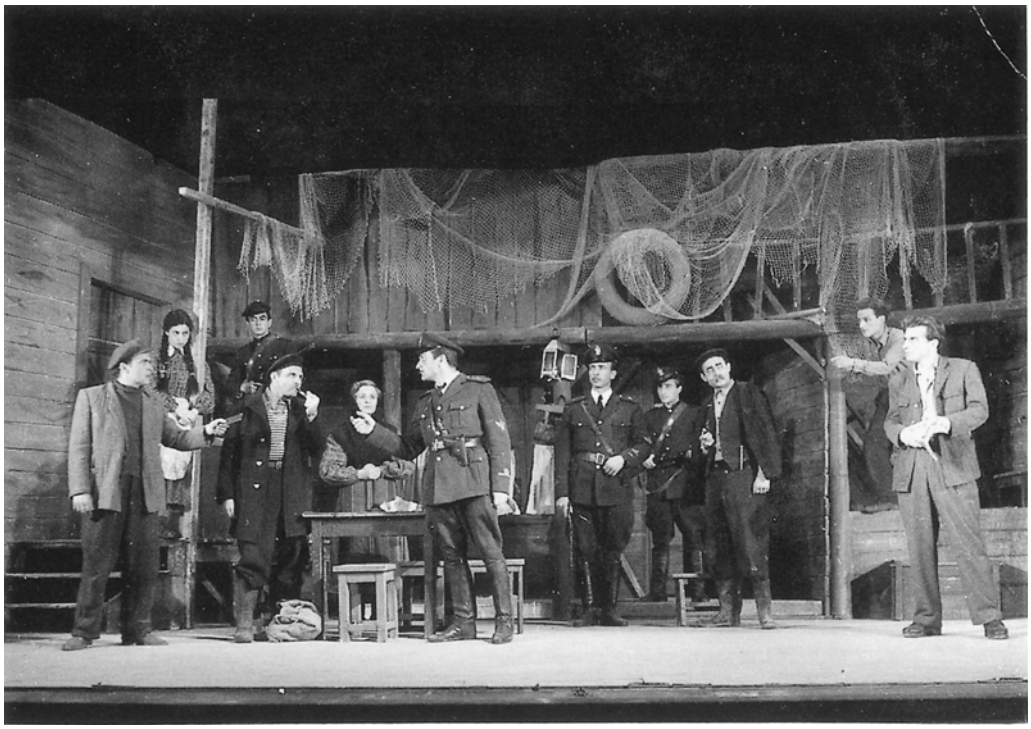
Dramaturgy too developed significantly during the 1950s as did opera and ballet. For the first time, major works from the European repertoire were seen in Albania performed by Albanian professionals. A number of important dramas by Albanian dramatists also began to be included in the repertoire, among them *Toka jonë* (*Our Land*, 1954) and *Halili dhe Hajria* (*Halili and Hajria*, 1952) by Kol Jakova (b. 1916), and *Familja e Peshkatarit* (*The Fisherman's Family*, 1955) by Sulejman Pitarka (b. 1923).

During the 1960s and 1970s, government theatrical policy made national dramatic literature a priority and the production of foreign plays was significantly reduced. What the Albanian theatre may have lost at this point in external ideas, it made up in enriching the national dramatic tradition, raising the level of dramatic writing and consolidating what can be called the Albanian theatrical style.

By the 1980s, policies changed again and European and other works from the world repertoire once more found a place on the national stages and a more balanced ratio of national and international works was seen. During this decade, the national theatres began taking risks once again, presenting a wide range of works dealing with major issues of the time. Productions focused particularly on the relationship between individuals and society at large, depicting most often the lives of simple working people and the struggles they faced each day.

Of interest here is the fact that the official theatres very often reflected one view of society – usually an optimistic one – while many others, including the variety theatres, reflected a very different view, a more cynical one. At times this dichotomy could be seen almost as stemming from different aesthetic principles, dialectical in their varying approaches. Each was influenced in turn by national economic, social and political changes. Despite these philosophical differences, however, Albanian theatre artists as a whole tended to remain loyal to realism through the 1980s and generally rejected experiments in form as well as what might be called the dramaturgy of paradox.

In the 1990s, Albanian theatre aimed once more at linking with and mastering the many developments in world theatre – in terms of both styles and schools – of which it was deprived under the long period of communist censorship which had ended as the decade began.



Pandi Stillu's 1955 People's Theatre production of Sulejman Pitarka's *The Fisherman's Family,* designed by Hysen Devolli.
Photo: Teatri Popullor Archive.

Structure of the National Theatre Community

In Albania in 1992, twenty-eight different professional theatrical groups existed – ten dramatic companies, fifteen variety groups, an opera-ballet troupe, a circus, and a puppet company. There were also ten smaller puppet companies. The largest concentration was in Tirana. This city alone boasted the Teatri Kombëtar, the Teatri i Operas dhe Baletit (Opera and Ballet Theatre), two variety theatres (Estrada and Estrada Ushtarit) and the Teatri i Kukullave (Puppet Theatre).

Through the early 1990s, all professional theatres in the country were completely state supported and operated in similar ways.

The largest company is the Opera and Ballet Theatre with over 400 singers, instrumentalists, dancers and artistic and administrative staff. The largest dramatic theatre in the country is the National in Tirana with fifty-five actors, four directors, three stage designers and other personnel. The variety theatres in Tirana have some forty actors, instrumentalists and singers on their payroll while the other six theatres each have from twenty-five to thirty staff.

Variety theatres give an average of three or four premières a year while drama and comedy theatres each give two or three premières annually. The majority of premières take place at the theatres in the capital.

Administratively, each theatre has an artistic council which acts as a consulting body to the director. The council looks at all new scripts and expresses its opinion about the value of the play. If approved, the script is passed for judgement to the Repertoire Commission (part of the Executive Committee of the district) but final decisions are given only by the District Party Committee. In the early 1990s, this system was still in place but was gradually being modified.

Government policy itself continues to be

aimed at the spread of the theatre to all the major towns of the country – a policy that had often been used to turn theatre into an effective method of state propaganda.

In addition to its professional groups, Albania also boasts more than 4,000 amateur groups which work in local town and village cultural facilities and which are usually attached to factories and agricultural cooperatives.

A national festival of professional theatres is held every three years (beginning in 1962) with the Aleksandër Moisiu Prize awarded for the Best Play in the festival. Other prizes awarded at the festival are for Best Direction, Performance and Design. Variety theatres also compete at these festivals for the Çajupi Prize for Best Production.

Until the 1990s, state subsidies kept ticket prices extremely low, usually equal to between one and three hours' work at the national minimum wage.

All theatre professionals, including designers and technicians, are members of the Writers' and Artists' Union and are traditionally entitled to a wide range of social benefits. Many work as well in film, television and radio. In total, the country has more than 1,000 actors, designers, singers, variety performers, puppeteers and musicians, all members of the union.

Artistic Profile

Companies

The Teatri Kombëtar is without doubt the country's most important theatrical institution. Throughout its history, it has consistently served as a school for the qualitative growth of other theatres. Its stage in Tirana has also been the venue for the most significant plays by the country's most important authors and the themes of its repertoire have been closely linked with fundamental national interests. Through its history, the Kombëtar company – usually numbering some sixty actors, directors and designers – has been Albania's major producer of historical plays on national subjects, plays which have attempted to throw light on significant periods, events and figures. Artistically, the theatre has tended to favour spectacular productions, large-scale visual design and an epic tragic style.

The country's second most important theatre – the Migjeni – is located in the city of Shkodra. Its favoured style can be described as romantic and the company has produced many poetic dramas featuring nationalistic themes (but themes specifically relating to the regional life of the northern highlands). Many of its productions have also dealt with the nature of individual freedom in its various struggles against communal habits, norms and conceptions.

The Çajupi Theatre in the city of Korça has dealt most directly with social and political issues, even including in its repertoire plays focusing on the National Liberation War itself. This interest has been seen as well when the theatre has staged classics from world dramatic literature with directors being encouraged to find parallels to national issues.

In the variety area – an area of enormous popularity – theatres have tended toward the staging of mostly satirical works. With a broad thematic spectrum of social issues to deal with, these theatres have generally played in mixed genres including everything from dance and music to painting, projections and film. Of particular importance in this regard have been the major variety theatres of Tirana and Shkodra, Fieri and Durrësi, which have staged a wide range of productions from comedy to fantasy, from large-scale musicals to modest revues. Virtually all of these companies have a strong critical edge to their work as well as an extremely contemporary sensibility.

Dramaturgy

Though Albanian dramaturgy lacks a significant historical tradition, during the last half of the twentieth century it has been linked with the ideals of socialist-realism, trying to reflect daily life, political problems and contradictions, and trying to place the Albanian people at the centre of the dramatic canvas.

The main shortcoming of this type of dramaturgy was its specific political agenda, extreme idealization of life and schematism of conflicts and characters. Most plays followed strict principles and concepts, all relating to the ideal of the struggle for social emancipation and national identity.

Three writers are of particular importance within the country's theatre. Kol Jakova is probably the most significant of the post-war writers. He tends to deal with social and economic concerns and is interested in the struggles of his characters to gain greater freedom. Jakova's psychologically well-drawn characters bear testimony to the disintegration of the traditional national patriarchal structure. His cleverly devised fables, sharp dramatic conceptions, unique language and laconic dialogue are hallmarks of his style. His major plays include *Toka jonë* and *Lulet e Shegës* (*Pomegranate Flowers*, 1977).

Fadil Paçrami (b. 1921) is another of the more successful playwrights of the post-war period, mainly in the 1960s, with such plays as *Shtëpia në bulevard* (*The House on the Boulevard*, 1963) and *Ngjarje në fabrikë* (*It Happened in a Factory*, 1969). Distinguished by his own political viewpoint and his consistent protest against conservative forces, he constructs his plays on a dialectical basis with conflicting groups of characters face-to-face in debate on keen political or ethical problems. He reveals the spirit of his characters through inner psychological tension which gradually emerges. His characters often seem fated, their destinies fixed beforehand.

The most prolific Albanian dramatist during the 1970s and 1980s was Ruzhdi Pulaha (b. 1942), a comic writer whose works dealt with conflicts between various social groupings. A problematic, optimistic yet militant writer, his plays are characterized by their recognizable everyday language and their reduction of dramatic time and space in an almost journalistic way. His most important works include *Zonja nga qyteti* (*City Lady,* 1974), *Maro Mokra* (1978) and *Mësuesi i letërsisë* (*The Literature Teacher,* 1986).

Another dramatist of note is Fadil Kraja (b. 1931) whose work focuses on historic issues of national importance. A creator of epic and monumental heroes with an almost spiritual commitment to the ideals of the nation, he consistently takes his subject matter from Albanian myth and legend. A dramatist of passion and pathos, Kraja's plays balance lofty ideals with spiritual struggle, national interest with personal commitment, honour and shame, law and belief. His two most often produced plays are *Baca i Gjetajve* (*The Patriarch of Gjetaj*, 1979) and *Gjaku i Arbërit* (*The Blood of Arbri*, 1981).

There are, as well, a large number of satirical comedies which have proven popular with audiences. Among the most produced are *Prefekti* (*The Mayor*, 1948) by Besim Lëvonja (1922–68); *Karnavalet e Korçës* (*The Carnivals of Korça*, 1961) by Spiro Çomora (1918–73); and *Fytyra e dytë* (*The Second Face*, 1968) by Dritëro Agolli (b. 1931).

Probably the most popular author during this period working almost exclusively with the variety theatres has been Pëllumb Kulla (b. 1940), a writer whose productions have involved strongly satirical character sketches, situational comedy and simple verbal humour. His works exist within the tension between dramatic cause and comic consequence, between what is possible and what is real. It should be said here as well that the paradoxes in his work have grown not so much from fantasy as from the realities of everyday Albanian life.

Directors, Directing and Production Styles

Sokrat Mio (b. 1902) was Albania's first important director of the modern period. Coming to prominence in the 1950s, Mio professionalized Albania's stages and his approach to the theatre had enormous influence on all those who subsequently went into directing as a career.

Following Mio's example, a large number of newly professionalized directors emerged. Pandi Stillu (1914–70) was given the country's highest cultural honour when he was named a People's Artist for his consistently committed work during the late 1950s and 1960s. Creating vivid stage portraits of the lives of ordinary people (generally through detailed psychological work with his actors) Stillu's career was highlighted by his productions of *Toka jonë* in 1954 and of the comic classic *Karnavalet e Korçës* in 1964.

People's Artist Pirro Mani (b. 1932) achieved note in the late 1960s through his ability to handle large casts and massive scenes in such plays as *Cuca e Maleve* (*Mountain Lass*, 1967). His later work focused even more on the development of actors through the creation of recognizable individual characters. His work has consistently dealt in contrasts: the serious with the humorous, the spiritual with the battles of daily living, the tragic with the grotesque. This latter ability was particularly evident in his handling of Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* in 1971. His work also showed him to be a master in the creation of stage atmosphere, as in *Fytyra e Dytë*.

Kujtim Spahivogli (1932–93) was another

Pirro Mani's 1971 People's Theatre production of Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, designed by Agim Zajmi.
Photo: Teatri Popullor Archive.

strong director. In his productions of *Ngjarje në fabrikë* by Paçrami and *Banya* (*The Bath House*, 1973) by Vladimir Mayakovsky, he created an organic symbiosis of the dramatic and comic, the real and grotesque. He successfully experimented in elements of setting and acting, paying attention especially to the nature of feeling within a limited unit of time. His stagings were always dramatically expressive and within his eclectic style there converged the conventional, the visual, the symbolic and the naturalistic. He was also a distinguished teacher of acting.

Mihal Laurasi (b. 1930) is distinguished by his rigorous depictions of life in its metaphoric details. In his productions of *Njollat e murrme* (*Dark Stains*, 1968) by Minush Jero (b. 1938) and *Orpheus Descending* (1972) by Tennessee Williams, Laurasi managed to develop a genuine sense of ensemble playing with his actors.

Serafin Fanku (b. 1939) is another People's Artist who has achieved note as a director by successfully interweaving elegant pictorial compositions with very realistic performances. His work has also shown a particular sensitivity to the poetic, the figurative and the metaphorical. Among his most important productions have been *Fisheku në pajë* (*The Bullet in the Dowry*, 1967), *Baca i Gjetajve* (1979) and *Gjaku i Arbërit* (1981).

Esat Oktrova (b. 1930) is a director known for his philosophical, almost meditative productions. *Këneta* (*The Swamp*, 1968), one of his most characteristic shows, was at once philosophical and realistic, creating both emotional and spiritual power.

In the variety field, the best known director has been Gjergj Vlashi (b. 1928). Working in various styles, his productions have consistently displayed a keen sense of political satire through a very accomplished sense of burlesque.

Among Albania's many outstanding actors are a number who have been recognized as People's Artists. Among those who should be noted here are Naim Frashëri (1923–75), Kadri Roshi (b. 1927), Mihal Popi (1903–79), Zef Jubani (1910–58), Loro Kovaçi (1903–66), Sandër Prosi (1920–85) and Robert Ndrenika (b. 1942).

Josif Papagjoni

Music Theatre
Dance Theatre

Music and dance are used regularly in the country's many variety theatres but, for the most part, when one speaks of music theatre and dance theatre in Albania one is speaking of traditional opera and ballet. Only one company exists in the field, Tirana's Teatri i Operas dhe Baletit (Opera and Ballet Theatre) founded in 1953 as an extension of the Philharmonic Orchestra which was created in 1950.

Early on, the company staged a number of classical international operas and ballets. Perhaps the most important result was a significant improvement in opera and ballet training which led by the end of the 1950s to the staging of operas and ballets by Albanian composers.

The first of these national operas was written in 1958 by composer Preng Jakova (1917–69). Entitled *Mrika*, the work was distinguished as much by its lyricism as its nationalism. In 1968 Jakova composed another opera of note, *Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu*. Jakova's pioneering works led to the creation of even more sophisticated operas later on, including *Komisari* (*Commissar*, 1974) by Nikola Zoraqi (1928–92); *Zgjimi* (*The Awakening*, 1976) by Tonin Harapi (1927–92); and *Goca e Kaçanikut* (*The Girl from Kaçanik*, 1979) by Raul Dhomi (b. 1945).

In the 1980s, Albanian operas and operettas sought a more popular appeal by utilizing a traditional international style; these later operas nevertheless relied heavily on recognizable Albanian types and situations. At root in the music could be heard the intonations of popular and patriotic Albanian folk songs which have long remained a permanent source of inspiration for composers.

Ballet has developed along much the same

Panajot Kanaçi's 1963 Opera and Ballet Theatre production of Tish Daia's *Halili and Hajria*, designed by Stavri Rafaei.
Photo: Teatri i Operas dhe Baletit Archive.

path. First came works from the international repertoire; later came ballets dealing with national themes and issues. Among the ballets which have stood out are *Halili dhe Hajria* (1963), composed by Tish Daia (b. 1926), choreographed by Panajot Kanaçi (b. 1923); *Cuca e maleve* (1972), composed by Nikola Zoraqi, choreographed by Agron Alia (b. 1931); and *Plaga e dhjetë e Gjergj Elez Alisë* (*The Tenth Wound of Gjergj Elez Alia*, 1987), composed by Feim Ibrahimi (b. 1935), choreographed by Alia.

Pandi Bello

Theatre for Young Audiences
Puppet Theatre

There are no companies in Albania specifically producing plays for young audiences. Rather, most companies – including the variety theatres – try to schedule at least one production annually which will be of particular interest to young audiences.

Plays written for teenagers and children mainly serve didactic and educational purposes but do little to introduce their audiences to fantasy, dream, play or fun. Only productions by the variety theatres include song and dance and some actually include the participation of children and teenagers in the cast. The situation was beginning to change only in the early 1990s.

In the area of puppet theatre, Albania has one major company in Tirana and another ten in smaller towns which mostly tour. There is no Albanian school for puppet theatre. Those wishing to work in the field usually graduate from the Art Academy in Tirana and then take training courses at the Tirana Puppet Theatre.

Albania's great folkloric wealth, however, is perhaps best demonstrated in puppetry since many of the plays are based on legends and stories. The well-known national tale *Fatbardha* (1951) was among the first professional productions of the modern period and remains popular.

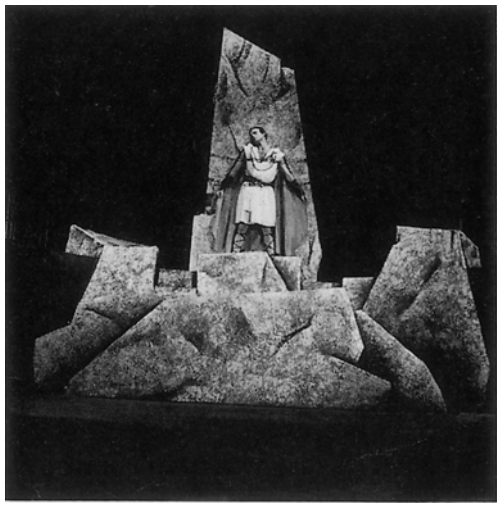
In the years 1951–6 the bulk of puppet and children's plays staged came from abroad and presented images of the world within a rigorously predetermined morality. The repertoire was mainly of an informative and descriptive character at the expense of entertainment and spectacular features. The world of miracles and fairytales on the puppet stage particularly was deprived of elements of paradox, of free imagination and suggestiveness. Elements of evil – all forms of demons, monsters, witches, fear, violence and anxiety – were virtually forbidden from the stage or were presented in a schematized way. Charms, magic and miracles were also dismissed. In their place were moralism and didacticism of the most extreme kind. This began to change in the 1980s with the appearance once more of fantastic and miraculous elements in dramatized fairytales and folk legends.

Up to the mid-1950s settings too were static. Later they became movable and by the 1970s sculptural elements came into use which emphasized a new vividness.

As for puppet technique, finger-puppets were replaced from 1955 by marionettes. Musical backgrounds using live accordion replaced earlier and long outdated recordings.

Design
Theatre Space and Architecture

As Albanian theatre has been professionalized, design elements too have become more and more important. During the 1950s, most design was simply illustrative, gaining sophistication only in terms of its illusionistic qualities. In the 1960s, realism began to give way to less concrete images, while in the 1970s colour, symbolism and light played increasingly important



Shaban Hysa's design for the 1984 People's Theatre production of *Prometheus*.
Photo: Teatri Popullor Archive.

roles. It was also in the 1970s that the notion of conventional theatrical space began to be questioned and exploration began to be conducted in this area. All these elements could be seen in Albanian theatre design during the 1980s and into the early 1990s.

In technical terms, Albanian theatres have also improved over these decades. As the 1990s began, there were a dozen well-equipped theatre buildings across the country, all with revolving stages, sophisticated though basic lighting equipment, mechanical scene-changing capabilities and communications equipment.

Most are of the proscenium type with stage widths ranging from 9 to 15 metres, depths from 6 to 16 metres and in visible height from 6 to 18 metres. The Opera and Ballet Theatre is the largest hall in the country with 1,200 seats while the largest dramatic theatres are the Kombëtar with 550 seats and the Çajupi with 580.

Training

In 1959, a Higher School of Dramatic Art was established to meet the growing needs of the professional Albanian theatre. Attached to the People's Theatre, the school was named in honour of the great Albanian actor Aleksandër Moisiu (1879–1935). Seven years later, the school merged with similar schools of music and visual arts to create the Higher Institute of the Arts.

Located in Tirana, the Higher Institute's theatre programme trains young people for professional careers in virtually every area of dramatic art including all aspects of stage work, variety theatre and cinematography. The largest group of its students graduates from programmes in acting and directing; smaller numbers train in design, singing, music and choreography. The school uses the country's leading artists as its teachers.

The Higher Institute also has a library of over 70,000 volumes and offers university-level equivalencies in theatre, music, film and the visual arts.

Criticism, Scholarship and Publishing

Probably the most important work yet published on theatre in the country is the three-volume *Historia e Teatrit Shqiptar* (*History of Albanian Theatre*) published in 1983, 1984 and 1985 in Tirana. Complementing these volumes on the early traditions are a number of more general books on theatre and theatre aesthetics along with monographs on such national figures as actors Aleksandër Moisiu and Zef Jubani.

Since 1961, a bimonthly journal has appeared called *Teatri* which has published a great deal of theoretical and practical material along with playscripts. A quarterly journal called *Skena dhe Ekrani* (*Stage and Screen*) also publishes essays on both theoretical and practical aspects of theatrical and cinematic art as well as opera and variety theatre.

Regular reviews and commentaries have long been carried in newspapers and more popular

magazines although they have not always been written by people with real qualifications. The first attempts at raising the level of critical journalism came after the opening of Albania's first university (in Tirana) in 1957, when critics began to receive proper training for the first time. In the decades that followed, one began to see some breakthroughs in both analysis and aesthetic considerations.

In the 1990s, a new democratic Albania made it possible for theatre criticism to assume an even wider freedom of expression and a new social dimension. Criticism now can present deeper analytical views and is able to judge from various aesthetic and methodological viewpoints. In earlier years, criticism was permeated by ideological and political dogmatism.

Even in the early 1990s, Albanian theatrical criticism still had a tendency to be more polemical than theatrical. Among the modern critics whose work has been more theatrically oriented are Ismail Hoxha (1931–73), Kudret Velça (b. 1929), Josif Papagjoni (b. 1950) and Miho Gjimi (b. 1942).

Josif Papagjoni
Translated by Emtela Lubomja

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ARMENIA

The Armenian Republic, from 1920 until 1991 part of the Soviet Union, is located between the Black and Caspian Seas, between Georgia and Azerbaijan on the north and east, and between Turkey and Iran on the south and east. Once a potent kingdom bridging the borders of Europe and Asia – in 1947 it celebrated its two thousandth anniversary – modern Armenia was reduced to its present 29,000 square kilometres (10,670 square miles) through a succession of invasions and historic circumstances. Accepting Christianity as its state religion as early as AD 301 – the first state to do so – the Armenians quickly found themselves in conflict with their non-Christian neighbours.

Armenia was conquered in the sixteenth century by the Ottoman Empire. In 1828, Russia acquired most of present-day Armenian territory. Between 1894 and 1915, a series of Turkish massacres of ethnic Armenians took place and many of those remaining left their ancient homeland. In 1993, the country had a population of approximately 4 million with an additional 4 million ethnic Armenians spread around the world. The largest expatriate Armenian communities – each with its own theatre groups – can be found today in Georgia, Azerbaijan, the United States, Canada, Bulgaria, Egypt, France, Iran and Lebanon. Even today, but certainly prior to 1915, Armenian culture, commerce and politics can be found in many parts of the region, including Istanbul, Tbilisi and Baku.

In 1918, a modern Armenian Republic was established with its capital in Yerevan; following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a new Armenian Republic was established in 1991.

The earliest reference to Armenian theatre is found in Plutarch's *Comparative Biographies*. It is stated there that the Armenian King Artavazd, son of Tigran the Great (d. *c.*56 BC), built a Hellenic theatre in his capital city of Artashat and that in 53 BC Euripides' *The Bacchae* was staged. Documentation also exists related to theatre during the early and late Middle Ages in the area. A professional theatre emerged in the nineteenth century.

Translations of Shakespeare into Armenian began to be published in the 1850s and staged in the 1860s. Among the most important translators was Hovhannes Mahseyan (1864–1931), who published twelve translations of Shakespeare's major plays, beginning with an enthusiastically received *Hamlet* in 1894. Bedros Adamian, Armenia's first great Shakespearian actor, had begun to popularize Shakespeare on stage in the 1880s. In 1883 he and his Armenian theatre company performed *Hamlet* at the Pushkin Theatre in Moscow and Adamian subsequently toured Russia for five years. Another major Shakespearian actor, Hovhannes Abelian (1865–1936), starred in *Othello* for twenty-five years beginning in the 1890s.

Major early Armenian playwrights include Gabriel Soundoukian (1815–1912), Hakob Paronian (1842–91), Alexander Shirvanzadé (1858–1935), Levon Shant and Derenik Demirjan. Soundoukian's comedy *Pepo* (1871), about a fisherman's rebellion against a conniving merchant, marks the foundation of Armenian realist drama. Written in Tbilisi, Georgia, the play is still performed in Armenia today, has been staged in Georgia and Azerbaijan, and has also been translated into French, Russian (by Maxim Gorki) and Ukrainian.

Hakob Paronian was a satirist whose stories contained much dialogue that lent itself easily to stage dramatization. His tragi-comedy about

marital infidelity and judicial injustice, *Baghdassar Aghpar* (*Brother Balthazar*, 1886), was produced on the Western Armenian Stage in Constantinople, the capital of Ottoman Turkey. Through its exposure of the corrupt moral life of the Armenian upper-middle class, it became one of the most popular Armenian plays and has also been performed in Ukrainian, Georgian, Azerbaijani and Russian.

Alexander Shirvanzadé's domestic plays, such as *Iskhanouhi* (*Princess*, 1891), *Yevkine* (1901), *Ouner Eeravoonk* (*Did She Have the Right?*, 1902) and *Armenouhi* (1909), show the influence of Ibsen, particularly *A Doll's House*. In his family drama *Patvi Hamar* (*For the Sake of Honour*, 1904), material greed overcomes conscience and parental love, resulting in tragedy. By 1911, the play had been performed 300 times.

Levon Shant's neo-romantic symbolic drama *Hin Astvatsner* (*Ancient Gods*) was written in 1909 and staged to great acclaim at the Artists' Theatre in Tbilisi in 1913. The play stresses the idea of the liberation of the human spirit from all constraints. Other important works by Shant include *Oshin Bayl, Caesar* and *The Princess of the Fallen Castle*.

Written in 1923, Derenik Demirjan's grotesque comedy with political overtones, *Kaj Nazar* (*Nazar the Brave*), dramatizes the popular folk tale by the national poet Hovhannes Toumanian about how a stupid and weak person, by sheer luck of circumstance, becomes a fear-inspiring tyrant.

With the establishment of an Armenian Soviet Republic in 1920, stage art – along with Armenian society in general – embarked on a new phase of its development. Armenian theatre, as all Soviet theatre, faced the requirement of reflecting and endorsing the principles of the socialist revolution while attempting to preserve and develop its own traditions.

Levon Hakhverdian

Structure of the National Theatre Community

Through most of the post-World War II period there were two basic types of organization of the theatre in Armenia: state companies (*pettatron*), completely subsidized by the government, and the people's theatres (*zhoghtatron*), semi-amateur companies mostly in the small provincial towns. Most of the colleges and high schools put up their own amateur productions every now and then. All employees (including actors) of state theatres were on the payroll, regardless of their participation in a production. There were special bonuses for successful productions. As a rule each state company has a separate theatre building. State theatres have a chief director in charge of all artistic issues and an administrator overseeing business matters.

An important tool of state control was the artistic council (*geghkoroord*), made up in each company of ideologically sound individuals. It previewed all productions, confirmed the selection of plays and the distribution of roles. The ultimate power in all theatre-related matters rested with the Ministry of Culture.

The theatre community in Armenia since World War II includes about two dozen state theatres (half of those in Yerevan) and the same number of people's theatres. The Union of Theatrical Workers (UTW), founded in 1940 and serving as a sort of trade union, possessed certain coordinating capabilities and, during the Soviet period, provided extra ideological leverage.

From 1945 to 1991 the universal Soviet classification of artistic merit applied also to Armenia: the government granted the titles of Honoured Artist and, higher still, People's Artist of the Armenian SSR. In the 1970s the government established the Hovhannes Abelian Prize for outstanding contribution to Armenian theatre. In the Soviet period the Armenian theatre companies toured extensively in the USSR and occasionally abroad, and almost every year two or more of the better Soviet companies played on Armenian stages. Although there was no regular theatre festival, several international events took place in the 1970s and 1980s – a Shakespearian Festival in 1983, and Festivals of Armenian and Russian Drama.

After 1985 numerous non-state professional theatre companies emerged. These do not always have a building of their own and are mostly not subsidized by the government. Some are sponsored by private business or prosperous state enterprises, others attract enough spectators to carry on and some survive

on sheer enthusiasm. The *geghkoroords* have lost most of their prominence, although the Ministry of Culture still allocates funds for the state theatres.

Ticket prices vary greatly but are kept within reach of the majority of theatregoers. The rehearsal period of a play seems to have decreased slightly compared with that of the Soviet period and ranges between three and four months on average.

In 1992 playwright Raphael Hakobjanian established the Stanislavski and Vakhtangov Foundation to promote theatrical revival in Armenia. Among its other activities, the foundation provides scholarships for theatre students.

Artashes Emin

Artistic Profile

Companies

Dramaturgy

Directors, Directing and Production Styles

On 26 August 1946, the Communist Party of the USSR passed a new law relating to theatres and their repertoires, specifically requiring plays to reflect the ideals of socialist-realism. Socialist-realism was essentially a theory of drama without conflict, drama that reflected a harmonious social order. As a result of this law, ideologically sound plays became rather colourless, replacing conflict with bombast, and genuine reflection of reality with idealization.

Serious plays were of little interest in such an atmosphere and comedy, a form which allowed playwrights to infringe on at least some taboos, became the genre chosen by most writers. It was also the form favoured by many leading actors, among them Tatik Sarian. In classic plays by writers such as Hakob Paronian and Gabriel Soundoukian and modern plays by writers such as Nairi Zarian, Sarian did a series of star turns portraying brilliant characters, at once simple and kind. Most of his work was staged by director Vardan Ajemian (1905–78) in Yerevan at the Paronian Musical Comedy Theatre. Ajemian also staged important productions of Armenian plays at the Leninakan Drama Theatre (among them, Zarian's historical tragedy, *Ara the Beautiful*).

At the same time, psychological realism still flourished at the Soundoukian Theatre. Among the many important productions staged there by director Armen Goulakian (1899–1961) were Lermontov's *The Unknown* and Tolstoi's *The Living Corpse*, both starring the great classic actor Papazian.

A thaw began after Stalin's death in 1953 and state control of the arts loosened significantly. At this time classical plays were again staged widely along with more modern plays with a much sharper critical tone. As a director, Ajemian was the foremost figure in Armenian theatre at this time, equally at home with the fantastic realism of Vakhtangov and the lyrical realism of Chekhov. His major productions ranged from *The Cherry Orchard* to musical comedies such as *Karineh* (Choukhajian), from Shirvanzadé's play *Namous* to Paronian's *Baghdassar Aghpar*.

Among significant productions during this period at the Soundoukian Theatre, many of which toured to Moscow, were Cassona's *The Trees Die Standing*, Figereydo's *The Fox and the Grapes*, De Filippo's *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* and Saroyan's *My Heart's in the Highlands*.

Many of those who worked with Ajemian became key figures in the development of Armenian theatre in the 1960s and 1970s, among them Hrachia Ghaplanian, who first emerged as an important director at the Young Spectator's Theatre in Yerevan.

During those two decades, many playwrights came to prominence as well, including Gourgen Boryan (author of *Under the Same Roof* and *On the Bridge*), Grigor Ter Grigorian (*The Last Carnations* and *Ah Nerves, Nerves*), Alexander Araxmanian (*Roses and Blood* and *Sixty Years and Three Hours*), Gevorg Haroutyounian (*The Heart Fault* and *Intersection*), Aramashot Papayan (*The World Has Really Gone Berserk*), Perj Zeytountsian (*The Saddest Man* and *The Legend of the Destroyed City*), Zarzand Darian (*The President of the Republic*), Zabel Asadour (1863–1934), one of Armenia's few female writers (*The Bride*), and Vardges Petrossian (*The Hippocratic Oath Is Heavy*).

Nishan Parlakian's 1984 New York Armenian Church production of Zabel Asadour's *The Bride*.
Photo: H. Kantzabed.

Many of these plays were produced not only in Yerevan but also in smaller cities – Leninakan, Kirovakan, Artashat, Kamo and Kapan. They addressed issues about both the ancient and immediate past of the nation but more immediately they addressed the imperfections of the regime.

In 1968, the Yerevan Drama Theatre opened under the artistic direction of Ghaplanian. It established its own style, larger than life, broad in character. Focusing on clear, somewhat simple solutions to complex issues, its productions were dynamic and socially suggestive. Among its successes were *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Makayonok's *The Persecuted Apostle*.

Throughout the 1980s, Armenian plays examined and re-examined the theme of 'power to the people' as social changes began to rock the Soviet Union as a whole. Many world classics were looked at in this light, among them Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and *King John* (both done by the Soundoukian Theatre), *Hamlet, The War of the Roses*, and Stratiev's *The Bus* at the Yerevan Drama Theatre and *Richard II*, Lermontov's *Masquerade*, Shirvanzadé's *Chaos* and Chekhov's *Three Sisters* at Kirovakan's Abelian Theatre. Another notable production was *The Criminal's Family* by Giacometti at the Leninakan Drama Theatre.

Nineteen professional companies were operating in Armenia by the early 1980s including three new ones in Yerevan – the Film Actors' Theatre directed by H. Malian; the satirical Camera (Chamber) Theatre founded by its director Ara Yernjakian in 1982; and the Experimental Youth Theatre founded by its director Hratchya Ghazarian also in 1982. Among the important productions in the early years of the Film Actors' Theatre were *The Decameron* and a work based on Medieval Armenian proverbs, *The Foxbook*, while the Experimental Theatre found success with Mayakovsky's *Mystère Bouffe*.

Two music theatres also operate in Yerevan – the Paronian Musical Comedy Theatre headed by Armen Elbakian and the Spendiarev Opera and Ballet Theatre (where the operas of Alexander Spendiarian, Tigran Choukhajian and Armen Tigranian are regularly played). There is also a State Youth Theatre headed by Yervant Ghazanchian and two puppet theatres. The Theatre Institute, a four-year college training young people for the stage, presents several student productions a year as the final requirement for graduation.

Until shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the state-subsidized theatre in Armenia made possible an excellent repertory system which provided most artists with ongoing work and enabled directors, playwrights and designers to stage engaging work for their audiences. The Soundoukian Theatre in the early 1990s, for example, staged productions such as Berj Zeitountiants's *Unfinished Monologue* about corruption in the business world; Ibsen's *Enemy of the People*, starring one of Armenia's foremost actors and the artistic director of the company, Khoren Abrahamian; and Jirair Ananian's musical farce *Carousel* and *My House Is Not Your House*, a political farce about the current housing shortage. Ananian began writing for the stage, radio and television in 1956. Through his many comedy-farces about contemporary Armenian moral and social mores – *Taxi, Taxi* (1972), *The Man From the Flying Saucer* (Paronian Musical Comedy Theatre, 1992) – Ananian has become the Neil Simon of Armenian comedy.

In the early 1990s the Yerevan Drama

Theatre, directed by Armen Khandigian, staged works such as Berj Zeitountiants's *The Great Silence* about the great national poet Daniel Varoujan, one of 300 intellectuals murdered at the outset of the 1915 massacres; the drama *The Eternal Return*, about the poet-writer Paroyr Sevak, a spokesman for Armenian rights in the Soviet Union; *Brother Balthazar* by the satirist Hakob Paronian, in which both the actors' costumes and the stage were designed in stark contrasting black and white; and an impressionistic production of *Julius Caesar*.

In 1992 one could also see Hakob Paronian's sex comedy *The Eastern Dentist* at the Youth Theatre, Armen Elbakian's production of Molière's *Georges Dandin* at the Paronian Musical Comedy Theatre, and the Gavit Theatre political collective creation *For the Sake of Gigos*.

By the late 1980s companies in Armenia were beginning to face many serious problems yet struggled to continue operating. This despite an enormous earthquake in 1988, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the political turmoil that followed through the early 1990s, an economic blockade by Azerbaijan and the struggle by the breakaway province of Nagorno-Karabakh; this despite economic chaos, only two hours of water per day in the capital in 1993, one hour of electricity, a fuel shortage and the departure of many from the profession to seek new lives in other countries. Theatre nevertheless continued to be staged and new groups amazingly continued to emerge.

Among the groups starting up in the 1990s were Studio Nork, Theatre Guild Laboratory, Satire Theatre, Raffi Muradian and Artur Khachaturian's Theatre on Wheels, Sonnet 101, Triangle, Studio 13, Bem, Gavit Theatre and the Ajemian Studio. Not all lasted very long in the new economic atmosphere. Even the Soundoukian Theatre faced major economic crises and as a result three smaller companies emerged – one run by director Mher Mkrtchian and known simply as the Mkrtchian Company; another by Sos Sarkissian called the Hamazgayin Theatre; and a third run by N. Tsatourian called Metro.

In 1993, Armenian theatre was almost completely without government support. As a result, it was struggling to regain both its stature and its audiences.

Levon Hakhverdian

Music Theatre
Dance Theatre

Music theatre in post-war Armenia evolved mostly through and around the Sate Opera in Yerevan (founded in 1933). The repertoire of its company over the years has included mostly western classical works of which many productions were Soviet premières such as Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, Menotti's *The Consul*, Bellini's *Norma*, Donizetti's *Poliuto* and Bernstein's *West Side Story*.

Virtually every Armenian piece ever written for opera has also played on the State Opera stage.

The Paronian Musical Comedy Theatre was founded in 1944 in Yerevan.

The State Ballet Company gave its first performance in 1939 with Khachaturian's *Happiness*. Until Vilen Galstian took over as artistic director in the late 1970s, most of the productions were put together by guest choreographers from Russia (Moisaev, Lavrovski, Zanga). Galstian's productions of *Gayane*, *Spartacus*, *Masquerade* and *David of Sassoun* represented the result of a national re-evaluation of

Armen Goulakian's 1935 production of Hovhannes Toumanian's opera *Anoush*.

traditional ballet. Its dancers mostly come from the Yerevan School of Dance, established in 1936 from the School of Rhythm and Plastics which had been founded in 1930 by Srbouhy Lisitsian in Yerevan.

Emmanuel Manoukian

Theatre for Young Audiences
Puppet Theatre

Information not available at time of publication.

Design
Theatre Space and Architecture

Most influential on Armenian design tradition were Georgi Yakoulov's sets for *The Merchant of Venice* and Shirvanzadé's *Related with a Morgan* (both 1926, Yerevan State Theatre). He combined a colourful palette with almost architectural laconicism and a versatility of plastic solutions.

Michael Aroutchian headed a school of more academic professional designers over the following decades. This was occasionally stirred with ventures into theatre by such great painters as Yervand Kochar and Martiros Sarian, who did the opulent sets of *Almast* by Spendiarov for the opening of the Yerevan Opera in 1933.

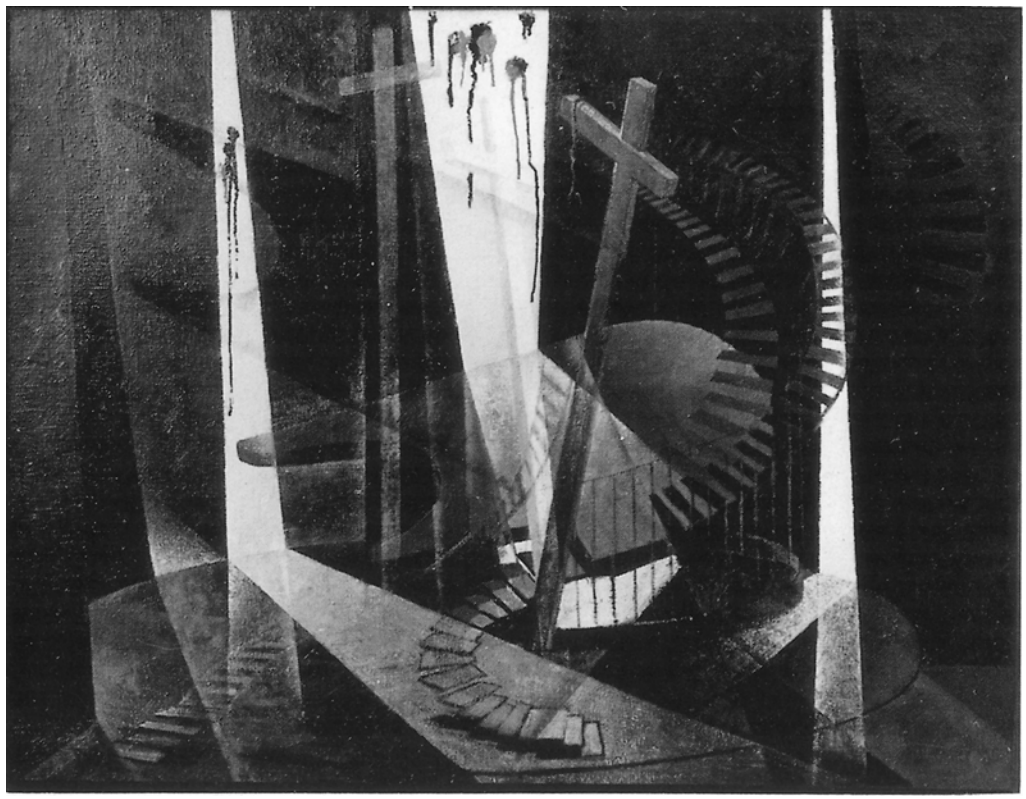
The prevailing designs in the years that followed were marked by a movement between simple graphic solutions, use of architectural volumes and the constructivist approach. The war years reduced the theatre repertoire to historical dramas with a patriotic charge, where the original talent of Melixet Svaghchian blossomed, most markedly in the sets for Nairi Zarian's *Ara the Beautiful*.

The post-war years proved to be most trying for theatre designers. The non-conflict drama was asking for near-photographic solutions, stripped of any inspiration. This changed in the mid-1950s almost overnight with the arrival on the scene of the first graduates of the Yerevan Arts and Theatre Institute. They broke the naturalistic non-conflict spell, but lacked innovation, mostly reviving, with some expertise, long-forgotten trends and techniques.

The 1960s punctured the stagnation with increased exposure to new visual material and ideas from abroad. Theatre directors were the first to respond, but it was not until 1965, when Sargis Aroutchian designed the sets for Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (Soundoukian Theatre, directed by H. Ghaplanian), that Armenian stage design attempted anything that could be called modern. The sets promoted a philosophic perception of the play, accentuating its mood with then-unorthodox means. This paved the way for others to experiment.

The renowned post-war painter Minas Avetissian designed a number of sets for opera, among which one for Khachaturian's (1903–78) *Gayane* showed sparkling wit and colours. Through the 1970s and 1980s a new generation of Armenian stage designers emerged, including Rouben Ghevondian, Vahagn Tevanian, Karen Gevorgian and Karen Grigorian. Among them, Yevgeny Sofronov was clearly the most innovative, experimenting with modernistic techniques, though his designs were mostly void of colour. The mid-1970s also brought along a growing awareness of the importance of costume, and Anahit and Gayane Aroutchian contributed greatly towards more diversity and flexibility in costume design. Their best works included *The Barber of Seville*, *Macbeth* and *La Bohème*.

Sargis Aroutchian



Sargis Aroutchian's 1965 design for the final scene of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, Soundoukian Theatre.

Training

Until 1944, when the Theatre Institute was founded in Yerevan, theatre professionals were trained in independent studios. The most prominent was the studio in Tbilisi (founded by O. Sevoumian) and the studio in Moscow (founded in 1918 by Ruben Simonov). Today, the institute in Yerevan offers five-year Master's degrees in acting, directing and theatre studies. Each year a different master teacher accepts a class of his or her own and carries it through to graduation.

University-level general humanities background courses (history, languages, and so on) are mandatory. Theatre training is also available at the Armenian Pedagogical Institute's theatre department (founded in 1972). The four-year master classes in acting and directing there are also led by leading actors and directors. At both schools tuition is free. Theatre technicians usually emerge through apprenticeship at the theatres themselves.

Designers often train at the Yerevan Fine Arts Academy or one of several other art schools. Costume designers sometimes come from fashion houses.

Some of the major companies, such as the Soundoukian and the Dramatic Theatre, now have their own studios.

Artashes Emin

Criticism, Scholarship and Publishing

Armenian theatre has been accompanied by theatrical criticism since the middle of the nineteenth century. Following 1945, routine reviews began to be augmented by more general articles commenting on theatrical developments. Some theoretical provisions were set forth, drawing from the experience of Russian and western theatre. A dispute about the future prospects of Armenian theatre arts evolved in the periodicals. Sargis Meliksetian, Rouben Zarian and Souren Haroutiounian, prominent scholars of the time, were succeeded by the graduates of the department of theatrology of the Yerevan Theatre Institute.

Their joint efforts contributed in the mid-1950s to the formation of an independent school of theatre scholarship. This promoted the publication of a number of studies on the history of the national theatre and its prominent personnel, resulting in a library of important works, among which are Georg Goyan's *2000 Years of Armenian Theatre*, Vahram Terzibashian's *The History of Armenian Playwriting* (in two volumes), Garnik Stepanian's *Outline of the History of Western Armenian Theatre* (in three volumes), Rouben Zarian's *Siranouysh* and *Petros Adamian* (in two volumes), Sabir Rizaev's *History of Armenian Directing*, Louise Samvelian's *Shakespeare and the Armenian Literary and Theatrical Culture*, Levon Hakhverdian's *History of Armenian Theatre (1901–1920)* and *Theatre Dictionary*, Henrik Hovanessian's *Medieval Armenian Theatre*, and the group project, *History of Soviet Armenian Theatre*.

The Art Institute of the Armenian Academy of Sciences is responsible for the bulk of these publications. In 1958 it incorporated a theatre department, with nearly a dozen scholars studying theatre and its history. The department is completing studies on nineteenth-century Armenian theatre, Armenian theatre communities in the United States and Egypt, and old Yerevan theatre companies. A complete history of the Armenian theatre in five volumes was in preparation in 1993.

This picture of Armenian theatre criticism would be incomplete without mentioning the memoirs of notables like Olga Goulazian, Vahram Papazian, Vagharsh Vagharshian and Gourgen Janibekian, which provide invaluable material, both critical and factual.

Armenian theatrical periodicals also have a history in Istanbul, Tbilisi and Baku since 1874. New productions in Armenia are regularly reviewed in the press both by columnists and freelance contributors, most of them professionals. The weekly *Taterakan Yerevan* (*Theatrical Yerevan*, founded in 1953) is published by the UTW and combines *Playbill*-type infomation with artistic profiles of companies and actors. The illustrated monthly *Arvest* (*Art*, founded in 1926) has a lengthy section on theatre and drama. Since 1990 an exclusively theatrical almanac has been published in Yerevan under the name *Bem* (*Stage*).

Levon Hakhverdian with Artashes Emin
Research assistance by Nishan Parlakian
Translated by Artashes Emin

(See also USSR. Because of war conditions in Armenia during 1992–4, it was not possible to obtain material for all sections of this article.)

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AUSTRIA

Austria is the country of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Adolf Hitler and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Until the time when the Iron Curtain was dismantled, Austria was considered as the easternmost country in the west. Its geopolitical situation is thrown into relief by a list of Austria's neighbouring countries: Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Germany, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy. Covering an area of 83,900 square kilometres (32,400 square miles), the country is divided into nine federal states or provinces. German is the mother tongue of most of its 7.8 million inhabitants (1.6 million of whom live in the capital, Vienna) though there are several linguistic minorities. Politically speaking, Austria is one of the western parliamentary democracies. As the successor state to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which also had its political and cultural centre in Vienna, Austria feels entrusted with a centuries-old cultural legacy.

The inter-war period saw the emergence of a specific, historically evolved role for the country's theatre as the centre of the search for a national identity. On the one hand, Austria had the task of modernizing the grand tradition of the (imperial) theatres of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into what had become a small, deeply indebted republic. On the other hand, the many modern theatres established in the late nineteenth century had to fight desperately for survival, a remarkable task in view of the diminished population and the pauperization of the very classes that had supplied most of the regular theatregoers.

Six of the eight provincial capitals at that time also had well-established theatres with permanent ensembles and a high quality three-sector repertory (opera, operetta and theatre). Even many of the medium-sized and small towns were used to having permanent theatres whose seasons were highlighted by guest performances of touring stars or companies. The decline of the empire, with its dense network of German-language theatres, ushered in hard times for many of these establishments, since free movement was severely restricted by new borders, differing labour laws and economic barriers. Many of the smaller theatres found themselves hard put to engage quality artists. Economic hardship forced other leading performers and directors to emigrate, especially to Germany. Still, a number of magnificent new establishments attracted major talents to Austria: in 1920, the Salzburg Festival, founded by Max Reinhardt (1873–1943), Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929) and Richard Strauss (1864–1949), was inaugurated with the legendary open-air performance of *Jedermann* (*Everyman*), Hofmannsthal's adaptation of this morality play from the late Middle Ages. Due to its consistently high level of quality, the Salzburg Festival became – next to Bayreuth – one of the most important European festivals. Its unique combination of lovingly preserved local tradition and a sophisticated, international atmosphere soon attracted audiences from all over the world.

Works by such Austrian dramatists as Hofmannsthal, Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931), Hermann Bahr (1863–1934), Ferdinand Bruckner (1891–1958), Franz Theodor Csokor (1885–1969) and Robert Musil (1880–1942), all great influences on German-language theatre, were, however, often staged in Austria only after they had been premièred abroad. In the 1930s, cabaret had a special standing in Austria, both aesthetically and politically. It was honed to perfection and gained an importance that went far beyond the scope of the small

stages on which it was performed. Probably the most influential proponent of this politically agile but heterogeneous movement was Jura Soyfer (1912–39), whose main works (*Der Weltuntergang, Astoria, Vineta* and *Broadway Melodie 1492*) were revived in the 1980s and 1990s.

The invasion of Austria by German troops on 12 March 1938 and the annexation (*Anschluß*) of Austria by the Third Reich had a decisive impact on the nation's theatre life. Numerous Austrian artists had to leave the country because of their 'racial origins' or politics. It was also the time when many German artists who had found protection in Austria left the country. To name but a few, these included dramatists Carl Buckmayer (1896–1977) and Ödön von Horvath (1901–38), composers Ralph Benatzky (1887–1957) and Ernst Krenek (1900–91), directors and theatre producers Max Reinhardt and Stella Kadmon (1902–89), writer and director Ernst Lothar (1890–1974), and actors Oscar Karlweis (1894–1956), Albert Bassermann (1867–1952), Tilla Durieux (1880–1971) and Hans Jaray (1906–90).

Many of them had to live in hiding and found themselves banned from working. Some of them were mangled in the deathly machinery of the Nazi regime. Rudolf Beer (1889–1938), the administrator and director at the Volkstheater and the Raimundtheater, who was even briefly in charge of the Reinhardt stages in Berlin and finally artistic director of Theater in der Scala in Vienna, committed suicide after an interrogation by the Gestapo. Jura Soyfer, the young dramatist who wrote cabaret, died in a concentration camp, as did the cabaret artist Fritz Grünbaum (1880–1941), and the directors Carl Forest (d. 1944) and Friedrich Rosenthal (1885–1942). The introduction of authoritarian theatre laws in the Ostmark, as Austria was called, and strict supervision by Nazi Propaganda and Culture ministries ensured that theatres kept to Nazi-issued directives. In fact, Berlin used the structures of Austria's essentially elitist cultural establishments to put art and artists to the service of Third Reich propaganda. All theatres were 'Aryanized' and more often than not they were also nationalized.

Austrian Nazis, who had expected to make a career for themselves after the take-over, were only initially successful, such as the writer Mirko Jelusich (1886–1969), who spent some months in 1938 in the position of director of the Burgtheater. Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister, made appointments to the key positions: Lothan Müthel (1896–1965) at the Burgtheater (from 1939), Heinz Hilpert (1890–1967) at the Theater in der Josefstadt (from 1938), Walter Bruno Iltz at the Deutsches Volkstheater (from 1938), Heinrich Strohm (from 1939) and Karl Böhm (1894–1981; from 1943) at the Vienna State Opera.

The Ostmark was subjected to the same repertoire guidelines, bans, employment directives (certificates of Aryan origin, certificates of political reliability) as Germany itself. The traditional theatrical competition between Berlin and Vienna was consistently decided in favour of Berlin by the Nazis. Nevertheless, the Nazi leader appointed for Austria between 1941 and 1945, Baldur von Schirach, was permitted to make some regional concessions with a view to cultural independence.

With the ambitious and highly subsidized Reichstheaterfestwochen (German Theatre Festivals) in 1938 and 1939, the Third Reich sought to advertise its cultural superiority to the world. Pompous events, such as the Raimund Week in 1940 and the Mozart Week and the Grillparzer Week in 1941, were designed to subjugate the works of these artists to Nazi ideology. There was steady resistance to the annexation of the mind: at the Burgtheater the Catholic resistance group of Karl Roman Scholz (1912–44) was active. When the group was denounced in 1942 by the actor Otto Hartmann, actor Fritz Lehmann along with musician Friedrich Wildgans and members of the technical staff were sent to prison.

With the onset of 'total war' Joseph Goebbels decreed a theatre ban on 1 September 1944. The staff was transferred to compulsory jobs in the arms industry; some theatre buildings, such as the State Opera and the Burgtheater, were severely damaged by bombs in the last year of the war.

In the Moscow Declaration of 1943, three Allied powers – the United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain – declared that Austria had been the first victim of Hitler's policy of aggression and was to be freed from German oppression. This statement formed the basis of the Second Austrian Republic, which was founded on 27 April 1945. A further important statement of the declaration, which reminded Austria of its responsibility for participating in the war on the side of Hitler Germany, was soon forgotten.

From 1945 until 1955 Austria was divided into four occupation zones by the Allied powers.

Vienna was also divided into four sectors. The Soviets, who had liberated Vienna, decreed the immediate reopening of theatres. On 30 April 1945 the Burgtheater performed Franz Grillparzer's (1791–1872) *Sappho* at its interim home, the Ronacher Variety Theatre. In their occupation zone, the Americans supported the organization of the Salzburg Festival in 1945. Hofmannsthal's *Der Tor und der Tod* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* by Mozart were performed. The provincial theatres in the French and British zones also opened their doors in the same year. The rapid restoration of artistic life led to revivals of productions from the Nazi period, pre-empting serious discussion on the role of art during the Nazi regime and preventing any new definition of Austrian art after 1945.

Only a few politicians in the Second Republic, such as the communists Viktor Matejka (1901–92), Vienna City Councillor for Culture, and Ernst Fischer (1899–1972), senior official in the Art Ministry and a great expert on world literature, tried to lure expatriate Austrians back to their home country. Some returned of their own volition, some came back as Allied cultural officials and participated in the redevelopment of cultural life in Austria.

Theatre played an important role when Austrians went searching for their identity after 1945. It was living proof of the collective psychological, emotional and intellectual state. By the plays performed and the style in which they were performed, theatres underlined the desire of Austrians to distance themselves from the Nazis. Being Austrian meant, first of all, *not* being German and, thus, not being involved in the terrors of the past. This attitude made it possible to regard the period of Austro-fascism (1933–8) and the Nazi regime as a mere interruption in a continuous period of democracy and republicanism. Sensitive spots appeared whenever the theatre touched on Austria-related taboos or religious convictions or spoke in favour of class warfare.

From 1948 onward, the Cold War also influenced Austrian theatre. Attempts at social criticism or criticism of Austria by the theatre were frequently labelled 'communist' and defamed. Thus an important Austrian theatre – the Neues Theater in der Scala – was ruined because it was said to propagate communism.

In order to heighten Austria's international reputation, policy-makers decided to subsidize expensive festivals. One audacious idea – to engage Bertolt Brecht in a senior position at the Salzburg Festival – was not implemented. The Salzburg Festival has ever since, however, been characterized by famous actors and internationally renowned singers and musicians. On the other hand, the social element, festive mood and well-off, music-loving regulars seemed to become more important than innovative productions and the striving for new forms of art.

Hans Moser in Axel von Ambessers's 1961 Theater in der Josefstadt production of Johann Nestroy's *Blue Funk*, designed by Hill Reihs-Gromes.
Photo: Barbara Pflaum.

The Bregenz Festival, concentrating on classical operettas since 1946, has also developed into a big tourist attraction. The Vienna Festival was revived in 1955 so that Vienna could maintain its role as a metropolis of theatre and music.

For Austria, the year 1955 meant the State Treaty – and with it its sovereign status and 'ever-lasting' neutrality – and the reopening of the reconstructed State Opera and Burgtheater, again linked to the fate of the state in representational functions. The fact that cultural policy and funds focused on the establishment of 'high culture' only strengthened the scepticism towards Austria as a centre of modern and experimental art.

The largest part of the audience that has filled the major theatres in Vienna and in the

provincial capitals (the owners of season tickets) in the decades since World War II has come from the educated upper-middle class. They are traditionally less interested in content or experiment than in the actors' performance. Austrian audiences therefore appreciate performance elements above all and have affectionate relationships with their favourite actors. While audiences at the numerous private comedy theatres and alpine folk-play theatres (amateur theatre) were moving away from the stage with the advent of television from the 1960s onward, audiences in the major cities survived every crisis. They continue to be interested in guest performances, festivals and open-air events in the summer, and are not deterred by high ticket prices. A tiny section of the public is open to experimental theatre and the avant-garde and usually fills the alternative theatres.

The progressive Austrian actors' law of 1922 was reintroduced in 1945. Actors with contracts enjoy a satisfactory social security status (pay, health and pension insurance). More often than not the management will give them leave for television, radio or film jobs. In the alternative theatres, the social situation of artists is significantly worse. For decades, they were paid only for performances and not for rehearsals, another reason why actors try to become integrated into the well-established theatres.

A general paradigm shift of politics and art became apparent in the period of single-party government of the conservative Austrian People's Party (1966–9), when the opposition in Austria's artistic and intellectual life began to pool their resources. With the social-democratic government under the leadership (1970–82) of Bruno Kreisky (1911–90), Austria took some major steps toward modernization – international contacts, new social relationships and new interests on the stage. One late effect of this cultural renewal was the occupation of the Arena St Marx (1976). This dilapidated slaughterhouse area, where the alternative events of the Vienna Festwochen had taken place, was occupied by artists, intellectuals and young people who wanted to prevent the proposed demolition of the slaughterhouse area and to establish an autonomous civic and cultural centre under a self-administration scheme. The summer of the Arena conflict, upgraded by solidarity from Canadian singer and poet Leonard Cohen (he called the Arena 'the best place to be in Vienna') was abruptly ended by the arrival of the municipal demolition machinery. Nevertheless, local and central policy-makers learned a lesson from this demonstration of independent youth culture and began to support the establishment of cultural centres and free theatre companies. Although this did not result in a redistribution of public funds in favour of free theatre companies, the economic situation at least allowed for an increase in the overall budget for culture. At the end of the 1970s, a general austerity policy meant a partial restriction on the freedom of production. In the 1980s many free companies, now recipients of state subsidies, sank into undistinguished production modes and socially irrelevant aesthetics.

Evelyn Deutsch-Schreiner

Structure of the National Theatre Community

The theatre plays an extremely important role in Austria's public life. This is indicated by the fact that not only is the Republic of Austria the owner of the world's largest theatre trust, the Bundestheaterverband (Association of Federal Theatres) whose 3,500 employees are responsible for 1,400 performances attracting 1.4 million spectators each season in Vienna, but also most of the country's many privately owned theatres receive public funds within the framework of a subsidizing system.

Subsidies to theatre make up a significant share of the public culture budget (national and provincial budgets) which in 1990 amounted to some 11 billion Austrian schillings (ASch), approximately US$1.1 billion. Of this, museums and collections were allocated 9.2 per cent, music 3.7 per cent, and the performing arts (theatre and opera) 35.5 per cent. This represents almost four times what the state allocated to the promotion of sports. However, the entire public culture budget amounts to only 1.2 per cent of public expenditure or 0.7 per cent of the gross domestic product.

The lion's share of theatre subsidies traditionally goes to the national theatres, which are all part of the Association of Federal Theatres: the State Opera (2,280 seats), the Volksoper (1,577 seats), the Burgtheater (1,400 seats) and the Akademietheater (532 seats).

In 1990, the overall expenditure of the Federal Theatres amounted to ASch2.3 billion. Of this sum, ASch560 million was spent on pensions, while the revenue from ticket sales amounted to only ASch421 million; houses averaged about 80 per cent of capacity. In total, income covers about 28 per cent of expenditures with different cost-coverage ratios for individual theatres; the State Opera, for instance, has a cost-coverage ratio of 50 per cent. The deficit (about ASch1.6 billion in 1990) is entirely covered by public subsidies.

The fact that even permanently sold-out performances cannot pay for more than a fraction of production and operating costs is characteristic of this form of organization and is more or less accepted by the general public.

Public funds not only go to the four national theatres in Vienna, but also are allocated to the operation or support of various theatres and festivals all over Austria. Since the amount of funds from federal, provincial and municipal sources should theoretically reflect the social importance and the artistic quality of the respective activity, subsidies are frequently surrounded by controversy.

Vienna has for centuries been the theatrical capital of Austria. Apart from the national theatres, it is home to such important, long-standing stages as the Theater in der Josefstadt (since 1788), the Volkstheater, and the Theater an der Wien (1801), as well as a great number of smaller theatres and companies.

Although the number of theatregoers has clearly declined in recent decades, audience statistics are still impressive: in the 1989–90 season Vienna counted almost 4 million theatregoers (more than double the number of inhabitants and about the same as the number of cinemagoers). Of these, the two operas attracted 1 million visitors; the Burgtheater and the Akademietheater 400,000; the major private theatres 1.8 million in about 3,000 performances; and the more than fifty small stages and theatres without permanent location more than 600,000 visitors; expressed in terms of ticket sales this means about 12,000 tickets are sold

Claus Peymann's 1993 Vienna Festival/Burgtheater première of Peter Handke's *The Hour We Didn't Know Anything About Each Other*, designed by Karl-Ernst Herrmann.
Photo: Oliver Herrmann.

every day, the shares of music theatre and drama being roughly equal.

Ticket prices vary considerably: tickets to the opera cost between ASch15 (standing room) and ASch2,500; on average theatre tickets cost ASch200, about double the cost of a cinema ticket. There are, however, substantial discounts for unemployed people, students and military personnel.

The provincial capitals also have theatres of some size. In the 1989–90 season the province and town theatres attracted 1.3 million visitors in more than 3,000 performances. It is striking that all these theatres have long been prepared to accept substantial deficits in order to maintain cultural life in the provinces. While musicals by Andrew Lloyd Webber were attracting the biggest crowds in Vienna in the 1980s and early 1990s, the repertoire of provincial music theatres is to a certain extent dominated by operettas. There are also a great number of small theatres and other locations used regularly for performances, as well as a long amateur tradition.

Festivals are held annually in every Austrian province. The Salzburg Festival, with its 142 performances and 200,000 visitors in 1990, heads the list in terms of international prestige and economic size, followed by the Bregenz Festival (more than 100,000 visitors). For many smaller festivals (for example, Burgenländische Festspiele, Sommertheater Bad Ischl and Seefestspiel Gmunden) the economic impact for the region is significant. In spite of its intimate character, the Carinthischer Sommer (in the Carinthian towns of Ossiach and Villach) has gained an international reputation for its programme of contemporary music, church operas and children's operas. The Vienna Festival is another major festival also featuring guest performances by international companies. Two festivals with a considerable impact on the development of contemporary art are the Steirischer Herbst Festival in Graz, and the Ars Electronica in Linz.

Klemens Gruber, Rainer Maria Köppl

Artistic Profile

Companies

From 1945 to 1948, left-wing theatrical artists who had come back from exile tried to use the stage as a vehicle for both social criticism and general enlightenment. Günther Haenel (b. 1898), director of the Volkstheater during this period, used critical social drama to mark this new beginning. Other theatres too were willing to explore new territory. Under the directorship (1945–8) of Rauol Aslan (1890–1958) the Burgtheater increasingly presented Austrian dramatists who had been banned under the Third Reich: Arthur Schnitzler, Richard Beer-Hoffmann, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Ferdinand Bruckner (*Krankheit der Jugend*), Franz Theodor Csokor (*Der 3. November 1918*), Fritz Hochwälder (1911–86) (with perfectly constructed and historically realistic plays such as *Das Heilige Experiment*), Franz Molnár (1878–1952) (*Liliom*) and František Langer (1888–1956) (*Peripherie*, a critical social study); much the same was true of the Theater in der Josefstadt, on whose studio stage Ödön von Horvath and Hans Weigel (1908–91) were performed. Leon Epp's (1905–68) theatre, Die Insel (The Island), strove for a consistently literary programme.

The Neues Theater in der Scala (1948–56) was founded and managed jointly by the actors Wolfgang Heinz (1900–84), Karl Paryla (b. 1905) and Emil Stöhr (b. 1907), who had returned to Austria from their Swiss exile, and Günther Haenel. Their project was based on the idea of a workers' theatre which they had already developed in Zürich.

This theatre, often hailed as the 'working-class Burgtheater', pursued a programme of outspoken social drama. The company performed Johann Nestroy (1801–62) but also favoured Bertolt Brecht. The highly professional actors were unequivocally anti-fascist; many of them, in fact, had been persecuted by the Third Reich.

After the war, the Theater in der Josefstadt was directed by Rudolf Steinboeck (b. 1908), who had the daring to produce as its second show Brecht's *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* (*The Good Person of Setzuan*), with Paula Wessely (b. 1907) in the title role.

The Salzburg Festival, however, remained rooted in tradition and continued to perform stately culture for the well-to-do and the elite

after the war. From 1946, Max Reinhardt's famous production of *Jedermann* has been a sold-out highlight of the programme. Among the major actors portraying the title role have been Attial Hörbiger (1896–1981), Will Quadflieg (b. 1914), Walter Reyer (b. 1922), Curt Jürgens (1912–82), Maximilian Schell (b. 1930) and Klaus Maria Brandauer (b. 1944). Among the directors leaving their imprint on the festival in the immediate post-war period were Ernst Lothar, Leopold Lindtberg (1902–84) and Oscar Fritz Schuh (1904–84).

In this same period, the small theatre scene – the so-called 'cellar theatres' – was also lively: the Studio of the Hochschule (1945–50), the Kleines Theater im Konzerthaus (1949–58), the Theater am Parkring (1951–60), the Theater Kaleidoskop (1952–60), Die Tribüne (since 1953), Experiment am Lichtenwerd (since 1956), and in particular the Theater der Courage, founded in 1947 by Stella Kadmon to continue the pre-war cabaret *Der liebe Augustin*. These theatres were devoted to international contemporary plays, focusing particularly on Brecht, Günther Weisenborn, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Genet, Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco. Many famous actors and directors started their careers there: the actors Kurt Sowinetz (1928–91) and Ernst Meister (1926–86); the director Erich Neuberg, who greatly influenced the style of theatre performances broadcast on television in the early stages of that medium; and the film and television directors Michael Kehlmann, Walter Davy (b. 1924) and Wolfgang Glück (b. 1929).

Cabaret in Vienna, famous in the 1930s, experienced a new heyday in the post-war period. Karl Farkas (1894–1971) and Ernst Waldbrunn continued to work in traditional cabaret forms and particularly shone in comic exchanges full of Jewish humour. Helmut Qualtinger (1928–91), Gerhard Bronner, Carl Merz (1906–79) and Georg Kreisler (b. 1922) developed a much more politically oriented cabaret style with black humour and 'dirty' language.

Qualtinger and Merz created a figure named 'Herr Karl' (Mister Karl) for an Austrian television play with the same title, broadcast in 1961 under the direction of Erich Neuberg. This stereotype of the malicious and sentimental Austrian lower-middle class was unequalled in its cutting representation of how Austrians analysed their past, and led immediately to a nation-wide scandal.

The period between 1955 and 1966 was characterized in government by a coalition between the two major political parties and was said to possess 'tomb-like calm' by socially aware artists. Resistance to this conservative cultural policy was a subcultural phenomenon. Its radicalism was mainly of an aesthetic nature, however. *Acht-Punkte-Proklamation des Poetischen Actes* (*Eight-Point-Proclamation of the Poetic Act*) by Hans Carl Artmann (b. 1921), for example, laid down rules of 'poetic action' by saying it was possible to be a poet without ever having written a poem. It also anticipated happenings and performance art independent of the well-known American avant-garde tendencies. The abandoning of strict borders among individual art forms awakened a new trend towards the 'integrated work of art' and revitalized the old avant-garde notion that 'art equals life'.

Helmut Qualtinger as 'Mister Karl'.
Photo: Barbara Pflaum.

The avant-garde began to gather through a group of Viennese writers who, in spite of their differences, soon formed the Wiener Gruppe (Vienna Group). In close contact with painters and musicians, they established their base at the Art Club and Der Strohkoffer, a combination bistro and gallery, and at the leftist Catholic Galerie next to St Stephan run by Monsignore Otto Mauer. Not only did the representatives of the young *informal* painting style (Josef Mikl, Markus Prachensky and Arnulf Rainer) exhibit their works but also it was there and at the Theater in der Liliengasse that the members of

the Wiener Gruppe read their works. The French Tachist painter Georges Mathieu at the same time performed his public paintings at the avant-garde theatre at the Fleischmarkt led by Herbert Wochinz and became one of the fathers of what has become known as Wiener Aktionismus (Viennese Actionism). Apart from marathon literary readings and happenings, there were processions and demonstrations (usually ending in huge parties) and, in 1958–9, a series of literary cabarets. In the summer they staged an 'open-air *commedia*' in a park, organized macabre parades and, for their last joint event, in 1964 staged the first performance of a multimedia children's opera.

The main protagonists were Friedrich Achleitner (b. 1930), Konrad Bayer (1932–69), Hans Carl Artmann, Gerhard Rühm (b. 1930) and Oswald Wiener (b. 1935). As in the literary cabaret, the dominating aspects were those anticipating happenings, a style of communication the Wiener Gruppe deliberately cultivated to distinguish themselves from the Austrian art and cultural establishment; and there was, of course, to compensate for the intellectual wasteland of the Nazi regime, innovative experimenting with expressionism, surrealism and dadaism – for example, the Austrian Raoul Hausmann (1886–1971) – on the content side, and innovative techniques in the handling of language.

An important contribution to avant-garde art came from the Wiener Aktionisten (Viennese Actionists), the performance-oriented anti-art movement that was a radical reaction to the prevailing conservative atmosphere. Hermann Nitsch (b. 1938), Otto Mühl ('paintings growing out of the canvas'), Rudolf Schwarzkogler (1940–64), Günther Brus (b. 1938), Valie Export (b. 1942) (Grapple and Touch Cinema), all from the visual arts, enjoyed a close relationship with the Wiener Gruppe. They elevated gesture into a movement-oriented, theatrical act. In various performances – *Pouring with Food and Blood*, *The Body as a Canvas*, *Self-Mutilations*, *Walling In and Walling Out* and *Trespassing of the Public Space* – they violated taboos of religion, sex and, often, good taste, aiming at a kind of therapeutic effect. Nitsch, in fact, developed a whole theatrical theory of what he called *Orgien-Mysterien-Theater* (Orgy Mystery Theatre).

The Burgtheater, in its renovated building (inaugurated in 1955) and directed by Ernst Haeusserman (1916–84) from 1959 to 1968, devoted itself to world literature. Leopold Lindtberg directed Shakespeare's historical dramas and a cycle of plays by dramatist Franz Grillparzer; Gustav Rudolf Sellner (1905–90) directed a cycle of ancient dramas in a space created by Fritz Wotruba (1907–75); and a Raimund cycle (Ferdinand Raimund, 1790–1836) was staged under the direction of Rudolf Steinboeck with stage design by Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980), the famous expressionist painter.

The Theater in der Josefstadt, formerly the theatre of Max Reinhardt, was and still is a theatre centring on individual actors and a conversational tone. After Ernst Haeusserman, the theatre was directed (1959–69) by Franz Stoß (b. 1909). In a much-admired, unmistakably Viennese acting style, an experienced company played Anton Chekhov, Georges Courteline, Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Franz Molnár, Luigi Pirandello and Ödön von Horvath, as well as polished light comedies.

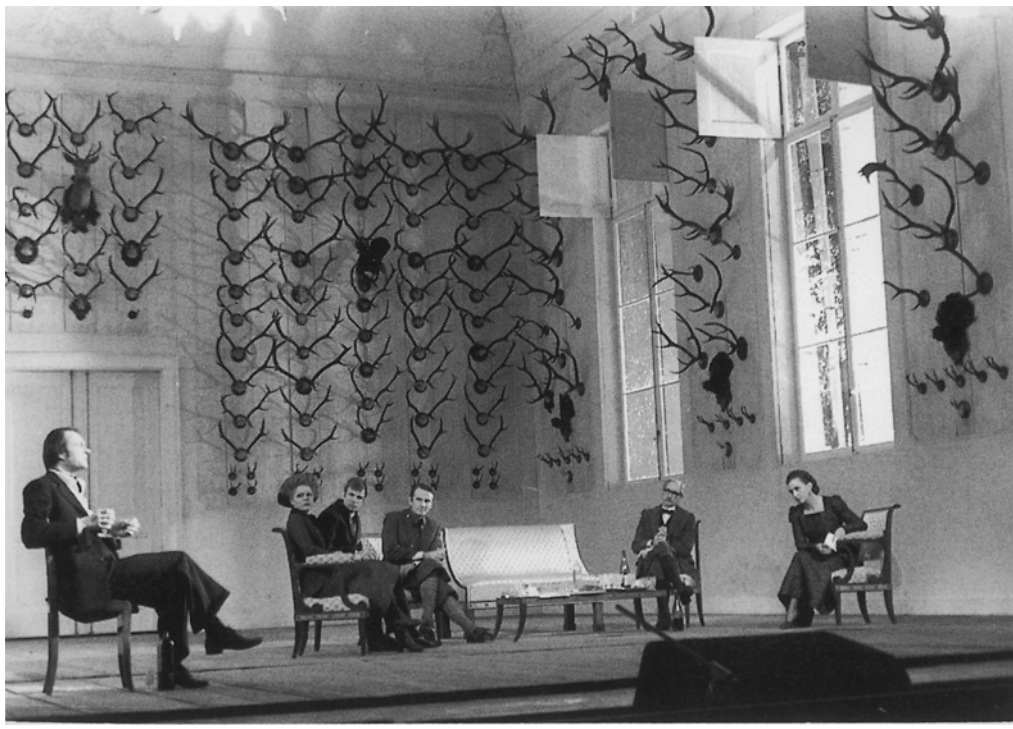
From the standpoint of programming, the most interesting theatre in Vienna was probably the Volkstheater under the directorship of Leon Epp (1952–68). Epp presented Sartre, Camus, Genet, Ionesco and writers in the documentary style, such as Heinar Kipphardt, Peter Weiss and Rolf Hochhuth. With his production of *Mutter Courage* (*Mother Courage*) in 1963 Epp put a stop to the boycotting of Brecht in Vienna and from then on presented a Brecht production every year. Essentially, the theatre's seasons were devoted to Austria, with a special focus on Nestroy, a policy continued (1968–79) by Gustav Manker (1913–89), Epp's successor. Manker paved the way for the new generation of Austrian dramatists: Wolfgang Bauer (b. 1941), Peter Turrini (b. 1944) and Harald Sommer (b. 1935).

In the 1970s, the socialist one-party government under Bruno Kreisky led to a demand for a radical cultural policy. This awakened great expectations among Austria's cultural community: a spirit of departing for new territory left its lasting imprint on the cultural climate. The upheavals of 1968 had reached Austria with delay and in a very dissipated form. The new open-minded and multicultural atmosphere, however, did induce some changes in the institutionalized temples of art: under the directorship of Gerhard Klingenberg, the Burgtheater attracted some of the most important European directors: Jean-Louis Barrault, Peter Wood, Peter Hall, Otomar Krejca, Roberto Guiccardini, Luca Ronconi, whose classical productions (with Luciano Damiani) did not meet with general understanding but turned out to be

epoch-making, and Giorgio Strehler, who, in Goldoni's *La Villegiatura*, was able to kindle a Mediterranean acting temperament in even the most serious-minded classical players. The theatrical landscape was given added colour by artists and companies such as the Komödianten am Börseplatz (Stock Market Comedians), 'practising Brechtians', and underground stages such as the Ateliertheater am Naschmarkt and the Kaffeetheater.

The commissioner of the Vienna Festival, Ulrich Baumgartner (1907–84), began in 1968 to lure the international world of theatre to Vienna under the motto 'European Comedians', from the Piccolo Teatro of Milan to the Vakhtangov Theatre from Moscow to avant-garde *café-théâtres* from Paris. In the following years Baumgartner succeeded in bringing companies, directors and productions to the Arena St Marx. These were to define European theatre in the 1970s and even in the 1980s – Peter Brook, Jérôme Savary (Magic Circus), Andrei Şerban, Ellen Stewart, and Joe Chaikin's Open Theatre. Some years earlier, the Living Theatre from the USA caused a scandal in Vienna with its performance of *The Brig*.

A consequence of this open-mindedness was a sudden boom of independent theatrical producers, called 'independent companies'. Theatre in cafés, in the street and in pubs animated the world outside of establishment culture (on which they had hardly any influence). Some of these independent companies managed to create their own performing spaces and bridged the gap between underground theatre and the large civic companies. Artistically, the most important were the Ensembletheater (the former Kaffeetheater), the Gruppe 80 (Group 80) which developed out of the Komödianten im Künstlerhaus, and the Schauspielhaus, known as the Theater der Kreis (The Circle) in the late 1980s when it was under the direction of George Tabori. One should also mention here the mobile Fo-Theatre, which performed critical, socio-political drama in Vienna's municipal housing complexes.



Claus Peymann's 1974 Burgtheater production of Thomas Bernhard's *The Hunting Party*, designed by Karl-Ernst Herrmann.
Photo: Hausmann, Österreichischer Bundestheaterverband.

The theatrical institutions run by the state and the provinces, on the other hand, have stayed mostly with the traditional, for example, the slightly outdated bourgeois style of the Theater in der Josefstadt's seasons or the combination of popular classics and contemporary Austrian drama at the Volkstheater.

Under the directorship (1973–85) of Achim Benning (b. 1935) the Burgtheater devoted its seasons to actors' theatre in German dramas from the classical period and the *fin-de-siècle*. In addition, there were world premières of Václav Havel's plays, productions of Scandinavian, Irish and Russian dramatists and some works of Brecht. Brecht's plays, though, remained strangers to the Burgtheater, even under its new director, Claus Peymann (from 1986) and despite the efforts of Manfred Karge, the Brecht-trained director from Berlin.

Peymann did, though, make some remarkable attempts to change his audience and brought many young people to the Burgtheater and the Akademietheater. Peymann's seasons, with their focus on German-language contemporary drama – Thomas Bernhard (1931–89), Peter Handke (b. 1942), Peter Turrini, Elfriede Jelinek (b. 1946) – now represent formidable competition for even the smaller companies.

Dramaturgy

One of the most performed living Austrian playwrights in the 1970s and 1980s was Elias Canetti (b. 1905), the 1981 Nobel prize-winner for literature. The linguistic virtuosity of his dramatic parables *Die Hochzeit* (*The Marriage*, written 1931–2, published 1932), *Komödie der Eitelkeit* (*Comedy of Vanity*, written 1933–4, published 1950) and *Die Befristeten* (*The Numbered*, written 1952) was only belatedly recognized by theatre companies. *Die Hochzeit* was directed by Hans Hollmann at the Akademietheater in 1985 and by Axel Corti at the Salzburger Festspiele in 1988. *Komödie der Eitelkeit* was directed by Hermann Kutscher at the Schauspielhaus Graz in 1972 and by Hans Hollmann at the Burgtheater in 1979. Friedrich Kallina directed *Die Befristeten* at the Konzerthaustheater in Vienna in 1987.

Contemporary Austrian drama is focused around a revival of the critical social play depicting the working classes on the one hand and, on the other, a refined literary daring, represented by Peter Handke and Thomas Bernhard, the most internationally known Austrian writers. From 1976 until his death in 1989, Bernhard was the Burgtheater's writer-in-residence and *Heldenplatz* was his last première. In his will, however, Bernhard, the 'democratic anarchist', prohibited further productions of his plays in Austria. Since 1989, Austrians wishing to see productions of Bernhard's plays can do so only abroad. Handke, author of *Kaspar* and *Offending the Audience*, has had many of his plays staged by Karl-Ernst Hermann, whose kindred visual spirit effectively reflects the writer's imagination on stage. In the early 1990s, Peter Turrini was the most frequently performed Austrian dramatist at the Burgtheater: *Minderleister* (directed by Alfred Kirchner), a piece on unemployment and the economic crisis, *Tod und Teufel* (*Death and the Devil*, directed by Peter Palitzsch), a drama about a sinning priest and arms deals, and *Alpenglühen* (directed by Claus Peymann), have been successes there.

The Akademietheater presented the world première of *Totenauberg*, a play about Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and Hannah Arendt (1906–75) by Elfriede Jelinek, who had success at the Volkstheater with *Krankheit oder Moderne Frauen* (*Illness or Modern Women*).

Works by the two important writers of social drama, Felix Mitterer (b. 1948) and Heinz R. Unger (b. 1938), have been staged in many theatres across the country. The political drama *Republik des Vergessens* (*Republic of Forgetting*), Unger's contribution to the debate about Austria's relationship with fascism, had its première at the Schauspielhaus and at the Volkstheater. Felix Mitterer, author of *Kein Platz für Idioten* (*No Place for Idiots*) and *Die wilde Frau* (*The Wild Woman*), also had success with a modern version of *Jedermann* at the Theater in der Josefstadt.

Playwright Wolfgang Bauer, a radical chronicler of current history (*Magic Afternoon*, *Change*, *Shakespeare the Sadist* and *Die Kantine*), has also been performed at national theatres. The writer Ernst Jandl (b. 1925) is also a radical linguistic experimenter in his dramatic works *Die Humanisten* (*The Humanists*) and *Aus der Fremde* (*From Abroad*), voted play of the year by the journal *Theater heute* in 1980. The director George Tabori has also achieved success as a playwright in the last few years with *Mein Kampf* and *Goldberg-Variationen*. Among the writers emerging in the mid-1990s were Werner Schwab (b. 1958), a representative of verbally aggressive social drama (*Volksvernichtung oder Meine Leber ist sinnlos*/*Genocide*

or My Liver is Senseless), and Robert Schneider (b. 1962).

Directors, Directing and Production Styles

While Austrian dramatists have left their imprint on theatre throughout the German-speaking world, and actors such as Romy Schneider (1938–82), Oskar Werner (1922–84), Helmut Berger (b. 1944) and Klaus Maria Brandauer became international stars, few internationally known directors emerged in Austria after World War II. Max Reinhardt died in exile in 1943. The Austrian-born film directors Billy Wilder (b. 1906), Fred Zinnemann (b. 1907), Otto Preminger (1906–86) and Fritz Lang (1890–1976) did not return to work in Austria.

Walter Felsenstein (1901–75) left Austria as a young man and worked in Germany as an actor, director and theatre director. Director of the Komische Oper Berlin (East Berlin) since 1947, he became one of Europe's leading directors of contemporary music theatre. Leopold Lindtberg, director at the Schauspielhaus Zürich while in exile, frequently returned to Austria after the war. His style greatly influenced the performance of the classics at the Burgtheater and in 1964 he directed the first performance of the stage version of Karl Kraus's (1874–1936) *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit (The Last Days of Humanity)* at the Theater an der Wien with Helmut Qualtinger, Karl Paryla and Otto Tausig.

In 1948 Berthold Viertel (1885–1953), a poet and director, returned to Austria. He returned from exile with more knowledge and his own translations of contemporary Anglo-American dramas. In the late 1940s and early 1950s he directed thirteen productions in Austria, for

George Tabori's 1993 Akademietheater production of his *Requiem for a Spy*, designed by Karl-Ernst Herrmann.
Photo: Ruth Walz.

example, Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* at the Akademietheater.

Vienna-born Fritz Kortner, a well-known actor during the 1920s in Berlin, and a director in post-war Germany, offered some glimpses of radical realism in the 1960s (for example *Othello* in 1966 at the Burgtheater).

Hans Hollman (b. 1933) put his stamp on productions of classical plays in the FRG in the 1970s; most were adapted to address current issues. Otto Schenk (b. 1934), as director and actor, is the theatre's most popular performer at the Theater in der Josefstadt. His productions at the New York Metropolitan Opera were also widely acclaimed.

At the Schauspielhaus (Vienna) Hans Gratzer (b. 1941) produces exclusively contemporary drama. Many well-known German directors, such as Jürgen Flimm, Peter Zadek, Peter Stein, Hans Neuenfels, Achim Freyer and Andrea Breth, also work regularly in Austria. Stein has also been the artistic director of drama at the Salzburg Festival. George Tabori moved to Vienna in the late 1980s and began Der Kreis (The Circle), an experimental theatre and a school. His productions for Der Kreis and also at the Burgtheater and Akademietheater quickly made him one of the most influential personalities in Viennese theatre in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The Slovene minorities in Carinthia and Styria, and the Hungarian and Croatian minorities in Burgenland, also pursue their own cultural activities in 'culture societies' or 'clubs', partly including amateur theatre. The same is true of foreign workers from Turkey and those from the former Yugoslavia. There is no professional theatre organized by or for these minorities.

Ulf Birbaumer

Music Theatre

Austria's reputation as a 'land of music' can be explained in more than one way: apart from the international repute of many works created there, along with the performers and music institutions of high artistic quality, the general public attributes enormous cultural importance to music. The media as well are interested in the form, especially works at the Vienna State Opera, a powerful symbol of the nation's cultural identity. They are also interested in its world-famous orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, and festivals such as the one in Salzburg, which are strongholds of traditional culture. The enormous interest that the population showed in the reconstruction of the State Opera after World War II was telling proof of the special affinity Austrians have for music and music theatre.

Due to bomb damage to the building, the State Opera had to suffer ten years of 'exile'. Its first post-war performance, however, took place on 1 May 1945 – Mozart's *Hochzeit des Figaro* at the Volksoper, directed by Hermann Juch (b. 1908); from October 1945, it continued mostly at the Theater an der Wien (under the directorship (1945–54) of Franz Salmhofer (1900–75) until the reopening of the opera house on 5 November 1955. This decade, one of the most attractive in the opera's history, was shaped by its skill with the Mozart (and Richard Strauss) ensemble under the directorship (1943–5) of Karl Böhm. From 1945 onward, the ensemble gained an international reputation through singers such as Irmgrad Seefried (1919–88), Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (b. 1915), Hilde Güden (1917–88), Sena Jurinac (b. 1921), Wilma Lipp (b. 1925), Anton Dermota (1910–89) and Erich Kunz (b. 1909).

Herbert von Karajan (1908–89), who after Böhm's second period as director (1954–6) became artistic director of the opera (until 1964), introduced an era of internationalization which replaced the commitment to a permanent ensemble and a connected repertory. The focus was shifted to productions in the original language and attempts were made to lure attractive star singers to a kind of semi-*stagione* in Vienna. This system was followed by directors Egon Hilbert (1899–1968), director 1964–8, Heinrich Reif-Gintl (1900–74), director 1968–72, Rudolf Gamsjäger (1909–85), director 1972–6, Egon Seefehlner (b. 1912), director 1976–82 and 1984–6, Lorin Maazel (b. 1930), director 1982–4, and Claus Helmut Drese (b. 1922), director 1986–91. Drese complemented his overall strategy – superlative performers and directors, controversial repertoire – with some innovative activities motivated by his commitment to twentieth-century opera: productions with an experimental character staged at

unusual locations (such as the Odeon and the Theater im Künstlerhaus) and designed to attract new audiences. Members of the opera-affiliated Opernstudio had an opportunity to test their skills in the performance of contemporary works (such as the first Austrian performance of Udo Zimmermann's *Weiße Rose* in 1987, or *Kehraus um St Stephan* by Ernst Krenek in 1990).

The two directors since 1991, the singer Eberhard Wächter (1929–92) and the former theatrical agent Ioan Holander, shifted the focus of their artistic strategy to the ensemble. This policy was less oriented towards brief stays by famous names but was geared more to longer-term contracts for young or not yet well-known singers.

Since 1991 the Vienna Volksoper, for fourteen years under the leadership of Karl Dönch (b. 1915), has had the same director as the Vienna State Opera. Its programme is traditionally characterized by a combination of works from the traditional operetta repertoire, a few mostly 'classical' musicals, rarely performed operas (such as *Lady Macbeth of Mtenšk* by Shostakovich in 1991) and German-language productions of Italian operas (such as *La Bohème* by Puccini in 1984 or Mozart's *Da Ponte-Trias* in 1987–9), as well as works from the twentieth century.

As far as Austrian composers are concerned, in the State Opera contemporary opera has primarily been represented by Gottfried von Einem (b. 1918), *Dantons Tod* after Georg Büchner (1947 and 1967); *Der Prozeß* (*The Trial*) after Franz Kafka (1953 and 1970); *Der Besuch der alten Dame* (*The Visit*) after Friedrich Dürrenmatt (first performed in 1971, revived in 1989); *Kabale und Liebe* after Friedrich Schiller (first performed in 1976); and Friedrich Cerha (b. 1926), *Baal* after Bertolt Brecht (1981, revived in 1992) and *Der Rattenfänger* after Carl Zuckmayer (1987). The Wiener Schule (Vienna School), forced out of the country by the Nazis, conquered the opera stage after World War II, first through Alban Berg (1885–1935) – *Wozzeck* (first performed in 1930, then 1952 and 1955) and *Lulu* (1968) – then through Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) – *Moses und Aron* (1973). Ernst Krenek's first dodecaphonic opera, *Karl V*, was commissioned by the State Opera in 1933 but never reached the stage due to political reasons. The work was finally premièred in 1984. As far as the international contemporary repertoire is concerned, *Un re in ascolto* by Luciano Berio (1984), *Die Schwarze Maske* (1986) by Krzystof Penderecki and *Die Soldaten* (1990) by Bernd Alois Zimmermann were successful with both the public and the media.

The Wiener Kammeroper (Vienna Chamber Opera), under the leadership of Hans Gabor (b. 1924) since its foundation in 1953, presents contemporary works on a smaller scale, complemented by open discussion sessions, for example Gerhard Schedl (b. 1957), *Der Kontrabaß* (1984); Herbert Lauermann (b. 1955), *Das Ehepaar* (first performance in 1987) and *Wundertheater* (first performed in 1988). The greater part of the approximately 120 annual performances of this medium-scale stage with only modest financial means is devoted to a deliberately broad repertoire. The Kammeroper is also very committed to the promotion of young talent (for example, through the International Belvedere Competition for opera and operetta, organized for the first time in 1982).

The Jugendstil-Theater is part of the psychiatric hospital at Baumgartner Höhe at Vienna's periphery. Designed by Otto Wagner (1841–1918) and reopened in 1980, since 1990 it has been the home of unconventional opera performances, presenting innovative interpretations, well-established contemporary works and experimental music.

In 1956 Marcel Prawy (b. 1911) introduced the Broadway-style musical to Austria with a Volksoper performance of Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate*. This type of popular music theatre gained special importance at the Theater an der Wien under the directorship (1965–83) of Rolf Kutschera and, especially, under the directorship (1983–93) of Peter Weck (b. 1930). Following Anglo-Saxon models, he produced hit musicals from the USA or London's West End, such as Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*, which after seven years and 2,020 performances formed the basis of Vienna's reputation as a European musical metropolis. This was followed by attempts to use Austria-related themes to create an 'Austrian musical': *Freudiana* (Eric Woolfson, Brian Brolly and Lida Winiewicz, 1990) dealing with the intellectual world of Sigmund Freud, and *Elisabeth* (Sylvester Levay and Michael Kunze, 1992), devoted to the legendary Elizabeth of Bavaria (1837–98), wife of the Habsburg Emperor Franz Joseph (1830–1916).

The opera in Graz, Austria's second-largest home of music theatre, presents contemporary and rare works, as well as a traditional repertoire in new and even spectacular interpretations. Since 1990, its director, Gerhard Brunner (b. 1939), has been continuing this policy after

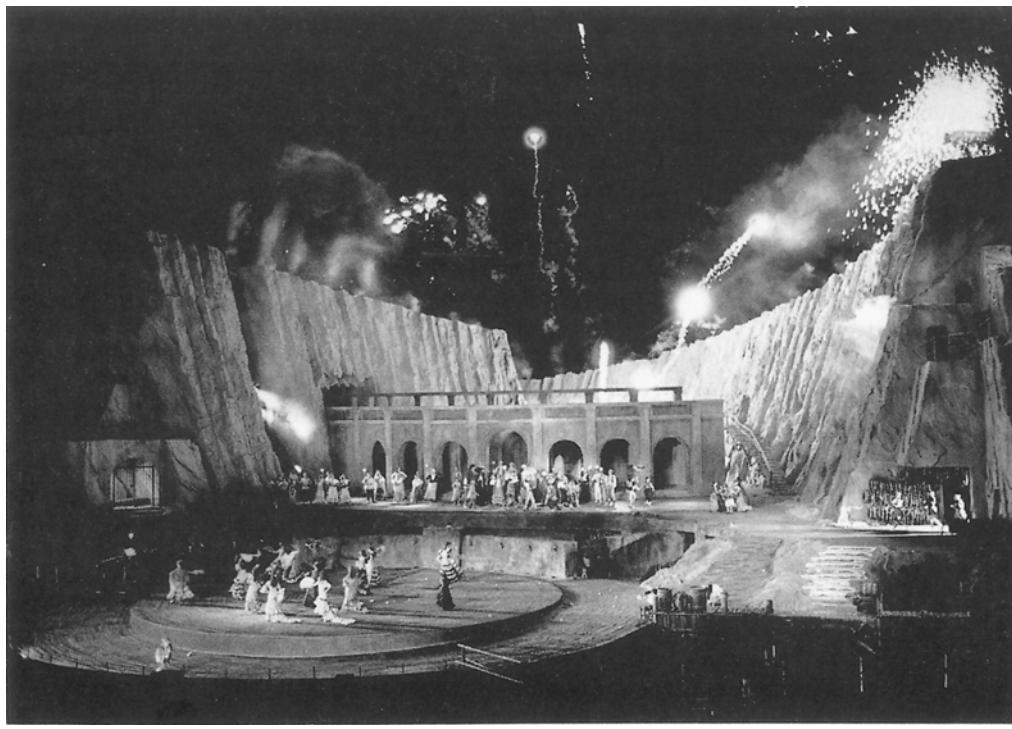
eighteen years of the directorship of Carl Nemeth (b. 1926) came to a close with Wagner's *Ring* cycle (1988–9).

Other theatres in the provinces, offering both music theatre and drama, also mainly rely on a traditional repertoire. The Tirolean Landestheater and the Landestheater in Linz have gained additional recognition after 1945 due to their commitment to high-quality operas through first performances of contemporary works and an emphasis on modern composers.

Austrian festivals also combine a traditional programme with a commitment to contemporary or rare works. In the three decades until his death in 1989, Herbert von Karajan placed his unmistakable stamp on the Salzburg Festival. During that period the festival was predominantly dedicated to artistic perfection and opulence. During the Karajan era, Mozart's work was mainly presented by the directors Jean-Pierre Ponnelle (1932–88) – for example, *The Magic Flute* (1978) – and Michael Hampe (b. 1935) – *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan Tutte* (1982–91). This dedication to the *genius loci* continues to be one of the pillars in the policy of the present festival management under Gerard Mortier (b. 1944).

After World War II the commitment of the Salzburg Festival to contemporary music theatre began with the first performance of *Dantons Tod* by Gottfried von Einem in 1947. It became even more clearly visible in the 1980s, frequently in cooperation with the Vienna State Opera (Cerha, 1981; Berio, 1984; Henze after Monteverde: *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, first performed in 1985; Penderecki, 1986; Gerhard Wimberger (b. 1923): *Fürst von Salzburg*, 1987; Helmut Eder (b. 1916): *Mozart in New York*, 1991).

Since 1986, the Bregenz Festival has presented major operas staged with spectacular results on the Seebühne (for example, by Jérôme Savary), the lake-front stage which had mainly been used for operettas and musicals since 1946; and the Festival Hall (inaugurated in 1980) which shows works that are rarely seen elsewhere (for



Jérôme Savary's 1991 Bregenz Festival production of Bizet's *Carmen*, designed by Michel Lebois.
Photo: Monika Rittershaus.

example, Catalani's *La Wally*, first performed in 1990). The Seefestspiele Mörbisch has since its establishment in 1957 been devoted to operetta.

Since 1975, the Carinthischer Sommer has been presenting religious opera, especially through commissions to Austrian composers, and pieces for children, for example, Cesar Bresgen (1913–88), *Albolina* (1987). Founded in 1958, the Gesellschaft für Musiktheater (Society for Music Theatre) presents Baroque works in churches, mostly in the Vienna University church.

The diversity of contemporary Austrian music theatre also finds expression at the avant-garde Graz festival, Steirischer Herbst (Styrian Autumn). Within the framework of the festival, the opera in Graz presents important first performances such as *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures* (first performed in 1970) by György Ligeti, *Orpheus und Eurydike* (first performed in 1973) by Ernst Krenek, Friedrich Cerha's three-act version of Alban Berg's *Lulu* (first performed in 1981), *Auszählreim* (first performed in 1986) by Otto M. Zykan (b. 1935), and *Amerika* (first performed in 1992) by Roman Haubenstock-Ramati (b. 1919).

When the Nazi era interrupted the development of modernity it led – especially in the domain of music – to a longer search for an indigenous point of view. The reception of the Vienna School and everything that came in its wake was delayed; post-war concert performances – as, for example, Berg's *Lulu* in 1949 by the Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (International Society for New Music, founded in 1922) – were rare. Gottfried von Einem had a special position. As early as 1947, the success of his *Dantons Tod* placed him in the limelight and he became the most frequently performed living composer. His work is marked by tonality.

Creators of more traditional opera include Helmut Eder, *Der Aufstand*, an appeal against violence and the abuse of power (1976); Cesar Bresgen, who uses an accessible musical language in *Der Engel von Prag* after motifs by Leo Perutz (1978); Gerhard Wimberger, whose *Dame Kobold* is a musical comedy after Calderón de la Barca/Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1964). Ivan Eröd (b. 1936) revives earlier tradition in works such as *Orpheus ex machina*, a paraphrase of the Orpheus motif (1982).

The Vienna School was succeeded and further developed – apart from the work of emigrants such as Egon Wellesz (1885–1974) and Ernst Krenek – by composers such as Karlheinz Füssl (1924–92), Paul Kont (b. 1920) and Friedrich Cerha. György Ligeti wrote *Le Grand Macabre* (1978), a doomsday spectacle after Ghelderode, following the tradition of absurd drama. His work is now recognized in many parts of the world. A leader of avant-garde composers (and a leader in graphic notation) is Roman Haubenstock-Ramati, whose *Amerika* (1966, after Franz Kafka) is a panoply of simultaneously presented scenes. A total rejection of the 'Darmstadt School' (Stockhausen, Boulez and Nono), which had dominated the debate of ideas in the international avant-garde in the 1950s, became apparent in the vein of 'new tonality' seen in the work of Kurt Schwertsik (b. 1935). His *Fanferlieschen und Schönefüßchen* is a fairytale after Clemens Brentano and was presented in 1981.

Of younger composers, Herbert Lauermann and Gerhard Schedl have already left their artistic imprints. The multimedia emphasis is reflected by Otto M. Zykan's unconventional conception of the integral work of art (*Singers Nähmaschine ist die beste*, 1966/73). In the works of Dieter Kaufmann (b. 1941) sounds produced by the human voice, instruments and electronic devices are contrasted with one another.

The Hallucination Company, Drahdiwaberl, the Erste Allgemeine Verunsicherung and Wolfgang Ambros (with the 'Alpine musical' *Der Watzmann*) successfully represent Austrian rock theatre.

Isolde Schmid-Reiter

Dance Theatre

Austria's centres for classical and modern dance are Vienna, Graz and Salzburg. The Vienna State Opera Ballet is Austria's most important company. After World War II the ballet was led by Erika Hanka (1905–58) until 1958, Dimitrije Parlic (b. 1919) from 1958 to 1962, Aurel von Milloss (1906–88) from 1963 to 1966 and 1971 to 1974, Wazlaw Orlikowsky, from 1966 to 1971, Richard Nowotny (b. 1926) from 1974 to 1976, Gerhard Brunner, from

1976 to 1990, Gerlinde Dill (b. 1933) from 1990 to 1991, and Elena Chernischova, from 1991 to 1993, when Anne Woolliams (b. 1936) took over direction of the company.

In her work, Erika Hanka strove for a modern style which integrated classical ballet. Her seasons featured the Diaghilev repertoire, works with contemporary music and ballets with a typically Austrian or Viennese flair, for example *Medusa* (1957). Aurel von Milloss was responsible for giving the programme a more international touch and created a number of works using contemporary composition, such as *Bolero* (1965) and *Estri* (1972). A lasting influence was exerted by Gerhard Brunner, who developed an excellent repertoire with very high standards of both choreography and music, and who also tried to create a specifically Viennese style.

The second classical troupe in Vienna is the ballet company at the Vienna Volksoper. Outside Vienna the companies in Graz and Salzburg are the only ones possessing supra-regional importance. Graz focuses on both the classical and contemporary repertoire while Salzburg deals with various forms and styles. Since 1992, Innsbruck has had a dance theatre, directed by Eva Maria Lerchenberg-Thöny (*Lamento* and *Rosa Winter*, both 1993), within the framework of the Tirolean Provincial Theatre.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Grete Wiesenthal (1885–1970) and her sisters Elsa and Bertha began to experiment with modern dance. In the 1920s and 1930s the expressionist dancers Gertrud Bodenwieser (1890–1959) and Gertrud Kraus (1903–77) gained international recognition, as did Rosalia Chladek (b. 1905), an expressionist dancer and teacher. A lively modern dance scene did not come about, however, until the 1980s. An international dance boom, the Tanzbiennale in Vienna with its New-Dance Week, and numerous festivals with guest performances throughout the year significantly influenced the development of modern dance in Austria.

The Vienna Tanztheater Homunculus was

Hubert Lepka's *108 EB Chambermusic for Five Engines* at the 1991 WUK Dance Festival in Vienna.
Photo: Wolfgang Kirchner.

founded in 1981; in 1982 Liz King from Britain set up the Tanztheater Wien with its international company, a leader in this area for a number of years. The company closed in 1988. In 1982 the dance theatre Vorgänge was established in Salzburg.

By the early 1990s Austria had about forty companies with varying artistic standards. Homunculus continues to propagate modern expressionist dance with many of its dancers graduates of the Conservatory of the City of Vienna. Their training is based on Rosalia Chladek's system of movement. The greater part of the Homunculus repertoire is based on literature and literary sources. Its productions tend to deal with human relationships and issues relating to the individual versus society, for example, *Neue Räume I–III* (*New Rooms I–III*, 1990–2) and *Schlachthof für Engel* (*Slaughterhouse for Angels*, 1992).

Dancer-choreographer Sebastian Prantl (b. 1960) was trained in New York and for some time specialized in multimedia dance performances. In the early 1990s he returned to a more abstract dance language and extensively concerned himself with music, visual arts and architecture, for example in *Für die Vögel* (*For the Birds*, 1992) and *Klangsäule* (*Sounding Post*, 1993). Another dancer-choreographer is Willi Dorner. After training in the USA and France, his work was very much influenced by contact improvisation and the use of video techniques (*Fremdlingin/The Foreigner*, 1990). Other dancer-choreographers of note include Elio Gervasi, Bertl Gstettner, the performance artist Daniel Aschwanden, Dorothea Hübner, Aurelia Staub, Roderich Madl and Doris Ebner. Dancers Astrid Bayer, Sibylle Starkbaum and Rose Breuss concentrate mainly on solo performances. Social criticism appears in the choreography that Zdravko Haderlap devises for his Tanztheater Ikarus in Klagenfurt (Carinthia).

The Salzburg dance scene has been markedly shaped by the Vorgänge company, which was founded in 1982 by sports students searching for alternative forms of movement. The group quickly attracted international attention due to its fresh style and acrobatic elements. In the late 1980s it split into several groups: the companies of Editta Braun, Beda Percht (b. 1958) and his Cataracts (specializing in suspension and climbing events), Hubert Lepka and his Maschinen-Tanz-Theater, and the dance-comedy duo Ekke Hager and Wolf Jugner.

The Austrian choreographer best known internationally is Johann Kresnik (b. 1939), who received his training as a dancer in Graz. He moved to Germany in 1959 where, since the end of the 1960s, his dance theatre works count among the most radical and provocative examples of German dance theatre – *Paradies* (*Paradise*, 1968), *Familiendialog* (*Family Dialogue*, 1980), *Ulrike Meinhof* (1990) and *Frida Kahlo* (1992). His work is seen in Austria only through visiting dance companies.

Ursula Kneiss

Theatre for Young Audiences

Since the 1930s, Vienna has had, in its Theater der Jugend (Theatre for Children), an organization unique in tradition, size and structure. After 1918, Vienna was governed by the social democrats. Still known for its grandiose municipal housing complexes, the city established a Theatre for Children for two purposes. First, it was to promote popular education and provide young audiences from all sections of the population with aesthetic training through organized theatre visits in order to attack the educational monopoly of the upper classes. Second, the productions provided jobs for unemployed actors and filled gaps in Vienna's theatrical life.

After 1934 the organization, now officially known as Theater der Jugend, extended its activities, formerly restricted to children over the age of 10, to encompass primary school children. Subsidized from this point by the Ministry of Education, the theatre had to fulfil 'national' tasks and was soon taken over by Hitler's youth movement. After the war, the organization was slowly rebuilt, a theatre company re-established in the 1950s, and a permanent stage found for the company for the first time in its existence.

The structure of Theater der Jugend (TdJ) is still the same as in its founding years: an organization which arranges theatre visits for children and a theatrical production unit. Tickets are distributed through the schools: every school in Vienna appoints one of its teachers as a contact, who then informs the school about the group's

activities and organizes ticket orders. The company, organized as a non-profit association, is financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and the Arts, the City of Vienna and the neighbouring provinces of Lower Austria and Burgenland.

The subscription scheme presents the company's own productions as well as outside productions, for example, from the Burgtheater, musicals and circus performances.

With the Renaissancetheater (550 seats), the Theater im Zentrum (230 seats), and the Zwischenraum (seventy seats), the TdJ has three permanent stages at its disposal and rents additional stages if the need arises.

Roughly 50,000 subscriptions were sold in the 1991–2 season; 558 performances of the TdJ's own productions were attended by 160,000 people. In addition, the TdJ's organization distributed just as many tickets for other theatres in Vienna. The TdJ has a staff of approximately 200, receives subsidies amounting to ASch60 million and has revenues of about ASch40 million.

The TdJ's collaboration with schools not only is the source of its high attendance rate but also restricts the artistic freedom of the theatre. Proposed productions have to be submitted to a pedagogic advisory board for approval. This board consists of teachers and representatives of various institutions (Catholic Family Association, Youth and Parents' Associations). The original task of the TdJ, to make 'education' available to broader sections of the population, was pursued after 1945 in such a way that the programme remained rather rigid: fairytales for children and modern classical plays for adolescents.

The years of 'proper' adaptations of popular tales, legends and mystic stories, carefully cleansed of any references to real life, was sold to schools on a subscription system by the TdJ – arguably the largest theatre organization for children in the western hemisphere until the early 1970s. It was then that socially critical productions by the Berlin Reichskabarett (later renamed Grips), with their many references to daily life, found their way to Vienna's cellar theatres. The first step came in 1971 with a performance of *Maximilian Pfeiferling*, by Carsten Krüger and Volker Ludwig (b. 1937), produced by Werner Prinz and Ingrid Greisenegger (b. 1940) at the cooperative theatre, Courage.

At the same time models of theatre for children from France and Italy provided incentives for the *Animazione* (Social Animation) movement, which, initiated in 1972 by the theatre experts Ingrid Greisenegger and Ilse Hanl (1943–90) at the Dramatisches Zentrum in Vienna, paved the way in Austria for a theatre *with* children. In contrast to the traditional theatre *for* children, addressing a quasi-imaginary child, *Animazione* aimed at helping children to express their own needs in group work, to discover creativity in role-playing, drawing, and discovering their environment. Animation concepts were used as basic materials, not only for school performances, but also in the professional theatres. In 1972 the Teatro del Sole staged its *Città degli animali* as part of the summer seminar of the Institute for Theatre Research in Eisenstadt.

In the 1990s, the Theater der Jugend focused on real situations experienced by children and adolescents, giving commissions to young writers and young directors, who put their own stamps on the productions.

In the provinces, theatre for children was traditionally reduced to Christmas pageants at provincial theatres and amateur theatres. In the 1980s, individual companies making theatre for children were established. Two of them succeeded in securing permanent stages for themselves – the Theater am Mirabellplatz (Toi-Haus) in Salzburg and the Theater des Kindes in Linz. Other companies perform at schools and in municipal meeting halls.

Today the Culture Department of the city of Vienna allocates ASch3.5 million to independent companies producing theatre for children. An advisory board decides on the distribution of this amount to the thirty to forty companies that apply for subsidies annually.

Momentum to the movement of theatre for children is now also provided by various international festivals. The year 1987 saw the first international children's theatre festival in Vienna, within the framework of the Vienna Festival. This event resulted in the foundation of an Austrian centre of the international ASSITEJ association. Since 1989, a group from Vorarlberg has been organizing the Luaga and Losna Festival, presenting international and Austrian companies and organizing conferences. In the province of Lower Austria a further international festival, Szene Bunte Wähne, presents performances in six different towns.

Marlene Schneider

Puppet Theatre

After the end of World War II Austrian puppet theatre was in a deplorable state. In order to survive, many puppet theatres had observed instructions issued by the Nazi-German Reichsinstitut for Puppet Theatre, which had an outlet in Vienna. They incorporated Nazi propaganda in their sometimes century-old texts. When the war was over, many of the theatres physically destroyed these old scripts, and sometimes even their equipment, for fear of reprisals. Thus, a treasure of traditional puppet material was lost forever. With only a few exceptions, the old puppet masters were unable to continue their work.

Post-war misery induced many young people to try their hands at puppet theatre. New companies evolved which did not understand the older traditions and, out of ignorance, took the propaganda style as their own. Even today puppet shows for children on television contain residual traces of this.

Two very well-known puppet theatres survived the war without damage. The Salzburger Marionetten (founded by Anton Aicher in 1913) continued their work and their tours abroad with immensely popular musical plays. At the Paris World Exhibition in 1937, the company was, in fact, awarded the gold medal. During World War II, its puppets were used as 'front-line-theatre'. After the war, it performed even major operas, such as Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and *Don Giovanni*. The company can still be seen at the Salzburg Festival.

According to puppeteer Richard Teschner (1879–1948), puppet theatre was never supposed to be a miniature imitation of human theatre. Rather than giving human voices to his puppets, his creations acted in silence, accompanied by exotic music, in a mysterious, grotesque and unreal world. Teschner developed a specific technique based on Javanese models, for operating his puppets, a combination of rod and string techniques. In the beginning, Teschner performed for a small private circle – among the audience Gustav Klimt (1862–1918) and Alfred Roller (1864–1935). From 1925 onward, the performances were open to the public. From 1932 to 1948 he performed with his own Figurenspiegel. The name of the theatre stemmed from the circular concave mirror used to display the setting. Today, the remnants of Teschner's theatre can be seen in the Austrian Theatre Museum. The rare performances in this style still find enthusiastic audiences.

The economic recovery of the 1950s produced a pedagogical era of puppet theatre. Theatrical 'lessons' for children about traffic or brushing one's teeth resulted in a complete loss of traditional glove-puppet theatre. Most puppeteers viewed their work as merely a meagre source of income.

The only puppet theatre with a permanent stage today is the Wiener Uraniapuppentheater led by Hans Kraus. With his two puppet stars, Kasperl and Petzi, he has shaped the impression that Austrians have of glove-puppet theatre.

In its early days, Austrian television discovered glove-puppet theatre for children's programming. Wednesday afternoons have ever since been the time for puppet theatre on Austrian television.

In the course of time, puppet theatre has, more or less, lost its artistic dimension and is regarded only as nostalgic entertainment for children. In the 1960s some puppet theatres for adults were founded in Vienna, but had to close due to a lack of interest on the part of the public. The early 1970s saw a major upswing, and Ulrich Baumgartner, commissioner of the Vienna Festival, devoted the entire 1971 festival to puppet theatre and invited internationally renowned puppet theatres to Vienna.

Erwin Piplitz (b. 1939) was entrusted with the organization of the World Puppet Festival at the Museum of the Twentieth Century and he also founded the Pupodrom, the first contemporary Austrian puppet theatre. In 1984 the Vienna Festival was once more devoted to puppet theatre. A major exhibition at the Messpalast was a meeting-point for many young puppeteers and several companies presented their first public performances. Old techniques were rediscovered. This did not, however, represent the beginning of a new avant-garde tradition, as was the case for some eastern bloc companies, and most of the newly founded companies disappeared again.

In the 1990s, most of the puppet theatres perform for children. Some companies use contemporary forms and texts that also address an adult audience: the Lilarum Theatre (Vienna) presents fairytales for children and a separate programme for adults (Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in 1992); the one-man theatre by Christoph Bochdansky (Vienna); the Bavastel Company

(Kirchdorf, Upper Austria); and the shadow theatre of Klaus Behrendt (Vienna), which is especially focused on Asian shadow theatre, myths and legends. There are also some very good amateur and school puppet theatres. In 1989 the Theater der Jugend in Vienna closed its puppet theatre and thus put a stop to a tradition initiated by teachers in the 1930s.

In 1979 Austria joined the International Puppeteers Association (UNIMA); in the same year the first Mistelbacher Puppentage was held, the most important international puppet festival in Austria. A new series of festivals called Pupienale was established in Wels, which from 1994 was named Welser Puppentage. In Hohenems, the Homunculus Puppet Theatre Festival was created as a counterpoint to the Schubert Festival. This means that at present Austria has three international events devoted to puppet theatre.

Klaus Behrendt

Design

Stage and costume design in Austria are characterized by contrasting forces of great tradition on the one hand and avant-garde attempts to abandon that tradition on the other. During the Baroque era, sumptuous music-theatre pageants at the imperial court used all available means to represent the power and style of the emperor. Eventually, religious theatre and theatre for the common man began to make use of the stage painter. At the end of the twentieth century Viennese prop shops and costume workshops delivered their perfectly crafted scenery to theatres all over Europe.

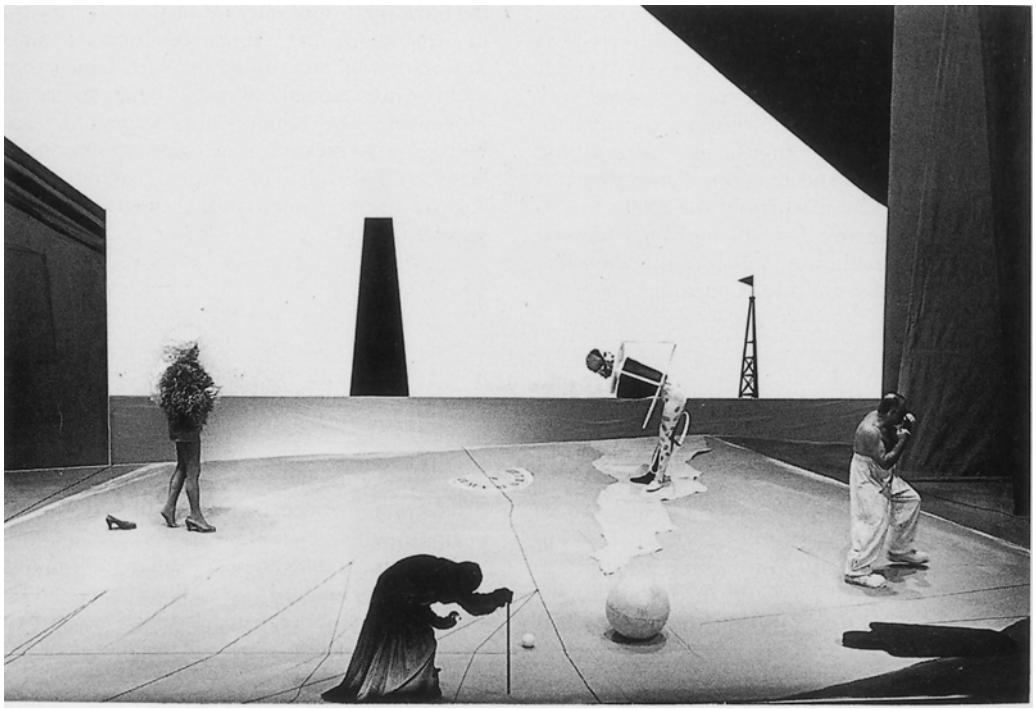
In the early twentieth century Vienna became a centre of theatrical reform. The director of the opera – composer and conductor Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) – appointed Alfred Roller, a graphic artist, painter and professor at the progressive arts and crafts school, as the opera's head designer. In just over five years, the collaboration between the two men gave rise to a fundamentally new definition of opera as an integrated work of art. At the same time leading proponents of modernism, such as Kolo Moser (1868–1918), Remigius Geyling, Heinrich Lefler (1863–1919), Eduard Wimmer-Wisgrill, Oskar Kokoschka, and Oskar Strnad (1879–1935), to cite but a few, gathered experience at small theatres (*Fledermaus* cabaret) and at open-air stages. They presented their radical scenery projects in exhibitions and had them published. One example of the high quality of scenery and costume designs at the beginning of the twentieth century was the Wiener Werkstätte, which decisively influenced interior decoration at the time. It also designed and produced fashion and made Vienna a European fashion centre. After World War I these skills were utilized by productions – even on Broadway – for many years to come.

Tradition and attempts to break with it were also characteristic of the post-war period. The Burgtheater, the Vienna State Opera, and the Salzburg Festival succeeded in attracting the permanent services of domestic artists, such as Stefan Hlawa (b. 1896), painter and graphic artist of scintillating wit, and designers of international calibre, such as Lois Egg (b. 1913) at the Burgtheater and Günther Schneider-Siemssen (b. 1926) at the State Opera.

Another important factor for stage design developments after the war was the fact that leading personalities of the new theatrical trends of the inter-war period – Emil Pirchan (1884–1957) and Casper Neher (1897–1962), for example – continuously worked in Vienna. As well, numerous visual artists, such as the painter and poet Oskar Kokoschka and the sculptor Fritz Wotruba, cooperated in entire production cycles of the Burgtheater while painters such as Wolfgang Hutter, Ernst Fuchs, Arik Brauer, Karl Korab and many others were engaged for individual productions.

The fact that Austrian theatre has always been in a position to attract leading representatives of international stage design has made its mark. Wieland Wagner, Teo Otto, Jürgen Rose, Ita Maximowna, Josef Svoboda and, especially, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle have regularly worked at Austrian theatres. More recently, stage designers who want to implement their scenic visions as directors have found more than ample room for their ambitions, both in repertory and at festivals: among them, Karl-Ernst Herrmann, Wilfried Minks and Achim Freyer.

The training institutions for stage and



Achim Freyer's 1987 Burgtheater production of *Ovid's Metamorphoses*.
Photo: Matthias Horn.

costume design have contributed to the high standards, since only artists of international renown have been appointed as teachers. At present there are four training institutions, each of them headed by a professor active in international theatre. These include the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna under Erich Wonder (b. 1944); the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna under Axel Manthey; the Mozarteum University of Music and Performing Arts in Salzburg under Herbert Kapplmüller (b. 1941); and the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz under Wolfram Skalicki. These artists are also active in day-to-day Austrian theatrical life.

Theatre Space and Architecture

Vienna has always been home to a great number of renowned theatre architects. The Opera House, designed by Eduard van der Nüll (1812–68) and August Siccard von Siccardsburg (1813–68), opened in 1868 and served as a model for major theatres in central Europe due to its rich ornamentation, its sober spatial arrangements and its excellent acoustics. The Hofburgtheater (later known as the Burgtheater) was a late work by Gottfried Semper (1803–79) and his partner Karl Hasenauer (1833–94), designed as a finale to the Baroque tradition of theatres with tiers of boxes. The design was flawed by deficiencies with regard to acoustics and the range of vision, and at the inauguration (1888) it turned out to be already obsolete. Both buildings were so heavily damaged in the war that their reconstruction was actually a rebuilding, especially of their stages.

Austrian architects designed other theatrical buildings even outside Austria. The design team of Ferdinand Fellner (1847–1915) and Hermann Helmer (1849–1919) designed no fewer

than forty-eight theatres and concert halls, especially in central and eastern Europe. Oskar Strnad's audacious designs anticipated the total theatre of Gropius and Piscator, Clemens Holzmeister designed the two festival stages in Salzburg while Wilhelm Holzbauer designed the new opera and town hall in Amsterdam.

The most urgent construction tasks connected with theatre in the post-war period were the reconstruction of the Vienna State Opera, heavily damaged by bombs and fire, and the Burgtheater, which had burned down only two days after the liberation of Vienna. In both cases the solution chosen was neither an exact reconstruction – which would have been possible – of the historically important buildings, nor entirely new buildings, but something between the two, a half-hearted and unsuccessful search for a combination of tradition and innovation. All undamaged building parts (especially the external walls, but also the grand staircases and the lobbies) were painstakingly preserved, but the auditoriums were clearly designed to tastes prevailing in the early 1950s. The stages were completely redesigned and brought up to the latest standards; at the Burgtheater, for example, there was a revolving stage by Sepp Nordegg (b. 1913).

The architects appointed for the politically important 'reconstruction' of the two national theatres (after a restricted competition) were Erich Boltenstern for the State Opera and Michel Engelhart and Otto Niedermoser (b. 1903) for the Burgtheater. They made it their task not so much to serve a new aestheticism or a new social objective, but rather to provide representative space for festive educational theatre.

Both competitions failed to pay any notice to Clemens Holzmeister, the designer of the first Salzburg Festival Hall (1926 and 1936–8) and creator of the sets for Max Reinhardt's legendary *Faust* production at the Salzburg Festival. Ignoring this man, recently returned from emigration, was absolutely typical of the period: change was fearsomely to be avoided. Holzmeister had designed the government quarter in Ankara during the years he spent in exile and had also worked on the idea of an 'ideal theatre' after studying ancient theatres. As a result, he designed various projects which were much discussed in expert circles. His projects for Salzburg, for instance, were a music stage on the Mönchsberg and a fascinating festival hall at Mirabellgarten. The designs were breathtaking in their audacity, entirely abandoning the concept of the proscenium arch stage. He searched for new relationships between audience and players, integrating nature and the precincts of the town. The post-war period forbade an implementation of these ambitious schemes. By then, Holzmeister had already begun the battle for the completion of 'his' festival quarter in Salzburg and was offered the task of rebuilding the historical theatre in Linz and designing a new, smaller building for drama. This provided him with an opportunity to give a tangible example of what he planned to do for Salzburg. In both cases the theatre occupied a central point within the town; in both cases the new theatres were expected to meet the latest technological standards. In both towns the theatre projects were high-priority items on the cultural policy agenda and received a great deal of public attention.

In 1956 Holzmeister was commissioned to build a large festival hall in Salzburg to accommodate opera, concert and drama. He planned to build a theatre district, also including administrative offices and workshops, behind the protected walls of the former Imperial Stables in early Baroque style, next to his old festival hall, which had been badly scarred by an adaptation by the stage designer Benno von Arendt during the Nazi period. The new, large festival hall, ideally fitting into the historical centre of Salzburg, is today one of Austria's most beautiful modern theatres as well as a model of functional adequacy and technological perfection, displaying the possibilities a theatre architect may make use of in the late twentieth century. Holzmeister's festival district is more than just a group of important functional buildings. It is a symbol for a country seeking to unite a cosmopolitan spirit and indigenous values, tradition and innovation, aestheticism and technology.

The monumental lake-side stages in Bregenz and Mörbisch are of little inherent artistic value: platforms extended into the lakes to carry the sets of the respective festival productions. Similarly, many other open-air theatres harness natural or architectural beauty as an essential element of the atmosphere they create.

The new festival building in Bregenz, mainly designed to provide a roof for the open-air productions and for as many spectators as possible in case of bad weather, is an unadorned functional edifice.

No new public theatres have been established in the period under discussion. The only moves in this respect were the installation of technically well-equipped stages in multifunctional halls or

civic centres, the establishment of rehearsal and experimental stages for the major theatres, and the creation of adequate stages for theatre schools, such as the Max Reinhardt-Seminar in Vienna designed by Peter Czernin.

Small and medium-size stages (for example the Theater im Künstlerhaus in Vienna) devised simple and convincing solutions for giving their theatres flexible spatial arrangements to be adapted for any kind of production.

A number of internationally renowned Austrian specialty companies regularly provide theatre technology. Among them are Waagner-Biro AG (Vienna Burgtheater, opera buildings in Geneva and Sydney); Wiener Brückenbau und Eisen Konstruktions AG (opera buildings in Vienna, Warsaw, Istanbul, theatres in Bratislava and Ostend); and PANI, active in stage construction and lighting technology.

Wolfgang Greisenegger

Training

Academies for music and the performing arts are located in Vienna, Graz and Salzburg. The Vienna Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst operates the solo voice and music drama department, the well-known acting and directing department (the Max Reinhardt-Seminar) and the film and television department. The Hochschule also runs a department of culture management, arts administration and public relations.

The Mozarteum, the famous Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Salzburg has, inter alia, departments for solo voice and music drama and for the performing arts (direction, acting and stage design).

The Vienna Akademie der Bildenden Künste (visual arts) and the Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst (applied arts) offer master classes in both stage and costume design.

Applications to these training institutes are very high and include large numbers of German students. Only a few applicants are accepted every year from the several hundred that apply. On average, training lasts for four years and is completely paid for by the state.

Additional training options are offered at the Conservatory of the City of Vienna and various private actors' schools.

The theatre division of the Trade Union for Art, Media and Free Professions holds a 'stage admission exam' for graduates from private acting schools or private theatres. This exam is the legal prerequisite for the acting profession.

Actors' workshops in the 1970s led to the foundation of an acting class at the Dramatisches Zentrum in Vienna in 1979. For ten years it was a catalyst for theatrical activities outside the institutionalized theatres.

Rainer Maria Köppl, Klemens Gruber

Criticism, Scholarship and Publishing

In Austrian journalism, theatre reviews have a remarkably high priority. In supra-regional daily and weekly newspapers, theatre reviews – by far outstripping cinema or television reviews – are the most important columns where journalists deal with art and are given the biggest portion of the culture pages. Austria's best known art critics have always been theatre critics; O.M. Fontana (1889–1969) for the conservative daily newspaper *Die Presse* (*The Press*), Friedrich Torberg (1908–79) for the monthly *Forum*, Otto Basil (b. 1901) for *Neues Österreich* (*New Austria*) and as editor of the cultural magazine *Der Plan*, and Jacques Hanak for the socialist newspaper *Arbeiter-Zeitung* in the 1950s and 1960s. Later important critics have included Hans Weigel and Hilde Spiel (1911–91) for the daily German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*Frankfurt General Newspaper*) and Piero Rismondo for *Die Presse* until the 1980s; and in the early 1990s Sigrid Löffler for the weekly Austrian magazine *Profil* (*Profile*), Karin Kathrein (b. 1938) for *Die Presse* and the daily *Kurier* (*Courier*), Hilde Haider-Pregler (b. 1941) for the daily *Wiener Zeitung* (*Vienna Newspaper*) and Hans Haider (b. 1946) for *Die Presse*. The major foreign German-language newspapers also include regular features on Austrian theatre.

There are two specialized Austrian theatre magazines – *Die Bühne* (*The Stage*) and *Opernwelt* (*Opera World*). The weekly *Der Falter* gives information on cultural events of every type in Vienna. Austrian radio (Volkmar Parschalk, head of cultural programming) and Austrian television (Karl Löbl, head of cultural programming) cover premières at the larger theatres.

The Institut für Theaterwissenschaft (Institute for Theatre Studies) at the University of Vienna is the only advanced degree-granting theatre institution in Austria. Its faculty include guest professors from various parts of the globe and more than thirty local experts in areas such as theatre and media history, theory of the theatre, dramaturgy, theatre design and equipment, social and organizational history, music theatre and media theory. In addition, there are courses on directing and acting, dance, theatre and media law, as well as on non-European theatre. Various trainee programmes are offered (theatre and film direction, playwriting, and stage design) and students have the opportunity to attend rehearsals and work at theatres.

The institute also has a specialized library of approximately 50,000 volumes – among them a comprehensive collection of dramas from Count Ferdinand Palffy (1774–1840) from the eighteenth century and 160 magazines – as well as an audio-visual archive. Two offices house a collection of pictorial material and reviews (about 10,000 pictures, 27,000 theatre programmes and 800,000 theatre reviews). Since 1955, the institute has also been publishing the quarterly journal, *Maske und Kothurn: Internationale Beiträge zur Theaterwissenschaft* (*Mask and Cothurnus: International Contributions to Theatre Studies*). The Fachbibliothek für Theaterwissenschaft (Library for Theatre Studies) and the Wiener Gesellschaft für Theaterforschung (Vienna Society for Theatre Research) publish scientific studies such as complete yearly documentations on Austrian theatre productions.

The Austrian Theatre Museum is one of the most attractive theatre museums in the world. It regularly presents exhibitions and administers the former theatre collection of the Austrian National Library (more than 1 million objects, 100,000 of them stage and costume designs) and its department of theatre literature (70,000 volumes).

The works of many Austrian dramatists are regularly published in the Federal Republic of Germany. Agents in Austria expressly devoted to drama are the Thomas A. Sessler Verlag, Vienna/Munich, the Hans Pero Bühnen- und Musikverlag and the Österreichische Bühnenverlag in Vienna. In addition, the publishers Residenz Verlag, Bundesverlag, Europa-Verlag, Jugend und Volk and Löcker Verlag publish drama and theatrical literature.

Two literary reviews, *Manuskripte* (Graz) and *Protokolle* (Vienna), also feature new scripts by Austrian dramatists.

The Vienna publishing house Universal-Edition, founded in 1901, is of tremendous importance for music theatre. Very early, it concluded copyright contracts with composers of the Vienna School – Schoenberg in 1908, Zemlinsky (1872–1942) in 1911, Berg in 1921 and Krenek in 1923 – and the firm's publishing programme has always been influenced by its concern for contemporary composers.

Klemens Gruber, Rainer Maria Köppl
Translated by Susanne Watzek

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AZERBAIJAN

Situated in the eastern part of the Transcaucasian region, Azerbaijan shares borders with Russia, Turkey, Iran, Armenia and Georgia. It has a land area of 88,600 square kilometres (34,200 square miles), the Caucasus Mountains surround it on the northeast and southwest; to the east is the Caspian Sea. Its 1992 population was approximately 7.3 million, 1.7 million of whom live in Baku, its capital. Just over 88 per cent of the population are native Azeris. The other 12 per cent are composed of various ethnic groups including Russians, Lezgins, Talyshins and Jews.

The land has been the subject of foreign invasions for more than a thousand years. Between the seventh and tenth centuries the country was overrun by the Arab Khalifat; in the eleventh century, it was the Turks/Seljuks; in the thirteenth century, the Mongols. Azerbaijani culture began to prosper between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries when the country, officially part of the Sevefid State, was ruled by Turkish dynasties. During this time, the arts of poetry, miniature painting and calligraphy achieved their heights.

The war treaties of 1813 and 1828 divided the Azerbaijan territories between Russia and Iran. With the development of the oil industry in the nineteenth century, Baku became the world's largest oil-producing centre and the country began to undergo an industrial boom. Capitalism began to develop at this time and European influence began to be clearly felt in all spheres of life.

In 1918, however, as a direct result of the Russian Revolution, Azerbaijan moved towards socialism and became the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, a parliamentary democracy that lasted only two years. In April 1920, the Red Army overthrew the government and northern Azerbaijan became part of the new Soviet Union. It remained part of that Union until the USSR collapsed; in October 1991 it once again became an independent Azerbaijani Republic.

Azerbaijan today is a democratic secular state with a president and a parliament. Azeri is the majority language but Russian is widely spoken. The majority religion is Islam but there are significant numbers of Christians, Jews and Krishnas.

Historically, the country's culture has been defined by three specific influences – the culture of Islam, Turkish culture and European culture. During the Soviet period, socialism was more imposed than accepted and disturbed in many ways the country's natural historical development. Consequently the post-Soviet period has been marked by a complex search in all cultural processes for the synthesis of the national and the universal.

In terms of theatrical history, it is also possible to identify three specific periods: from the beginning to 1920 (the development of an indigenous culture); from 1920 to 1990 (the development of a Soviet culture); and from 1990 on (a new beginning and an attempt to synthesize the various influences).

Early Azerbaijani theatre was heavily involved in the art of the storyteller. Known as *ashyks*, they were singer-musicians and followed in the tradition of the tellers of epic legends. Other indigenous forms include *kos-kosa*, a kind of theatrical folk game; *garavelli*, rooted in the spring festivals much like the Dionysian festivals of Greece; folk puppet shows; and the religious spectacles of T'azieh ritually performed in specially built tents with a small raised stage area, actors working mimetically with the spectators separated from the performers.

Theatre in the European sense is a nineteenth-century phenomenon. The founder of Azerbaijani professional theatre is Mirza Fatali Akhundov (1812–78), an educator and a worshipper of European culture. He wrote six comedies in the western style, among the first in Islamic culture. Before the end of the nineteenth century, all had been translated into English, German and Dutch. Molièresque in style but identifiably indigenous in feeling, these comedies were successful on stage and have become a touch-point for Azerbaijani directors when renewal has been sought in the repertoire.

Akhundov's comedy *Sarguzashti-veziri-khani Lankarani* (*The Envoy of the Khan of Lenkoran*) was staged in 1873 in Baku by a group of teachers who had studied in European and Russian cities. This and other of Akhundov's plays were subsequently staged in other Azerbaijani cities including Giandja, Shusha, Sheki, Kuba and Nakhichevan, along with plays by Nadjafbek Vezirov (1854–1926). Also staged at this time was Gogol's *Revizor* (*The Government Inspector*) translated into Azeri. The deeper goal of all these productions, however, was essentially didactic.

After 1900, a number of other writers began to emerge. Most important among them were Abdurakhimbek Akhverdiev (1870–1933), Nariman Narimanov (1870–1925), Djalil Mamedkulizade (1866–1931) and composer and dramatist Uzeir Gadjibekov (1885–1948). Groups of actors were also beginning to appear – known as *tovarishestva* (friendship groups) – as early as 1906. Through various educational societies these troupes began to become more and more professional.

Some of the groups were allowed to play one day a week at the Tagiev and the Mailov Theatres in Baku (on a rental basis), stages put up by capitalist philanthropists at the beginning of the century and generally utilized by foreign touring groups. Between 1900 and 1920, these increasingly professional, western-style Muslim acting companies staged many national plays as well as plays by Shakespeare, Schiller, Geine, Dukandj, Gogol and Tolstoi.

The national plays that were most frequently staged were *Gadji Gara* by Akhundov, *Aga Mohammed Shakh Gadjar* by Akhverdiev, *Othello* by Shakespeare, *The Robbers* by Schiller, *Life of an Actor* by Dukandj and *Revizor* by Gogol. The first national opera, *Leili ve Medjnun* (*Leili and Medjnun*) written by Uzier Gadjibekov, was also staged at this time. There were also performances of classical Azerbaijani *mugams*, national song recitals with many centuries of tradition.

Even as late as 1918, indigenous productions were staged with the support of private benefactors and theatre enthusiasts with educational interests. State and local authorities supported only foreign troupes and solo performers such as the Russian Fyodor Chaliapin. In 1919, the state decided to nationalize the Mailov Theatre but given the unstable political situation, no further steps were taken in the development of a national theatre.

Many theatre professionals of the time wanted to see more state activity in the field, hoping to make theatre a more public art which proclaimed social and moral concepts. Others wanted the state to support folk forms and non-western forms. To pious Muslims, who found European culture merely amusing, the development of a state-supported, western-style theatre was not a direction to be supported.

The result of this struggle was a rather sober form of western theatre filled with moral lecturing and philosophical and poetic stereotypes. Elements of this can still be seen today.

By 1920, all the theatres and their property were nationalized and the state began a monopoly on the legal staging of theatrical performances. State ideology became compulsory in the theatre with deviations, direct or implied, resulting in immediate bans of both the production and those participating in it. By the end of the 1930s, this control became a trigger for official repression.

The first new State Theatre was organized in Baku in 1920, joining the already existing Azerbaijani and Russian drama troupes and an opera troupe. The new State Theatre was created on the model of the popular Moscow touring company, Satir-Agit (Satire-Agitation). A year later, a small Azerbaijani troupe opened in Baku calling itself Tanqid-Tabliq (Critique-Propaganda). The popular success of this latter group was based on its comic sketches utilizing local character types, its political satire and witty dialogues. This theatre later changed its name to the Baku Workers' Theatre and moved to Azerbaijan's second biggest industrial city, Kirovabad (now called Giandja).

In Baku in 1922, the State Drama Theatre was officially opened, becoming in 1924 the Azerbaijan Academic Drama Theatre – known throughout the country as GAT – under the direction of the Russian director and actor, A.A. Tuganov (1871–1952). Tuganov tried to create an Azerbaijani version of the Moscow Art

Theatre and introduced the Stanislavski method into Azeri acting. The experiment was not a success since local audiences expected direct contact with their actors and rejected the fourth-wall aesthetics of the new style.

GAT's repertoire at that time was dominated by romantic, poetic and moralistic plays by Djafar Djabarly (1899–1934), philosophic morality plays and verse parables by Husein Djavid (1882–1944) and adaptations of Shakespeare (*Hamlet*) and Schiller. The public also went to see their favourite actors almost regardless of what play they were in.

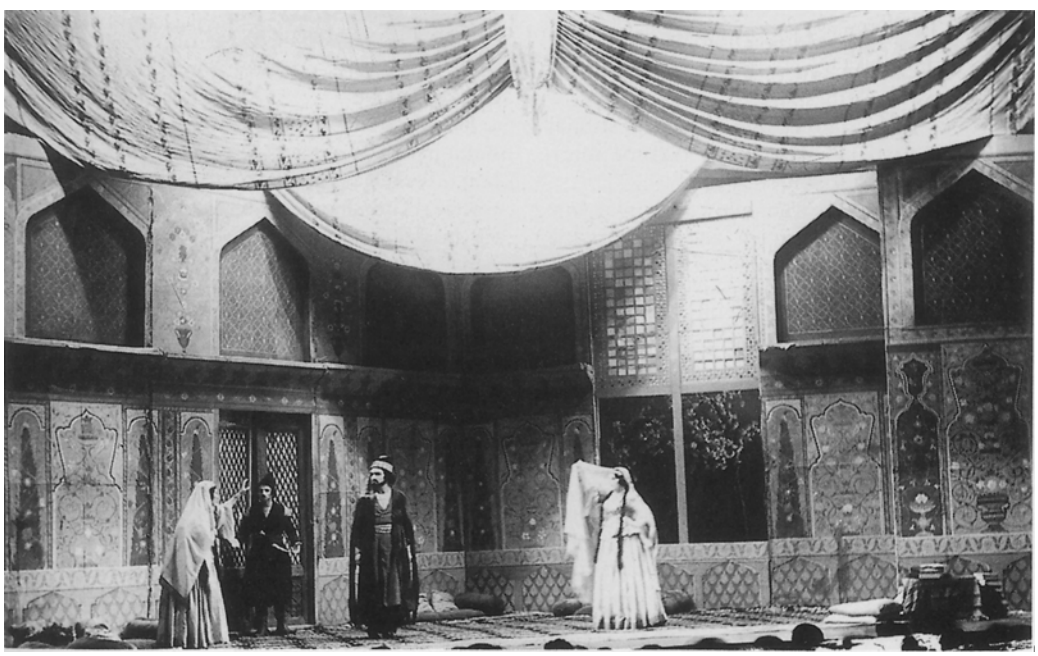
The Baki Fakhla-Kandli Teatry (Baku Workers' and Peasants' Theatre) opened in 1925. In 1927, it was renamed the Baki Turk Ischi Teatry (Baku Turk Workers' Theatre) and from 1927 it began to work in the style of the Russian director Vsevelod Meyerhold. Its work was heavily agitprop and its visual approach constructivist. Biomechanics was used in the approach to performance. This was another short-lived experiment, however, and Meyerhold's ideas were not seen again until the 1960s.

Led by GAT, which followed the decreed cultural and theatrical aesthetics, theatre in the 1920s and 1930s played a significant and determining role in the country's social life, particularly in the capital. At the same time, the social status of actors increased enormously. No longer considered as social exiles, they became respected and honoured artists.

Audiences of the time came from all social groups, indicative of the state's determination to create a classless society. Critical discussions dealt only with approved styles. Critics had to be for realism and against 'bourgeois formalism', for national tradition and against national 'short-sightedness', for an ideal-filled repertoire and against 'excessive entertainment'.

Ideological pressure increased significantly in the 1930s when the wave of repressions then sweeping the Soviet Union also touched Azerbaijani theatre. Fabricated political cases incriminated Djavid, Miza Sharifzade (1893–1937), Ulvi Radjab (1903–37) and other famous theatre practitioners. All were arrested.

In 1938, Adil Iskenderov (1912–78) was appointed principal director at GAT, a position he held until 1960. By the end of the 1940s, despite strict codification of theatre forms, new experiments began at GAT and one could see for the first time in Azerbaijani productions elements that could be described as baroque.



Adil Iskenderov's 1938 Azerbaijan Academic Drama Theatre production of Samed Vurgun's *Vagif*.

Iskenderov strove to combine aphoristic attacks with essentially motionless performances constructing productions in many new ways. Audiences easily understood the ideological codes and could identify with the ideas being expressed. Among his major productions were the verse drama *Vagif* (1938) by the poet Samed Vurgun (1906–56) and *Othello*.

A young director, Mekhti Mamedov (1918–85), joined GAT in 1945 and in 1960 became the principal director. His first directorial assignment for the company was *Twelfth Night* (1946), a high-spirited comic spectacle. This energy and spirit was characteristic of much of his future work – *Dancing Master* (1949) by Lope de Vega, and *Aligulu evlanir* (*Alikui Gets Married*, 1949) by Sabit Rakhman (1910–70). Despite his energy, Mamedov was not really able to break through the older traditions.

Tofik Kazymov (1921–80) became the director of GAT in 1963 and tried to usher in a new era. But ideological orientation of theatrical art was deeply rooted by this time and Kazymov, who had begun his career in Iskenderov's company, was unable to make real changes.

Kazymov's first production for GAT was *Antony and Cleopatra* and featured a much more spare design than had been seen at the theatre to that time. His next production was *Romeo and Juliet*, handled as a human love story in a hostile world. He later turned to Azeri plays – *San hamisha manimlasan* (*You Are Always With Me*, 1964) and *Mahv olmush gundalikar* (*Destroyed Diaries*, 1967), both by Ilyas Efendiev (b. 1914). Both these works tried to move away from established ideology and to throw light on everyday reality. He even dealt with the taboo subject of bribery in *Shaharin jaj qunlari* (*Summer in the City*, 1978), a play by the writer Anar (b. 1938).

One of Kazymov's most interesting experiments was *Olular* (*The Dead*, 1966), a tragicomedy by Mamedkulizade, in which he tried to synthesize contemporary trends with traditional Azeri theatre forms. A year later he staged the melodramatic parable *Sansiz* (*Without You*) by Shikhali Kurbanov (1925–67) and *Fyrtyna* (*The Tempest*) by Shakespeare, a fairytale interpretation in which one could see subtle notes of scepticism and disappointment with contemporary life.

At the end of the 1960s, Mamedov returned to GAT and staged a number of productions of classical works. Among them were Lev Tolstoi's *Qanly meyit* (*The Living Corpse*, 1968), Djavid's *Hajjam* (1970) and *Iblis* (*The Devil*, 1978) and, his most outstanding production, Mamedkulizade's tragi-comedy *Deli jeqingagy* (*Concourse of the Insane*, 1976).

This same period saw the Azerbaijani theatre grow into crisis as audiences simply stopped going to the theatre. Stereotypes abounded in all areas of culture and people seemed to simply lose interest in the arts. It became, therefore, a period of artistic renewal with directors seeking ways to connect the contemporary theatre with national forms. The process took place mainly outside GAT.

It was in 1975 that the Sheki Dovlet Dram Teatry (Sheki State Drama Theatre) opened in the city of Sheki. More precisely, the company reopened, having been in existence in the period 1931–49. The theatre's director was Guseinaga Atakishiev (b. 1949), who managed to find an effective blend of European plasticity, Brechtian epic forms, Russian realism and Azeri folk theatre. Even the Eastern European Grotesque found its way into his work.

Atakishiev also staged the work of modern foreign playwrights including Bulgaria's Racho Stoyanov, Hungary's S. Petöfi, Brecht (*Arturo Ui*) and Switzerland's Friedrich Dürrenmatt. In 1985, he moved to Baku where as director of GAT he staged Gorki's *Lower Depths*, Dürrenmatt's *Romulus the Great* (1986) and invited a guest director from the Berliner Ensemble to stage *Dreigroschenoper* (*Threepenny Opera*, 1987). Despite these efforts, Atakishiev could not establish an effective working relationship with the company and left the theatre soon after.

From 1977, the Russian section of the Young People's Theatre in Baku (called TUZ) began working with a young director named Azerpasha Neimatov (b. 1947). His productions, mostly musicals, were marked by a strict and reserved sense of style and extraordinary taste, quite different in feel from the ideologically based productions of GAT.

His productions, for both the Russian and Azerbaijani sections of the company, were quite strong and successful with audiences. Russian productions of note included *Noch posle vypuska* (*Night After Graduation*, 1975) by Vladimir Tedriakov, and *Bumbarash* (1976) by A. Gaidar. For the Azeri section, he staged *Danabash kendinin mektebi* (*The School of Danabash Village*, 1989) by Mamedkulizade, *Sabah chohdan bashlanyb* (*Tomorrow Began a Long Time Ago*, 1986) by Rakhman Ali-Zade

(b. 1947) and *Juchulama* (*The Dreams*, 1987) by Kamal Aslanov (b. 1946).

In 1979 the director Vagif Ibragimogly (b. 1949) became head of the Tadris Teatry (Theatre School) at the Azerbaijan Dovlet Indjasanat Institutu (Azerbaijani State Arts College). A cornerstone of his approach was his interest in principles of Asian theatre – suggestiveness, body movement more than text, the use of music and dance. He sought to find an Azerbaijani version of all these elements and tried to move theatre into a mytho-poetic direction, towards archetypes.

In 1990, Ibragimogly became head of the Theatre Juk (the name comes from an ancient Turkish cry for the dead, particularly for dead heroes). In this role, his ideas for a new theatrical form for the Azerbaijani public began to crystallize.

Another theatre which tried to break from the GAT mould – in 1991 GAT was renamed the Azerbaijan Dovlet Milli Dram Teatry (Azerbaijani National State Drama Theatre) – was the Kirovabad (Giandja) Dram Teatry (Kirovabad Drama Theatre). The company was first formed in 1932–3 on the base of the Baku Turk Workers' Theatre. Following the GAT model until the 1960s, it began to include at that time a number of new plays – *Buraja qajin* (*Come Here*, 1965) by the Turkish writer Aziz Nesin, *Hajatda qapan it var* (*Beware of the Dog*, 1964) by the Georgian writer G. Buachidze, and even Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*. All these productions were directed by Nasir Sadykh-Zade (b. 1939). Sadykh-Zade later moved to Baku and, unfortunately, the theatre returned to a much more conservative style.

Another theatre that tried to find a new approach to repertoire was the Sumqait Dovlet Dram Teatry (Sumqait State Drama Theatre) under the directorship of Marakhim Farzalibekov (b. 1949). Farzalibekov staged several Soviet works – Bokarev's *The Steel Makers* (1976) and Lermontov's *Masquerade* (1971) – along with some Azerbaijani plays including Djabarly's *Vafaly Sarijja* (*The Betrayed Saria*, 1979). When he too moved on to GAT, the Sumqait lost its distinct focus.

A note here about the production of Russian plays in Azerbaijan. Since 1945, Russian plays have been regularly produced in the country but have not dominated the repertoire. Indeed, though it was mandatory early on to include Russian plays in the repertoire, it was also mandatory to include Azerbaijani works. Since 1991, many styles have begun to be seen in the country and many new voices heard. The old idea of one voice and unification of culture for ideological reasons is no longer tenable. On the other hand, across-the-board decreases in state support have meant that all Azerbaijani theatres in the early 1990s are searching for new ways to continue their explorations.

Structure of the National Theatre Community

Control by the state was a feature of Azerbaijani theatre for most of the twentieth century. Control was the essential responsibility of the Medeniyyet Nazirliyiyenin Teatr Idarasy (Directorate of Theatres of the Ministry of Culture). The directorate (or TI as it is known in Azerbaijan) was in charge of virtually everything – administration, financial policy, ideology and artistic policy.

In the mid-1980s, this began to change. Until that moment, the TI also acted as a censor and was given a private showing of every production in advance. From the mid-1980s, the censorship still officially existed but a much more liberal attitude began to make itself felt. It was rare, in fact, for productions to be stopped. After the breakup of the USSR and with the beginning of democratic reforms, much more creative and economic independence was given to each theatre. The TI in the 1990s had virtually no control of theatrical activity.

There are twenty-four theatres currently functioning in Azerbaijan. Fifteen of them are in Baku, most in the downtown core. Ten of those are state owned – the Azerbaijan Dovlet Milli Dram Teatry, the Azerbaijan Dovlet Opera ve Ballet Teatry (State Opera and Ballet Theatre), the Azerbaijan Dovlet Misigili Komedija Teatry (State Musical Comedy Theatre), the Gosudarstvenny Russki Dramaticheski Teatry (State Russian Drama Theatre), the Azerbaijan Dovlet Qang Tamashachylar Teatry (State Young People's Theatre), the Qanglar Teatry (Youth Theatre), the puppet and marionette theatre Buta, the Azerbaijan Dovlet Juk Teatry (Theatre Juk), the Mugam Teatry (Mugam

The State Musical Comedy Theatre production of M. Shamkhalov and Z. Baghirov's *Mother-in-Law*.

Theatre) and the Mahny Teatry (Song Theatre). The last two opened in 1990.

Three municipal theatres also exist – Tanqid-Tabliq (Propaganda and Agitation), Kamera Teatry (Chamber Theatre) and Theatre Mejdan (Square). The last two opened in 1992. The city's only studio theatre is the Opera Studio at the Azerbaijan State Conservatory.

State drama theatres also function in other cities of Azerbaijan – Giandja, Mingechaur, Sheki, Nakhichevan, Gazakh, Agdash, Shusha, Fizuli, Lenkoran and Kusary. In Nakhichevan, Giandja, Saliany and Kakh, there are also puppet theatres. In Nakhichevan and Giandja, there are poetry theatres as well, named after Djavid and Zarrabi, respectively.

Numbers of actors in troupes vary from ten to a hundred people. For instance, in the Opera and Ballet Theatre, ninety-six; in GAT, ninety-six; in the Youth Theatre, thirty-nine; in the puppet and marionette, only ten. In the past, state funding was allocated annually in a lump sum. By 1992, rising inflation was sharply increasing production costs, even within several months. An average rehearsal period is three months with about sixty rehearsals scheduled.

The Azerbaijan Teatr Khadimleri Ittifagy (Union of Theatre Workers of Azerbaijan) is the only artistic and social benefit organization which represents theatre workers. It was registered in 1944 as the Theatre Society. In the past the Theatre Society, as well as other artistic organizations of Azerbaijan, was under state control and appeared to be a conduit of state ideology. Today it is an independent self-financing organization which genuinely represents the interests of theatre people. It has recently begun to organize tours for theatre people to festivals and conferences. In 1991, it established the Golden Dervish Prize for best director, actor and theatre critic of the year.

The major traditional theatre festival (Novruz) includes groups from Azerbaijan, middle Asia and Kazakhstan.

Theatre attendance in the 1990s dropped significantly due to the general political instability, the economic crisis and inflation. Since the end of the 1980s ticket prices have risen substantially, reaching 15–30 rubles, with movie prices only 10–20 per cent lower.

There is a theatre museum in Azerbaijan, although in 1992 and 1993 its materials were not displayed due to economic and organizational problems.

Artistic Profile

Companies

The most important actors and directors in Azerbaijan have traditionally worked at GAT in Baku. The company, the most officially connected of all the troupes in the country, has traditionally been defined by the principles of educational aesthetics and its work has been based on romantic theatre traditions and principles of socialist art.

Under Iskenderov, a strong hierarchy developed inside the theatre and the productions themselves reflected prevailing cultural policies. Elements of this system remained as time went by though strict adherence to the system broke down.

It was at the end of the 1980s that the old aesthetic was galvanized for the last time in the social pamphlets which were put on stage. It still defined to a great extent successful performances of *Qyzyl tesht* (*Golden Jar*, 1987) by Seiran Sekhavet (b. 1950), directed by Bakhram Osmanov (b. 1962). The time itself seemed to demand accusatory, politically engaged productions, which in many ways went along quite well with familiar educational reasoning. Still, this last gasp only underscored the irreversibility of the evolution, the final breakdown of a didactic approach to theatre.

A specifically national quality is a distinctive trademark of the TMK troupe. Using a form close to singing, the troupe is divided into vocalists and dramatic actors. Vocalists are usually the actors with the highest professional training and who studied voice at a conservatory. Dramatic actors also learn rhythmical recitation and domestic-style singing. Essentially they play buffoon-type characters colourfully satirizing real-life situations. In this theatre, it is difficult to speak about a specific show, or about the integrity of movement or text. Nevertheless, the best performers from this troupe still manage a stable psychological and social contact with their audiences.

Also national in its way is the troupe of the Theatre Juk, which consists of fifteen actors and a director. In Juk's shows, words, song, music and movement are present in one undivided synthesis, somewhat similar to Indian *Katkhakali*. The actor's body remains the main and primary material of expression. Rehearsal periods at this theatre are lengthy and it is rare for them to stage more than one or two shows per year. The actors are constantly striving to materialize inner and intimate, sacred qualities of the human being through movement, searching for an image to express the nature of the spirit. This is more conceptual theatre than traditional, although it does appeal to national traditions and to eastern theatre forms with its meditative orientation.

Dramaturgy

By classic Azerbaijani dramaturgy is meant first of all plays by M.F. Akhundov, D. Mamedkulizade and A. Akhverdiev. Their best plays contain recognizable images of the national universe and actors readily incarnate these worlds on stage. More often than not, their respective visions appear fragmented and split and this tends to be emphasized in production of the plays.

In the 1960s, the most significant plays were by Sabit Rakhman and I. Efendiev, which still maintain a romantic perception of the world and offer clear and simple solutions. Rakhman, author of *Hoshbahtlar* (*Lucky People*), *Jalan* (*The Lie*), *Nishanly qyz* (*Engaged*) and others, created more comic characters, juicy epigrams and witty repartee. Efendiev, on the other hand, author of *San hamisha manimlasan* (*You Are Always with Me*), *Mahny daqlarda qaldy* (*The Song Stayed in the Mountains*) and *Mahv olmush qundaliklar* (*Destroyed Diaries*) created a more lyrical drama about everyday life though the domestic environment was still often romanticized and poeticized.

From the mid-1970s, other authors emerged such as Anar, Rustam Ibragimbekov (b. 1939) and Vagif Samedogly (b. 1939) who rejected romantic pathos and concentrated on the existential aspects of their characters.

Ibragimbekov, who wrote in Russian, is the author of *Zabytyi avgust* (*Forgotten August*), *Pokhozhyi na lva* (*The Lion-Like*), *Zhenschina pered zakrytoi dveriu* (*Woman at the Closed Door*), and many other plays. All are neorealistic stories with a Baku backyard atmosphere, presented in a Chekhovian psychological style and constructed as complex parables. They offer their insights through the banal and ordinary.

Anar, another important author, wrote *Zangir* (*The Chain*), *Adamyn adamy* (*Insider to Insider*) and *Shaharin jaj qunlari* (*Summer in the City*) among others. In his works, he melds melodramatic collisions with social pamphleteering in which the 'between the lines' meaning prompts 'between the lines' theatrical decisions. In his comedies, he follows the aesthetics of the folk *garavelli*, whose characters are traditional trickster-jester types.

V. Samedogly, author of *Ugja dag bashynda* (*On the Top of a High Mountain*), *Baht uzuju* (*Wedding Band*) and *Jajda top-top ojunu* (*Playing Snowball in the Summer*), likes sharp grotesque situations. Though witty, his plays are ironic rather than accusative.

Two writers who emerged in the 1980s were Kamal Aslanov and Rakhman Ali-Zade. Aslanov, writing in Russian, is the author of *Da zdravstvuiet solntze* (*Long Live the Sun*), *Pravaia ruka Mirali* (*Mirali's Right Hand*) and *Rai v shalashe* (*Paradise in a Hut*). He writes well-made plays with unexpected turns of

events. Quite often they present surreal situations or even completely absurd ones.

Ali-Zade, author of *Bizim kendin narlary* (*Pomegranates of our Village*), *Qohumlar* (*Relatives*) and *Dadashbala amalijjaty* (*Operation 'Dadashbala'*), prefers comedies of manners with juicy, sharp and even risqué dialogue. His plays are rooted in folk farce, but behind them one can always see the twentieth century.

Directors, Directing and Production Styles

A new direction in Azerbaijani theatre emerged in 1991 with the production of *Ogul* (*The Son*) directed by V. Ibragimogly, based on the epos *Kitabi Dede Korkut*. This new style moved away from illusionist aesthetics as well as from the traditional Italian box stage. This particular show was performed in a large room where the audience sat on the perimeter. The genre is identified as *iukhlama* (lamenting) and is not based on a particular literary text. Ibragimogly aimed to liberate the hidden motivations of human existence through expressive body movement and the magic of sound and rhythm. Actors were required to hear the music and the melody of the pronounced word. Depending on their own movement abilities and inner tuning, they materialized their reactions to what they were hearing. A key to this style is silence itself – its capacity to reach the innermost mind by bypassing words. To fulfil his ideas, Ibragimogly uses principles of eastern theatre, Brecht's epic theatre folk forms and elements of western European avant-garde theatre.

Music Theatre

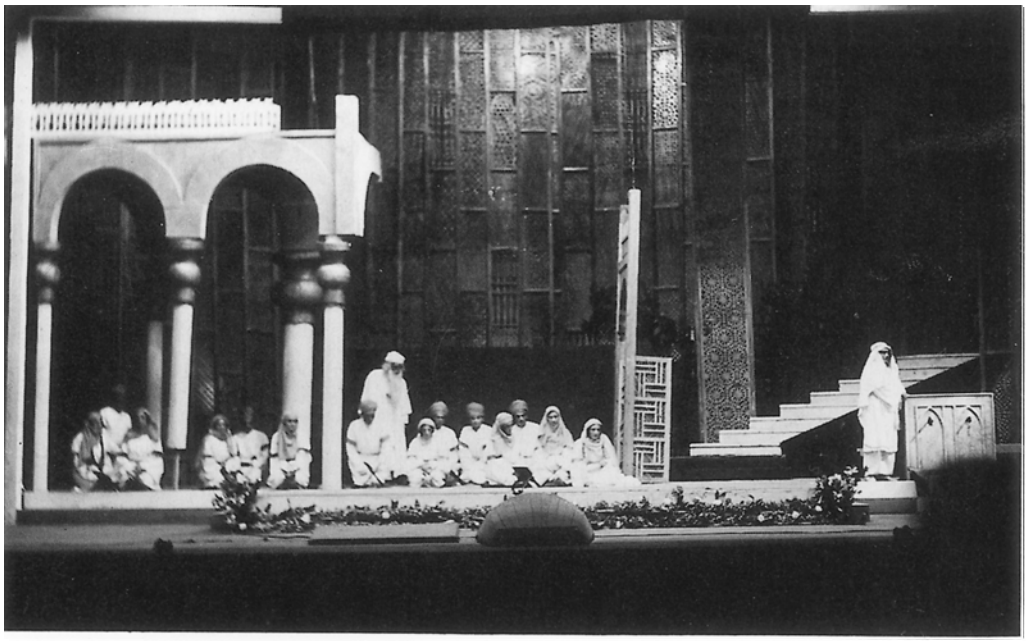
The history of the State Opera and Ballet Theatre and the State Musical Comedy Theatre are both related to the name of composer and writer Uzier Gadjibekov. Gadjibekov, creator of the opera *Leili and Medjnun*, premièred his work in Baku in 1908. Based on a poem by Fizuli – an Azerbaijani poet of the sixteenth century – the opera starred the actor-singer Guseinkuli Sarabskii (1879–1945).

Leili and Medjnun is an eastern variant of *Romeo and Juliet* in which love of woman is transformed into love of God. *Mugam*-style singing laid a national musical basis for the composition, a perfect complement to the symbolic content of Fizuli's poetry. Unfortunately, numerous productions of the opera have turned it into more of a concert performance. A genuine *mugam* opera spectacle could show how unique a *mugam*-based theatre could be.

The State Opera and Ballet opened in 1920 and has kept up a repertoire of classical and contemporary opera, including works by other Azerbaijani composers. A milestone was its production of the opera *Kerogly* (1937), based on the national epic, starring Shovket Mamedova (1897–1981) and Biulbiul (1897–1963), who trained in voice in Italy. Both *Leili and Medjnun* and *Kerogly* have become calling cards for Azerbaijani opera.

Fatma Mukhtarova (1893–1972) was the first Azerbaijani opera singer to perform in such parts as Carmen, Delilah, Polina (*The Queen of Spades* by Tchaikovsky) and Marina (*Boris Godunov* by Mussorgski). The first director of national operas was Ismail Idayat-Zade (1901–51) and the company's best known conductors were Niyazi (1912–84) and Rauf Abdullaev (b. 1937).

The first musical comedy, *Ar ve arvad* (*Husband and Wife*) by Gadjibekov, was performed in Azerbaijan in 1909. In 1939 the Musical Comedy Theatre was created, a troupe with both Russian and Azerbaijani sections. The Russian section had a preference for classical operetta as well as contemporary musicals. The Azerbaijani section tended towards national musical comedies. In that genre there were productions which have become classics – *O omasyn bu olsun* (*If Not This One, Then That One*, 1910) and *Arshin mal alan* (1913).



Mekhdi Mammedov's 1976 State National Opera and Ballet Theatre production of Uzier Gadjibekov's *Leili and Medjnun*, designed by Elchin Aslanov.

Dance Theatre

Azerbaijan has preserved many rich dance traditions from ancient times. These are now being studied and developed thanks to various dance ensembles, predominantly state owned. Other than this classical choreography in which dance has a self-imposed meaning, there is not really a contemporary dance theatre in Azerbaijan. There are rather only choreographic elements used in contemporary productions.

Classical ballet is most often seen in works by foreign and Azerbaijani composers at the Opera and Ballet Theatre. The first national Azerbaijani ballet was staged in 1940 – *Qyz qalasy* (*Maiden's Tower*) to music by Afrasiyab Badalbeili (1907–76). It was choreographed and danced by Gamer Almaszade (b. 1915).

The best known Azerbaijani ballets are by composer Kara Karaev (1918–82) – *Jeddi gozal* (*Seven Beauties*, 1952) and *Ildyrymly jollar* (*By the Path of Thunder*, 1958), premièred in St Petersburg – and by composer Arif Melikov – *Mahabban haqynda dastan* (*The Legend of Love*, 1984), premièred in St Petersburg, *Min bir qegja* (*The Thousand and One Nights*, 1981) by Fikret Amirov (1922–84), choreographed by Nailya Nazirova, (b. 1936). These works were most frequently danced by Tamilla Shiralieva (b. 1946) and Vladimir Pletnev (1946–88), two of the country's most outstanding dancers.

Theatre for Young Audiences

Azerbaijan's State Children's Theatre, known as TUZ, opened in 1928 (with first a Russian and then, in 1931, an Azerbaijani section). The key figures early on were director Zafar Neimatov (1915–71), for many years the principal director of the theatre, and actors Agadadash

Gurbanov (1911–65) and Guseinaga Sadygov (1914–83).

Theatre for children and young adults in Azerbaijan was for a long time regulated by Soviet directives. The main goal of these theatres was to provide the ideological education of the new generation in the spirit of Soviet ideas. Any recommendations had to be approved by central Komsomol (Young Communist League) organizations. Pedagogically, they also had to be approved by the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. Recommendations were very carefully and pedantically regulated: optimum ages for certain plays (pre-school, junior, intermediate, senior, adolescent); lengths of scripts; and specifics of aesthetic perceptions. Repertoire was obviously under strict control. Group attendance and collective discussions were encouraged. At the same time, ticket prices for youth theatres (as well as puppet theatres, which were in the same category) were kept very low with trade union organizations (also state owned) obliged to sponsor theatres. Such a system was in place practically until the beginning of the 1960s.

Changes in the socio-political and cultural situation of the USSR at the beginning of the 1960s had an immediate impact on the status of youth theatres. Ideological dictatorship weakened. Theatre institutions in Azerbaijan decided not to train actors for youth and puppet theatres, with conventional theatre training considered sufficient.

Directors found themselves allowed, on occasion, to stage shows outside the guidelines. However, the social prestige of youth theatres was declining, partly because of cuts in financial support and partly because of lower rates of pay for actors. Many working in the field were coming to youth theatres simply to get experience and would quickly move on to an 'adult theatre'.

Thanks to a relatively free creative atmosphere, Azerbaijani TUZ was able to use directors who were not so ideologically, aesthetically, or socio-pedagogically engaged. Among these were A. Neimatov, Namik Agaev (b. 1962) and Djannet Selimova (b. 1940). All showed their artistic opposition to the dominating aesthetics of GAT, and this was evident in their best productions – *Zabyty avgust* (*Forgotten August*, 1974) by Ibragimbekov (directed by Selimova) and *Kechan ilin son qegasi* (*The Last Night of the Passing Year*, 1978) by Anar (directed by Neimatov).

Theatre for teens in the USSR began as a repercussion of the youth movement of the 1960s. The Studio Theatre of G. Atakishiev followed in the same line when the entire acting class of the Arts Institute started its own theatre after completing training. This immediately became a genuine youth theatre, a theatre by the young, and not necessarily for particular age groups. The company set itself up as an official opposition to the repertoire and theatre aesthetics of GAT. This was later expanded by the creation of the Theatre Juk (headed by Ibragimogly), the Youth Theatre in Baku (headed by G. Atakishiev) and the studio Ahtarysh (Search) at the Sheki Theatre (headed by Farman Abdullaev (b. 1952)).

The most significant productions of the Ahtarysh were *Tanha padshakhyn naqyly* (*The Tale of the Lonely Padisheik*, 1988) after a comic parable by Anar, and *Ajri aqag* (*The Crooked Tree*, 1988) by F. Abdullaev.

Such youth theatres in the 1990s were working quite actively, including in their repertoire plays that were not staged at other theatres. Among their productions have been *Qatl qunu* (*The Day of the Execution*, 1989) after the novel by Azerbaijani author Yusif Samedogly (b. 1935), and *Leili ve Medjnun* (1991).

Puppet Theatre

Since the Middle Ages in Azerbaijan, puppet shows such as *Godu-godu*, *Shakh Selim* and *Kilimarasy* were widely staged. Puppets made out of rags or wood, or finger-puppets, were used and some of these shows are still presented at folk events today.

In 1931, through the initiative of actor Molla Aga Bebirli (1905–70), the Gosudarstvenny Kukolny Teatr dlia Detei (State Puppet Theatre for Children) was founded in Baku. In its early repertoire were fairytales such as *Ali-baba and the Forty Thieves* and *Aladdin's Magic Lamp* as well as *Gadji Gara* by M.F. Akhundov and *The Dead* by Mamedkulizade. From 1941 to 1945, the troupe began touring as an agitprop type theatre for young people. From the mid-1960s,

when a permanent theatre was opened, adaptations and original plays from national Azerbaijani folklore were produced.

Namik Agaev, the theatre's principal director since 1987, quite often uses an actor-puppet double on stage. Agaev staged *Bulbul* (*The Nightingale*, 1989) based on Hans Christian Andersen, *Qyrmyzy renqin naqyly* (*The Tale of the Black Colour*, 1991) after a poem by the Azerbaijani classic writer Nizami (twelfth century) and *Pari Gjadu* (*The Witch*, 1988) by A. Akhverdiev.

In 1990, the Buta Puppet Theatre premièred in Paris *Arshin mal alan* after an operetta by Gadjibekov. The theatre, headed by Tarlan Gorchiev (b. 1953), used a combination of hyper-naturalistic aesthetics in the miniature space of a marionette theatre. The result was a lyrical musical comedy which created an unexpected effect of ironic distance and nostalgia.

There is no special institution for training puppeteers in Azerbaijan, nor is there an established system for training technical staff for puppet theatre. The majority of directors and actors, as a result, adapt their conventional theatre training. The deep-rooted folk background in this field is still being explored and is predetermining further development of the form.

Design

The stylistic search of theatre designers in Azerbaijan for years followed the directions of the Soviet Union. Until the 1960s, the visual designs did not go beyond decorative painted back curtains, lifelike costumes and a naive stage illusion recreating specific locations. These were the boundaries of the aesthetics within which the first professional Azerbaijani theatre designer Rustam Mustafaev (1910–40) worked. Such aesthetics were dominant in practically all theatres in Azerbaijan in the post-World War II period. They reached their conclusions and exhaustion in the theatre works of Nusret Fatullaev (1925–88), who worked with Iskenderov at GAT.

On the stage, Fatullaev called for precisely built architectural recreations, pieces designed for a single observation point and the illusion of perspective. His work was meticulous in both sets and costumes. At the same time, he created a stage space filled with ornament. With the director's predetermined frontal compositions and one-dimensional blocking (often played on the apron) anything mimetic was transformed into pathos and truth became stylized 'truthfulness'. This need to create illusion on stage was caused by the dominating ideology, in which realism was a panacea for fighting bourgeois formalism. Iskenderov and Fatullaev, at the same time, were actually trying to destroy the 'fourth wall' illusion, appealing to the audience's perception, which identified itself not so much with the general atmosphere of the stage but with the nicely ornamented words of pathos.

In the 1960s, when Tofik Kiazymov came to GAT, the theatre's designers were challenged with scenographic tasks rather than mimetic-decorative ones. The artist-decorator became the artist-scenographer and these tendencies began to spread to other Azerbaijani theatres.

The scenography of Elchin Aslanov in *The Dead* was the first to destroy the frame of illusionism. The stage itself showed its bareness, first, through the elimination of the painted backdrop, and second, by baring the theatrical machinery itself. The stage set became meaningful rather than illustrative. A tombstone became part of a house wall; two places of action became one, underlining the inseparability of life and death. The design became flexible thanks to the clever use of lighting; it 'acted' together with the actors. Frightening empty spaces emerged on this bare stage, all creating an atmosphere of uneasiness, alertness and fear.

Director Kiazymov and designer Aslanov blasted away the customary and the established from within. It was probably for those reasons that *The Dead* turned out to be a strange spectacle, both to audiences and to the more orthodox and dogmatic theatre critics. The first thaw was, however, irreversible and was an important part of the process of freeing stage design from its ideologically loaded mimetic function.

Azerbaijani scenography developed further in the work of Elchin Mamedov (b. 1946). Mamedov arranges the space for his shows metaphorically. Using most often softly faded

Elchin Aslanov's design for Tofik Kiazymov's 1967 Azerbaijan Academic Drama Theatre production of Djalil Mamedkulizade's *The Dead*.

colours, variations of light, textured costumes, and collages of objects, he focuses all of it on the metaphor. In *The Concourse of the Insane*, he created a two-level construction made of white painted beams, all wrapped in a cobweb, out of which characters struggle to free themselves. In *Danabash kendin mektebi* (*The School of Maktabash Village* by Mamedkulizade, directed by Neimatov), a miniaturized model of a village is built on the stage, creating an overall strangeness. In *Juhulama* (*Before You Go to Sleep* by Aslanov, directed by Neimatov) the stage set is surreal: a combination of a doctor's office and a shed for cattle. While creating these designs, Mamedov is also often being ironic towards his objects.

The style of Diaghilev's *Russian Seasons* was incorporated by painter Torgul Narimanbekov (b. 1930) into his designs for the ballet *Thousand and One Nights*. The stage was framed by a brightly decorative and colourfully sophisticated back curtain, inside which was the magic world of Scheherezade's tales. The dancers' costumes were also designed by the artist in the same style as painted stage decorations. Overall, it created a visual environment which, in a sense, predetermined the musical and choreographic solutions.

Theatre Space and Architecture

All theatres in Azerbaijan are Italian-style proscenium arch buildings. GAT's stage measures 12 by 22 metres, the Musical Comedy Theatre 13 by 20 metres and the Opera and Ballet 12 by 18 metres. On occasion these theatres are also used for social events, meetings, conferences or even congresses.

Technically, most theatres are very poor: there are no elevators beneath stages, no electronic equipment and limited lighting and sound capabilities. Many theatres – including GAT – are currently undergoing reconstruction.

This lack of difference in theatre buildings is, in fact, slowing down the development of theatre aesthetics today. Nevertheless, attempts are made. The Theatre Juk, for instance, has

practically destroyed the boundaries of the Italian stage box in its productions, and its designer-scenographer (Rashid Sherif, b. 1953) artificially recreates a 'theatre-under-the-tent' atmosphere.

Training

The only institution that provides theatre training in Azerbaijan is the Azerbaijani State University for the Arts, which from 1923 to 1945 functioned as the Baku Theatre Technical School, and from 1945 to 1990 as the Azerbaijani State Institute for the Arts. Acting students are trained in the Stanislavski system. Upon graduation, students receive diplomas and are assigned to one of the state-owned theatres.

In the past, directors' training included a two-year apprenticeship in Moscow or St Petersburg. The country's independence may broaden the choice of countries in which theatre students can train. There are no alternative theatre schools in Azerbaijan.

Criticism, Scholarship and Publishing

There are three major centres for theatre research in Azerbaijan: the department of theatre and cinematography at the Institute for Architecture and Arts of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, the Faculty of the History of Theatre at the Institute for the Arts of the University of the Arts, and the Theatre Museum.

There are no special theatre periodicals in Azerbaijan. There is an arts magazine, *Gobustan*, which regularly publishes materials on theatre. Also publishing occasional articles are newspapers *Madanijjat* (*Culture*) and *Adabijjat gazeti* (*Literary Gazette*). Other periodicals publish theatre reviews.

When surveying this situation, one must take into account the fact that the educational tendencies in Azerbaijani theatre have long been state controlled, while all aspects of social life have been extremely ideologized. Both have had tremendous impact on theatre research and theatre critics. As a result, practically all theatre research is done using the same methodology which supposes that theatre processes do not have their own rules but are always engaged by ideology. It is important to bear this in mind when appraising the works of the major authority in theatre research until the 1970s – Djafar Djafarov (1914–73). Also significant are the works of theatre scholars Gulam Mamedli (b. 1897), Makhmud Allakhverdiev (b. 1931) and Ingilab Kerimov (b. 1931), although most are more descriptive than anything else. In recent years, critics are much more often taking aesthetic viewpoints into account in their work.

The current necessity is to write a new history of Azerbaijani theatre, one that pays more attention to theatre discourse and inner theatre processes (synchrony and diachrony), discovering the hidden and open methods of resisting ideological pressure, analysing the psychology and sociology of audience perception and taking into account the differences in audiences.

There are, however, several useful works on theatre aesthetics and semiotics in Azerbaijan by directors Mekhti Mamedov, Rakhman Badalov (b. 1937) and Niyazi Mekhti (b. 1951).

There is no regular system for theatre criticism in the mass media, although some criticism does exist. Among the critics of note are Ilkham Ragimli (b. 1949), Mariam Ali-zade (b. 1950), Giulrikh Alibekova (b. 1928), Novruz Takhmazov (1947–91) and Aidyn Talybov (b. 1958).

Rakhman Badalov
Translated by Roman Koudriavtsev

Further Reading

Allakhverdiev, Makhmud. *Alaskar Alakbarov: Hajat ve jaradygylygy*. [Alaskar Alakbarov: life and creative journey]. Baku: Azerneshr, 1972. 234 pp.