

EXPLAIN EUROPE - EUROPE EXPLAIN

22nd Drama/Theatre in
Education Conference 2019

12th of April - 17th of April

RETZHOF CASTLE



Final Report

Index

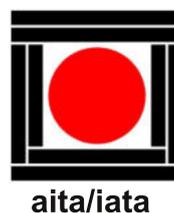


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 Bundesministerium
Bildung, Wissenschaft
und Forschung



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Asociación Internacional de Drama/Teatro y Educación
國際戲劇/教育協會



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Please, save the date!!
See you from 26th to 31st of March. 2021 at Retzhof Castle

Preamble

EXPLAIN EUROPE – EUROPE, EXPLAIN !

EUROPA ERKLÄREN! – ERKLÄR DICH, EUROPA !

Europas Identität in der Kunst!

Denken wir an Europa, fallen uns zuerst Begriffe wie Bürokratie, Brexit oder die Brüsseler EU-Zentrale ein, dann erst Sprachenvielfalt, Reisefreiheit und Verständigung.

Letzteres war seit Heinrich Heine der Traum jedes Europäers: Offenheit, Vielfalt und Freiheit unseres Kontinents – nirgendwo besser zu sehen als in vielen Kunstwerken.

Denken wir an das Europa der Kunst, denken wir an Cervantes und Moliere, an Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven und Picasso, an Van Gogh, Mozart, die Beatles und Rimini Projekt! Besuchen wir die jährlich wechselnden Kulturhauptstädte und treffen überall Menschen, denen Kunst und Kultur besonders wichtig ist – ganz besonders, wenn sie ihre angestammte Heimat verlassen haben!

Europa ist zuerst eine Erfindung von Dichtern wie Heinrich Heine. Oder von Malern wie Franz Marc, der bereits im Jahr 1912 schrieb: "Man fühlt eine künstlerische Spannung über ganz Europa, überall winken neue Künstler sich zu: ein Blick, ein Händedruck genügt, um sich zu verstehen."⁽¹⁾

Genauso ist Europa aber auch eine Erfindung von MusikerInnen und Theaterschaffenden. Aus diesem Blickwinkel betrachtet: Nicht nur die gemeinsame Währung und Wirtschaftsunion, sondern auch Kunst und Kultur prägen diesen Kontinent wesentlich.

Kunst kennt keine Grenzen, ist international. Das Überwinden dieser Grenzen - der sprachlichen, der politischen oder kulturellen – gelingt nirgendwo besser als in gemeinsamen Europa-Projekten der Kunst- und Kulturszene – in ganz besonderem Maß gilt das für das Theater.

Gesellschaftlich sehen wir aber einen gegenläufigen Trend: Abschottung und Entsolidarisierung, Rückfallstendenzen in überwunden geglaubte Nationalstaaterei sind unübersehbar. Es stellt sich die Frage, was Kulturschaffende dem entgegensetzen können.

Auf dem Kongress werden wir uns mit verschiedenen Aspekten und künstlerischen Zugängen zu einer europäischen Identität auseinandersetzen.

In spannenden viereinhalb Tagen werden die ReferentInnen gemeinsam mit den TeilnehmerInnen europäische Sichtweisen ausloten, kritische Stimmen inklusive. Dabei interessiert uns sowohl die Außen- als auch die Innensicht. Vielleicht gelingt es sogar, mit theatralen Mitteln an einem Europa mitzuschreiben, das sich Dichter wie Heinrich Heine erträumt haben und in welchem wir gerne leben.

1. Subskriptionsprospekt zum Almanach 'Der Blaue Reiter', Januar 1912, München

EXPLAIN EUROPE – EUROPE, EXPLAIN !

European Identity in Arts!

When we think of Europe, first of all words like bureaucracy, BREXIT or Brussels headquarters come to our mind and not till then language diversity, freedom of travel and international understanding.

Since Heinrich Heine the latter was the dream of every European: the openness, diversity and freedom of our continent, which appears nowhere better than in the arts itself. Let us think of Europe and the Arts, let us appreciate Cervantes and Moliere, Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven and Picasso, Van Gogh, Mozart, The Beatles and Rimini Project.

Let us visit the European Capitals of Culture changing every year and meet people everywhere, for whom art and culture are of particular importance, especially when they have emigrated or had to leave their home country involuntarily.

Europe is first of all an invention of poets like Heinrich Heine, or of painters like Franz Marc, who wrote in 1912: „One can feel an artistic tension across entire Europe, everywhere new artists wave to each other: a glance, a handshake is adequate to understand. (1)

At the same time Europe is an invention of musicians and theatre producers. Looked at from this perspective, not only common currency and economic union but also art and culture have formed the old continent substantially. There are no borders for arts, it is cosmopolitan. Nowhere else it works better to overcome these – linguistic, political , cultural - limits than in mutual european arts'projects. This is highly true for theatre.

In society as a whole we are facing an opposing trend. There are highly visible signs of regression into old patterns of nation-state behaviour, separation and erosion of solidarity. The question is, what cultural workers can do to counteract these tendencies.

At the Conference Drama in Education 2019 various aspects of and artistic approaches to European Identity will be up for discussion, viewed both from the inside and the distance. In these four and a half days workshop leaders and participants will explore diverging perceptions on Europe including critical voices.

And maybe it works to contribute with theatrical instruments to shape a Europe which was dreamt by Heinrich Heine and in which we love to live.

(1) In: almanac “The Blue Rider“, January 1912, Munich

Explain Europe! - Europe, Explain!

The following catalogue of questions is an inspiration for the opening speaker and the keynote speakers. The topic „Explain Europe! - Europe, explain!“ should accompany them through the whole Conference. All contributions are gathered in the panel discussion.

Opening speaker:

- What is European identity (not exclusively/only from an artistic point of view)?
- How important would you consider the topics openness/diversity/freedom?
- Which of the following values - openness/diversity/freedom – are currently under pressure/ in danger?
- What is the role/function of art in the process of finding one's own identity?
- What is the contribution of the arts to the European identity in theoretical and practical form?
- What is the role of art/artists in this context, especially the role of the performing arts?
- How can the arts realise/put their self-defined role in this process/context into action?
- How can the arts live up to their wish to be an opposition to negative developments in the European society?
- In how far are the values that we put into our announcement for the congress – openness/diversity/freedom – achievable by the performing arts (examples from your professional surroundings)?

Keynote-Speaker:

- What is European identity (not exclusively/only from an artistic point of view)?
- Which of the following values - openness/diversity/freedom – are currently under pressure/ in danger?
- What is the role/function of art in the process of finding one's own identity?
- What is the contribution of the arts to the European identity in theoretical and practical form?
- What is the role of art/artists in this context, especially the role of the performing arts?
- How can the arts realise/put their self-defined role in this process/context into action?
- How can the arts live up to their wish to be an opposition to negative developments in the European society?
- In how far are the values that we put into our announcement for the congress – openness/diversity/freedom – achievable by the performing arts (examples from your professional surroundings)?

At least two questions to the keynote speakers, which are going to be discussed in the panel discussion

- Is there – in arts – a common European identity/is Europe the sum of all its identities/is European art a common cultural value/OR does Europe – on the contrary define itself by its diversity?
- Is the BREXIT a consequence of the desire/wish for diversity? Or is it just an obstacle that has to be overcome?
- Is there such a phenomenon as national art or are all arts just variations of an European art?
- What would you personally wish for regarding this subject? And considering the wish and hope that the arts can play their designated part in strengthening the European identity?

Harald Volker Sommer



Harald Volker Sommer (A / D)
Theaterpaedagogue BuT, drama / theater
teacher, director, actor & theater researcher

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The Profile

He is active since 1997 in various fields of theater & drama education, such as schools and recreation. He is offering trainings in various institutions such as theaters, universities, colleges of education and centers of drama teaching. Beside the teaching profession he was an actor in several ensembles (Theater Augsburg, bremer shakespeare company, Theater der Jugend Wien, Stadttheater Rostock).

He has been teaching since 2002 at the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück (D), at the Institute of Theater Education in Lingen. He is member of the Educational Commission of the German Association of Theater Education (Bildungskommission des deutschen Bundesverbandes Theaterpädagogik). From 2014 to 2018 he was manager of TPZ Lingen and executive director of Europäisches Theaterhaus (ETH).

Since 2018 he is member of the board of AITA / IATA (International Amateur Theater Association). Now he works as theaterpaedagogue, director, senior lecturer and actor; his theatrical work focuses especially on directorial and acting training, choral theater and different approaches to theater work such as supporting development of groups and topics.

Harald Volker Sommer (2017): Das "Neue Wir". Gedanken zur Theaterarbeit mit Menschen nach Fluchterfahrung. In: Zeitschrift für Theaterpädagogik, Heft 71, Milow: Schibri Verlag

The Keynote

Europe? Explain! Some thoughts on Europe, identity and the chorus theatre

I would like to talk about choral theatre in the context of our political consciousness and our European identity. Choral theatre can perhaps give us a concrete theatrical experience of the problems that affect us right now. Theatre actually always negotiates the contents of identities in the group. And our aesthetic or social identity is closely related to our political identity.

Europe? Explain! What is Europe? Maybe Europe can be defined as an end of the eurasian landmass. But today there is no agreement where this part begins. There is the Myth of Princess Europe, grabbed and stolen from a god in a body of a white bull. We should not build any identity on this story. One thing is very interesting for me is the fact that Princess Europe came from Asia. So she was a refugee, coming over the sea, lucky enough not to reach Lampedusa but Crete. But nevertheless there is no funding principle for Europe.



But what does european identity for each one of us mean, very personally? Maybe identity involves necessarily the questions of What do I want to be? So? As artists and teachers, drama experts and theatre workers? What do we want to be – in Europe today, dealing with so called „european problems“? Explain! We know the term of Fortress Europe. What does Fortress mean? When we ask – what we always do - Wikipedia, we read:

Fortress Europe was a military propaganda term used by both sides of the Second World War which referred to the areas of Continental Europe occupied by Nazi Germany, as opposed to the United Kingdom across the Channel.[...] Currently, within Europe, the term is used either to describe dumping effect of external borders in commercial matters, or as a pejorative description of the state of immigration into the European Union. For conservative parties such as the Freedom Party of Austria, 'Fortress Europe' is a positive term. They mostly claim that such a fortress does not really exist yet, and that illegal immigrants can enter Europe far too easily. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortress_Europe, 22.4.2019)

Asking an online dictionary „collinsdictionary.com“ I found two very different meanings: (1) a large fort or fortified town, (2) a place or source of refuge or support

(<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/fortress>, 22.4.2019)

Thus the spectrum of meaning ranges from a military fortress to a place of refuge. If one looks at the increase of the security service Frontex, as one could read in the media in recent weeks to almost 10,000 employees, it becomes clear that the concerns of the FPÖ are unfounded. It is crystal clear Fortress Europe is understood here: as a political tool in order to continue to guarantee one's own security at the expense of others. A place of refuge or support? Not for those who come from outside. As artists, what do we think Europe can give us? What do we like about Europe? Being at congresses, festivals, meeting theatre people all over Europe, talking to them about several important issues? But this must be clear: more or less we share the same opinions, so there is no deep conflict. It is a closed shop.



So, as an artist, or a teacher - what do I want to be? Explain! There are personal questions we should ask ourselves in context to the term Fortress Europe. What are my limits that I want to defend? How do I describe my identity in terms of home, language, community or shared memory? Explain!

Everything in flux

There are many questions when we work with theatre methods with non professionals.

In preparation for this congress, I've been thinking: How many borders have I crossed in my life on foot, by train, by plane? A lot. I have often had the experience taking the first step into something new and going into an open, unknown place. Only on the other side of that border I knew what I left behind. What I've won, I knew only when I got home.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said more than 2000 years ago that everything flows - panta rhei. Yes, all is in flux, and has become ever more fluent since. Everything is constantly in flux, politically, socially, personally. So many things are becoming uncertain in our days. We call them patchwork: patchwork identity, patchwork family, maybe patchwork gender, patchwork home, patchwork history and tradition, and so - patchwork Europe? It is still under construction, since the old Greeks. Also artistic: the performative and thus also the choral require us to develop new viewing habits. New narratives replace the old ones. The dismantling of traditional structures takes place everywhere: in the direction, the pedagogy, the tradition, language, writing, media realities. Everything gets into a drift.

What can we offer? Here is one proposal. Let's call it „Utopian Realism“. That means giving room for utopias and being anchored in the real. But what can this „real“ be? Is it one's own body, one's own experience, the feeling of expanding one's own limits?

I would like to tell you an example of an Erasmus + project of the European Theatre House in Lingen (ETH), when I was the CEO of the organization in 2015. The project was called „I work therefore I am - Theatre as a Forum for political Participation“ (<http://www.european-theatrehouse.org/en/projekte/theatre-forum-political-participation>, 22.4.2019). The project dealt with working utopias and realities of 12 countries in Europe with theatrical means like „What does work mean to me?“ or „Am I more than my work?“.

We started our project with a workshop in Thessaloniki in 2015. And suddenly a conflict arose: what is politically relevant in our theatre pedagogical work? The Greek position, which explained and justified itself entirely from its own social situation, was opposed to other positions, which formulated more aesthetic themes. We mediated - and we experienced a conflict that was primarily based on a lack of understanding of the other social situation.

The next step? Only through the means of theatre we approached: through our expertise. We shared exercises and worked together on several issues with our methods. We listened to each other and started - step by step - to take seriously also other realities to look beyond one's own nose. We readjusted our judgments, which are so deeply anchored in our own social experience.

Chorus theatre and Europa

It is this social experience and these social dynamics that make choral theatre so valuable for negotiating such issues. Choric theatre is a social art form by definition. It is not only the historical context, that in the first so-called democracy of the world in Athens around 500 B. C., choral theatre was part of a social system and stood for an art form in which citizens who had come of age could practise, expose themselves and critically question their own political setting. The chorus is a utopia, a representative of society, and sent to the stage by it to represent it and to negotiate community issues related to the individual, to question: Where do I start? Where do I end? What are my limits? How far can I go alone or in a group? When do I feel comfortable in the collective, and when is it time to step out and assert my position? The chorus always represents societies that can express themselves politically, towards the ruler, the person in crisis who turns to or against the choir, makes common cause with it, emerges from it, withdraws into it. Some matters we see every day on the screen are quite good material for chorus theatre.

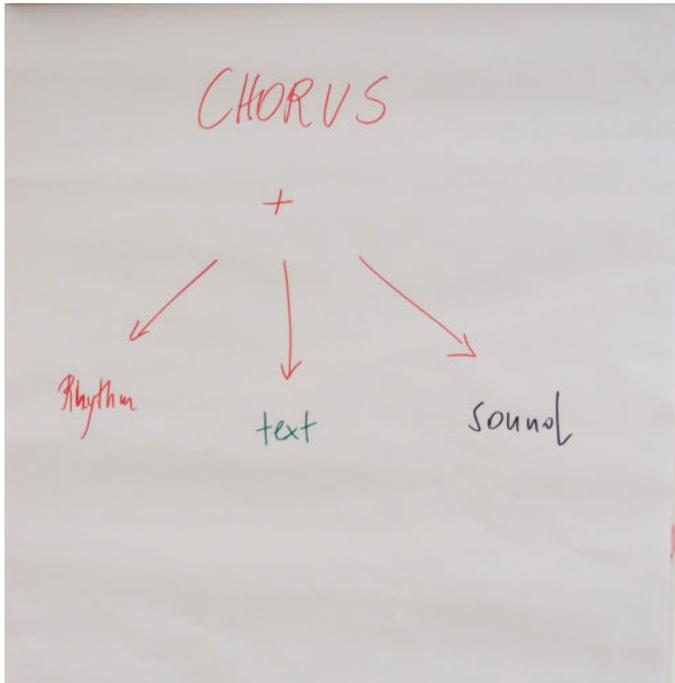
Especially when we work with young people, the experience of acting in a chorus brings up matters of personal importance: working with your own inner borders in a very physically way. So we can ask questions on the scene: Where do my boundaries begin? How does intolerance feel physically? When am I part of a group and when am I „outside“?

But there was one question in the impulses we got as Keynote-Speakers in the run-up to this congress that seems quite important for me: „How far are the values that we put into our announcement for the congress - openness/diversity/freedom - achievable by the performing arts? Please give examples from your professional surrounding.“ I will give an example of a choral exercise in a project that has made diversity an issue: This is the project „flucht. punkte“/“vanishing. points“ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EsnXax0DAE>), which we realized during my time as head of the TPZ Lingen (<http://www.tpzlingen.de>). It was a theater project with people from the Ivory Coast making their way to Germany. The participants theatrically portrayed their own experiences, but abstracted them with dance and choral methods in order not to end up with too much that was biographical. In one scene, the chorus is the wall that cannot be penetrated by the so called „Refugees“. Taken as an exercise, this setting can be a chance for transformation: in the repetition of the gesture lies the potential of its change. Thus, the chorus also becomes a „physical border“ that can be experienced and portrayed in the scene.



chorus class / personal
chorus

rhythm text sound (Abb. 5)



example of chorus

AC & DUP Formation (MUSIK), look at
genius.com/Asian-dub-foundation-fortress-europe-lyrics [23.6.2019]

Europe means for me ... decide as fast as you can
read every single line
read with numbers (together, some chorus
experience)

reading choreography

read single
read in a canon
read in pairs
read in chaos
read single

play with objects (canon)

- repeatable movements from 1 to 4, give the rhythm (Stift / Glas)
- 5 to 8, stand up & turn around
- research with paper: 1 to 4 movement, stand up: tear/tear/throw
- z.B. chow Büromonotonie

count: park / railway station = sounds & voices (1 / + 2 + 3 / 4)

Fortress Europe – read the single lines, not unisono
each of us should give the voice

CHORUS Buffet (explanation / (Abb. 6)

use text and gestures (body work / different
standings
use questions and statements from morning
session

individual work – presentation and discussion –
text from different groups
for example

What does Europe mean to us?

- a flag
- cultural inheritance
- same origins
- it's easy to understand each other
- opportunities to have
- friendship
- being proud of diversity
- freedom & peace
- Euro in Lanzarote



Reflection

- the role of the conductor (director), the first to hear
- give enough space to react
- come together without language
- comfortable – uncomfortable
- showing
- personal performance of questions
- importance of line (emotional aspects of the technique)
- copy the energy of yourself

MATERIAL

Fortress Europe (Asian Dub Foundation)

Keep bangin' on the wall
Keep bangin' on the wall
Of fortress Europe!
2022 – a new European order
Robot guards patrolling the border
Cybernetic dogs are getting closer and closer
Armoured cars and immigration officers
A burning village in Kosovo
You bombed it out now you're telling us go home
Machine guns strut on the cliffs of Dover
Heads down people – look out! we're going over
Burnin up! can we survive re-entry
Past the mines and the cybernetic sentries
Safe European homes built on wars
You don't like the effect don't produce the cause
The chip is in your head not on my shoulder
Total control just around the corner
Open up the floodgates time's nearly up
Keep banging on the wall of fortress Europe
Keep banging
Keep banging...

Songwriter: Aniruddha Das / John Pandit / Sanjay
Tailor / Steven Savale
Songtext von Fortress Europe © Universal Music
Publishing Group

taken from genius.com/Asian-dub-foundation-fortress-europe-lyrics [23.6.2019]

Sentences

“We're building a wall. And it's going to be a great wall.” (Donald Trump)

“You don't like the effect don't produce the cause.”
(Asian Dub Foundation)

“Only on the other side of that border will I know what I left behind.”

“What I've done, I know only when I get home.”

Questions

What is Europe?

What do I want to be?

Who stays, who flees, who is targeted? What are the limits to be defended? Where does demarcation begin and where does it become isolation?

What do I describe my identity with; home, language, community or shared memory?

How many borders have I crossed in my life on foot, by train, by plane?

Where does my own border begin?

But where is home?

Where do I start, where do I end?

Where are my limits?

How far can I go alone or in a group?

When did I feel good/unwell in the collective?

When is it time to step out and assert my position?

When do my boundaries begin?

How does intolerance feel physically?

When am I part of a group and when am I “outside”?



Terms:

safe
openness
diversity
freedom
propaganda
war
continental Europe
[external] borders
commercial matters
immigration European Union
illegal immigration
border control
European tradition
the biggest crisis
The United Nations
more than 60 million refugees worldwide
collective meltdown
enslavement and slaughter
new homeland
beatings, shooting, robbery, imprisonment and torture
mass exodus of refugees
television screen
international humanity organizations
multilingual
business

Dagmar Höfferer ©/2019

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