

Heinz-Uwe Haus and Brecht in the USA

Heinz-Uwe Haus and Brecht in the USA:

Directing and Training Experiences

Edited by

Heinz-Uwe Haus
and Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe

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Those great poets, for example, men like Byron, Musset, Poe, Leopardi, Kleist, Gogol . . . are and must be men of the moment, sensual, absurd, fivefold, irresponsible, and sudden in mistrust and trust; with souls in which they must usually conceal some fracture; often taking revenge with their works for some inner contamination, often seeking with their high flights to escape into forgetfulness from an all-too-faithful memory; idealists from the vicinity of *swamps*. . .

—Nietzsche

Art, life, and politics are inseparable and at the same time in conflict.

—Blok

I don't know whether I'll be able to change certain things for the better, or not at all. Both outcomes are possible. There is only one thing I will not concede; that it might be meaningless to strive in a good cause.

—Havel

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	xi
------------------------	----

Introduction

Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe.....	xiii
-----------------------------	------

First appearances and career of Heinz-Uwe Haus (HUH) in the USA (1980-)

Klaus M Schmidt	1
-----------------------	---

Bodin	31
-------------	----

PART 1: PRODUCTIONS

Clurman	34
---------------	----

Chapter One: The Caucasian Chalk Circle

1.1 Image	35
1.2 Biographical Context.....	36
1.3 1980 and 1992—a comparison	36
1.4 Review 1992.....	43
1.5 Review 1992.....	44
1.6 Foreshadowing the end of the “GDR” 1988.....	45

Strehler	51
----------------	----

Chapter Two: Mother Courage and her Children

2.1 Image	52
2.2 Review.....	53
2.3 The dramaturg’s perspective.....	54

Reinhardt	64
-----------------	----

Chapter Three: The Threepenny Opera

3.1 Image	65
3.2 The story	66
3.3 Review	69
3.4 Dialogue	73

Stein	77
-------------	----

Chapter Four: The Good Person of Szechwan

4.1 Image	78
4.2 Notes on the preparation	79
4.3 Review	83
4.4 The music director's perspective	86

Borchert	91
----------------	----

Chapter Five: The Life of Galileo Galilei

5.1 Image	92
5.2 Oh Joy of Beginning	93
5.3 A press release	93
5.4 An academic journal article	94
5.5 A review for an academic journal	97
5.6 Director's address at symposium about the play and production	101
5.7 The designer's perspective	104
5.8 Three versions	106
5.9 The music director's perspective	107
5.10 A "curtain raiser"	112
5.11 Observations on the rehearsal process	121
5.12 A review	126
5.13 A review	129

Apocryphal	133
------------------	-----

Chapter Six: The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui

6.1 Image	134
6.2 A review	135
6.3 A news release	136
6.4 Director's reflections	141
6.5 A review	147
6.6 Announcement in a University Bulletin	151
6.7 Item in a university's Theatre Training Programme newsletter	152

6.8 A Brecht researcher's experience acting in <i>Arturo Ui</i>	154
6.9 A review	159
6.10 From the director to the choreographer	162
6.11 Item in university magazine.....	166

PART 2: CONTEXTS

Bodin	170
Weber	171

Chapter Seven: Training

7.1 The actor's art.....	172
7.2 Use value of a handbook	175
7.3 Approaches to directing: how we got where we are	178
7.4 How to conserve heritage	184
7.5 Brecht in the 21 st century	186
7.6 Notes	187
7.7 "Thinking capable of intervention" – Brecht as director	188
7.8 Suggestions for a Brecht workshop	195
7.9 Emotional memory	195
7.10 What do we expect from Brecht?	196
7.11 On Brecht and working with director Heinz-Uwe Haus.....	198
7.12 Review of <i>Notes on Directing</i>	204
Bodin	208
A popular saying.....	209

Chapter Eight: Symposia

8.1 Faksimile: Symposium flyer, PTPP Milwaukee, 1987.....	210
8.2 Symposium announcement 1986.....	211
8.3 Notes for a roundtable discussion, 1979	212
8.4 Announcement: Brecht Unbound. University of Delaware, 1992	214
8.5 Symposium lecture (1): Defining Dialectics between Space and Storytelling	216
8.6 Symposium lecture (2): Excerpt from a speech at Kenyon College Gambier/Ohio 1990	221
8.7 Symposium lecture (3): The sister art of music in Brecht's plays	223
8.8 Symposium lecture (4): Brecht in Motion: translating "Galileo" to the American stage	239
8.9 Symposium lecture (5): Bert Brecht on Broadway and beyond	246

Bodin	252
Haus	253
Chapter Nine: Comments	
9.1 Recent Brecht reception in East Germany	254
9.2 “Ein Berliner” in America: directing approaches in context	257
9.3 Review of Lyon, James K., and Hans-Peter Breuer, eds. <i>Brecht Unbound</i>	265
9.4 Communist Anti-Americanism.....	267
9.5 Surprises since 1980	268
9.6 Most produced plays.....	270
9.7 Theatre of storytelling	271
Bodin	274
Archimedes.....	275
Chapter Ten: Historical and Biographical Contexts	
10.1 Cold War timeline	276
10.2 Berlin Wall timeline	279
10.3 America’s relationship with the GDR	282
10.4 Biographical contexts	283
10.5 To remember	286
10.6 To Sleep No More	287
10.7 Conclusions 1992	289
10.8 PC Police	290
10.9 Teaching, Training and Productions.....	290
10.10 Other books by or about Heinz-Uwe Haus	296
Bodin	298
Conclusion: Meyer-Dinkgräfe Interviews Haus, February 2019	299
Editors	305
Index	306

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INTRODUCTION

DANIEL MEYER-DINKGRÄFE

Up to 1977 I had been a student in a politically alert and progressive school in what was then West Germany, which led to a certain level of political awareness and awareness of history. We had eagerly followed the drama surrounding a well-known German Democratic Republic (GDR) citizen, former Brecht-disciple, and explicit GDR critic, singer-songwriter Wolf Biermann (b. 1936), who had not been allowed to return to the GDR, and was subsequently deprived of his GDR citizenship, after a concert tour to West Germany 1976.

At one of the first international theatre studies conferences I attended from the mid-1980s, my attention was drawn to a delegate who attracted comments from many others because of his peculiar behaviour. He could have served as a character in a farce who is haunted by paranoia. During conversations in between conference events he would talk only in a very hushed voice, and always look around carefully, repeatedly, and fearfully, whether anybody was watching or listening in. I was told that he was the one and only delegate from the German Democratic Republic. Several delegates were surprised that this totalitarian state allowed one of its citizens to attend an international conference such as this, others commented openly that this might be a signal of the regime showing signs of inconsistency, of weakness, and this might foreshadow the beginning of the end.

In 1996, I first met Heinz-Uwe Haus at a conference in Utrecht, The Netherlands. In him I encountered an epitome of theatre practice and political thinking and action as a genuine unity, rather than a theatre artist who has got some rather unrealistic political ideas, or a politician who has a subscription to the theatre. My work on editing a Festschrift on the occasion of his 65th birthday in 2007 coincided with, and helped me in turn deal with a seminal event in my career: A newly appointed head of department summoned me to his office a month after taking up his role and told me: “I do not wish my department to be associated nationally or internationally with Theatre and Consciousness” [which has been my research focus throughout my academic career, starting with my 1994 PhD]. He proceeded to offer me a sabbatical, “to realign your research interests to

the established strengths of the department". From my conversations with, and editorial work on Haus, I realised that in my department I was witnessing the beginning of a totalitarian regime in miniature, with the whole range of responses, from real or feigned not noticing anything amiss, via a conscious accepting a role in the opposition but without the option of leaving, all the way to seeking immediate escape. I escaped, to a professorship at the University of Lincoln, signing my contract only three months after that memorable meeting with the new head of department.

The idea of living in a totalitarian regime, not just visiting, observing and being free to leave at any time, but of living there on a daily basis, and often without any chance of getting out, is something many people in the world then, and now, are unable to fully grasp, to grasp beyond reason and intellect; even attempts at imagining the emotional impact must remain attempts, no matter how well intended, or how conscientiously and thoroughly carried out.

Heinz-Uwe Haus worked hard for the opportunity of "getting out", temporarily, but repeatedly, with the regime making sure, on all such occasions, that they kept sufficient pressure in hand to insure for them that he would return after his respective commitment outside of the GDR come to an end.

The regime could benefit in its national and particularly international position by trying to be seen as open or liberal by allowing a leading theatre practitioner to do work outside of the GDR. A large part of Haus's work outside of the GDR took place in the USA. Because of the lineage Brecht, Manfred Wekwerth (a student of Brecht), Heinz-Uwe Haus (a student and later colleague of Wekwerth), and because Haus came from a communist state, Haus was of major interest to American academia. Both the geographical and the ideological distance is a major factor in this relationship, which continues to this day.

Against this background, this book presents to the reader a selection of the considerable amount of material written and published in relation to Haus's productions of Brecht plays in the USA, production by production. This includes material written by Haus at the time for his cast, announcements of the productions in the media, newspaper reviews and academic articles about the productions, conference contributions, and reflections by cast members (both professional actors and university faculty) and designers (set, costume, light, music).

The material on the productions themselves is then placed into a range of contexts: actor training and specifically the academic debate of Brecht in the USA (Symposia) form the inner circle of that range, while "Comments" and "Historical / Biographical Contexts" widen the range. The information

about the productions will make more sense after reading the contexts, and the contexts in turn will make more sense when reflecting them in the light of the discussion of the productions. My conversation with Haus as the final chapter of the book seeks to integrate the material.

FIRST APPEARANCES AND CAREER OF HEINZ-UWE HAUS (HUH) IN THE U.S.A. (1980 -)

KLAUS M. SCHMIDT¹

(...) After a first appearance in the U.S. at the Annenberg Center in Philadelphia, invited by a consortium of Penn, Temple and Villanova University, with a production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in 1980 and a subsequent visit to New York University, NYC in 1982 with a production of *Richard III*, the *Stasi* began to retaliate. In the same year, they thwarted his academic career in the GDR by issuing a ban on teaching claiming "he had obtained his permission to work abroad under false pretences." He was accused of spreading "negative anti-socialist and pro-American ideology to his students". The authorities stripped him of his teaching certificate (*facultas docendi*). Haus had to resign from the *Institute*. His theatrical career in the GDR had also come to an end.

Nevertheless, the *Stasi* could not prevent Haus' further activities in Cyprus and in Greece. Too great was the value of his reputation for the image of the GDR abroad. His personal relations with Greek politicians from *Neo Demokratia* (including members of the family of Prime Minister Rallis) as well as *Pasok* (like the Minister of Culture Melina Mercouri) and his high public profile in the Greek and Cypriot media helped to overcome again and again the chicane of the regime. He called it "survival navigation". And with a dogged persistence Haus pursued further engagements in the U.S. (...)

¹ Excerpt from an essay "From Brecht Via Brecht To Brecht. Heinz-Uwe Haus: The Metamorphosis of a Theatre Director" (unpublished), written 2019; Schmidt holds a dual M.A. University of Tübingen, Germany; Ph.D. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Professor emer. Bowling Green State University, Guest Professor University of Kiel, Germany, University of Salzburg, Austria; Adjunct Professor University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Lives in Ann Arbor. Published extensively in the fields of Medieval and Modern Literature, Drama, Film and Linguistics, including Computer Linguistics. Founder of Middle High German Conceptual Database (<http://mhdbdb.sbg.ac.at/>).

I had established contacts with HUH during his stay as a guest professor at Kenyon College, Ohio. During our conversations we also discussed a strategy of how we could arrange an extended visit at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) on the occasion of Brecht's anniversary year in 1986. The strategy was to go through the official channels with the GDR cultural authorities and make a formal request with the usual emphasis on how the image of the GDR could be enhanced in the U.S., especially for such an important event as the Brecht anniversary. Eventually the trip was granted. But we knew that the *Stasi* would probably withhold Haus' passport on the day of his departure. In the meantime, the entire correspondence had been copied to the American Embassy in Berlin. But that was not revealed to the GDR authorities until the very last days before HUH's travel. Thus, when they learned about this fact they could not possibly withdraw from the deal without completely losing face before the American authorities, who were likely to make a big political issue out of it. Thus, the deal was on. Although, according to the official agreement, the *Stasi* was unable to send along an official supervisor for HUH, they found another form of harassment. A few weeks after Haus' arrival in Bowling Green mysterious postcards with typical communist images, for instance Picasso's peace dove, began to appear in Haus' official mailboxes at the Department of Theatre and the Department of German and Russian. They showed a variety of sending addresses from the GDR and from Cuba. They all lauded and congratulated HUH's indefatigable efforts for the communist cause. Quite obviously they were designed to arouse suspicions about Haus' political intentions for the students he worked with. Fortunately, nobody gave a hoot about this rather clumsy attempt of undermining Haus' reputation. The result was a nationally and internationally acclaimed Brecht conference and a unique parallel production of *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* and *Der aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui* both in English and German with two entirely different casts, entirely different directorial concepts (see below).

The Complete Teacher/Director: From the Brecht Models to a New Model for Brecht in the USA

In theatre departments and schools for drama in America Brecht had become sort of an institution since he died in 1956. Everybody needed to be exposed to his theory, and occasionally some of his plays made it to the stage even in professional theatres. The usual fare consisted of *The Life of Galileo*, *Threepenny Opera*, *Mother Courage*, lifelessly staged along the well-trodden models Brecht himself had established. Due to the emphasis

on dealing with Brecht's theory, which most of the students found rather cumbersome, the enthusiasm for Brecht's theatre was rather tepid at best. Based on some reading knowledge of Brecht's didactic plays one associated a rather sententious and clumsy socialist messaging with all of his works. The falsely translated *alienation effect* seemed to take all the fun and emotion out of theatre. The deeply embedded Stanislavskian approach to acting associated with Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler, the so-called "method acting" added an additional dimension to the rather lame reception Brecht kept receiving at the institutions for higher learning, acting schools and theatres around the country.

Brecht needed badly a defibrillator that could bring him back to life in the U.S. HUH provided that instrument. Most of the time he stayed away from Brecht's theory. He focused back on the essentials of directing by quoting, for instance Peter Stein and Giorgio Strehler:

The inventing power of the director is therefore based on what he sees.
Peter Stein (1994)

... it is useful, necessary even, to know the theatre from within, to know the trade of those who interpret texts through their own voices, their own bodies, their own intelligence and sensibility. For the theatre is made of these: flesh, blood, sound and thought.
Giorgio Strehler (1995)

The Stanislavski Syndrome

HUH's encounter with the American concept of directing based on Stanislavski developed almost within some sort of a renewed realism debate.

The most important difference between a theatre based on Stanislavski and one based on Brecht is that the former is continuously concerned with representing characters that are being more and more psychologically defined and refined, whereas the other is primarily concerned with telling a story, in which characters behave according to the circumstances arising within the story. That means the characters will appear predictable on the Stanislavskian stage and often appear contradictory in their behaviour on the Brechtian, where a person may, for instance, follow his/her moral compass very closely in one situation and in another be capable of the vilest behaviour. In the extreme case, a falsely interpreted Stanislavskian approach zeroes in on the personal experiences of the actors, has them dig deeply into their emotional memories and relive those experiences on

stage. This may ultimately lead to a state of hysteria, where acting becomes more or less a therapeutic session. Stanislavski was well aware of these pitfalls. Naturally, a perfectly healthy actor/actress can hardly relive the emotional experiences of a character who had suffered a terrible accident that has turned him/her into a paraplegic. Likewise, nobody can reexperience from memory the emotional state of a person during the minutes before his/her execution (see Mary Stuart Queen of Scots). To counter such tendencies, Stanislavski had his actors, for instance, train the generation of feelings by expressing themselves through the way they were throwing balls at each other, thus generating emotional expression on the spur of the moment without any relationship to a set character. This would be quite similar to a Brechtian actor's training. Brecht's reaction to the supposedly unbridgeable chasm between his understanding of epic theatre and the Stanislavskian approach resulted in declaring in writing the twelve similarities he shared with Stanislavski.

The falsely understood concept of the epic theatre has actors "distance" themselves (*Verfremdungseffekt*) from their characters, which ultimately makes them behave like trained robots on stage. In an interview with Konrad Wolff (*Theaterarbeit*) Brecht insists that epic theatre does by no means distance itself from drama and intense emotions. On the contrary, it even tries to boost them during key moments of the dramatic development. However, the actors must never lose themselves within the character of their roles. Instead, they must always remain aware of the possible contradictions in their character's behaviour.

The difference between the two approaches to acting and directing boils down to the difference between the ancient Greek concepts, *daemon* vs. *tyche*, that determine human behaviour by their innate characteristics, on the one hand, either generated by the stars (astrology) or by modern genetics, or by fate or exterior circumstances on the other. The problem is that *daemon*, what we now call *psyche*, has been and still is relatively inaccessible to our understanding and *tyche* is only accessible in retrospect. The totality of human behaviour remains at best intelligent guesswork. We may have come closer to understanding the processes (neuroscience) but understanding character and its predictable behaviour within any given situation is still way out of reach. Thus, it can never be an issue of Stanislavski versus Brechtian theatre, but a successful production rather thrives on a cross fertilization of the two approaches. A theatre that appeals to the public's emotions as well as their intellect, a theatre that completely fulfils its public function of entertainment and getting us actively involved in the issues raised by the dramatic action, making us question the actions of the figures on stage, comparing them

with our own potential actions and reactions and a theatre thriving on the contradictions, raising questions rather than answering them will always have the greatest appeal with a mature audience of a socially and politically involved citizenship. Anything short of that means reliving second-hand lives for brief moments through demagogically conceived virtual characters, who are quickly forgotten when we pass through the doors of the theatre. It is an ironic situation that the Brechtian theatrical approach is still being associated with communist propaganda, simply because he wrote a few didactic socialist plays, whereas the Stanislavskian approach has been cherished in the western world, even though he never ceased being one of Stalin's favourites.

Brecht's understanding of the epic theatre is much closer to that of the ancient Greeks and to Shakespeare than Stanislavski could ever have been even with his best model productions. In the US there has always been a greater affinity to film than to theatre. Film had logically been conceived as the most "realistic" genre of all artistic endeavours. However, it has failed to find a way to convince its audiences of the fact that what appears as the grand illusion in reality is the greatest lie. Thus, the movie industry has cherished a Stanislavskian approach to acting as its most important handmaid. Movie audiences must literally be kept in the dark so that the cash register at the box office keeps ringing. Nevertheless, the process of making movies is much more associated with a Brechtian approach to acting and producing a play. With the multitude of cameras, cranes, lighting and sound equipment, illusion producing machinery and computerized special effects continuously present on the set the distancing effect on the actors could not be greater. Yet, the audiences are literally kept in the dark about all this.

In *Brechtian Theatre of Contradictions*² Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe writes:

Stanislavski was not a director. Brecht was a great dramatist; Stanislavski was not a dramatist. Stanislavski was a teacher of acting, which Brecht never was. Stanislavski came from a tradition of theatre he wanted to maintain and develop further, while Brecht endeavoured to break traditions. The alleged antagonism is merely mechanistic and not accurate. There is no point setting them against each other. They are talking about different things, although at some stage Brecht, under pressure from the formalism debate, under the pressure from attacks his theatre was

² Brechtian Theatre of Contradictions. Providing Moral Strength under Conditions of Dictatorship: A Festschrift for Heinz-Uwe Haus, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, UK, 2007' p. 16

subjected to, produced a list of fourteen things he had in common with Stanislavski.

It seems like Stanislavski's theatre was at his peak the right medium for Chekhov and Ibsen. Through Stanislavski the false pathos of fake emotions began to disappear from European stages and eventually from those of the U.S. as well. Yet, left entirely in the hands of Stanislavski both Chekhov and Ibsen would be dead by now. He would have ignored the social entanglements of the characters, the contradictions in their behaviour depending on the situations they were thrown into, in favour of creating one dimensional characters producing sheer emotions that can be readily consumed by the audience without even leaving an aftertaste. HUH proved with his recent production of *The Lady from the Sea* that in the hands of a follower of Brecht's principles Ibsen can be as alive for a contemporary audience as he was a hundred years ago.

HUH on Brecht

Brecht's dramaturgical approach is not a style but a way of viewing the world. Basically, it is the acceptance of and the search for contradictions — in characters, scenes, the whole theatrical creativity. His way of storytelling resists and challenges the familiar "social drama" in anticipation of the audience's ability to observe the actors in situations/events full of contradictions. Brecht himself gave with his famous comparison of dramatic and epic theatre not only an understanding of his conscientious objections but a high-spirited, hopeful, democratic sense of what directing can do to improve the art of theatre. In 1936 he wrote: "The spectator of dramatic theatre says: 'Yes, I have always felt the same. I am just like this. This human being's suffering moves me because there is no way out for him. This is great art; it bears the mark of inevitable. I am weeping with those who weep, on the stage, laughing with those who laugh'. The spectator of epic theatre says: 'I should never have thought so. That is not the way to do it. This is most surprising, hardly credible. This will have to stop. This human being's suffering moves me because there should have been a way out for him. This is great art; nothing seems inevitable. I am laughing about those who weep on the stage, weeping about those who laugh'."

Brecht fought against the notion of 'natural' material conditions, or social fate, even as he employed, theatrically, a profound attention to specific naturalistic details in production. Under Brecht's direction the presentation of the "natural" was not meant to fetishize that natural as natural, but to incite critical attention to the ways in which the natural was deployed socially and politically for specific ends. "Truth is concrete" was his favourite moral. He was once asked what he thought was the purpose of

a good play, and he replied by showing his questioner a photograph of Tokyo after its famous earthquake. In the devastation, one building stayed standing, upright and proud, and the caption was "Steel Stood". "There is your answer", said Brecht, "the purpose of drama is to survive".

Such an attitude is more than a desire for reason and enlightenment. It reflects a basic attitude (*Grundgestus*) how to re-view the natural. Its precondition is dialectical thinking.

...

We need to go back to fundamentals: What Acting is, why it moves us, what its purposes are, how it relates to other art forms. ... "Return" to Brecht is always a start with one's own interests in socially conscious theatricals. Theatre artists have to be trained, what Lessing is demanding, "to recognize the multiplicity of connecting strands". Brecht's privileged visible theatricality. Brechtian performers wield the natural detail (such as Courage's belt buckle) in order to underscore it or make it appear as a performance, or as a performative, social and conscious act.

The genesis of a good play is comparable to the multitude of small episodes from the storyboard of filmmaking or the gradual formation of an image through an accumulation of pixel points.

But it takes a personality like HUH to convert all the theories he learned from Brecht into practice. His vitality, his energy, the examples he sets through his own behaviour is what lights the fire among his team. There is no better way to explain this than letting one of his former team members speak:

(Steven Pelinski):

As far as the approach to Uwe's work, I've worked with Uwe once before in Greece as well as other directors such as JoAnne Akalaitis in other locations. Both deal with the abstract Brechtian devices in all of their work, so this wasn't something new to me. I've dipped my toes in these waters before. What's unique in a professional capacity is how quickly Uwe was able to mould an ensemble. We had masters, MFAs, and seasoned professionals working together and learning at the same pace - something that he achieved in very short order. That was the improvisational nature of the work. Any idea was a good idea. We went down many paths, some of them were not so good and we tossed them out; other ones you wouldn't even think would work in a production of Arturo Ui and all of the sudden: Boom! He's going to actually use this material that was from today's headlines.

That kind of collaboration is something I'm passionate about, something I've missed when it hasn't been apparent in rehearsals. Certain directors are very dictatorial; Uwe and JoAnne Akalaitis are not. They are directors who allow the actors' contribution to actually create the piece and then bring in the audience as a continued improvisation.

In *Notes on Directing*, Heinz-Uwe Haus writes: "The actor must develop his faculties in the art of observing human relationships in everyday life, as well as investigating what may lie behind the society in which the relations occur" (8).

There are two essential trademarks for HUH's style of directing, which he also inherited from Brecht, *gestus* and masks.

Gestus

Texts only come to life through theatric action. It is the physicality of an event that render meaning to the words. The words can never carry an action on their own. Similarly, it is the basic situation that creates the physical appearance of a character and fills the words with meaning. When Woyzeck goes about buying the knife with which he intends to kill his Marie, the way he moves, the way his entire body speaks to the audience of his inner state of turmoil is more important than the words he utters. It can never be the same as if someone goes and buys a knife, who simply wants to kill a rabbit for his next meal, even though the words used during the process of the transaction might be exactly the same. This is what Brecht and Haus mean by *gestus*. It must always be found anew for each rehearsal and for each performance, and it cannot be determined by the words of the text. To speak with Haus: "As all the other artistic expressions on stage (movement, costume, fabrics, sloping platform, lighting, music, etc.) text only turns into interaction among human beings via *gestus*. Only thus can enjoyable and meaningful images of reality be generated. We know from Brecht to what extent speech is physical behaviour."

Masks

HUH realized early on in his career that playing with masks was not only a way of hindering an audience from identifying too much with the characters on stage, but also a perfect method of hiding contradictory and even rebellious ideas from the numbing influence of the censor. Their helpless flailing against so-called "formalism" reflected the fact that there are limits to entering the heads of performers and audiences alike in a politically controlling way once thought processes are set in motion by what is taking place on stage and beyond the orchestra.

The psycho-physical techniques of Stanislavski had enabled the dictatorial cultural authorities in the wake of Stalin to introduce a so-called "new truthfulness" or "socialist realism," which hides behind a "fake

reality" and hides the fact that nothing is like the brave new world of industrious workers and peasants they would like their audiences to believe in. Everything that deviates from such a flat one-dimensional appearance of reality is defamed as "formalist" and "bourgeois decadence." Thus, their flat realism had turned into a mask and only the masks used on stage began to reveal the true face of a living human being.

Haus says: "The use of masks was thus also an act of resistance of a more realistic and inventive form of theatre."

Masks go back to the ancient Greek theatre and the *comedia d'el arte* and were reintroduced by Brecht in his *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1951). They appeared as a novelty on American stages. HUH often had his actors make their own masks out of paper maché and other materials, quarter-face, half-face, full-face, in all kinds of varieties or had them transform or embellish existing basic masks according to what they thought befitted their character. This forced them into a new form of physicality, through which they would ultimately find the right *gestus* for each individual situation their character had to encounter. Masks encourage the free play and experimentation as if a load or a straitjacket is being taken off the actors and they turn them from marionettes into multi-faceted breathing human beings. Above all, masks hinder the sentimental consumption and absorption of texts and the fixation on simplistic messages.

HUH:

Drama sets no limits to the use of its theatrical means. I have been using masks for Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," "Richard III," "Hamlet," "Pericles" either partially or fully. Whether it was Toller's "Man and Masses," Carvajal's "Downfall of the Centaurs" or Lem's "Science Fiction" the use of masks became my specific means of expression and communication.

Stage Design

Haus applies the same creative process that goes into movement and gestures of the actors to the entire stage. Nothing is left to coincidence in the sense that everything must contribute to telling the story or each individual story of a scene or a sequence within a scene that forms the overall narration. Objects and space, light and darkness also speak a language just as costumes and fabrics do. They also assume a *Grundgestus* in each individual scene, which has to be determined ahead of time in discussions with the stage designer or preferably artists brought in from the outside and the entire team. Still, there is ample room for experimentation before the final set is confirmed. It is this free play with

spaces and objects that eventually arrives at the most eloquent solution for a given scene. At the same time, absolutely nothing must be on stage that does not directly contribute to telling the story. There is no room for decorative stuff or period setting. William Browning, one of HUH's stage designers describes this process as follows:

He's always interested in narrating the story effectively; he's not interested in putting decorations up on stage and physical barriers to the space. Uwe is very interested in finding a way to find the space as an instrument of narration. He typically likes weird and unusual spaces: he's not a big fan of the American proscenium standard stage. All of Brecht's plays are episodic in nature; that is, there is at least a dozen scenes in or in the neighbourhood of a dozen scenes or more in all of his plays. You go from place to place to place and it would be completely idiotic, in my view, to try to create a representation of any of those places. Typically, what we do is find some way to physically decide where it's located on the stage and provide only the elements that are essential in having that scene narrated. That often involves just utilizing a door in a middle-frame-work or something that's there as a part of the theatre, or maybe it's taking a couple of benches with a board across it to create a counter perhaps, or whatever is sufficient to describe and then allow the actors to then play the scene. Of course, they do a lot of experiment in trial and error in the rehearsal process.

What often happens is you happen to leave something in the rehearsal hall during this rehearsal period while the actors are working, and if an actor goes and picks something up and uses it and likes the way it's used, that suddenly is now in the play. So, you have to be careful what you leave in the rehearsal hall for him.

Interludes

As for Brecht, interludes are one of the most important features for HUH for the overall narration. Even though many of those have already been set by Brecht for his own plays, HUH frequently deviates from them, rearranges them or creates new ones, where none had been before. Wherever a play script seems to come without interludes, HUH will create them, fill them with music specifically designed for a particular production within a particular cultural and socio-political environment. The interludes have four major functions for him: a) they create distance for the audience from the emotional involvement with the previous scene, provide mental spaces for rational thinking and question the recently observed actions; b) they prepare the ground for the following story, lead towards a new location or set a different mood; c) they frequently provide background information that sheds a different light on the ensuing action and raise

additional questions; and d) they whip along the action and determine the tempo of the entire play. There must not be any idle moments, for changing sets, for instance. Every moment in time is precious and must not be wasted. A wasted moment is like a needless piece of decoration. It would only lead audiences astray from the story that needs to be told. Even though interludes build bridges between scenes they are an integrated element in the overall narration. HUH pays as much attention to the interludes as to the individual scenes themselves. The result is often the experience that things move along at a break-neck speed, yet they also provide enough space for reflection.

The Fall of the Wall - The Potential Politician (1989 -)

When the first crack in the Berlin wall finally opened in the night from November 9th to the 10th in 1989 and one of the most absurd edifices in human history could no longer hold back the flood waves of people streaming into the West, HUH had been there, if not in person but in spirit a long time before it even happened. As the *SED* regime began to unravel at an ever-faster speed, Haus who had been active in dissident activities for a long time joined the movement *Demokratischer Aufbruch/Democratic Awakening* along with Angela Merkel and many others, a movement that was supposed to turn eventually into a political party. By Mid-December already they had demanded the immediate introduction of a free market economy for the territory of the GDR and a reunification with a new free Germany. Haus was the Berlin delegate for the leading constituting committee of the future party, and he founded and led the study groups for both European Policy and Culture. He also founded the *Praxis Group*, an activist information group, that started in January and February of 1990 to rally U.S. intellectuals with a signature campaign in support of a German reunification. Such an action had become very important in order to break an ivory tower concept at American institutions of higher education that the GDR was an idealistic enterprise of a "true" socialist society that had just not found its right ways yet. Some had even gotten so far as to claim that in case of a transitional rapprochement of the two Germanys an institution like the *Stasi* was badly needed in order to maintain law and order and keep the Western drug pushers under control. Driven by GDR propaganda and some conformist literary celebrities they had allowed a reverse wall to be erected in their minds that justified the many victims of aborted escapes from the East to the West as a "necessary evil" for giving the GDR a chance to advance towards their "ideal society."

However, the rapid reunification set in motion by chancellor Kohl turned out to have its true down sides for the "new" federal states in the former GDR as well as for Germany as a whole. The so-called *Abwicklung*, winding down of the encrusted GDR economy resulted in a gigantic vulture like takeover of all salvageable holdings by western companies that gave inexperienced East German upstarts short of capital hardly a chance. The result was a massive migration of young people to the West leaving behind a frustrated population of middle aged and older people as well as young uneducated unemployed in vast areas of the former GDR. It created the hotbed for a resurgence of the former *Stasi* stalwarts in form of the *Neue Linke*/*New Left* party as well as for the populist right-wing xenophobic and racist slogans of the *Alternative für Deutschland/Alternative for Germany (AfD)* of today. Both are well-established in the current *Bundestag* by now at the cost of the established democratic parties of SPD and CDU.

Angela Merkel, who had once linked elbows with HUH during the time of the *Democratic Awakening*, had realized early enough that the new idealistic movement coming out of the former GDR stood little chance of not being absorbed by the two big established parties CDU and SPD, both of which had continued as dummy parties in the East throughout the forty years of GDR. Thus she made her career first at the side of Helmut Kohl until she made it to the head of the CDU and into being Chancellor of Germany, from where she determined Germany's and Europe's destiny in the mature and rational way of the trained scientist she was up to this very moment of her twilight.

With the slow disappearance of the *Democratic Awakening* HUH also moved out of the eye of the political storm around him. After all, he is a theatre man and idealist by nature, which are not exactly the virtues that help you climb the political ladder, where a certain degree of ruthlessness and elbows are necessary to advance. He has always been a conservative protestant and passive revolutionary. Inspired by his grandmother's genealogical heritage from the Huguenots escaped to Prussia, HUH took to the political and social theorist Jean Bodin (1530–1596) early on in his life as one of his models for his own political and social thinking. HUH even assumed the pseudonym Jean Bodin for his sketches and paintings as well as his lyrical and dramatic writings.

Since he had almost become a victim himself of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572), Jean Bodin had concentrated all his efforts on avoiding a second war against the Huguenots. In his theories of government, he assumed a moderate position during the period of post-reformation upheavals in French politics. However, one of his most

important conclusions was that passive resistance to an oppressive state was totally justified. This type of passive resistance will continue to determine HUH's career for the rest of his life. His work remains dedicated to raising issues, to questioning existing conditions, to challenging establishments through the public forum of theatre and to some extent through his writings. He is not the type who climbs on soap boxes shouting out simplistic answers to complex issues. In other words, he is not a born politician. Nevertheless, he expressed his shock about the fact that only a few years after the wall had tumbled to the ground the former *Stasi* party had first made it to the new *Bundestag* under the name of *PDS* (2002) and later having joined forces with the Western out-left parties under the name *New Left* had become (2009) the fourth strongest party in a united Germany:

After an analysis of the incomprehensible turnaround and denial of Stasi terror, sharp shooting at the border, brainwashing and suppression of free speech and free travel, the material want caused by a bureaucratically planned economy one has to seriously ask oneself about the spiritual condition and historical identity of our nation. The fact that after such a short period since liberation the SED/PDS was sent by almost a fourth of the voters of the former GDR into parliament, without a doubt has to be attributed to their totalitarian conditioning or to the democratic immaturity of part of the population. But above all, it reflects the decay of our value system that to many of the responsible democrats in the established parties seems to have become irrelevant...Above all, we have to ask ourselves why despite our democratic revolution of 1989 the understanding of our present through the analysis of our past is marked by such an inconceivable lack of historical understanding in our reunified nation.

This written outcry by HUH may have been received by the public like the proverbial cry in the wilderness. He may have withdrawn from the political stage to his beloved theatrical stage again. However, for the few who are lucky to attend some of his theatrical productions his voice will definitely be more effective.

Theatre is always politics, even when it comes along seemingly as totally apolitical. Beneath the oppressive daily drums of the Nazi propaganda machine lay a shallow sea of a totally apolitical gravity of operettas, cheap slapstick comedies, pompous historical dramas and soaps as well as totally uncritically performed German classics. This shallow sea of entertainment spoke more about the condition of the society and where it was going than Goebbels's official clarions of propaganda. The message was unmistakably: "Don't ask any questions, laugh yourself silly, shed

tears about something that really does not concern you!" - until the walls were crumbling all around.

HUH's theatre definitely is different. It tries to be the true public forum for a democratically mature audience, a theatre of contradictions, as has been the theatre of the Greek antiquity, Shakespeare's *Globe* and *Swan* and Brecht's. The following model productions that are not models, which some of Brecht's own productions have unfortunately turned into, will reveal the depth of Haus' directorial creativity to its fullest extent.

Great Productions - Not Models

HUH has never seen his productions as models that could be repeated the very same way in a different environment, even though he transposed his acting team several times from the US to Greece or Cyprus or even to West Germany. Each of these "transposed" productions varied considerably from its original. Models are always prescriptive and as such they limit not only the artistic freedom of expression but also the receptive freedom of audiences. Each audience is a different human cosmos of its own with its multitude of personal and collective experiences and its own cultural environment. That Brecht's models have been used many times as prescriptive, something his heirs had promoted, was probably quite against his own intentions, as he had demonstrated with his own productions in several different places at different times. That means in order to remain faithful to Brecht's ideas about the theatre one has to deviate as far as possible from his model productions. Anything else would place Brecht within the cold walls of a museum.

***Pericles* by William Shakespeare**

(A new adaptation by Heinz-Uwe Haus based on the 18th century translation by Johann Joachim Eschenburg)

(...), this production represents the peak of HUH's directorial creativity on the stages of the GDR, and it is no coincidence that he chose a play that is relatively little known rarely appears among the Shakespeare repertoire on the stages of the world. All that Haus has learned from Brecht and his disciple Wekwerth flowed into this production at the *Weimar National Theatre*. Never has one of his teams devoted greater efforts and time to the preparation and the collection of supporting material for the production.

The program booklet is a testimony to Haus' efforts of always being in control of all aspects of a production, from producing his own text to dealing with new creative ways of using music, choreography, and stage