

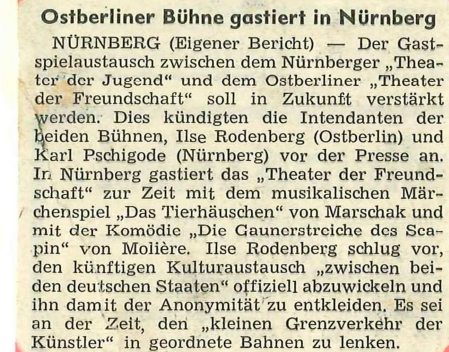
Brigitte Dethier: „50 years of ASSITEJ“

Rede der Stellvertretenden Vorsitzenden aus Anlass des Festessens beim Festival „Panoptikum“

23. Januar 2016 in Nürnberg

Good evening everyone. We have a good reason to celebrate: 50 years of ASSITEJ in Germany! And we want to celebrate together with all of you, but first of all, I am here to tell you why we start our year of celebrations here in Nürnberg:

ASSITEJ Germany was founded in 1966, the year after the international association had been founded in Paris. This sounds like a simple story, but there were two German states back then and, accordingly, two ASSITEJ centers were founded. In the West there were, at this time, only three theatres that addressed young audiences all year round: Kinder- und Jugendtheater am Stadttheater Dortmund, Schaubude in München and - ! – das Theater für Kinder und Jugendliche an den Städtischen Bühnen in Nürnberg. East Germany had four theaters on offer that were specialized to address young audiences only. They were located in Berlin, Leipzig, Halle and Dresden. They were important cultural institutions and worked on a highly professional level for the aesthetic education of a young generation that was to build and cherish socialism. As early as 1963 all theatres in the DDR had to create theater for young audiences, too.



Ostberliner Bühne gastiert in Nürnberg
 NÜRNBERG (Eigener Bericht) — Der Gastspielaustausch zwischen dem Nürnberger „Theater der Jugend“ und dem Ostberliner „Theater der Freundschaft“ soll in Zukunft verstärkt werden. Dies kündigten die Intendanten der beiden Bühnen, Ilse Rodenberg (Ostberlin) und Karl Pschigode (Nürnberg) vor der Presse an. In Nürnberg gastiert das „Theater der Freundschaft“ zur Zeit mit dem musikalischen Märchenspiel „Das Tierhäuschen“ von Marschak und mit der Komödie „Die Gaunerstriche des Scapin“ von Molière. Ilse Rodenberg schlug vor, den künftigen Kulturaustausch „zwischen beiden deutschen Staaten“ offiziell abzuwickeln und ihn damit der Anonymität zu entkleiden. Es sei an der Zeit, den „kleinen Grenzverkehr der Künstler“ in geordnete Bahnen zu lenken.

Süddeutsche Zeitung
 Okt. 27. Okt. 1966

So, young audiences in the West had little to choose from and Nürnberg played an important role: As early as 1960 international performances were invited to Nürnberg to perform in a festival of theatre for young audiences, the “Internationale Woche am Theater der Jugend”. Shows from Belgium and Jugoslavia and East Germany were shown in Nürnberg. Now you know why the audience in Nürnberg is so special and so very open to inspiration from abroad, to other languages and to new artistic ideas! The festival was also the place where international exchange started and where Hanswalter Gossmann, artistic director of the stage for young audiences in Nürnberg, played a central role in bringing people together.

Still, ASSITEJ was not founded in Nürnberg, but in Berlin. And, this may be somewhat surprising, both ASSITEJ centers – East and West – were founded in East Berlin! The three colleagues from the West met in February 1966 and agreed to become “ASSITEJ Germany” and join ASSITEJ International. They were then forced to change their name into “ASSITEJ Section Bundesrepublik Deutschland”. The Eastern section was founded in October 1966 and called “Zentrum DDR der ASSITEJ”. The right to represent “Germany” was not available to anyone at this time!

The founding of ASSITEJ Germany was just one small step in the process of breaking down the wall that separated Germany and Berlin in the Cold War. It was one example that underlined the importance of exchange and sharing. Together, we are part of a national and international network. We admire those founding generations for their will to change the world. And today we are also strong enough to create a better world, to cross more borders and overcome more walls.

Let’s share this lovely “Torte” and celebrate the future! Thank you.