

Mapping opportunities for playwrights in Europe

Seminar at Bibu Festival

Input by Christian Schönfelder about Germany

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I Structure

Germany has a very diverse theatre scene, also for young audiences. There are many theatres of very different sizes. One distinctive feature is certainly that almost every larger town has its own theatre, with its own venues and its own ensembles.

Big City and State Theatres for young audiences in the former east

Theater an der Parkaue Berlin (<https://www.parkaue.de/>) – *Artistic Directors: Christina Schulz und Alexander Riemenschneider*

Theater der jungen Welt Leipzig (<https://www.theaterderjungenweltleipzig.de/>) – *Artistic Director: Miriam Tscholl*

Theater der jungen Generation Dresden (<https://www.tjg-dresden.de/about-us>) – *Artistic Directors: Ulrike Leßmann & Mihkel Seeder*

Departments at City and State Theatres (few examples)

Junges Schauspielhaus Hamburg (<https://junges.schauspielhaus.de/>) – *Artistic Director: Klaus Schumacher*

Theater im Werftpark Kiel (<https://theater-kiel.de/seiten/junges-theater.html>) – *New Artistic Director: Franziska-Theresa Schütz*

Moks Theater Bremen (https://theaterbremen.de/de_DE/junges-theater) – *Artistic Director: Rebecca Hohmann*

Junges Staatstheater Hannover (https://staatstheater-hannover.de/de_DE/junges-schauspiel-hannover) – *Artistic Director: Cathrin Rose*

Junges Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf (<https://www.dhaus.de/home/junges-schauspiel/>) – *Artistic Director: Stefan Fischer-Fels*

Independent theatres with own stages and ensembles (few examples)

Junges Ensemble Stuttgart (<https://www.jes-stuttgart.de/en/>) – *Artistic Director: Grete Pagan*

Theater im Marienbad, Freiburg (<https://www.marienbad.org/>) – *Artistic Director: Sonja Karadza*

Schauburg München (<https://www.schauburg.net/de/theater/leitbild>) – *Artistic Director: Andrea Gronemeyer*

In few years: hopefully Frankfurt!

Independent theatres without ensemble (few examples)

Comedia Köln (<https://comedia-koeln.de/>) – *Artistic Director: Manuel Moser*

Hochx München (<https://theater-hochx.de/en/theatre/>) – *Artistic Director: Ute Gröbel*

Figurentheaterzentrum FITZ! In Stuttgart (<https://www.fitz-stuttgart.de/was-ist-das-fitz/>) – *Artistic Director: Katja Spiess*

Independent companies (only one example of probably hundreds)

Pulk fiktion (<https://www.pulk-fiktion.de/wer-wir-sind>) – *Artistic Director: Hannah Biedermann*

II ASSITEJ & The Children's and Youth Theatre Centre in the Federal Republic of Germany

(<https://jungespublikum.de/en/about-us/>)

In Germany, there is not only ASSITEJ, but also, quite important, the Children's Theatre Centre in the Federal Republic of Germany situated in Frankfurt. The centre connects colleagues, theatres with one another, and theatres with other institutions. And it feels responsible to come forward with change processes like diversity, participation on all levels and inclusive theatre.

It also hosts some important meetings, festivals and seminars:

AUGENBLICK MAL! (<https://jungespublikum.de/events-series/augenblick-mal/>)

„Best of“ Germany with international programme, every second year in Berlin, next one in April 2027

Frankfurter Forum Young Theatre (<https://jungespublikum.de/events-series/ff-junges-theater/>)

fka as Writer's Forum (...), every year in November, every second year mainly about new texts and their writers, combined with the German Kindertheaterpreis and the German Jugendtheaterpreis

Grant Nah dran (<https://jungespublikum.de/grant/nah-dran/>)

Supports cooperations between playwrights and theatres: playwrights can pitch their ideas, a jury picks out four of the pitches, than theatres can apply for a cooperation with one of the four playwrights

III More Festivals (selection)

Festivals are still the best way to get to know theatre people and their thoughts, aesthetics and topics. The most important one in Germany has been AUGENBLICK MAL! for many years now; it takes place every two years in Berlin.

Other festivals featuring many international guest performances. Of course, the best thing is to get invited to one of these festivals with a production. But alongside that, many festivals also have special formats designed to allow companies, visitors and guests to get to know one another and exchange ideas.

Starke Stücke (<https://www.starke-stuecke.net/>)

International and national guest performances in different cities around Frankfurt; every year in March

Panoptikum (<https://festival-panoptikum.de/en/>), hosted by Theatre Mumpitz Nürnberg

European and local performances for children, many international delegates, every second year, next one in Feb. 2028

Schöne Aussicht / Bright View (<https://www.jes-stuttgart.de/en/schone-aussicht-festival-2026/>), hosted by JES

International festival with also local performances, every second year, next one in 2028

Imaginale (<https://imaginale.net/en/contact-information/stuttgart/>), hosted by FITZ! Stuttgart

International Festival for Animated Forms, every second year, next one in January 2027

Think Big (<https://www.schauburg.net/de/thinkbig>), hosted by Schauburg München
International Dance-, Music- and Performance-Festival, next edition in July this year

Regional Festivals like Hart am Wind (north), Westwind (west), KUSS (middle), Wildwechsel (east)

IV Agencies (Selection)

In Germany, staging existing plays is almost exclusively handled by publishers agencies. Internationally most of them work together with theatre publishers like Columbine or Nordiska and translators who scan the programmes and suggest interesting plays to be translated.

It is also possible (but very optimistic) to get into contact without agencies or translators. Send one or two scenes translated by an AI and a summary along with them. Anyone wishing to submit their entire play should do so in English.

Felix Bloch Erben (<https://www.felix-bloch-erben.de/de/fbe>);

Contact: *Judith Weißborn* (weissenborn@felix-bloch-erben.de)

Rowohlt Theater Verlag (<https://www.rowohlt-theaterverlag.de/foreign-rights#about>);

Contact: *Maren Zindel* (Maren.Zindel@Rowohlt.de)

Theaterverlag Weitendorf (<https://www.buehnenverlag-weitendorf.de/ueber-uns.html>)

Contact: info@buehnenverlag-weitendorf.de

Theaterstückverlag / Drei Masken Verlag (<https://theaterstueckverlag.de/>)

Contact: theaterstueckverlag@dreimaskenverlag.de

A list with most German speaking agencies you find here:

<https://www.theatertexte.de/nav/1/2/5/2>

V Remarks

The situation in Germany for theatres and especially for playwright are not that easy at the moment. We are struggling massively with coming or already imposed budget cuts. That concerns also or mostly freelancers like directors, guest-performers and playwrights. There is less money for the theatres. And one quite easy way for theatres to save money is not to play contemporary texts.

Or to develop them on their own. Sometimes theatres involve playwrights in this process, but most times these plays are devised through improvisations on a theme; the final draft is then done by the director or the dramaturg. The results are nevertheless often not bad, at least in theatrical and emotional terms, though less so in literary terms.

Why do theatres do it this way, then? To have more freedom in staging, I would say. This might be also the reason why theatres prefer to adapt novels rather than order new plays. If the money is available, this can also be attractive for playwrights. But most times the directors or dramaturgs create their own versions once again.