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INTERNATIONAL THEATRE PROJECT EXPOSES CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GERMANY AND AMERICA IN A PLAY PREMIERING AT 59E59 THEATERS

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*A cast of four will present **Outside Inn in English and German, mixed-language Performances***

The new German drama by Austrian playwright Andreas Jungwirth was commissioned by International Culture Lab (ICL) and Theater Rampe Stuttgart for an ensemble of four actors – two German, two American. This project was designed to instigate an artistic and cultural exchange between Germans and Americans, with subsequent dialogue to take place in the community in the form of talk-backs, workshops and panel discussions. Produced by International Culture Lab with the support of the Goethe Institute New York, **Outside Inn is directed by Melanie Dreyer and will have its New York premiere Wednesday, October 1 at 59E59 Theaters (59 East 59th Street, between Madison and Park Avenues). The limited engagement runs through October 19th with performances Tues.–Fri. at 8:15pm, Sat. at 2:15 and 8:15pm and Sun. at 3:15pm. Tickets are \$35.00 and can be purchased by calling 212-279-4200 or online at www.ticketcentral.com. Group, senior and student discounts. (Mature content; recommended for ages 14 and up).**

Outside Inn is a murder mystery that leaps across three continents, including present-day Germany, a small town near the Arizona-Mexican border and Namibia (the former German colony). Paul, a disillusioned German civic engineer unintentionally participates in the death of his boss, a Svengali-like tycoon. Rather than going to the police, Paul runs away to a small town in Arizona. With his mistress Marina by his side, he steals the identity of his former boss and flees across the Mexican border. The husband and wife Paul and Marina leave behind must face a future alone and a past that continues to haunt them.

The play, which raises issues of illegal immigration, corporate greed, identity theft, racism and hate-crimes, among others, has been performed before an audience in Stuttgart, Germany and Pittsburgh. Stuttgart is home of Mercedes and site of the much-discussed failed merger of Daimler Chrysler, and Pittsburgh has recently launched an initiative to engage business and the arts to work in partnership in imagining the city's future. Consequently, some of the most engaged discussion about *Outside Inn* has transpired in talk-backs and panels that have included the business and diplomatic communities addressing the new challenges of transatlantic cooperation. Ancillary events in New York include a panel discussion in cooperation with the American Council on Germany and Deutsches Haus at NYU, featuring



Benjamin R. Barber, Distinguished Senior Fellow at Demos. An internationally renowned political theorist, Dr. Barber brings an abiding concern for democracy and citizenship to issues of politics, culture and education in America and abroad.

“We commissioned Andreas to write *Outside Inn* to catalyze a dialogue about how contemporary Germans and Americans see and think about each in our newly globalized world. In the two years of German-American collaboration we discovered that our respective theatre cultures mirrored many of the differences present in the more general national cultures. The profound successes as well as certain undeniable communication failures in this theater project could be linked to those differences,” says director Melanie Dreyer.

Outside Inn is the first project of International Culture Lab, the newly reconfigured production company and ensemble under the co-artistic direction of Melanie Dreyer and Gabriele Schafer. The company formerly had a twenty-five year history producing nationally and internationally as Thieves Theatre, best known for its world premiere in New York of R.W. Fassbinder’s controversial play about real estate speculation, *Trash, the City and Death*, translated by Schafer. It was also a cofounder and ‘communication central’ of the Rat Conference (www.ratconference.com), an international collective of theater artists, for which it organized a conference in Rosario, Argentina, among other cities.

“The realities of the post-9/11 world made us realize that both ethically and aesthetically our theater needed to address more directly our role in a world community,” says Schafer, who also translated *Outside Inn*.

The project originated in partnership with Theater Rampe Stuttgart in the summer and fall of 2007. Using two actors from New York City and two actors from Theater Rampe, *Outside Inn* was rehearsed and performed in both English and German on both sides of the Atlantic. The play previewed in Pittsburgh during the second week of September 2007 and then moved to Stuttgart, Germany in October of 2007 where it ran for three weeks. The actors performed the text in English and German on alternate nights. The production was then invited back to Stuttgart by the Deutsch Amerikanisches Zentrum/James-F.-Byrnes Institut to participate in its first annual American Days from July 1-5, 2008.

An accomplished translator, director, and actor, Dreyer is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Theater, Film and Dance at Cornell University. She has directed over forty productions nationally and internationally, two of them in German. Her translations of contemporary German plays have been presented at multiple theaters in the United States. International collaborations include work in Turkey, Russia, Germany, and Argentina. She holds an MFA in Directing from Northwestern University in Chicago.

Gabriele Schafer (translator of *Outside Inn*) is co-founder of the 26-year-old Thieves Theater, ICL’s predecessor, for which she has produced and acted throughout the United States and internationally. Acting credits include the Yale Repertory Theater, New York’s Public Theater and the Thalia Theater, Hamburg. She is producer of the CAVE New York Butoh Festival and holds an MFA in acting from the Yale School of Drama.



Playwright Andreas Jungwirth was born in Linz, Austria and trained as an actor at the Vienna Conservatory. In 1996 he moved to Berlin where he has lived and worked (primarily as a writer) ever since. His plays have been produced throughout Germany and Austria including at the Landestheater Linz, Theater Konstanz, TJG Dresden, Theater Phoenix (Linz), Theater Rampe Stuttgart and the Thalia Theater, Hamburg.

Cast: Roger Grunwald*, Markus Hirnigel, Jenny Lee Mitchell*, Karen Sieber*. (*Members AEA)

ICL provides opportunities for artists from across the world to explore contemporary issues through jointly created projects. We believe that as artists representing the United States, we have a responsibility to both contextualize and promote the diversity of culture, using our art to encourage, celebrate and learn from cultural differences. ICL promotes dialogue across cultures through training, translations, educational partnerships and research travel. It then shares its findings with the community.

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INTERNATIONAL CULTURE LAB

Co-Artistic Director: Melanie Dreyer
Co-Artistic Director: Gabriele Schafer
Resident Dramaturg: Nick Fracaro
Resident Actor: Markus Hirnigel
Technical Associate: Seth Kaufman
Resident Scenic Designer: Stephanie Mayer-Staley
Artistic Associates: Stephan Bruckmeier, Roger Grunwald, Andreas Jungwirth, Pei-chi Su, Petra Weimer

Mission

International Culture Lab is a performing arts organization dedicated to providing opportunities for artists from across the world to explore contemporary issues through jointly created projects.

We believe that as artists, particularly ones representing the United States, we have a responsibility to both contextualize and promote the diversity of culture, using our art to encourage, celebrate and learn from cultural difference. To that end, ICL collaborates with artists from other countries, promoting the rich examination of the shared human condition that can occur when multiple points of view come together.

In addition to the presentation of plays, ICL promotes dialogue across cultures through training, workshops, translations, educational partnerships with universities and research travel. It then shares its findings with members of the community not traditionally encouraged to participate in artistic dialogue, including but not limited to college and high school students, the business sector, social organizations, merchants, and politicians.

OUTSIDE INN

by Andreas Jungwirth

Translated by Gabriele Schafer
Directed by Melanie Dreyer

Cast: Roger Grunwald*, Markus Hirnigel, Jenny Lee Mitchell*, Karen Sieber*

Stage Manager: Karin Anderson
Dramaturg/Assistant Stage Manager: Nick Fracaro
Set Design: Stephanie Mayer-Staley
Costume Design: Pei-chi Su
Lighting Design: E. D. Intemann
Video Design: Austin Guest
Sound Design: Nicholas Crano
Production Manager: Vadim Malinskiy
Producing Assistants: Theodora Loukas, Krista Parsons

The Story of *Outside Inn*

The journey into this production of *Outside Inn* has traveled through many rich incarnations. The University of Pittsburgh, ICL and Theater Rampe Stuttgart originally commissioned playwright Andreas Jungwirth to create a text to serve as a vehicle to explore cultural difference among the

collaborators and their respective countries. From the beginning, the project called for four bilingual actors to perform the play in both languages on both continents. *Outside Inn* rehearsed and previewed at the University of Pittsburgh in September 2007, where it played two German and three English language performances. It then traveled to Stuttgart, Germany, where it played at Theater Rampe Stuttgart in the month of October 2007, including five performances in English and one impromptu mixed-language performance. This mixed-language version was further rehearsed and then returned to Stuttgart July 1-5, 2008, as part of the first annual American Days, sponsored by the German-American Center there "to further improve and intensify the transatlantic dialog."

In our project, language has evolved into a dominant creative element that drives and shapes character development, rhythm and tone, and actor/audience relationship. Audience members who have seen the same actors play in two languages have commented on how different the characters seem in one language or the other. The actors, in turn, notice differences in the ways their characters respond to the same narrative circumstances, depending upon the language they are using.

In our multi-layered, digital age of information, communication has become a complex juggling act. We are able to "text" or "talk" to the whole of the world from the palm of our hand, but the process of "translating" – intention, emotion, culture – has become more challenging than ever in a globalized world. With this incarnation of *Outside Inn*, International Culture Lab, in partnership with its New York audience, is taking a closer look at the role language plays in rendering the story of our lives.

BIOS

ROGER GRUNWALD (Chris) most recently appeared as the patter-singing, postmodern schemer, Heckler, in *KNB – The Musical* that premiered in the 2008 NY International Fringe Festival. Roger was a founding ensemble member of the California Shakespeare Theater, the Robert ("Bobby") Lewis Acting Company and New York's Castillo Theatre. Selected roles from regional, stock and NY include: Galileo in Brecht's *The Life of Galileo*, Toby Belch, Larry (*Company*), Marcus Lycus, Senator Joseph McCarthy, D.H. Lawrence, Theodore Herzl, Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, Heiner Mueller and V.I. Lenin. Roger trained at LAMDA, studies with Wynn Handman and is a proud Artistic Associate of the International Culture Lab.

MARKUS HIRNIGEL (Paul) was born in Vienna, Austria and studied acting with Sanford Meisner at the Neighborhood Playhouse. He is a member of La MaMa E.T.C., touring extensively in Europe and Asia. He studied at RADA and acted in productions in London, Oxford, Edinburgh and Spoleto, Italy. In 1995 he returned to Austria to work for four seasons under Gerard Mortier at the Salzburg Festival. In 2000 Elizabeth Swados invited him to participate in a two-year exploration of racism in the US in her production of *The Hating Pot*, presented at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He recently appeared as Vershinin in *The Three Sisters* at the Connolly Theatre and frequently works with New Stage Theater Company in New York City.

JENNY LEE MITCHELL (Kathleen) attended The Experimental Theatre Wing, at Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, and studied voice in Germany. Europe: *Dance Of The Vampires*, directed by Roman Polanski, *Fame*, *Falsettos*, *Jekyll And Hyde*, *King Ludwig II*, *Mozart!*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Elephant Man*. NY and regional: *THE CURSE OF THE MYSTIC RENALDO* at 3 Legged Dog, *The East Village Fragments* with Peculiar Works, Dottie Bean in *The Amazing Goldin* at the Northeast Theatre, *The Queen of Hearts* in Wonderland by The Flying Machine, and Catherine in Charles Mee's *Fire Island*. Jenny sings and plays clarinet with The Renaldo The Ensemble as part of her company TheaterTHE. member of AEA.
www.jennyleemitchell.com, www.theaterthe.com

KAREN SIEBER (Marina) is Swiss-American. Recent films include: Hallmark's: *A Christmas Carol*, *Real-The Movie*, and award winning indie features *Miss Swiss* and *Bored of Education*. National/International Tours: *Some Like it Hot w/Tony Curtis*, *Disney's Beauty and the Beast*, *Cats*, and *Grease*. Off-Broadway: *This Joint is Jumpin'*, *Mindfreak w/Criss Angel*, and the premiere reading of *The Blue Book*. Regional: *Mack and Mabel* and *Very Good Eddie* at Goodspeed Opera House, *The Radio City Christmas Spectacular*, and the World Premiere of *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* at Theatre Under The Stars. Karen can be seen as a principal in numerous national and regional commercials. www.karensieber.com

ANDREAS JUNGWIRTH (Playwright) was born 1967 in Linz, Austria. He studied acting at the Conservatory of the City of Vienna. Today he works as a playwright and author of radio plays from his home base in Berlin.

GABRIELE SCHAFER (Translator) was born near Heidelberg, Germany, and was co-founder of ICL predecessor Thieves Theatre, where she produced and translated the world premiere of R.W. Fassbinder's controversial *Trash, the City and Death* in NYC. Other authors translated from the German include Heiner Mueller, Oliver Czeslik and Ferdinand Bruckner. International collaborations include work in Germany, New Zealand and Argentina. She is producer of the CAVE New York Butoh Festival and holds an MFA in Acting from the Yale School of Drama.

MELANIE DREYER (Director) graduated from Northwestern University with an MFA in Directing, where she worked with Mary Zimmerman, Frank Galati, Tina Landau and Bob Falls. Fluent in German, she translates and directs contemporary German plays. She has directed over forty productions in the US and Europe. Her translations of contemporary German plays have been presented at multiple theaters in the United States. International collaborations include work in Turkey, Russia, Germany, and Argentina. She is an Assistant Professor of Acting and Directing at Cornell University.

NICK FRACARO (Dramaturg) was artistic director ICL predecessor Thieves Theatre for which he directed Peter Weiss' *Marat/Sade* at Toronto's Theatre Centre, Heiner Mueller's *Despoiled Shore Medeamaterial Landscape with Argonauts* and the world premiere of Fassbinder's *Trash, the City and Death* in New York, among other projects. He was co-founder of RAT, an international coalition of theaters, for which he organized conferences in New York, Philadelphia and Rosario, Argentina. As dramaturg at Dallas' Undermain Theater in 1999, he published possibly the first "theater blog," which he continues today at RatSass (ratconference.com/blog).

KARIN ANDERSON (Stage Manager) Stage management credits include: Capital Repertory Theatre: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *M. Butterfly*, *9 Parts of Desire*, and *Moonlight and Magnolias*. Lake George Opera: *Pirates of Penzance* and *Tartuffe*. Karin graduated from Skidmore College in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science in Theater.

STEPHANIE MAYER-STALEY (Scenic Designer) was trained as a visual artist in both Germany and the USA. Her art ranges from Set and Lighting Design to Installation, Land Art, Painting, Photography and Stone Masonry. Living "between two worlds" Mrs. Mayer-Staley's art reflects her desire for cross-cultural understanding.

E. D. INTEMANN (Lighting Designer) is the Resident Lighting Designer at Cornell University where he has designed over 50 shows. Prior to Cornell, he was Associate Professor of Lighting in the University of South Carolina's MFA program. He has designed at Danspace at St. Marks and La MaMa in New York City, the Eastman School in Rochester, NY, Burning Coal Theatre in Raleigh, NC, the Charlotte Repertory Theatre in North Carolina, and the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore. Internationally he designed for the Confrontations Festival in Lublin, Poland and is a member of United Scenic Artists Local 829.

AUSTIN GUEST (Video Designer) Austin Guest is a theater and media artist whose most recent work includes collaboration on Reid Farrington's *The Passion Project* at the Kannonhallen's PSK Festival (Copenhagen, Denmark) and video engineering on Radiohole's *Anger/Nation* at the Donau Festival (Krems, Austria). Austin previously served as a technical intern for both The Wooster Group and Richard Foreman. He has studied directing and acting with Robert Woodruff, Anne Bogart, and Tadashi Suzuki's SCOT Company. Austin graduated with High Honors from Harvard University in 2007 with a degree in Performance and Media Studies. He is a proud member of the Reasonable People's League.

PEI-CHI SU (Costume Designer) is originally from Taiwan where she was trained as a Scenic Artist and had the opportunity to work with some of Taiwan's most prestigious theater companies such as Cloud Gate Dance Company, Godot Theatre, Performance Work Shop, Green Light Theatre, and Crossover Dance Company. In the late '90, Pei-chi moved to Pittsburgh to attend graduate school at Carnegie Mellon University. Pei-chi's scenic and costume designs were part of more than 75 productions in Pittsburgh regional theaters. Her international credits include Theatre Rampe Stuttgart and Galway Arts Festival in Ireland. Recently, Pei-chi has moved to New York for her new appointment as assistant professor of costume design and director of costume design at Hofstra University.

VADIM MALINSKIY (Production Manager) Recent credits at 59e59 theatres include *Rainbow Kiss*, *The Jazz Age*, and *Park Avenue Whirl*. He production managed *1001* for Page 73 Productions and was a technical director for Ars Nova's productions of *Jollyship Wiz Bang* and *Boom*.

Project Description

The University of Pittsburgh, ICL and Theater Rampe Stuttgart commissioned *Outside Inn* from Austrian author Andreas Jungwirth as a vehicle to explore contemporary German and American culture. The project called for four bilingual actors to perform the play in both languages in both countries. *Outside Inn* rehearsed and previewed at the University of Pittsburgh in September 2007. In Pittsburgh, the actors played two German and three English language performances. The production then traveled to Stuttgart, Germany, where the actors played at Theater Rampe Stuttgart in October 2007, again in both languages, but this time also in one mixed-language performance.

From July 1-5, 2008, ICL was invited to bring *Outside Inn* back to Stuttgart as part of the first annual American Days celebration, sponsored by the Deutsch Amerikanisches Zentrum-James F. Byrnes Institut e. V., for which mixed-language performances were requested. For our production at 59E59 Theaters, rather than remount the show as an existing project, the team decided to use the opportunity to dig in again and reexamine the play through the new lens of having successfully worked through its dual-language, international collaboration. Three new areas of exploration emerged:

- Juxtaposing traditional American (Stanislavski-naturalistic) and German (Brecht-alienating) acting styles.
- Exploring the use of mixed language while performing for an almost exclusively English speaking audience, thereby employing foreign language as an expressive and lyric element.
- Using multi-media as a primary rather than secondary design component to support the above two explorations.

Adding these three new artistic elements to the production allows us to solidify our cross-cultural collaboration process while broadening the range and reach of our artistic expression.

Project Funders

Bombardier Transportation
City of Stuttgart, Germany
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Goethe-Institut New York
Penn Brewery
Siemens Large Drive Applications
State of Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany
Theater Rampe Stuttgart
University of Pittsburgh Arts and Sciences Faculty Research Scholarship Program
University of Pittsburgh Center for International Studies
University of Pittsburgh Central Research Development Fund
University of Pittsburgh Department of Cultural Studies
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University of Pittsburgh Third Term Research Stipend

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