

East German poster collection performing arts series C0209

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1955-1997



Title Statement

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Profile Description

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0209

Unit ID

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Unit Date

1955-1997

Language

German

Abstract

This series contains posters advertising theater, opera, concert and dance performances in Berlin and other East German cities. This collection consists of 941 posters of various sizes. They range in size from 28 x 58 cm to 86 x 60 cm. The majority of posters measure 57 x 81 cm.

source

Palast der Republik (Berlin, Germany)

source

Oper Leipzig

source

Friedrichstadt-Palast (Berlin, Germany)

source

Goethe-Theater Bad Lauchstädt

source

Hans Otto Theater (Potsdam, Germany)

source

Distel (Cabaret : Berlin, Germany)

source

Kleist Theater

source

Komische Oper Berlin

source

Landestheater Halle

source

Landesbühnen Sachsen

source

Leipziger Theater

source

Maxim Gorki Theater

source

Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater Schwerin

source

Metropol

Creator

Hill, Thomas

source

Drescher, Karl-Heinz, 1936-

source

Grüttner, Erhard

source

Jutte, H. F.

source

Müller, Rolf F.

source

Pfennig, W.D. (Wolf-Dieter)

source

Walter, Ekkehard

source

Werz, Wilfried

source

Berliner Ensemble

source

Buhnen der Stadt Gera

source

Buhnen der Stadt Magdeburg

source

Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin

source

Deutsches Nationaltheater (Weimar, Thuringia, Germany)

source

Deutsches Theater (Berlin, Germany)

source

Volkstheater Rostock

source

Volksbühne (Berlin, Germany)

source

Theater im Palast

source

Theater der Stadt Cottbus

source

Theater der Freundschaft

source

Theater der Bergarbeiter Senftenberg

source

Städtische Theater Karl-Marx-Stadt

source

Staatsschauspiel Dresden (Dresden, German)

Extent

941 posters

Physical Location

Map Case 4.1-4.5, 10.5, 20.2

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

There may be restrictions on reproduction. Contact the Special Collections Research Center for more information.

Acquisition Information

Purchased from Thomas Hill in 2009.

Processing Information

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Historical Information

The chronology and content of the posters illustrate an undulating timeline of alternately liberal and conservative phases, during which artists crafted their work in periods of greater or more limited autonomy. The performing arts provided an outlet for dealing with tragedy and turmoil that defined the creation of East Germany. The performances often touched on the legacy of the Nazis, the persecution of the Jewish people, and the division of Germany. Despite the strict censorship in East Germany, during the liberal periods authorities allowed a substantial number of Western performances to take place. In the GDR, America was conceived of primarily as a system of production; its levels of profit and abundance both awed and provoked the war-torn and comparatively impoverished East Germans. The American obsession with productivity and consumption drew the most bitter criticism from German observers. Interesting to consider in this context is the performance of "Ein Yankee an König Artus' Hof" (1982), a play adapted from Mark Twain's novel "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," in which the protagonist's escalating disillusionment with technology is a prominent motif. Even though Fordism may have been grudgingly accepted in the GDR as necessary for economic growth and the ultimate progress of the state, the assimilation of America's cultural barbarism through media imports was fiercely resisted. The state may have resisted America's cultural barbarism, but young people did not. Attending productions of the American media was a chance for them to distance themselves from their parents, from National Socialism, and from the failures of World War II. By the 1970s, changes in the performing arts community occurred, particularly in theatre, that included artists leaving as a result of increased censorship and smaller venues opening in cities and towns outside of Berlin.

Scope and Content

This series contains posters advertising theater, opera, concert and dance performances in Berlin and other East German cities. This collection consists of 941 posters of various sizes. They range in size from 28 x 58 cm to 86 x 60 cm. The majority of posters measure 57 x 81 cm. The performing arts posters present a complex and nuanced view of performance in the German Democratic Republic during the cold-war years. Most of the posters advertise performances in various venues in Berlin such as the Deutsches Theater, the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, the Komische Oper Berlin or the Palast der Republik, but performances in theaters in Leipzig, Dresden, Rostock, Erfurt, Halle, Gera, and Magdeburg are also included. The works advertised on the posters are predominantly classics: plays by Friedrich Schiller, Heinrich von Kleist, Georg Büchner, Shakespeare and Chekhov; operas by G. F. Handel, Mozart, Wagner, Puccini and Verdi, and ballets by Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev. However, contemporary playwrights like Maxim Gorki, Heiner Müller and Peter Weiss are also represented. Examples include posters from the Berliner Ensembles's premiere production of Bertolt Brecht's "Mother Courage"; Deutsche Theater Kammerspiele's "Der Blaue Boll" by the Expressionist playwright, Ernst Barlach; Landes Theatre Halle's cutting-edge production of "Tamerlan"; Ballet Company of Leipzig's historic performance of "Bilder Der Liebe"; and Maxim Gorki Theatre's "Sinulja" by Alexander Gelman. The majority of the posters consist of drawings or paintings that reflect the artist's interpretation of the works to be performed.

Related Material

The East German poster collection contains other series, including the [art exhibitions series](#), [political series](#), [culture and science series](#), and [film series](#).

In 2021, GMU Professor Samuel Huneke led the completion of the [East German Poster Database](#), a project funded by a Fenwick Fellowship. The posters from each of the East German poster collection series can be searched in this database.

Keywords

Theatrical posters
Theater -- Performances -- Germany (East)
Performing arts -- Performances -- Germany (East)
Opera -- Performances -- Germany (East)
Musical Theater -- Performances -- Germany (East)
Dance
Concerts
Comedy sketches
Children's theater
Ballet -- Performances -- Germany (East)

Concert posters
Performing arts
Dance posters
Posters
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Germany (East)
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Theater der Bergarbeiter Senftenberg
Städtische Theater Karl-Marx-Stadt
Staatsschauspiel Dresden (Dresden, German)

Arrangement

Arranged by subject and a numbering system.

Description of Subordinate Components

Series 3: Performing Arts Posters

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/77924

Unit Date 1955-1997

Scope and Content

See the External Documents note for a poster inventory with brief descriptions.