THREE SISTERS. Yuri Lyubimov's production of the play by Anton Chekov. Taganka Theatre, Moscow. January, 1989.

One of the major advantages of a more or less stable repertory theatre is that a number of major productions from past years can be kept essentially intact, modifying, to some extent, the necessary ephemerality of the art. When Yuri Lyubimov, considered by many to be the most innovative and imaginative director in Moscow, was denied permission to return to the Soviet Union in the early 1980s, Moscow audiences were at least still able to enjoy a number of his productions, which have remained in the active repertoire of his Taganka Theatre. How important these remain is suggested by their continuing great popularity and by Lyubimov's present negotiations with the government which, it is hoped, will lead to his return. The importance of these works was also clear to this reviewer, who on a recent visit to Moscow attended a wide range of current productions in a variety of theatres from the Moscow Art Theatre and Maly to the small experimental Studio of the Southwest and still found the work of Lyubimov, especially as represented in Chekov's *Three Sisters*, created in 1981, far more exciting and imaginative than anything else currently on view in the Soviet capital.

Another feature of the European repertory system is that in most European capitals theatre-goers are likely to have available every season many standard classics including, of course, works by the leading national dramatists. A German director offering a major work by Schiller, a French director doing the same with Molière, or a Swedish director with Strindberg, can assume, as an American director reviving O'Neill cannot, that much of his audience will be intimately familiar not only with the play as a literary text, but with a rich and varied performance tradition, within which the new interpretation will be situated.

This dynamic was extremely clear in Lyubimov's *Three Sisters*. From the very beginning visual and aural echoes were presented of later material, whose impact, even whose understanding, was impossible to gain without a solid knowledge of the play. Two particularly striking sequences from the very beginning of the production will serve to illustrate this. *Three Sisters* takes place on what is essentially an open stage, but with an unusual shape and decoration. The large main acting area is essentially enclosed by the stage walls, although they are masked by sheets of dull metal extending upward perhaps fifteen feet and bearing rows of rather crudely drawn portraits, suggesting something between a family portrait gallery and the iconostasis in a Russian Orthodox church. At the audience's right, a small side stage, only

a few feet wide and perhaps 25 feet long, runs out into the audience along a side wall. At its front are footlights and at its rear a wall of mirrors about ten feet tall.

As the houselights dim, we hear military music--the playing offstage of the military band which, if we are familiar with the play, we recall adds a poignant undercurrent to the final scene, as the soldiers leave, the winter closes in, and the sisters' dream of escape to their idealized Moscow seems further from realization than ever. As the music plays and this situation comes to our minds the mirror wall slowly opens--it is composed of a series of panels--and we see the band standing and playing in a line in the darkness behind. As they continue playing, the dark wall behind them slowly opens to reveal the world outside--a dark courtyard, a jumble of buildings and seemingly dead trees, and in the distance the dark shapes of some undistinguished urban structures, possibly apartment houses. Suddenly the realization strikes that here in reality is the dream city of the play, the longed-for and never achieved Moscow, a jumble of dark, cold, forbidding structures. Perhaps Vershinin's line from the second act occurs to us. "You won't even notice Moscow when you live there. We don't have happiness. It doesn't exist. We only long for it." In any case, the reality of that dark and grim city inevitably comes to mind frequently in the performance that follows, through the often-repeated "To Moscow!" of the characters, through the motif of the military music, which runs through much of the production; and through the wall of mirrors itself, since Masha in particular and occasionally others will from time to time rush against it, like trapped birds seeking an escape through a closed window. The movement would be a powerful one in any case, but it is made vastly more so by our knowledge of what in fact lies behind the mirror wall.

A second major sequence, anticipating the offstage duel of the final act, occurs shortly after the beginning of the play. In the middle of the main stage is a crude smaller stage, facing us, with footlights, but no curtains or scenery, only a crude slat wall with an entrance opening at its rear. Between it and us are two rows of black bentwood chairs, where most of the cast frequently sits, back to us, as audience for this inner stage. Three brass beds are in the area to the left of this stage and to the right a low table and the chairs, facing front, often occupied by the sisters. Irina presents her first long line about work on the inner stage as a frankly theatrical piece, each sentence wildly applauded by the "audience" in the bentwood chairs, primarily the soldiers. when she finishes, Tusenbach and Solyony rise from their places in the "audience," and begin to dress for their duel, Solyony down left and Tusenbach down right, as Tusenbach presents his speech beginning "Longing for work." As he speaks and dresses, Ferapont stands beside him with a lighted candle and the military music from the band slowly rises under his speech. Then he and Solyony, in parallel movements, turn, go upstage, and come out onto the inner stage. When Solyony gives his line "I'll forget myself and put a bullet in your forehead my angel," he fires a pantomime gun directly at the audience. Tusenbach, also

facing front at the other side of the stage, shows in formal pantomime the impact of the shot. He falls back against the rear slat wall, spreads his arms and throws his head back against the wall, moves a step to his left and repeats this. Four such "impacts" bring him to the rear door of the inner stage. He exits backwards and falls against the metallic rear wall of the actual stage, making a hollow crash. Ferapont, who has remained on the floor level of Tusenbach's side of the stage during all this, blows out the candle. This entire sequence is never repeated, not even at the end of the play when the duel actually occurs, but its various elements--the candle, the dressing, the pantomime shot, the fourfold impact, the hollow crash--having been powerfully established at the very beginning, these elements are repeated here and there throughout the evening to emphasize or to comment ironically on various moments.

The use of this duel material suggests a number of organizing principles of this complex interpretation. Clearly the traditional linear structure of action is subverted by visual and aural references to events and actions which have not yet occurred and which may in fact not occur onstage at all in a more conventional production of the play. However if one can assume a public familiar with the text, these references can reinforce the anticipations an audience may itself make (as when the future participants in the duel enter together at the beginning of the play) and they can encourage the audience to develop new patterns of interconnections and new meanings for familiar elements. The play thus becomes simultaneously a reworking of its traditional pattern of action and a collage meditation on elements from that action. Near the end of the first act Tusenbach and Irina pose on the inner stage as a bridal couple as Andrey and Natasha appear right, Andrey declaring his love as he pushes the baby carriage from the final act. This provides a transition into the second act, after Bobik is born (there is no act break in this production), but another visual transition is provided by Ferapont, who brings onstage a heavy rope which he ties across the stage, trapping Andrey and the others within it. At first we may see this rope only as a striking image of the entrapment of Andrey, and by extension, of the sisters, but then we realize it is also a specific textual reference, the rope stretched across Moscow which Ferapont mentions later in his wandering comments to Andrey.

The inner stage, as has already been suggested, provides a means for an extremely elaborate system of foregrounding and framing various elements, scenes, and images, particularly in conjunction with the two rows of "audience" in front of it, whose members sometimes relate to events on that stage and sometimes turn in their chairs to speak directly out to the real audience. The philosophic and contemplative set speeches so common in Chekov are often delivered on this stage, as are certain brief scenes of attraction (Masha and Vershinin) or conflict (Solyony suggesting to Natasha that Bobik might be eaten). The stage is also used to separate a character on it from another beside or in front of it. Thus when Solyony makes his declaration of love to

Irina he remains on the floor below the stage, she on it, and whenever he approaches her on one side of the stage she flees to the other, creating even a further gulf between them. Conversely, when Vershinin comes to say farewell to Masha in the last act she appears on the inner stage and he, down center, pushes roughly through the bentwood chairs to reach the front of the stage and embrace her as she kneels to hold him. The other sisters enter behind her and pull her away. Vershinin exits and Kulygin enters to give his speech promising to ignore all this as the sisters form a tableau of grief on the inner stage and he busily puts the disturbed bentwood chairs back to rights. The metaphor of the theatrical established by this stage extends into many other aspects of the interpretation--into the conscious theatricalization of musical accompaniment, into a frequent suggestion of performance, even by characters not on the inner stage, into a foregrounding of costumes and props, especially when used symbolically, and perhaps most obviously in the sequence in the second act introduced by Vershinin, who urges the others to "dream" with him of the life that will come after them in "two or three hundred years." During this sequence, most of the cast performs with crude, identical smiling masks, removed only by those like Tusenbach who insist upon interjecting notes of reality into this sequence. Only near the end of the act, when Natasha drives most of the company from the stage, may we come to realize that the masks, like Ferapont's rope, which were introduced apparently as a visual metaphor, in fact derive specifically from Chekov's lines, here the masked revelers whom Natasha, the destroyer of the dreams of others, refuses admission to the house.

The highly conscious conceptual organization of this production might suggest a high degree of stylization or abstraction in the portrayal of individual characters, but this is by no means the case. True, the use of repeated actions already mentioned might be considered a kind of stylization, and many more examples of such repetition, large and small, might be given. Andrey, for example, at almost any time when he is not on stage, is seated with his back to the audience at a piano located on floor level in front of the stage left area associated with the sisters, playing sentimental music. Solyony often washes his hands at a row of basins and soap dispensers which line the walls on either side of the stage. When Kulygin arrives, it is with a huge stack of his books, and he gives copies to everyone on stage.

In terms of actual character interpretation, however, only one character was developed in a manner quite at odds with the traditional concept of the role. This was the elderly servant Ferapont. In this production, he was as young as any of the soldiers, but more important, served throughout as a kind of combination of Greek chorus and Japanese prop man, arranging elements on stage, reinforcing certain moments by properties (the candle he holds for Tusenbach) or by gestures (when the sisters make their first entrance he stands behind their chairs and holds up a finger for each as they sit). Certain lines have also been reassigned to him, for comic effect or for extra emphasis. He

provides, for example, all the foreign phrases normally spoken by Kulygin, and when Kulygin is onstage, Ferapont often follows him about, ready when Kulygin gives him a glance or gesture to repeat the needed phrase, rather like a trained parrot.

Specific gestures, movements, and vocal inflections were, on the whole quite realistic for all the characters, even for Ferapont. Were these characters to be taken out of the context of this specific production, they would for the most part seem extremely carefully and convincingly drawn in the general tradition of realism. Olga was the epitome of a weary teacher, sympathetic, but dowdy and a bit heavy, pulling out her reading glasses at every available free moment and settling in to grade a seemingly unending set of papers. Vershinin was dark, intense, and romantic, Solyony and Tusenbach engagingly contrasted, the former stocky and clumsy, the latter tall, thin, and delicate in manner. The love scenes between Masha and Vershinin, the sympathetic understanding among the sisters, the growing realization in Andrey that his life has been wasted, were presented with as great a subtlety and conviction as I have ever seen them. The strikingly theatrical abstract and formal elements of this complex production did not undercut the power of these realistic elements, nor did they distract from the blatantly unrealistic sequences in which they were not infrequently embedded. On the contrary, formal and realistic elements were strikingly integrated throughout the work for continued and powerful mutual reinforcement. Lyubimov's *Three Sisters* seemed both a series of variations on its themes from its original and at the same time a brilliant fulfillment of that original's potential as a performed work.

Marvin Carlson
New York City

GALILEO in Portland, Oregon, April 1, 1988

Theatergoers in the United States have come to acknowledge the plays of Bertolt Brecht as part of the staple of American theater. With Brecht's acknowledged position in American theater comes also the attendant risk of monumentalizing and even misunderstanding poor B.B. One question many in the Northwest section of the U.S. had this winter was how does an East German direct a Brecht play in Oregon to appeal to an American audience and still remain faithful to Brechtian principles?

Portland, Oregon's New Rose Theater produced Brecht's "The Life of Galileo," which opened on April 1, 1988. The director, Heinz-Uwe Haus, from the German Democratic Republic, seemed to use the opening date to "fool" people who thought the last word had been said on interpreting Brecht, especially for American audiences. Although foreign to America, Haus demonstrated that he was quite at home with a very "American," and certainly nonmonumentalized interpretation of Brecht's *Galileo*. Haus remained faithful to the spirit of Brecht clearly within an American context for this play about the epochal confrontation of an Italian Renaissance scientist with the established church. But with his choice of a black actor for the title role and critical use of nuance and suggestion, Haus extended this very "American" production beyond the borders of America and showed the universal appeal and relevance of Brecht's theater art.

A major component of Brechtian theater is the V-Effekt. Brecht intended his V-Effekt to keep audiences emotionally detached from the story unfolding before them on the stage. He also intended it to keep his audiences off balance. Haus' choice of Shabaka, a black actor from the San Francisco Mime Troupe, provided exactly the opportunity to unbalance this American audience through nuance and suggestion. Haus has decided that an American audience may very well grasp the notion that the clash of historical forces can be separated from and transcend the story line of an Italian scientist's pivotal struggle with the established church over 300 years ago. Haus' additions to Brecht's wording in the script of Galileo provides new meaning when a black Galileo sings the "Lord and Master" song in the first scene; or in the fifth scene, when Galileo describes his ". . . bowing and scraping," and "throwing off the chains," and in the 10th scene: "Man is a cesspool of stinking prejudices." But in addition to unbalancing his audience, Haus also counted on the current political reality of a black American presidential candidate, and his encounter with a white established tradition in a national election. The issue then was

shifted to epochal confrontation per se and particularly in America to 1988, while maintaining the story line of the historical Galileo.

But Haus doesn't give his Portland audience much time to regain its equilibrium before he inserts another suggestive nuance to again throw them off balance. With the end of the eighth scene, the audience is comforted by the victory of reason, or at the very least, the victory of reasonable people when the little monk and Galileo arrive at accord. Haus' ninth scene begins with a very brief Middle Eastern line dance accompanied by Middle Eastern music. This small touch has the effect of shifting emphasis from seventeenth century Florence, as well as from twentieth century America, to a part of the world where reasonableness does not currently prevail. Haus' personal signature is in evidence here. He has worked with theater groups on the troubled island of Cyprus and has seen, first hand, how opposing ideologies cause unreasonable disharmony. Haus uses another device to suggest areas of the world in strife, where the effects of clashing ideologies have left, and are still leaving their mark. This device is the voice-over in Spanish, German and French repeating the words printed on a huge skrim hanging from the ceiling. Haus reminds us that in several countries where these languages are indigenous or have been imposed, few accords are achieved through reason or reasonableness.

In addition to the theme of the clash of epochal ideologies, Haus explores yet another theme within the context of the historical Galileo of the Brecht play. This theme, through Haus' interpretation, transcends the confines of the seventeenth century scientist as well as the limits of Brecht's own time; it is the politics of dream deferral. Langston Hughes wrote of a "Dream Deferred" in describing the black experience in America. Haus sets up the audience for a black Galileo's dream of scientific truth being deferred by the established church. Just as the audience is prepared to accept that detachment from seventeenth century Florence to twentieth century America, Haus again puts his audience off balance. Galileo is also a father; in Haus' interpretation, the black father of a white daughter. Galileo, whose own dream has been deferred, is also capable of deferring his daughter's dream of marriage to wealth and position. By not denouncing his scientific beliefs, he sacrifices his daughter to science. The oppressed one is also capable of oppression. This, then, provides an unbalancing, double detachment on the part of the audience. Indeed, two scenes later, Haus has a woman sing, "A New Age for You and Me." When seen in the light of the basic politics of oppression, "A New Age" need not be limited to the promise of science, or to reason over superstition, but may extend to all whose dreams have been deferred in the clash of political ideologies, whether they are women, black, or those who find themselves in a post-colonial Third World situation. I was reminded indeed of a poem by Maya Angelou, "Africa," in which Africa is a black colonial woman misused but ". . . now she is striding/although she had lain." The extension of just this kind of interpretation within the confines of a "traditional" Brecht play is possible

in large measure by Brecht's own principle of "detachment" or the famous V-Effekt. It is this detachment and extension of the known to the suggestion of the not so well known that gives this production its uniqueness while remaining essentially Brechtian.

A complementary theme to confrontation and dream deferral is suggested by a line in the last scene as spoken by the black Galileo, who says, "I live cautiously and think cautiously." This could have been a signature line from Brecht himself during the Nazi period as well as during the Joseph McCarthy anti-communist frenzy in America, where one's survival depended upon his ability to avoid the eye of the maelstrom. But the nuance suggests black Americans or South African blacks as well as pre-glasnost artists and intellectuals in socialist countries who have learned to live and think cautiously whether in Harlem, Johannesburg or Leningrad, but live and think nevertheless.

The extension of these themes is not in the stage directions for "Galileo," but through nuance and suggestion, the basic Brecht can be extended in meaning and time. Haus has demonstrated in Portland's New Rose Theater that Brecht productions need not be concrete monuments; that Brechtian theater arts are flexible enough to address the most current issues of importance in today's world, such as those of geopolitics to gender to color or a combination of all of these. People expecting a "monumental" Brecht may very well have been "fooled" last April in Portland.

James Stark
Portland, Oregon

UNCLE VANYA. By Anton Chekhov. Translated by Michael Frayn. Vaudeville Theatre, London, England. November 9, 1988.

The works of Anton Chekhov have taken the London stage by storm in recent months with highly acclaimed productions of *Three Sister* by the Royal Shakespeare Company, a collection of his short stories adapted under the title *the Sneeze* by playwright Michael Frayn, and also Frayn's new translation of perhaps Cheknhov's greatest play, *Uncle Vanya*. Chekhov once remarked that all he "wanted was to tell people honestly, 'Look at yourselves . . .'," an unblinking look which is both wryly comic and bitter in Michael Blakemore's first-rate West End production of *Uncle Vanya*.

Among Chekhov's plays, *Uncle Vanya*, is the great playwright's most concentrated and focused work; examining an ambiguous, complex, and, ultimately, unresolved world in which his characters struggle to survive their illusions and despairs. As Frayn has written in his introduction to this translation, the tragedy of *Uncle Vanya* is "not death, but of continuing to live after life has been robbed of hope and meaning."

Blakemore's vivid, splendidly acted production, set in highly detailed naturalistic scene designs and costumes by Tanya McCallin and somber lighting by Mick Hughes, weaves a profoundly melancholy spell. Frayn's fluid and economic translation quite appropriately emphasizes the human comedy of the characters and their complex, wrenching inter-relationships. It seems that Blakemore and his cast have heeded Chekhov's advice that "there's no use being theatrical. None whatever. The whole thing is very simple. The characters are simple, ordinary people." Blakemore has staged the play with simplicity and clarity, allowing the actors to develop subtle and telling effects.

Chekhov once noted that his job was "to be able to distinguish important phenomena from unimportant, to be able to illuminate characters and speak with their tongue," tasks that, in this case, are superbly carried out by the cast. Michael Gambon's memorable Vanya is the soul of this production; Gambon makes Vanya's unrequited longing for Velena (Greta Scacchi) and the relentless boredom of his forgotten life achingly real. When Vanya and Sonya (Imeld Staunton) share an agonized scene in the face of their shattered illusions, the moment is heartbreakingly real and unforgettable. Staunton and Jonathan Pryce, as Astrov, contribute equally fine performances, with strong support from the lovely Scacchi, Benjamin Whitrow as a gruff Serebryakov, Rachel Kempson as a coldly detached Maria Vasilyevna, Jonathan Cecil as a befuddled and endearing Telegin, and Elizabeth Bradley as a motherly Marina.

In 1898, Gorky wrote to Chekhov that "Russian literature has never known a story writer like you . . . you are a mighty talent." Ninety years later, as reflected by Blakemore's production and the excellent performances of Gambon, Stanton, and Pryce, there seems little reason to revise that opinion.

James Fisher,
Wabash College

STUNNING ALLUSIONS OF LUCIAN PINTILIE. Ibsen's Wild Duck at the Guthrie.

When staging a classical play, such as Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, most theatre directors base their interpretation on the play's dialogues, the author's remarks, the characters and stage description, and the play's historical and social background. However different those interpretations may be, they usually find their foundation in the play itself. When Lucian Pintilie, one of the most interesting contemporary theatre directors, staged *The Wild Duck* at Minneapolis's Guthrie Theatre, he rewrote parts of the play to subdue *The Wild Duck* to a concept, hitherto unprecedented. His stunningly revealing images, associations, and allusions dramatically changed the traditional perception of the play.

The play starts with a party in the house of a wholesale merchant, Haakon Werle. A big log fire in the middle of the bare huge thrust, two red velvet chairs next to the fire, a rich burgundy curtain covering a stained glass window and grand piano in the other room create an interior that reminisces the grandeur and beauty of European or Russian aristocratic salons of the 19th century.

Yet there is ugliness in this beauty which is brought by Werle's guests --his housekeeper, Mrs. Sorby, his son Gregers, his son's friend Hjalmer, and Chamberlains. A thick layer of a white powder covers the Chamberlains' faces, their bellies are artificially big, and they turn their heads and bodies simultaneously. This is Pintilie's first group portrait, in which hyperbolic bodies and ugly face-masks replace human beings. (In his productions of the thirties, Meyerhold used the same theatrical means for creating his group portraits.) When Mrs. Sorby and the Chamberlains play a blind-man's buff, the lights shaped like palm trees are moved from their previous position next to walls close to the Chamberlains and encircle them. A mist coming from the floor magnifies the hyperbolic tastelessness of these lights, the awkward movements of Mrs. Sorby's hands as they spread apart, and the Chamberlains' grotesque circle within the light's circle.

From the dialogues of the first act, played on this background, the audience learns that Hjalmar's father was in jail and now lives with Hjalmar; that Hjalmar's wife Gina Hansen was Haakon Werle's mistress before marrying Hjalmar; that Haakon Werle financially supports Hjalmar's family, although Hjalmar is not aware of this; and that Gregers decides to tell Hjalmar the truth. Ibsen repeats this information thrice--in a dialogue between the servants, between Gregers and Hjalmar, and between Gregers and his father.

Pintilie, however, uses every theatrical means to muffle or even ridicule the information and characters.

The dialogues are muffled with the Chamberlains' laughter, words, and hums. When the laughter is inserted between the sentences, it belittles their dramatic meaning. In the scene added to the production, the Chamberlains watch 'Italian' slides of Haakon Werle and Mrs. Sorby. The large white screen with flashing slides of Mrs. Sorby in different postures and the Chamberlains quietly sitting behind the screen as a group engross the audience and distract it from looking at Hjalmar and Gregers or listening to their most informative conversation. However, the main theatrical means Pintilie uses to undermine the dramatic meaning of the dialogues and question the sincerity of the two men are the characters of Hjalmar and Gregers themselves.

Ibsen's Gregers thinks that family life cannot be built upon lies, or illusions. The truth must be told even at the price of destruction and ruin. Only then a true marriage begins. When reality doesn't confirm Gregers's theory, a pistol enters the stage. Gregers suggests to Hedvic, Hjalmar's daughter, that she kill her wild duck that lives at the attic. He thinks that by destroying something she loves and needs she will prove her love to her father. This leads to Hedvic's suicide. Ibsen doesn't say who is right and who is wrong and he doesn't condemn Gregers. One of Ibsen's translators, Rolf Fjelde, wrote about the characters of the *Wild Duck*: ". . . in the lifelike complexity of Ibsen's conception, there is no one uniform reality for all, no single sufficient perspective on truth." Hence, the play gives a possibility for different interpretations of all the personages, including Gregers. Ibsen's Gregers can be comical, serious, pitiful, satirical, hateful, or a do-gooder. Yet the appearance of Christopher McCann, who plays Gregers, comes as a shock.

The reason for this is his striking resemblance to a member of the first Soviet Government, Yakov Sverdlov. It is as if somebody looked through old books about the Russian revolution, saw photographs of revolutionaries, and depicted their most common features in Gregers. Gregers has black curly hair, black eyes, a beard, and glasses. Pintilie adds a factual detail: from time to time Gregers covers his mouth with a handkerchief and slightly expectorates, as if he has consumption--a disease shared among many Russian revolutionaries. While trying to build a so-called "new society," the revolutionaries destroyed the old Russian society. They sacrificed human lives for a bright future and for the sake of their ideals. "The end justifies the means," they used to say, while causing destruction and death to millions and millions of people.

Since for Pintilie, Gregers's ideas match the ideas of the Russian revolutionaries, he makes Gregers repugnant. The timbre of Gregers's voice is penetratingly foxy. He is sickly thin. His body looks deformed when he raises his shoulders and then presses them to his neck. When he comes to Hjalmar's studio in a short brown jacket with a big fur collar and Russian fur hat which, together with the big glasses, cover his neck, head, and face, a

human being is replaced by a wicked caricature. This is Pintilie's individual portrait, which personifies the group.

Like so many early revolutionaries, Gregers is singleminded. He follows his ideas to the end and tells Hjalmar the truth about Haakon Werle. As a reaction, angry Hjalmar breaks the dishes in his house. Whenever Gina tries to pick up the debris, whenever her relationship with Hjalmar gets almost back to normal, Gregers interferes, bringing new destruction. Gregers does not notice the creaking sounds he makes when he steps on the debris, but for the audience the debris become a metaphor of the broken lives that can never be glued together.

To show Gregers as a harmful outsider, Pintilie creates a particular spatial relationship between Gregers and the others. Sometimes, it is a straight line parallel to the back wall, on which Gregers and another character stand, or a diagonal going from upstage left to downstage right. Sometimes Gregers moves in a circle around another person, crossing one leg over the other and coming closer and closer, like a hawk stalking its victim. Sometimes a rectangular table separates him from the group. This linear space physically alienates Gregers from the world of normal people, from the members of Hjalmar's family, who, before Gregers had come to the studio, had lived in proximity to each other in Hjalmar's huge studio.

The studio is not filled with photographic equipment described by Ibsen. Yet it looks oppressive, because a domineering color of the set and costumes is brown. Men's and women's clothing, the furniture, the props, the floor, and the walls of different palettes of brown recreate an atmosphere and background of old photographs, upon which Pintilie makes two group portraits of Hjalmar's family. As if obeying an invisible photographer, Hjalmar, his father, Gina, and Hedvic turn their faces toward each other and smile. Then Hjalmar's father leaves. Hjalmar sits on the sofa, playing the flute, Gina to his left, Hedvic on the floor to his right. The beautiful and moving composition of the three of them, with Gina and Hedvic touching Hjalmar and lovingly looking at him, and the melancholic sounds of the flute create a feeling of fleeting happiness, disrupted by Gregers's unexpected entrance. It is as if Gregers's presence tears up the photograph, causing its objects to quickly move away from each other. Never again will the members of Hjalmar's family pose for another group portrait. The torn pieces will never be glued together.

Pintilie adds yet another astonishing detail. When Gregers joins Hjalmar's family and their friends for lunch, his gloomy face and dirty-brown jacket, which he does not take off, contrast with the festive mood of the others, the white table cloth and vase filled with flowers on the table. Pintilie knows too well that Russian revolutionaries and their followers came to people's houses not as guests, but masters, walked through their rooms in dirty boots and sat at their dinner table in overcoats and hats. To make the Guthrie's audience pay attention to this detail, Pintilie adds a sentence for Doctor

Relling, who points out to Gregers that he is eating in a jacket. The laughter of the others at the table denies Gregers's status as a civilized person.

Unlike Gregers, Hjalmar--Charles A. Siebert, has a prepossessing appearance. He has a nice face. He looks like an artist. He talks like an artist, sadly, as if accepting life's blows. However, none of his sentences can be taken literally, for Pintilie accompanies them with contrastable visual images, which ridicule both Hjalmar and what he says. It is amazing to see how rich Pintilie's palette is. First he muffles Hjalmar's words with visual and auditory distractions and ridicules them with the Chamberlains' laughter. Then Pintilie adds a comical element to Hjalmar's character--when Hjalmar talks about his duties to his family, he becomes comically inactive. He stands in the middle of the stage, while Gina and Hedvic take his hat, coat, and street shoes and put on his slippers and gown. He sits, while they light up his cigarette, bring him sandwiches, beer, and his flute. When Hjalmar's father falls asleep in the studio, Gina and Hedvic, and not Hjalmar and Gina, as it is in the play, carry him to his bed, while Hjalmar yells at them: "Not like that, not like that." In this scene, Pintilie hyperbolizes the comical difference between Hjalmar's words and his inactiveness. In the next scene, a farcical element is added to the comical one.

In the play, Hjalmar retouches a photograph. In the production, Hjalmar, sitting in the middle of the stage, simply sharpens a pencil. While turning it around and admiring his work, he tells Gina and Hedvic in a lachrymose voice: "I work as hard as I can . . . As long as my strength holds out . . ." By leaving Ibsen's words the same but changing what Hjalmar is doing, Pintilie creates a farcical contrast between Hjalmar's stout body and the small pencil, his voice and action, his idleness and Gina's walking back and forth between the studio and kitchen, carrying boxes with food, moving the furniture, and setting the table. The effect is a mockery, almost 'Ionescish' absurdity. When Hjalmar learns the truth and decides to act, all he does is break dishes and push and throw furniture around. Paraphrasing the theatre of absurd's terminology, Hjalmar's actions are anti-actions.

At this point, a satirical element is added. When Hjalmar decides to leave Gina and Hedvic, he simply sits, as if even the thought of any action takes away his strength. Walking back and forth along the huge stage, Gina brings him everything he wants. Before giving Hjalmar his books, Gina dusts them off, which shows that Hjalmar never reads. When she starts packing his suitcase, he complains that it is exhausting to pack. When asked to find Hedvic, Hjalmar looks for Hedvic in a cupboard. For this scene, Pintilie replaces some of Ibsen's sentences with his own. He also creates a play around the suitcase, scissors, glue, books, and tray that looks like a gag from silent movies, funny but at the same time mocking and satirical.

One of the interpretations of Hjalmar's character in the play is that he helps maintain a world of illusions in the lives of his father and Hedvic by having an attic where his father hunts rabbits and Hedvic takes care of the wild

duck. Ibsen's attic is colorful and mysterious, lit up by streams of a moonlight. In the production, the attic looks dull and gloomy, as if it is filled with old trash. Whenever Hjalmar and his father go there to hunt, a raw egg falls down and splats on the floor. This egg coupled with Gina, who crawls around with a bucket of water before running to throw up, remove any poetic connotation about Hjalmar. Now he evokes anger.

When Hedvic is found on the floor, Hjalmar simply turns around and yells, "Help, help, help," without doing anything. When Hjalmar learns that Hedvic is dead, he laments and whimpers in his usual pathetic manner. These scenes are Pintilie's verdict: Hjalmar, too, is guilty of the broken lives of his family, his anti-actions, or the absence of actions, lead to Hedvic's death. Since Pintilie doesn't want to unite Hjalmar and Gina in Hedvic's death, he doesn't allow Gina and Hjalmar to carry Hedvic from the attic to the studio, as they do in the play. Instead, Gina gives Hjalmar a terrifying look and runs from the attic.

The other male characters in the production talk, argue, complain, or fantasize. But like Gregers and Hjalmar, they don't give much love. In Pintilie's version of the play, life goes on because women carry the burden and give love to the men. Hedvic pours love on Hjalmar. Hedvic needs Hjalmar's love to live, which Hjalmar is not capable of giving. The scene, in which Hedvic dangles from a ladder and waves with her hand like a wild duck with a wounded wing, is like a tragic prophecy.

In a decolette burgundy dress at the party, white dress on slides, and singing the song from "The Blue Angel," (the voice of Marlene Dietrich is recorded) Mrs. Sorby, Werle's housekeeper, looks more like a courtesan. Yet with her pretty face, caring voice, soft, feminine hair style, and attentive look she brings joy and devotion to Haakon Werle's life. However, when she comes to Hjalmar's dwelling to say good-bye to Gina and announce her decision to marry Werle, she is a different woman. Her long black tight skirt and jacket hide the soft shape of her body; a white muff covers her hands, a white fur collar her neck, and a black hat her head and forehead. The tight clothes and black and white colors kill her warmth and liveliness. A long white feather on her hat adds to the effect of a caricature on a woman who from now on will fit in the group portrait of masks. The only woman who doesn't change during the course of the production, the one who gets Pintilie's real love is Hjalmar's wife, Gina.

Gina's appearance is striking, too. Her hair is never brushed, her dress and shoes are old and dull. She is always working. When she sits, she either sews or knits, but more often she walks. Although Gina is not old, she walks like an old woman, bending a little bit and sometimes holding her hand on her waist, as if it aches. Pintilie emphasizes that Gina's strength and beauty are not in her appearance, but in her carrying life's burdens and maintaining a world of illusions, or lies, for her family. Knowing the truth, Gina also knows

that without illusions Hjalmar, his father, and Hedvic would sink to "the depth of the sea." Her continuous work and cleaning are like a metaphor: without it, life breaks down.

The idea that life is held by women, that women make sacrifices for men, and that in the moment of crisis women are spiritually stronger, finds its roots in Russian literature and Russian life of the 19th century. In his appearance and behavior, Pintilie's Hjalmar resembles men like Stiva Oblonsky from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* or Oblomov from Goncharov's *Oblomov*. Women like Pintilie's Gina are described in Tolstoy's short stories, in *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*.

When Hedvic lies dead on the sofa and Hjalmar whines and complains, Gina silently stands in front of the lamp that now encircles her whole body like a halo. In these two images, Pintilie revaluates traditional paintings: Gina is not a Saint, or God, yet this exhausted woman in an old dress with unbrushed hair, who cleans, washes, and cooks, and who endures all the joyless chores, is the light and the beauty of life, life's source.

Pintilie looks at Gina with admiration. Otherwise, he is unforgiving, austere, and harsh. An alarming whistle of a tea kettle echoed by a sad shriek of the wild duck, the lamp slowly turning toward Gregers, as if setting him on trial, a diagonal line at the end of which stand Mrs. Sorby or Haakon Werle in Hjalmar's studio, and a multitude of other details combined with mocking, grotesque, ridiculous, caricaturing, and ironic group or individual portraits bring the play to its harsh conclusion, which Pintilie has rewritten.

In Pintilie's version, of the play, Gregers tries to explain his ideas to Dr. Relling, but Relling drowns out his words with "Blah, blah, blah." Gregers is a demagogue full of propaganda not worth listening to. Meaningless words mock Gregers's ideas and ideals. Nevertheless, in Pintilie's production, Gregers wins. The last words of Pintilie's *The Wild Duck* are Relling's, who addresses Gregers in a weary voice by saying: "See you tomorrow." This means that once destruction starts, it will not stop. Pintilie's last individual portrait is a somber one: Relling himself, standing on the dark empty stage, drinking beer, and spilling it on the floor. Pintilie's last sound is the annoying noise of beer hitting the floor. Even Gina could not win over people like Gregers. He sank Hjalmar's family to "the depth of the sea." The stunning production of *The Wild Duck* by Lucian Pintilie and his set and costume designers Radu and Miruna Boruzescu (all of them were born in Romania and live now in Paris) finds its roots not only in the Ibsen's play but in a particular history.

Paulina Shur
Minneapolis, Minnesota

BOURGEOIS SHAKESPEARE: VALUE IN THE MAINSTREAM. John W. Velz.

Sometimes what everyone knows needs further discussion, even polemical discussion. What everyone knows is that the aesthetic of drama--like the aesthetic of all of the performing arts, from symphonies to sermons--lies mysteriously in the tension between the familiar and the innovative, the predictable and the unexpected. That tension is possibly unique in each production, and therefore impossible to define precisely, but the audience always feels it.

What happens when the tension is violated because a performance counts on expectations different from those the audience holds can be suggested by an anecdote Alexander Anikst told me years ago. A touring Soviet production of *Romeo and Juliet* once played an utterly isolated collective in a remote province of the Soviet Union; the audience, essentially theaterless, had never heard of Shakespeare or of *Romeo and Juliet*, or indeed of the traditions of New Comedy that lie behind the play--all the way back to Menander. They received the performance with strong hostility, angrily resenting a story that sides with the young against their elders. The cultural assumptions of this collective were flatly not adequate to the reliance that Shakespeare and the production had implicitly put upon them. The story is extreme, but everyone can provide less flamboyant analogues to it. When young children or visitors from other cultures misconstrue art because they are not familiar with its assumptions, aesthetic dislocation results: the art object "must" be in phase with audience expectations.

This aesthetic is a matter of genre, since any genre is a derivative from a hypothetical audience's collective past experience with analogues to the art object it is confronting. What the artist does is to manipulate the generic expectations of the intended audience. It is, for instance, precisely because Shakespeare could count on our subliminal awareness of the conventions of classical and renaissance amatory comedy that he attained so striking an effect when in *Romeo and Juliet* he warped a predictable comedic resolution into tragedy. Shakespeare did essentially the same thing with *King Lear*; those early Jacobeans who knew the old *Leir* play and/or the Cinderella folktale that lies behind it must have been shocked when the expected tragicomedy ended in apocalyptic tragedy. *Romeo and Juliet* and *King Lear* are, as it were, paradigms of the tension between innovation and familiarity that this essay is concerned with.

Yet in considering the tension we must be careful to distinguish between the production and the play-text, and since the production, not the author, is to be the subject here, what Shakespeare thought or did when he wrote *Romeo and Juliet* or *King Lear* is a consideration of only tangential relevance. We are better to speak of performances and audiences and reviewers than of authors and play-texts and their sources. Theater reviewers regularly presuppose the tension between tradition and innovation I am concerned with, especially when a classic is the art object. In some cases reviewers implicitly define the tension. Certainly when dealing with a classic, the theater critic will "predictably" protest if a production lacks the tension because it lacks innovation. The same critic, however (if responding to the iconoclastic spirit of our era), is less likely to object when the tension lacks in a production of the same classic because the familiar-predictable has been entirely subordinated to the startlingly new.

It is a matter of social class. The assumptions of the director and those of the critic presuppose an audience drawn from a highly educated class, a theatrically sophisticated group familiar to the verge of boredom with classics and capable of bringing their recollections of many orthodox productions to an unorthodox moment in the theater. This is all very well in theory, but it is somewhat insensitive to the actual makeup of such an audience as that of the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon and London. (Watching the audience watch the living-statue scene of *The Winter's Tale* in an RSC production will enforce an awareness that for perhaps half of those present this performance is their first contact with the play.)

In assuming the devil's-advocate role, I advance the argument that we are unwise to neglect the production aimed by serious artists at a bourgeois audience. Those not yet bored with classics may come closer to the intended and perhaps ideal aesthetic experience in any given case than their more chic (and more blasé) superiors. This devil's-advocate argument is advanced with comments on four productions of Shakespeare comedies in the summer of 1985 aimed specifically at a bourgeois audience in West Germany.

Unlike their counterparts in America, summer Theaterfestspiele in West Germany are ignored by academic students of drama and of Shakespeare. Those who flocked to Schauspiel Frankfurt in the 1985-86 season to see Martin Wuttke play a Woody Allen-like Hamlet opposite a male Ophelia and a male Gertrude, both of whom dominated him physically, would have been sought in vain the preceding summer in the audiences of the four productions I am concerned with. This neglect of West German Summer Shakespeare extends to serious theater journals; one finds only perfunctory coverage of summer festivals in **Theater Heute** and no coverage at all in **Shakespeare Jahrbuch**. It would hardly occur to a German theater journalist to consider from theoretical perspectives the summer festivals that have played to millions since World War II. Yet there is something to be learned from theater addressed specifically to this bourgeois audience. it remains unembarrassed in the mainstream of tradition, makes its innovations moderately by contrast with the

aesthetic daring of a Peter Zadek or a Heiner Müller. If its audiences are not as sophisticated as audiences in Munich, Berlin, and Frankfurt, they are by that token unjaded, unlikely to be bored by traditional approaches to texts, and summer stock companies sometimes find it possible to do exciting work within the requisite mainstream. Not all of the productions to be discussed here succeeded equally, but from the best of them one might learn something about the play in question, and a spectator could hope to find his previous experience with the text validated while something important came simultaneously fresh to him.

The formula for Shakespeare in a German summer festival is a romantic outdoor setting--a ruined monastery church, a castle moat, a rocky mountain-side in the spruce forests near the Czechoslovakian border, a disused cloister--; a **dramatis personae** shaped to repertory company size by excision or doubling; a sprinkling of name actors in a company of professionals, a text pruned to about two hours' traffic without an interval; any of a variety of translations retaining the poetry and the archaism of Schlegel-Tieck; and a rather broad than subtle acting style, suited to large audiences. Shakespeare does not dominate the festivals, as he does in America; in one of the seven 1985 Theaterfestspiele in West Germany there was no Shakespeare at all, and in only one, at Bad Hersfeld in Hessen, was there a second Shakespeare production. The repertory will be largely classic: Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Calderón, Molière, Dumas, but probably including one quite contemporary German play or a children's play, and possibly extending to ballet, concert, or opera. The audience will be large and appreciative; at only one of the five performances I saw were there any empty seats at all. The formula works, on the whole, and one understands why this post-World War II German institution continues to flourish.

The Tempest in the Festspiel at Bad Hersfeld, Hessen, made a conscious effort to recapture old acting traditions, especially in the roles of Ariel, Caliban, and Prospero. Yet Manfred Gruber's mise-en-scène was startling and made a moral point emphatically. This was designer's theatre, and Gruber had an exciting space to work in: the Stiftruine in Bad Hersfeld is said to be the most imposing romanesque church ruin in Germany. The audience of some 1600 sat under a vast tent roof in the shell of the nave, while the actors performed in the transept and on the raked upstage which filled the old chancel. Gruber brought taut ropes in ray-like patterns from various places on the high walls of the ruined church to stage level, and when spots picked out the filaments one felt that the characters were, all unaware, entrapped in transverse patterns of light, of supernal influence. It was most impressive, and the metaphysical point was fully made as early as I.ii when Ariel slid to stage level down a "ray" from her perch high up in a now-empty window, downstage right.

It may have been a desire to encapsulate all the action among these rays of light that induced Director Tom Toelle to stage I.i only as voices in the

dark; the effect was to lend stature to Ariel's vivid account of the shipwreck, delivered from the high window. The goddesses would have been at one with the light, but they were cut--evidently to keep the cast at eleven and to shorten a long running-time: the betrothal ceremony was greatly diminished by their absence. No doubt Barbara Treskatis was seeking a contrast with the rays of light when she created costumes for the Court Party that were sumptuously rich in fabric, but drab in color, as drab and undifferentiated as the fallen world of Milan/Naples/Carthage.

Caliban was dressed in a rough tunic of harmonizing drabness; cloth seemed an odd costume for a monster who was not only pre-civilized, but pre-human. He made animal noises from time to time, hovering at the verge of speech. He was not just churlish, but dangerous; yet one sudden gesture with the magic staff flattened him in I.ii. After experiencing a procession of nearly compulsory "Third World" Calibans in recent years, one welcomed this traditional monster, complete with red luminescent eyes. Ariel was also a reversion to a convention of time gone by--a tricksy spirit in a Pierrot Mask of makeup, definitely and appealingly female though not as gauzy as Victorian Ariels often were. She wore a trousered tunic which interfered neither with her femininity nor with her balletic acting style.

Will Quadflieg's resonant and compelling Prospero was a third artistic choice in the production that took the audience back to traditions their fathers would have recognized. This Prospero had less to learn and more to teach than the typical Prosperos of our day who grope their way uncertainly from vengeance toward the rarer action. He knew who he was and what he meant to achieve--the self-assurance offered us a center, an embodiment of the values of the play. Quadflieg's magnetism was triumphantly evident in the epilogue, which he spoke informally and without electronic amplification while the baseless fabric of the play world was fading away. He had won the audience from the first, effortlessly controlling our responses as Prospero controlled the world of the play, and he left us feeling that he could fill the huge church even when he stepped outside the play.

And yet the cosmic dimension of the play-world was larger than Quadflieg, larger than Propero's magic, constantly in sight in the stark, yet spectacular and excitingly innovative set-design. One felt the tension between tradition and inventiveness in this *Tempest*; one sensed as well that producer and director had read the needs of their audience correctly.

In a more ominous way, the setting of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on the Naturbühne near Wunsiedel, Bavaria, also made a suggestion about cosmic dominance. The mountainside stage of Luisenburg, dominated by boulders interspersed with trees and shrubbery, has been in use, it is said, since the seventeenth century. With its natural vegetation and extraordinary variety of playing spaces it made a splendid set for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A long boardwalk-like platform downstage (itself multi-level) was backed by paths leading upstage to acting spaces among the rocks and trees high above the

audience of more than 1700, who sat in permanent seats sheltered by a tent roof. The interpretation of the play as a study of social and cosmic dominance needed no designer: the huge rocks towering over the characters made their own statement.

Theseus, complacent in semi-military garb, dominated a conquered Hippolyta in Act I and enjoyed ordering Hermia about. At a more visceral level, Oberon, tall and imposing, dominated his world as well, though he had no cause for complacency. The abduction of the changeling boy by Titania and her fairies in a pantomime that began the play was flagrant defiance of his authority. The central action of the play was the putting down of this rebellion; all else seemed to us mere analogues to it or incidental bypaths. Puck immediately sought revenge by raping one of Titania's fairies and was in turn roughly interrupted by Oberon.

Domination of women by men is now familiar enough in productions of *Dream*, but this interpretation went further, exploring other kinds of domination, especially supernatural influence in human life. So the fairies (ragged in earth colors) were at the center of the play, onstage a great deal; unseen by the characters, they managed the action. Lecherous Oberon more than once lightly touched Hermia or Helena who all unconscious brushed him away, irritated as by an insect. A comic representation of the theme that mankind is dominated even when ignorant of the fact was the moment when one of the girls, pushed roughly away by one of the boys, landed in Oberon's lap and embrace, though she thought it was the roots of a tree she was sitting on.

The extent to which the four lovers had been manipulated in the forest undercut their superciliousness in Act V more acidly than is usual in *Dream* productions. It was apparent by mid-play, on the other hand, that the Mechanicals did not quite fit the dominance theme. Though Bottom's role as unwitting pawn in Oberon's bid for power over Titania was obvious and though Puck made a petty nuisance of himself at the "Pyramus and Thisby" rehearsal in the forest until the audience grew restive, the Mechanicals' plot remained peripheral to the main action.

For all the supernatural dimension of play and production, the action in the forest was very physical. Oberon at one point lifted Puck over his head and hurled him into a glen offstage. Puck's assault on a fairy has already been mentioned. Bottom and Titania retired beneath a tarpaulin to have privacy that Puck violated voyeuristically. The lovers, dressed in safari shorts, climbed over rocks, picked one another up, wrestled on the ground; in all ways they were the mortal fools Puck thinks them.

The unusual cosmic interpretation of the play and vigorous blocking did not put the audience off balance, because the cast, which included Lisa Fitz (Titania), Rudiger Bahr (Oberon), and Klaus Höhne (Peter Quince) maintained a decorum quite stately, quite traditional. They read the Schlegel verse resonantly, and the audience must surely have had the comfortable sense that Shakespeare was being spoken as he always has been in Germany. The

director, Dietrich Haugk, also showed a respect for the text one can no longer expect to find in fashionable major productions in the regular season in West German cities. Aside from expanding the stage presence of the fairies for thematic purposes, from cutting Egeus' role, and from introducing some vaudeville hi-jinks into the Mechanicals' plot, he tampered very little indeed with the text as it would be remembered from Gymnasium days by the intended middle-class audience. (It is perhaps worth remarking that the production of another classic, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, by the same company in the same repertory season was likewise textually reverential--it was as compelling as any production of a Miller play I can recall.)

The combination of a venturesome--but not implausible or self-indulgent --interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and a treatment of the text in other ways markedly conservative guaranteed the audience at Luisenburg the sort of aesthetic experience that comes when the tension between the unexpected and the familiar is near the ideal.

It need hardly be said that Shakespeare productions for the bourgeoisie cannot be counted upon to keep the difficult balance that is the ideal. Many, of course--perhaps most--fail to provide imaginative surprises for audiences, the converse of those productions that maroon their sophisticated audiences by failing to do anything but startle. Sometimes a mainstream production will innovate, but distort its text through a miscalculation in the innovation it offers the audience to induce the desired tension with what is familiar.

So, in a production of *As You Like It* (Würzburg, in that same summer 1985 festival season), the director was tempted to make broader comedy than Shakespeare intended out of Rosalind's difficulty in assuming male identity. Rosalind's disguise was gradually penetrated as the forest scenes progressed. The climactic revelation took the form of a sight gag borrowed from Asta Nielsen's silent film of *Hamlet* where Horatio, feeling the dying Hamlet's breast for a heartbeat, discovers that "he" is a woman. It was Oliver in the Würzburg production who made the discovery while grasping the fainting Ganymede under the arms. The difficulty with making Rosalind's disguise imperfect is that it deprives her of the revelations which are her power in Act V. This Rosalind had little to do and almost nothing to say in the last scene --the flatness of the closure was evident to the audience.

A production of *The Merry Wives* in the cloisters at Feuchtwangen, Bavaria, also distorted the play Shakespeare conceived; but in this peculiar case the distortion resulted not from misguided innovation but ironically from an equally misguided effort to cater to the bourgeois audience's past experiences with a version of the text. As some cast names (*Fluth*, *Bach*, *Reich*, and *Spärlich*) made clear, this "Shakespeare" was adapted from the comic opera *Die lüstigen Weiber von Windsor* (1849) of Otto Nikolai, which is very popular in Germany, more so, certainly, than Verdi's counterpart, *Falstaff*. Like Verdi, Nicolai omitted the Sir Hugh Evans role and the accompanying quarrel with Caius, and with these elements went the *Leitmotif* of foreign accents and

linguistic eccentricity. In the opera and the play-text these cuts promoted the Anne Page-Fenton love story and the jealousy of Ford-Brook (Fluth-Bach) to greater prominence than either has in Shakespeare. The acting in this production was very broad, full of double-takes and other sight gags, a carry-over, unquestionably, from the *buffo* comic style of Nicolai. Only an accomplished veteran like Hans-Dieter Zeidler (Falstaff) was able to keep it from cloying when Nicolai's music was not there to leaven the loaf. This was, then, essentially the libretto of Nicolai's opera without his music. What the music does to enhance centrality and cover up the loose ends left by cutting could not be done in this production that must go down as a failed venture. The anomaly is not just that we got in the name of Shakespeare an adaptation of an adaptation without the best asset of the first adaptation, but that all this was done in an effort to strike a familiar chord in audience sub-consciousness. As it were, the innovation was leaving out the music--and that made the tension between the familiar and the surprising weaker than it would have been in any orthodox production of either Nicolai or Shakespeare.

This has been an analysis, not a set of reviews: one need not, therefore, apologize for omitting virtues of the *As You Like It* and *Merry Wives* productions (there were a number). Nor need one defend the inclusion of productions that miscalculated the posited tension between what the audience already and happily knows and what it has yet to learn. Such productions go far to prove the rule. The sample is small (four plays) and only half of it proves to be positive evidence. Yet I am ready to suggest that bourgeois Shakespeare may be a more satisfying aesthetic experience--even for sophisticates--than those widely acknowledged productions that aim to *épater le bourgeois* by ignoring his aesthetic needs.

THE TEMPEST [DER STURM]. Presented in the Stiftruine, Bad Hersfeld, Hessen, in repertory from 29 June to 9 August 1985. Director, Tom Toelle; Translation, Wolfgang Swaczynna; Set Design, Manfred Gruber; Costumes, Barbara Treskatis; Lighting, Karl Steinbock, Walter Steinbock, Helmut Schiller; Music, Wolfgang Dauner. Running time 2 hours, 35 minutes, no interval.

PRINCIPAL CAST: *Alonso*, Gunther Malzacher; *Antonio*, Norbert Kollakowsky; *Ariel*, Monika Müller; *Caliban*, Hagen Marks; *Ferdinand*, Christoph Schobesberger; *Gonzalo*, Claus Hofer; *Miranda*, Roswitha Ballmer; *Prospero*, Will Quadflieg; *Swbastian*, Joachim Luger; *Stephano*, Karl-Heinz Gierke; *Trinculo*, Jörg Schneider.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM [EIN SOMMERNACHTSTRAUM]. Presented at the Naturbühne Luisenburg, Wunsiedel, Bavaria, in repertory from 21 June to 9 August 1985. Director, Dietrich Haugk; Translation, August Wilhelm von Schlegel adapted by Dietrich Haugk; Costumes, Hans-Joachim Weygold; Music, Dieter Schönbach. Running time 2 hours, no interval.

PRINCIPAL CAST: *Bottom*, Wilfried Baasner; *Demetrius*, Michael Holz; *Flute*, Albert Weilguny; *Helena*, Maria Vögel; *Hermia*, Katerina Jacob; *Hippolyta*, Rosemarie Schrammel; *Lysander*, Andreas Wimberger; *Oberon*, Rüdiger Bahr; *Puck*, Michael Boettge; *Quince*, Klaus Höhne; *Theseus*, Johannes Groβmann; *Titania*, Lisa Fitz.

ÄS YOU LIKE IT [WIE ES EUCH GEFALLT]. Presented in the moat of the Festung Marienberg, Würzburg (4 Guest Performances 1, 2, 9, 10 August from the Festspiele repertory in the Schlobhof, Ettlingen, Baden-Württemberg--production opened 4 July, closed 23 August 1985). Director, Boleslaw Barlog; Translation Robert Gillner; Set Design and Costumes, Hanna Wartenegg; Music (from Vivaldi), Siegfried Behrend. Running time 2 hours, no interval.

PRINCIPAL CAST: *Adam I Sir Oliver Martext* Friedrich Dauscher; *Amiens/Le Beau*, Bob Franco; *Audrey*, Paula Maria Kirschner; *Celia*, Manuela Joest; *Charles/William*, Rudi Spieth; *Corin*, Klaus-Dieter Söder; *Duke Frederick/Duke Senior*, Winfried Lünemann; *Jaques*, Kurt Müller-Graf; *Oliver* Helmut Dauner; *Orlando* Josef Baum; *Phebe*, Margit Wolff; *Rosalind*, Simone Rethel; *Touchstone*, Helmut Oeser.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR [DIE LUSTIGEN WEIBER VON WINDSOR]. Presented in the Kreuzgang, Feuchtwangen, Bavaria, in repertory from 5 July to 5 August 1985. Director, Joachim Fontheim; Translation, Wolf Graf von Baudissin (adapted by Karl Kraus); Set Design and Costumes, Ute Frühling; Music, Alfred Nowacki. Running time 2 hours, no interval.

PRINCIPAL CAST: *Bardolph*, Rolf Schmeske; *Dr. Caius*, Detlef Heydorn; *Falstaff*, Hans-Dieter Zeidler; *Fenton*, Eberhard Harnoncourt; *Ford*, Heinz Trixner; *Mistress Ford*, Susanne Heydenreich; *Page*, Wolfgang Werthenbach; *Mistress Page*, Dagmar Hessenland; *Anne Page*, Monika Herwig; *Pistol*, Günter Alt; *Mistress Quickly*, Martha Marbo; *Shallow*, Hannspeter Himpan; *Slender*, Winfried Stahlke.

John W. Velz
Austin, Texas