



LUDWIG-
MAXIMILIANS-
UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN

INSTITUT FÜR THEATERWISSENSCHAFT
DEPARTMENT KUNSTWISSENSCHAFTEN
FAKULTÄT FÜR GESCHICHTS- UND KUNSTWISSENSCHAFTEN



One-day symposium: "Singing and acting the document." Exploring the relationship of documentary material and its music-theatrical treatment

LMU Munich / [Theaterwissenschaft](#) in collaboration with International Doctoral Program (IDP) [MIMESIS](#) (LMU) and the [Center for Advanced Studies](#) (CAS) (LMU)

Convenors: Prof. Bella Merlin and Prof. David Roesner

Munich, Fr, 16 December 2016 at the Hoch X (Entenbachstraße 37, 81541 München), from 10am.

The working language of the symposium will be English.



Bella Merlin as actress Tilly Wedekind in her biographical one-women show "Tilly Nobody" from 2010 (with sound design by David Roesner). Photo by Kristin Slipson.

In this symposium academics and artists will investigate the relationship between documentary material and its music-theatrical treatment. In particular, they will explore the ethics and aesthetics that *musicalisation* can have in relation to documentary sources and interviews.

What are the tensions between the authenticity the real-life relevance of verbatim sources with aesthetic strategies of representation, with the modes of stylisation and form that come with music? How is our reading of this material changed and affected? What is the potential of presenting documents in a music-theatrical form, what are its dangers?

To discuss these and other questions and give us insight in related studies, theories and artistic practices, we have invited six papers and artist talks.

Programme

10.00 // **Bella Merlin / David Roesner: Welcome / Talking about my generation**

During a four-week fellowship at the LMU [Bella Merlin](#) (UC Riverside, USA) and [David Roesner](#) (Theatre Studies, LMU) will investigate the relationship between original interview material and its (musical) staging. In particular, they will explore the ethics and aesthetics that musicalisation can have in relation to the speech patterns, vocal inflections and rhythms of their interview partners from across three generations in three different countries. In this presentation they will draw first tentative conclusions from the ongoing work and from a workshop with students conducted two days prior at the Bayerische Theaterakademie August Everding.

10.45-11.15 // **Kornelius Paede: "Pastness": About Ted Hearne's *The Source* (2015) and composition with source material**

[The Source](#) is a music theatre piece based on source material of the 2010 leak of three quarter of a million classified documents from the Iraq war by whistleblower Chelsea Manning. *The Source* is remarkable in its consistent verbatim approach and raises various questions about intermedial transformation processes, the immanent artificiality of music theatre and adequate composition techniques.

11.15-11.45 // **Sebastian Stauss: Uncomfortably numb - structural interdependencies of music and document in Roger Waters' post-Pink Floyd period**

Offensively addressing Donald Trump in a concert gig most recently was not the first time Roger Waters used his songs and music for commenting on contemporary history and politics. Most effectively in his 1992 album "Amused to Death" (and in later live performances of selections from it), right from the opening to the title piece at the end, Waters used interview and sound material from various TV sources to emphasize the critical views expressed in the songs - or is it even this content, which is also a source of fan productivity such as 'vidding' - structurally shaping the music of its (in many respects self-taught) creator right from the beginning?

11.45-12.00 // **Coffee Break**

12.00-13.00 // **Adam Cork: Saying in tune. On composing *London Road***

Adam Cork is the composer and co-lyricist for the ground-breaking production [London Road](#) (National Theatre, London 2011), written by Alecky Blythe and directed by Rufus Norris. It won the 2011 Critics' Circle Award for Best Musical and was nominated for 2011 Olivier Award for Best New Musical.

Based on interviews with residents of Ipswich, where in 2006 five bodies of women were found, the production tells the story of the upheaval this crime cause for the community and the attempts to come to terms with it. It does so using only the words of the residents, which – unusually – are set to music. In this talk, Adam Cork will shed light on the ideas and concepts for creating this highly original piece of theatre, which has since been turned into a major motion picture.

13.00-14.00 // **Lunch break**

14.00-14.45 // **Thom Luz (via Skype): Unusual music-theatre phenomena?**

In conversation with David Roesner, [Thom Luz](#) will talk about his theatre practice as a director and musician, who works intensively on sound – very often in relation to themes

or material that don't lend themselves naturally to theatre. Luz was voted best newcomer director in *Theater heute* 2014 and creates unique, poetic theatrical mediations, which interweave the factual, the sonic, the musical and the atmospheric.

14.45-15.45 // **Julia Roesler and Silke Merzhäuser: Theatrical reportage - on the work of theatre group [Werkgruppe 2](#)**

For more than ten years now Werkgruppe 21 works as an independent theatre collective. In documentary projects the group seeks to describe social realities from the perspective of those belonging to marginalized, invisible or disenfranchised people. Basing their work on in-depth investigative journalism, they develop atmospheric and narratively complex productions, which defy the genre boundaries of drama, music-theatre, documentation and fiction. Starting point for the performance text are narrative interviews, from which the group derives a narrative web. This is then presented by actors and musicians – original compositions, often using unusual instruments and sound sources, plays an important role, commenting on and interrogating the textual material. Ultimately, werkgruppe 2 asks about the nature of documentation and how theatre may give and insight into reality and whether it can and may speak on behalf of others.

The director and dramaturg of Werkgruppe2 will reflect on their work with specific examples from their production [POLNISCHE PERLEN](#).

Their latest production, *Die Georgier* about and with the Georgisches Kammerorchester Ingolstadt has seen its first performance in [Ingolstadt](#) on 15 November this year.

15.45-16.00 // **Closing remarks**

Biographies:

Adam Cork

Adam is composer and co-lyricist of the documentary opera/musical LONDON ROAD which had an extended run at the National Theatre (Cottesloe) and then transferred for a 2012 run in the Olivier auditorium. He received a Tony Award in 2010 for his music and sound score for RED (Donmar/Broadway) and an Olivier Award in 2011 for KING LEAR (Donmar). Adam was also nominated in 2010 for the Tony Award for Best Score (Music & Lyrics) for ENRON (Broadway/West End).

He was awarded the 2011 Evening Standard Award for Best Design for ANNA CHRISTIE and KING LEAR and the 2011 Critics' Circle for Best Musical for LONDON ROAD.

Thom Luz

Thom Luz was born in Zurich and studied acting at the HMT Zurich. His debut as a director with »Patience Camp« 2007 was later invited to the festival Theaterformen (Hannover) Recent productions include [WHEN I DIE](#) (Munich 2014), to Berlin, Reykjavik, Buenos Aires, Marseille, Montpellier, Strasbourg, Amsterdam, Nanterre, Lausanne, and Zurich. In 2014 Luz was name as best newcomer director by the influential annual critics choice survey of *Theater heute*. Luz is now director in residence for the Theater Basel. On of his latest productions was [UNUSUAL WEATHER PHENOMENA PROJECT](#).

Bella Merlin

[Bella Merlin](#) is an actor, writer, and songwriter, with a PhD from the University of Birmingham. As a practice-based researcher, her areas of specialism include 'acting with

facts' (David Hare's *The Permanent Way* at the National Theatre and Lightworks' *Sarajevo Story* at the Lyric Hammersmith). Her solo pieces *Nell Gwynne: A Dramatick Essaye on Acting and Prostitution* and *Tilly Nobody: Catastrophes of Love* are both fact-based dramas using song and music. Publications include: *Facing the Fear: An Actor's Guide to Overcoming Stage Fright* (2016); *The Complete Stanislavsky Toolkit* (2nd edition 2014) and *Acting: The Basics* (2nd edition forthcoming 2017). She is Professor of Acting and Directing at University of California, Riverside.

Silke Merzhäuser

studied Polyics, Literature and social psychology at the University of Hannover. Since 2000 she has worked, first as an assistant dramaturg at Schauspiel Hannover and Theater Basel, later as a dramaturg for the Luzerner Theater. From 2007 to 2009 she was a dramaturg at the Deutsches Theater in Göttingen, facilitating mainly interdisciplinary events and theatre projects, such as FRIEDLAND with [werkgruppe2](#), for whom she has worked now for seven years.

Kornelius Paede

Kornelius Paede studied musicology and German philology in Würzburg. His work focus on contemporary music theatre manifested in projects with the Atelier Klangforschung Würzburg, the Münchner Biennale für neues Musiktheater and the Berlin Akademie der Künste. In 2016 he published an essay about Manos Tsangaris in the series *Musik-Konzepte*. He was an intern at BR-Klassik and cooperates with various composers and directors as a librettist and dramaturg. Currently he is studying dramaturgy for music theatre at the Theaterakademie August Everding and works on the 2017 production of Jonathan Dove's *Flight* with the Munich Radio Orchestra.

Jule Roesler

studies cultural studies and aesthetic practice at the University of Hildesheim, with semesters abroad in Freiburg and Argentina. Since finishing her degree she has worked as a freelance director and theatre pedagogue. She also teaches regularly at the HBK Braunschweig. Jule is one of the founding members of [werkgruppe2](#) and the director of all their productions.

David Roesner

Prof Dr [David Roesner](#) is Professor for Theatre and Music-Theatre at the LMU Munich. In 2003 he published his first monograph on 'Theatre as Music' and continued to work occasionally as a theatre musician. Recent publications include *Theatre Noise. The Sound of Performance* (with Lynne Kendrick, CSP, 2011), *Composed Theatre. Aesthetics, Practices, Processes* (with Matthias Rebstock, Intellect, 2012) and his latest monograph *Musicality in Theatre. Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making* (Ashgate 2014).

Sebastian Stauss

Sebastian Stauss studied theatre studies, German and English Literature at the LMU Munich and works as a lecturer and music journalist. He was part of the international DFG research group „Kulturelle Inszenierung von Fremdheit im 19. Jahrhundert" from 2000–2006 and collaborated on the exhibition in the Theatermuseum München "Von der Welt Anfang und Ende – Der Ring des Nibelungen in München". He teaches and publishes on a wide range of subjects, including music-theatre, popular theatre and comedy, as well as pop culture.