

Children Born of War – Sharing Knowledge and Lived Experiences through Performing Arts

A cooperation between the Universities of Leipzig and Birmingham and the Landesverband der freien Theater in Sachsen e.V.

PROGRAMME

Symposium and Scenic Presentations



4th May 2023 // 11 am – 9 pm

LOFFT – DAS THEATER, Leipzig, Spinnereistraße 7, Halle 7, Germany

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of armed conflicts, children have been conceived by foreign soldiers and were born to local mothers. Among those children are those conceived in rapes, as well as those born out of more or less consensual relationships. They usually grow up without their fathers in a tension between integration and exclusion, frequently in challenging circumstances. Children Born of War (CBOW) and their experiences, like few other conflict-affected groups, have been draped in a comprehensive silence until recently. Between 2015 and 2019, fifteen doctoral students, supported by an EU-funded project (<https://www.chibow.org>), researched this theme in different historical and geopolitical settings (ranging from children born of the Second World War and the post-war occupations to children conceived in captivity in African civil wars). During this interdisciplinary and international project, new paths were explored in order to raise public awareness of the experiences of CBOW and thus to amplify the impact of the scientific engagement with this important topic. These included collaborations with non-academic partners such as NGOs, creative and media partners, support organisations of CBOWs, to name but a few. The results of these intersectoral partnerships were multi-faceted and included, among others, animated and feature films, a documentary dance theatre, educational engagement and policy interventions.

In 2021, Prof. Dr. Heide Glaesmer (Universität Leipzig) and Prof. Dr. Sabine Lee (University of Birmingham) received the Ralf-Dahrendorf-Prize for the European Research Area in recognition of the quality of the research and the promise of the proposed new public engagement project. The prize money has supported this academic-artistic collaborative dissemination project bringing together doctoral research and theatrical scenic performance. The symposium combines lectures on the sharing of scientific ideas through theatre-based forms of dissemination, three performance art projects focusing on Children Born of War and an intersectoral panel discussion exploring challenges and opportunities of such dissemination activities.

We are hoping for a lively and engaged exchange between artists and scientists and are confident that the lessons learnt from today's symposium will add to our understanding and create new ideas of how best to utilise theatrical forms to help communicate and engage with scientific research.

Alongside the year-long programme of developing today's performances, the project team have created a podcast that explores further the intentions of the intersectoral programme and the ideas behind the scenic performances that have been created by the selected independent theatre companies for today's event. These podcasts can be accessed on <https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/chibow>.

Heide Glaesmer and Sabine Lee

PROGRAMME

SYMPOSIUM

11:00 am – 11:30 am	Welcome and Introduction Heide Glaesmer (Universität Leipzig), Sabine Lee (University of Birmingham) and Anne-Cathrin Lessel (LOFFT)
11:30 am – 12:15 pm	Theatre Shelters amidst War Tania Shelepko (ProEnglish Theatre, Kyiv, Ukraine / Cambridge, UK)
12:15 pm – 1:00 pm	Last Stop Torgau. Theatre and Trauma Georg Mellert (Leipzig)
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm //	Lunch Break
2:00 pm – 2:45 pm	Playing while the Counterpart Attends Felicitas Braun and Lena Hoffmann (Vajswerk, Berlin)
2:45 pm – 3:30 pm	Uncertain Certainties – the Art/Science Interface from an Aesthetic Perspective Frank Raddatz (Theater des Anthropozän, Berlin)
3:30 pm – 4:00 pm //	Coffee Break
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Panel Discussion with Children Born of War, Performance Artists and Researchers Winfried Behlau, Eckehart Göritz, Felicitas Braun, Dheeraj Akolkar, Saskia Mitreuter, Michal Korhel and Sabine Lee
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm //	Break

SCENIC PRESENTATIONS

6:00 pm	Presentation 1: “ARVYLA” by Natasha Martin (Athens, Greece) Choreography and Concept: Natasha Martin; Movement consultant: Yiota Peklari
	Presentation 2: “Shadow of a Hero” by Just Monkeys (Prague, Czech Republic) Performers: Věra Horáková, Angelika Kartous Sbouli, Tomáš Hanf, Mária Miličevićová, Petr Švarc, Kirill Danilin, Štěpán Wichs; Author: Štěpán Smolík; Consultants: Michal Korhel and Vendula Ježková; Visual Concept – Costume Designer: Lucie Špalková
	Presentation 3: “Andromache’s Child” by Abigail Akavia (Leipzig, Germany) Directed by Abigail Akavia and Hannes Flo; Performed by Felix Kerkhoff with Abigail Akavia; Text: Abigail Akavia (narration by Jamie Grass); Dramaturgy, Videography, Sound: Hannes Flo
8:15 pm – 8:45 pm	Audience Discussion moderated by Tessa Theisen (with translation ENG–D)

SPEAKERS

Tania Shelepko

Tania Shelepko is Director of the ProEnglish Theatre in Kiev, Press ELT Consultant at Cambridge University and news producer. She started as an actress in 2008, being a student of the Ukrainian Philology department, and switched to directing in 2015 starting to work in a studio with teenagers. In 2016, she joined ProEnglish Theatre Company as a drama teacher. By the end of 2022, she got her Master's Degree in Culture Studies and Theatre Directing at the Ostroh Academy (Ukraine). Her most recent work "The New World Order" was performed in March 2022 in the basement of the ProEnglish Theatre in Kiev as a part of the Theatre Festival Berlin. It also takes part in the Scena 9 project "HERE.NOW" in Bucharest and Timisoara. Another wartime performance, "L_UKR_ECE", was developed between trips to the frontline with a team of the Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten while documenting war crimes. The performance became a part of the Shakespeare Festival laboratory in Craiova (Romania) in May 2022 and in Gdansk (Poland) in July 2022.

Felicitas Braun

Felicitas Braun studied directing at the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna and subsequently took up an assignment as assistant director at the Burgtheater Wien. Since 2013, she has been working as theatre director focusing on new texts and cross-disciplinary linkages among others in Wiesbaden, Osnabrück, Oldenburg, Graz and Vienna. Since 2018, she has also been involved in audio productions.

Lena Hoffmann

Lena Hoffmann has been involved with theatre from childhood and has been active, both in theory and practice, in independent theatre for many years. In 2012, she moved to Berlin for university studies. Currently, she is completing a Master's degree in Theatre Studies at the Free University Berlin and is working on her final thesis. In 2015, she co-founded the research collective Vajswerk and is member of the organisation's executive board. Among her main foci are dramaturgy, biographical research and game studies.

Lena Hoffmann and Felicitas Braun are both members of the executive board of Vajswerk e.V., a Berlin-based research collective established in 2015. In a dialogue between scholarship and art, it forms ensembles to conduct biographical research and present it on stage. They produce stage presentations incorporating multiple perspectives, illuminating historical and political contexts and generating new subject matters and forms for the theatre. Vajswerk will have staged 31 productions by 2023, mostly with biographical testimonies as a basis for the representation.

Frank M. Raddatz

Together with Sabine Kunst, a geomicrobiologist biologist, director of the Alfred-Wegener-Institute and former President of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Frank M. Raddatz founded the Theater des Anthropozän (www.theaterdesanthropozaen.de) in 2019. He has published widely with and about Heiner Müller, for instance on aesthetics, politics and literature of theatre and, more recently, on questions of the anthropocene stage. He has worked as dramaturg in numerous theatres, recently at the Berliner Ensemble, the Volksbühne Berlin and the RambaZamba Theater.

Georg Mellert

Georg Mellert studied philosophy and German at the Free University Berlin and at Université Paris X. Since 2006, he has been working as dramaturg and assistant director in numerous productions of the independent theatre scene; among others at the Sophiensälen and the Theaterdiscounter. Internships took him to the Deutsches Theater Berlin as well as the Oper Frankfurt. Between 2008 and 2020, he studied dramaturgy at the Goethe University Frankfurt. Between 2010 and 2014, Georg Mellert was dramaturg at the Landestheater Coburg. Subsequently, he took up engagements at the Schlosstheater Moers and was leading dramaturg at the Luisenburg-Festspielen Wunsiedel. Since 2018/19, he has been working as dramaturg at the Schauspiel Leipzig.

Heide Glaesmer

Heide Glaesmer is a psychologist/psychotherapist working at the Department of Medical Psychology and Medical Sociology at University of Leipzig. She has done research on CBOW for more than 10 years, especially on CBOW of WWII in Germany, Austria and Norway and was the Director of Training in the CHIBOW network.

Sabine Lee

Sabine Lee is Professor of Modern history based at University of Birmingham, UK. She has done interdisciplinary research on conflict and security with particular emphasis on conflict-related sexual violence and children born of war. She was the Coordinator of the CHIBOW network.

Anne-Cathrin Lessel

Anne-Cathrin Lessel ist the artistic and managing director of the LOFFT as well as board member of the Association of Independent Theaters in Saxony.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION

Winfried Behlau is a Child Born of Occupation from WW II and he is one of the funders of the network of children fathered by soldiers from the Russian Army (www.russenkinder-distelblueten.de).

Eckehart Göritz is a Child Born of Occupation from WWII.

Dheeraj Akolkar is a filmmaker who has made, among others, a documentary about Norwegian CBOW fathered by Wehrmacht soldiers ("Wars don't end") and another documentary about a dance theater project with CBOW in Northern Uganda ("The wound is where the light enters").

Saskia Mitreuter was one of the PhD students in the CHIBOW network. Her PhD project investigates identity development of CBOW from WWII in Germany and Austria.

Michal Korhel was one of the PhD students in the CHIBOW network. His PhD project focusses on CBOW in Sudetengerman Territories.

ARTISTS AND PERFORMANCES

Natasha Chanta-Martin / “ARVYLA”

“ARVYLA” (meaning army boot in Greek) is the link between two Children Born of War stories and the main musical instrument of a percussive dancer: the stomping boot. Stemming from the common need for everyone to be heard, “ARVYLA” plays with this concept metaphorically and literally in the form of an inspiring fusion of true testimonies, research material and historical facts from two distinct situations experienced by Children Born of War and body percussion styles from around the world. Natasha Martin is a percussive dance artist and dance anthropologist whose main interest is in blending research with performance and vice versa. She has dedicated the past decade to teaching and performing with and for vulnerable communities, such as unaccompanied minors who have often fled from war zones, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and others. Natasha collaborates with dance and music festivals, with international organisations and institutions while putting great effort into making her workplaces inter-cultural and intergenerational. Fascinated by how humans move to rhythm, or what kind of rhythm makes them move, she investigates new ways to communicate non-verbally and to tell stories through sounding movement. Her artistic work touches upon cross-cultural coexistence, historical moments of oppression, the sense of feeling good with your own music and the interplay between geometries of space and time.

Just Monkeys / “Shadow of a Hero”

We tell a story based on the lives of our fellow citizens, people who are descendants of Czechoslovak mothers and foreign soldiers who arrived in the country at the end of World War II. From childhood, these Children Born of War reminded people around them of the war by their very existence, a forbidden act of extra-marital love, embodying the imperialist enemy. What is it like to be a token of taboos, a projection screen for society’s shadows and dreams? Are we different today? Would we treat children born of war differently today? Just Monkeys z. s. is a theatrical democratic group that aims to freely develop the creative potential of each member according to their individual talents. They developed out of the Just Monkeys performing arts courses. These courses, under the guidance of MgA. Vendula Ježková, Ph.D., have been running since January 2018 at the Pod Palmovkou Theatre (Prague). They staged the play “The Monumentkeeper” by contemporary Slovak author Peter Lomnický (2019), the play “Hamlet, or Lehrstück” (2021), the play “The Principle of Uncertainty” (2022) and the street performance Blind Spots (2021). The performance Blind Spots is based on the book of the same name by sociologist Daniel Prokop, who looks at the problems and challenges of the contemporary Czech Republic and the world. Just Monkeys have compiled authentic stories of their members on topics such as insolvency, domestic violence, alcohol and presented them in the streets of Prague.

Abigail Akavia / “Andromache’s Child”

What keeps a person alive when their identity is made up of fragmented memories? “Andromache’s Child” tells a fictional tale of a Child Born of War, inspired by an ancient Greek account of the aftermath of Troy. The play weaves together old and contemporary myths to build a world shaped by intergenerational trauma. Abigail Akavia is a writer, translator, and theater practitioner, who has worked both on stage and behind the scenes in Tel Aviv, Chicago, and Leipzig. Her recent stage-piece “A Song that Can’t Be Sung”, a collaboration with musician and poet Hilà Lahav, premiered at the Schaubühne Lindenfels in March 2023. Her book “Dancing with Philoctetes: Reactions on Pain and Remembrance”, forthcoming from Punctum Books, includes her new English translation of Sophocles’ “Philoctetes” and an essay on loss, empathy, embodiment and music. Abigail holds a PhD in Classics from the University of Chicago.

HOW TO FIND THE VENUE

The theater can be found in Hall 7 on the grounds of the Spinnerei Leipzig.

LOFFT – DAS THEATER
Spinnereistraße 7 / Halle 7
D-04179 Leipzig

GETTING TO LOFFT – DAS THEATER

Public transport

timetable Tram/Bus: www.lvb.de

timetable S-Bahn: www.bahn.de

- **By tram:** Line **14** to Leipzig-Plagwitz
- **By bus:** Line **60** to Leipzig-Plagwitz (station) AND Line **64** from Leipzig-Plagwitz to Niemeyerstraße
- **By S-Bahn:** Line **1** AND Line **10** to Leipzig-Plagwitz station

>>> Get off at the terminus of the S-Bahn at Plagwitz station: Keep left, pass under the tracks, and turn left into Spinnereistraße. After 550 m turn left into Saarländer Straße and immediately left again into Hall 7. LOFFT – DAS THEATER is on the 3rd floor.

- **By tram:** Line **8, 15** to Saarländer Straße
>>> Follow Lützner Straße a few metres into the city and turn right into Saarländer Straße. After 500 m turn right into Saarländer Straße and immediately left again to Hall 7.

By car

- Via **BAB 9:** Exit Leipzig West, drive on B181 approx. 5 km towards the centre. 200 m after the ARAL petrol station take a sharp right into Lützner Straße. After 1 km turn left into Saarländer Straße, after 250 m turn right into Saarländer Straße and immediately left again into the entrance to Hall 7.
- Via **BAB 14:** Exit Zentrum/Neue Messe. Take the B2 towards Zentrum, turn right onto Innenstadtring. After approx. 400 m, leave the ring road and turn half-right into Käthe-Kollwitz-Straße. Follow the road for approx. 4 km. Immediately after a railway subway turn left into Spinnereistraße, after 500 m turn left and immediately left again into the entrance to Hall 7.

CREDITS

The event is accompanied by a podcast series produced by **Eva Morlang** and **Julia Rasp**. The podcasts are available at <https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/chibow>.

A film documentation of the event will be produced by **Toni Gräfe**. It will be available via <https://www.chibow.org> after the event.

The audience discussion after the scenic presentations has a German-English translation by **Sabine Budnick**.

The graphic design of the program was realized by **Barbara Brendel**.

Project leads: **Prof. Dr. Heide Glaesmer, Prof. Dr. Sabine Lee**

Artistic lead: **Anne-Cathrin Lessel**

Project coordinator: **Julia Rasp**

LINKS

<https://www.chibow.org>

<https://www.uniklinikum-leipzig.de/einrichtungen/medizinische-psychologie/Seiten/psychotraumatologie-theaterprojekt.aspx>

<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/chibow>

The project has been funded by the BMBF through the Ralf-Dahrendorf Award for the European Research Area 2021.



GEFÖRDERT VOM

Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung