

**Andreas Härter, Beate Hochholdinger-Reiterer: Abstracts.**

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# Abstracts

Maike Gunsilius

## **How do we come together? Transgenerational negotiations in international theatre for children and young people**

The relational is inscribed in a special way in theatre for children and young people, whether it's theatre created for young audiences, or theatre performed by children and young people. This article highlights three contemporary tendencies in which the asymmetrical relationship between children/young people and adults – in society and in theatre – is questioned, and that allow us to work on that relationship using the means of theatre in a way that is self-reflexive, critical of power, and participative.

Beate Hochholdinger-Reiterer

## **On the history of theatre for children and young people in Switzerland**

A comprehensive history of children's and youth theatre in Switzerland has not yet been written, though the Swiss children's and youth theatre scene experienced an upswing from the 1970s onwards and drew considerable international attention. An outside perspective – also on Swiss theatre in general – can highlight the artistic diversity and cultural diversity brought about by the country's multilingualism.

This article contextualises the historical developments of theatre for a young audience and highlights exemplary cases of the diverse manifestations of Swiss theatre for children and young people.

Beate Hochholdinger-Reiterer

## **Theatre for all generations. Field reports from the history of Swiss theatre for children and young people**

This practical discussion of the history of Swiss theatre for children and young people features Ruth Oswalt, who founded the Theater

Spilkische (now Vorstadttheater Basel) together with Gerd Imbsweiler in 1974; Gabi Bernetta, who initiated and directs the jungspund theatre festival; and Ronja Rinderknecht, who currently works at Vorstadttheater Basel as production manager and dramaturge. They represent three generations of theatre professionals who have dedicated their work to young audiences. They talk about their beginnings and the specific challenges and benefits of theatre for children and young people.

Andreas Härter

### **What can we look forward to? Reports from the young scene**

Young theatre-makers at the beginning of their careers have their say here. They present their projects and discuss the role of storytelling and the special intensity of audience involvement in children's and youth theatre. Participatory work plays a role everywhere: participation as an artistic attitude, but also as a social task. The conditions of production are addressed, especially the importance of research and its role in funding policy. All the participants are united by a desire for the general acceptance of theatre for children and young people as a fully valid art form.

Cécile Dalla Torre

### **A panorama of theatre for young audiences in French-speaking Switzerland**

Joan Mompart

### **Theatre for young audiences**

Theatre for young audiences in French-speaking Switzerland has been booming for several decades and is marked by the presence of centres of artistic production in Geneva and Lausanne. In the heart of the historic district of Lausanne, the Petit Théâtre completely fulfils its mission of making theatre for the youngest audiences, co-producing a large number of performances for children. Sophie Gardaz, its director since 2005, has contributed to the development of a network for young audiences that continues to gain more and more attention beyond

our borders. Situated at the western tip of Lake Geneva, the Théâtre Am Stram Gram spearheads theatre for children and young people. Its director Joan Mompарт took over this theatre in 2021, inspired by the vision of the designer and educator Chiara Guidi, for whom art cannot exist without the eyes of childhood. Theatre companies that focus exclusively on young audiences can be counted on the fingers of one hand in French-speaking Switzerland. Plays aimed at the young generation are in practice more likely to be produced by general theatre companies, which tend to alternate this type of performance with productions for an adult audience.

Manuela Camponovo

### **Theatre for a young audience in Italian-speaking Switzerland**

The scene of professional theatre for children and young people in Italian-speaking Switzerland is as lively as it is diverse. This article documents the development of this scene since the 1970s and presents its most important forms and participants: the pioneer Vania Luraschi, clowns and commedia dell'arte, puppet theatre, narrative theatre and experimental theatre. The importance of school theatre, festivals and children's programmes at theatres is emphasised. It calls for a stronger cultural policy in favour of theatre for young audiences.

Petra Fischer

### **Children's and youth theatre in Graubünden.**

#### **A look into the future**

Against the background of the author's own observations and work experience, and based on research among theatre professionals in Graubünden, a picture is drawn here of today's performing arts scene for young audiences in the canton of Graubünden. Special importance is attached to those institutions with future potential, as they could link regional creative activity with national and international developments and thereby contribute to a greater awareness and appreciation of theatre work for young audiences.

Andreas Härter

**Frauke Jacobi on *Romeo and Juliet* at the FigurenTheater St. Gallen**

The puppeteer Frauke Jacobi here talks about the development of the play *Romeo and Juliet* at the FigurenTheater St. Gallen: about the puppetry, the music, the inclusion of film sequences, and the involvement of school classes in the development of the play. She points out the role of Shakespeare's play in efforts to appeal to an older young audience. In doing so, she addresses the genre-specific problem of puppet theatre, namely that it is often pigeon-holed as being something for small children, akin to playing with dolls. As the director of the St. Gallen FigurenTheater, she tackles this prejudice both artistically and programmatically.

Alexandra Portmann

**Charlotte Huldi in conversation about *What the rhino saw, when it looked on the other side of the fence* (La Grenouille, Theatre Centre for Young Audiences, Biel)**

The theatre director and dramaturge Charlotte Huldi talks about working on the play *What the rhino saw, when it looked on the other side of the fence*, directed by Julien Schmutz (2021). This conversation revolves around the topics of historical representation on stage, bilingualism as an opportunity and a challenge, and the imagined target audience in theatre for children and young people. She offers insights into specific work processes in the field of translation, the composition of artistic ensembles, and rehearsals at La Grenouille, a bilingual theatre centre for young audiences (Biel/Bienne).

Andreas Härter

**Workshop of ideas I: Theatrical forms for young audiences**

In a discussion about forms of theatre for young audiences, theatre professionals talk about their artistic work. This workshop demonstrates that theatrical aesthetics cannot be discussed without looking at the specific conditions that are decisive for theatre for children and

young people: its specific addressability, the question of performing spaces, the relationship between artistic freedom and pedagogical impact, multilingualism and cultural inclusion, the role of schools, theatre pedagogy and communication, curating, and programming.

Andreas Härter

**Workshop of ideas II: It's a money thing – promotion, sponsors, fees**

This workshop of ideas addresses the economic conditions under which theatre for young audiences functions. The discussion shows that funding for children's and youth theatre is lower than that for adult theatre, which is due not just to the funding policies of institutions, but also to the smaller production budgets of children's and youth theatre. This in turn has to do with the limited financial scope of the organisers, be they theatres or schools. Lurking in the background is the question of the cultural appreciation of theatre for children and young people.

Mira Sack

**Perspectives on professionalism in theatre education**

This article deals with the question of professionalism in theatre education. Its starting point is the necessity for a permanent process of reflection on professional ethics that takes into account the relational link between education, art and society. Against the background of today's social situation, the author proposes expanding our understanding of education. The influence that this might have on self-perception in theatre pedagogy, and the superordinate strategies for action that can follow on from it, are here outlined by way of example.

Andreas Härter

**Round table: children's and youth theatre – theatre for all?**

This round table discusses the conditions for improving the visibility of theatre for children and young people as an independent art form.

The participants discuss the status of children's and youth theatre, both in education and in theatres' programming strategies, and asks about the possible ways and means of addressing audiences. They describe the struggle for media coverage on children's and youth theatre, and explain their motivation for creating theatre for a young audience. Finally, the panel negotiates the term "theatre for all"; theatre for children and young people should also be theatre for everyone.