

Dear readers

The International Balzan Prize Foundation promotes culture and science, and supports initiatives that serve the ideals of humanity, peace and fraternity. In 2010, for the first time, the foundation awarded its prize to a theatre researcher. Professor Manfred Brauneck, of Hamburg, was honoured with the *Premio Balzan* for his life's work. In accordance with the prize regulations, Professor Brauneck donated half of the prize money to a research project for promising academics. He asked the German Centre of the International Theatre Institute, of which he is a long-standing member, to manage this project; its aim was to complement Brauneck's own studies in theatre history with an examination of structural changes to European theatre since the beginning of the 1990s. The context is a Europe experiencing change through the creation of the European Union, which has influenced international production, networking, digitalisation, project-based work and hybridisation of forms, as well as leading to the economisation of more and more areas of life and the commercialisation of the public sphere. The research project *The Role of Independent Theatre in European Contemporary Theatre: Studies on Structural and Aesthetic Changes* was developed together with four young researchers and four mentors: Professor Gabriele Brandstetter, Freie Universität Berlin, Dr. Barbara Müller-Wesemann, Zentrum für Theaterforschung der Universität Hamburg, Professor Günther Heeg, Universität Leipzig and Professor Wolfgang Schneider, Universität Hildesheim. A series of symposia and colloquia allowed the collaborators to survey the field of research and undertake an expansive discussion about working methods. The setting of both a regional focus and a limit to the practices to be described was of crucial importance.

The Institute for Theatre Studies at the University of Leipzig then organised a symposium as part of the festival euro-scene Leipzig 2012. The symposium was entitled *Art and Life: Metamorphoses in (Eastern) European Independent Theatre*. Experts from artistic and scientific disciplines and participants discussed questions around current structures and developments in the performing arts in Eastern Europe.

In March 2013, the *Post-Migrant Perspectives on European Theatre* conference took place at the Goethe Institute in London. Using the starting point of the national scenes in Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden, the conference members contemplated the effects of European migrant societies and the special role of post-migrant theatre artists from the artistic, scientific and cultural/political perspectives. The exchange also served to open up new perspectives and networks for a Post-Migrant Theatre in Europe.

The current volume presents the studies that were completed under the auspices of the research project; each asking their own questions, they approach the various areas of contemporary theatre and dance in field-specific as well as multi-disciplinary ways. The authors investigate the interaction between the changing means of production and distribution as well as the changing dialectics of content versus form; in order to do so, they interview numerous artists.

This expansive research initiative, the first to take on an international approach, is a prominent project for the International Theatre Institute. It assists in understanding the work of theatre professionals and the role of theatre as public benefit, as well as serving to strengthen the preservation of cultural diversity in the face of the increasing global economic pressures of recent decades. We would like to thank Professor Manfred Brauneck for this initiative, for his critical and thoughtful guidance and for his faith in the work of the authors as well as that of the ITI.

*Andrea Zagorski, Dr. Thomas Engel
ITI Germany*