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DIRECTORS IN PERSPECTIVE

General Editor: C. D. Innes

Max Reinhardt

DIRECTORS IN PERSPECTIVE

What characterizes modern theatre above all is continual stylistic innovation, in which theory and presentation have combined to create a wealth of new forms – naturalism, expressionism, epic theatre, etc. – in a way that has made directors the leading figures rather than dramatists. To a greater extent than is perhaps generally realised, it has been directors who have provided dramatic models for playwrights, though of course there are many different variations in this relationship. In some cases a dramatist's themes challenge a director to create new performance conditions (Stanislavski and Chekhov), or a dramatist turns director to formulate an appropriate style for his work (Brecht); alternatively a director writes plays to correspond with his theory (Artaud), or creates communal scripts out of exploratory work with actors (Chaikin, Grotowski). Some directors are identified with a single theory (Craig), others gave definitive shape to a range of styles (Reinhardt); the work of some has an ideological basis (Stein), while others work more pragmatically (Bergman).

Generally speaking, those directors who have contributed to what is distinctly "modern" in today's theatre stand in much the same relationship to the dramatic texts they work with, as composers do to librettists in opera. However, since theatrical performance is the most ephemeral of the arts and the only easily reproducible element is the text, critical attention has tended to focus on the playwright. This series is designed to redress the balance by providing an overview of selected directors' stage work: those who helped to formulate modern theories of drama. Their key productions have been reconstructed from promptbooks, reviews, scene-designs, photographs, diaries, correspondence and – where these productions are contemporary – documented by first-hand description, interviews with the director, etc. Apart from its intrinsic interest, this record allows a critical perspective, testing ideas against practical problems and achievements. In each case, too, the director's work is set in context by indicating the source of his ideas and their influence, the organization of his acting company and his relationship to the theatrical or political establishment, so as to bring out wider issues: the way theatre both reflects and influences assumptions about the nature of man and his social role.

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Max Reinhardt rehearsing *Faust* in Salzburg, in 1933.

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Preface

This is not a biography of Max Reinhardt, but a short account of his contribution to the modern theatre. Oliver M. Sayler's excellent collection of papers by those who knew Reinhardt personally, *Max Reinhardt and His Theatre*, was published by Brentano's of New York as long ago as 1924, nearly twenty years before his death and before the years of the main Salzburg festivals and the period of his exile in the United States. A number of well-illustrated studies have been published more recently in German, but there is a need for an up-to-date account in English which will look at the whole of Reinhardt's career in the light of our knowledge of the modern theatre and drama.

I am indebted to the Research Committee of Northwestern University for their support, to the librarians of the British Library and its Newspaper Collection at Colindale, to Marion Hanscom, Head of Special Collections at the Glenn G. Bartle Library of the State University of New York at Binghamton, and to Michael Jasenas and Marianne Janauer, Curator and Archivist of the Max Reinhardt Archive there, with its unique collection of Reinhardt *Regiebücher*, his library and papers.

The illustrations in this book appear by kind permission of the Binghamton Archive, and in acknowledging its help my thanks are extended also to the Max-Reinhardt-Forschungsstätte in Salzburg and to its director, Gisela Prossnitz.

J.L.S.

Chronology

- 1873 Born Max Goldmann, 9 September, in Baden, near Vienna. First of a family of six children.
- 1877 Family moves to Vienna.
- 1890 Acts under the name of Max Reinhardt for the first time.
- 1890–2 Takes acting lessons in the Sulkowsky Theater, Matzleinsdorf, under Maximilian Streben and Professor Emil Bürde.
- 1892–3 Actor at the Neues Volkstheater, Rudolfsheim, Vienna, under Pauline Löwe, and at the Pressburg summer theatre, Bratislava.
- 1893–4 Actor at the Stadttheater, Salzburg, his first full contract. Plays 49 parts, including several in Schiller.
- 1894 1 September, actor in the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, under Otto Brahm. Gains reputation as an actor of old men. Parts include Pastor Kittelhaus in Hauptmann's *The Weavers*, Tubal in *The Merchant of Venice* and the Secretary in Ibsen's *The Pillars of Society*. 1897: plays Foldal in Ibsen's *John Gabriel Borkman*. 1900: plays Engstrand in Ibsen's *Ghosts*.
- 1895–1901 Summer engagements in Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, etc.
- 1900 His first production as director: Ibsen's *Love's Comedy*.
- 1901 Starts his cabaret "Schall und Rauch" ("Sound and Smoke") in the Unter den Linden, Berlin.
- 1902 This becomes the Kleines Theater.
- 1903 Leaves Brahm and the Deutsches Theater; Brahm fines him 14,000 marks. Becomes director of the Kleines Theater and the Neues Theater on the Schiffbauerdamm: acts and directs. Joseph Ettliger invites him to serve as adviser to the Neue Freie Volksbühne.
- 1905 His *Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Neues Theater acclaimed. His first use of the revolving stage. Becomes director of the Deutsches Theater. His first production there is Kleist's *Käthchen von Heilbronn*. Opens his school of acting at the Deutsches Theater.
- 1906 Buys the Deutsches Theater. Opens the Kammerspiele next door. The first production there is Ibsen's *Ghosts*, followed

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- by the historic production of Wedekind's *Spring's Awakening*.
- 1907–8 Tours all Germany and Budapest each summer.
- 1908 Son Wolfgang born to actress Else Heims.
- 1909 Honoured with the title of "Professor."
- 1909–11 Summer engagements at the Künstler Theater, Munich.
- 1910–12 Becomes known throughout Europe: produces *Oedipus Rex* as his first arena production in the Munich Musikfesthalle and the Circus Schumann, Berlin; also in Vienna, St Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw, Stockholm, Budapest, Brussels and London (at Covent Garden, with John Martin-Harvey).
- 1910 Marries Else Heims in Maidenhead, Kent.
- 1911 First production of *Everyman* at the Circus Schumann. First production of *The Miracle* at Olympia, London. First issue of the Deutsches Theater news sheet.
- 1912 First attempt at film-making: *The Miracle*. First productions in New York and Paris: *Sumurûn*.
- 1913 Son Gottfried born to Else Heims Reinhardt. More film-making: *Island of the Blest* and *Venetian Night* made in Italy.
- 1913–14 Shakespeare Festival at the Deutsches Theater: ten plays in four months.
- 1914 Wedekind Festival at the Kammerspiele, Wedekind directing: eight plays in six days.
- 1915 Visiting director in Stockholm and Christiana.
- 1915–18 Director of the Volksbühne in the Bülowplatz, Berlin, saving it from possible extinction during the war years: first production is Schiller's *The Robbers*.
- 1917 *Das junge Deutschland* (Young Germany) series opens with Sorge's *The Beggar* at the Deutsches Theater. Opens the Salzburg Municipal Playhouse. The actress Helene Thimig joins the ensemble. In the middle of the First World War his production record peaks at 48 in the 1916–17 season.
- 1918 Becomes director of the Kleines Schauspielhaus, Berlin: first production is Goethe's *Clavigo*. July: buys the castle of Leopoldskron, Salzburg (built in 1736).
- 1919 Opens the Grosses Schauspielhaus, Berlin (formerly the Circus Schumann): first production is Aeschylus' *Oresteia*.
- 1920 Initiates the Salzburg Festival with Richard Strauss, Bruno Walter and Hugo von Hofmannsthal: first production of *Everyman* in the Domplatz, the cathedral square. Gives up control of his theatres in Berlin and moves to Vienna.
- 1922 Opens the Redoutensaal of the Imperial Palace, Vienna, as a theatre: first production is Goethe's *Clavigo*.

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- 1923 First production at the Schloss Leopoldskron: Molière's *The Imaginary Invalid*.
- 1924 *The Miracle* is his first production in America, at the Century Theatre, New York. Production tours the United States. Becomes director of the Theater in der Josefstadt, Vienna: first production is Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters*. Opens the Komödie in the Kurfürstendamm, Berlin: first production is also *The Servant of Two Masters*. Again becomes director of the Deutsches Theater: first production is Shaw's *Saint Joan*, with Elisabeth Bergner.
- 1925 Opens the Salzburg Festspielhaus: first production is Hofmannsthal's *The Salzburg Great Theatre of the World*, revived from 1922.
- 1926 Visits the United States. Discusses film directing in Hollywood.
- 1927–8 The ensemble plays in New York: eight productions in German.
- 1928 Becomes director of the Berliner Theater: first production is *Romeo and Juliet*. Lectures at Columbia University: "On the Actor." The Max Reinhardt Seminar founded in Schönbrunn, Vienna.
- 1929 Becomes director of his Berlin theatres again. Brother Edmund dies. Hofmannsthal dies.
- 1930 Twenty-fifth anniversary as director of the Deutsches Theater. Honorary degrees from Frankfurt-on-Main and Kiel Universities.
- 1931 Seeks divorce from Else Heims. Becomes vice-president of the Shakespeare Association.
- 1932 The ensemble visits London and Manchester.
- 1933 Outdoor productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Florence and Oxford. Forced by the Nazi government to give his theatres in Germany to "the German people": writes an open letter to Goering and Goebbels.
- 1934 Gives up direction of the Theater in der Josefstadt. Signs contract with Warner Brothers. Directs *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Hollywood, San Francisco, Berkeley and Chicago.
- 1935 His film of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Warner Brothers opens in New York and London. Lectures at the Writers' Club, New York. Divorce finalized; marriage to Helene Thimig official.
- 1937 Last production in Vienna. Emigrates to the United States; Helene Thimig follows.
- 1938 Austria occupied by Germany: his property confiscated.

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Opens the Max Reinhardt Workshop for Stage, Screen and Radio in Hollywood.

1940 Takes United States citizenship.

1943 Last production is Irwin Shaw's *Sons and Soldiers* at the Morosco Theatre, New York. Suffers stroke and dies in the Gladstone Hotel, New York, on 31 October.