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## A History of the Berliner Ensemble

The Berliner Ensemble was founded by Bertolt Brecht and his wife Helene Weigel in 1949. The company soon gained international prominence, and its productions and philosophy influenced the work of theatre-makers around the world. David Barnett's book is the first study of the company in any language. Based on extensive archival research, it uncovers Brecht's working methods and those of the company's most important directors after his death. The book considers the boon and burden of Brecht's legacy and provides new insights into battles waged behind the scenes for the preservation of the Brechtian tradition. The Berliner Ensemble was also the German Democratic Republic's most prestigious cultural export, attracting attention from the highest circles of government, and from the Stasi, before it privatized itself after German reunification in 1990. Barnett pieces together a complex history that sheds light on both the company's groundbreaking productions and their turbulent times.

DAVID BARNETT is Reader in Drama, Theatre and Performance at the University of Sussex. He is the author of *Brecht in Practice: Theatre, Theory and Performance* (2014), *Rainer Werner Fassbinder and the German Theatre* (Cambridge, 2005) and *Literature versus Theatre: Textual Problems and Theatrical Realization in the Later Plays of Heiner Müller* (1998). He has also edited the ninth volume of Brecht's collected plays in English, the *Berliner Ensemble Adaptations* (2014). He writes extensively on political and postdramatic theatre in Europe and has published articles in *Modern Drama* and *Contemporary Theatre Review* on Brechtian and post-Brechtian theatre.

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---

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For Georgina, my wife,  
and for Geoff Westgate,  
because a mention in the Acknowledgements  
simply isn't enough

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978-1-107-05979-5 - A History of the Berliner Ensemble  
David Barnett  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---



## Contents

---

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xv
Introduction	1
1 The Berliner Ensemble as an opportunity to establish a new type of theatre	8
2 The founding and the first season of the Berliner Ensemble	39
3 The Berliner Ensemble's years at the Deutsches Theater: 1949–1953	78
4 Brecht's last seasons at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm: 1954–1956	122
5 Developing the Brechtian legacy: 1956–1961	146
6 Making theatre politically after the Berlin Wall: 1961–1965	171
7 Years of crisis: 1966–1971	199
8 A new beginning: 1971–1974	230
9 A new crisis: 1974–1977	264
10 A safe pair of hands: 1977–1981	298
11 Crisis and stagnation: 1981–1989	323
12 Wekwerth's last stand: 1989–1991	355
13 From gang of five to power of one: 1992–1995	370
14 The last hurrahs: 1996–1999	416
	ix

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-05979-5 - A History of the Berliner Ensemble  
David Barnett  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

x	Contents	
	Conclusion	436
	Appendix: Productions of the Berliner Ensemble, 1949–1999	450
	<i>Select bibliography</i>	468
	<i>Interviews</i>	494
	<i>Index</i>	495

## Figures

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2.1	Sketch of <i>Mr Puntila and His Man Matti</i> . Deutsches Theatermuseum, Munich, Zw. IV 8015. ©Caspar Neher Estate	page 56
2.2	<i>Mr Puntila and His Man Matti</i> , November 1949. BBA Theaterdokumentation 2260 (34). ©Ruth Berlau/Hilde Hoffmann	56
2.3	<i>Mr Puntila and His Man Matti</i> , November 1949. BBA Theaterdokumentation 2260 (11). Photographer unknown	63
2.4	<i>Vassa Zheleznova</i> , December 1949. BBA BE FA Bg. 009/005. Photographer unknown	66
3.1	<i>The Mother</i> , January 1951. BBA Theaterdokumentation 2162–050. ©Hainer Hill	90
3.2	<i>The Kremlin Chimes</i> , March 1952. BBA BE FA Bg. 015/006. Photographer unknown	111
4.1	<i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle</i> , October 1954. ©Gerda Goedhart/Brecht Estate	129
4.2	<i>Battle in Winter</i> , January 1955. BBA BE FA Bg. 007/001. Photographer unknown	141
5.1	<i>The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui</i> , March 1959. BBA Theaterdokumentation 4419–009. Photographer unknown	164
6.1	<i>Coriolan</i> , September 1964. BBA Theaterdokumentation 630–003. ©Percy Paukschta/Inge Steinert	187
6.2	<i>In the Matter of J. Robert Oppenheimer</i> , April 1965. BBA BE FA 038/007. ©Photographer unknown	196
7.1	<i>Seven against Thebes</i> , May 1969. BBA BE FA Bg. 016/014. Photographer unknown	219
8.1	<i>In the Jungle of the Cities</i> , January 1971. BBA BE FA Bg. 049/009. Photographer unknown	240
8.2	<i>Cement</i> , October 1973. BBA BE FA Bg. 035/008. ©Vera Tenschert	258

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-05979-5 - A History of the Berliner Ensemble  
David Barnett  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

xii	List of figures	
9.1	<i>The Mother</i> , October 1974. ©Maria Steinfeldt	267
10.1	<i>Galileo Galilei</i> , February 1978. BBA BE FA Bg. 004/002. ©Vera Tenschert	305
10.2	<i>Blue Horses on Red Grass</i> , October 1980. BBA BE FA Bg. 028/002. Photographer unknown	316
11.1	<i>Drums in the Night</i> , March 1983. BBA BE FA Bg. 001/008. ©Vera Tenschert	328
11.2	<i>Faust Scenes (Urfaust)</i> , March 1984. BBA BE FA Bg. 019/008. ©Vera Tenschert	347
13.1	<i>The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui</i> , June 1995. Academy of Arts, Heiner Müller Archive 3033/11. ©Brigitte Maria Mayer	412
14.1	<i>The Measures Taken</i> , September 1997. BBA BE FA Bg. 013/109. ©Ute Eichel	430

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xiv Acknowledgements

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## Abbreviations

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AdK	Akademie der Künste (Academy of Arts)
BArch	Bundesarchiv (Federal Archive)
BBA	Bertolt Brecht Archive
BE	Berliner Ensemble
BEA	Berliner Ensemble Archive
BFA	Bertolt Brecht, <i>Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe</i> , ed. by Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei and Klaus-Detlef Müller (Berlin and Frankfurt/Main: Aufbau and Suhrkamp, 1988–2000) (= Complete Works in German. References give volume and page numbers)
<i>BoP</i>	Bertolt Brecht, <i>Brecht on Performance</i> , ed. by Tom Kuhn, Steve Giles and Marc Silberman (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)
<i>BoT</i>	Bertolt Brecht, <i>Brecht on Theatre</i> , ed. by Marc Silberman, Steve Giles and Tom Kuhn, 3rd edn (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)
<i>Briefwechsel</i>	Helene Weigel, 'Wir sind zu berühmt, um überall zu hinzugehen'. <i>Briefwechsel 1935–1971</i> , ed. by Stefan Mahlke (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2000)
BStU	Bundesbehörde für Stasi-Unterlagen (Federal Authority for Stasi Documents)
DAK	Deutsche Akademie der Künste (German Academy of Arts, the first incarnation of the AdK)
DT	Deutsches Theatre (Berlin)
ESA	Ekkehard Schall Archive
FDA	Friedrich Dieckmann Archive
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GI	Geheimer Informator (secret informer for the Stasi)
GmbH	Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (limited liability company)

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 David Barnett  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

xvi Abbreviations

GMS	Gesellschaftlicher Mitarbeiter für Sicherheit (social collaborator on security for the Stasi)
HMA	Heiner Müller Archive
HWA	Helene Weigel Archive
IM	Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter (unofficial collaborator with the Stasi)
<i>Journals</i>	Bertolt Brecht, <i>Journals 1934–1955</i> , ed. by John Willett (London: Methuen, 1993)
JTA	Joachim Tenschert Archive
KO	Komische Oper (Comic Opera, Berlin)
KVP	Kasernierte Volkspolizei (Garrisoned People's Police)
LAB	Landesarchiv Berlin (Berlin City Archive)
<i>Letters</i>	Bertolt Brecht, <i>Letters 1913–1956</i> , ed. by John Willett (London: Methuen, 1990)
MWA	Manfred Wekwerth Archive
NVA	Nationale Volksarmee (National People's Army)
RBA	Ruth Berghaus Archive
SAPMO	Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Charitable trust for the archive of the parties and mass organizations of the German Democratic Republic – hosted by the Bundesarchiv)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
StaKuKo	Staatliche Kunstkommission (the GDR's State Art Commission)
TiW	Theater in der Wende (Theatre in the <i>Wende</i> )
<i>Werke</i>	Heiner Müller, <i>Werke</i> , ed. by Frank Hörnigk (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1998–2008). References give volume and page numbers