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Theater Lindenhof
as a contemporary form of German
regional Volkstheater

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor in Philosophy

2017

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Summary

This thesis studies Theater Lindenhof, a *Volkstheater* company in the Schwäbisch-Alb, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Lindenhof performs from its own theatre in the small village of Melchingen and tours in Baden-Württemberg and northern Switzerland. It is one of the most successful and widely acclaimed *Volkstheater* companies and is frequently reported on in the local, regional, and national press.

The principal outcome of the research is a comprehensive assessment and account of the history, development and work of Theater Lindenhof, based on the use of methodologies across a variety of disciplines. This is the first full-length study of Theater Lindenhof. It provides an insight from a non-German perspective into an important cultural phenomenon in Germany. It sets out to illuminate an aspect of German theatre which is unique in that it is firmly rooted in the rich fabric of local culture and in the community which it serves, and at the same time has relevance outside that community and the surrounding region.

This research examines the manner in which community-based theatres such as Theater Lindenhof generate and sustain community at a time of increasing globalisation. It attempts to give an understanding of why Theater Lindenhof came about when and where it did, and why it has flourished. It sheds light on the terms *Volk* and *Volkstheater* and offers a definition of Theater Lindenhof's form of *Volkstheater*.

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Chapter One

1.1 Introduction

Coming by car, the twisty and steep mountain road between Talheim and Melchingen is the last challenge on the journey from Tübingen to Theater Lindenhof. Upon reaching the top of the forest-lined road, the driver and passengers are suddenly confronted with a wide-open space of fields and hills. The Swabian sky seems to be higher than usual, and there is a sense of having arrived somewhere where you can breathe a new kind of air.¹ Whether the fields are blanketed in deep, bright snow in the wintertime, or grass during spring, summer and autumn, it is always a striking vista. Melchingen, the home-place of the Lindenhof, can be seen in the distance. Theater Lindenhof describe the Swabian Alps in a promotional pamphlet:

Die Alb ist eine eigene Gegend. Der Sommer mit hohem Licht, der Winter mit klarer Kälte, glanzvoll eventuell auch der Herbst, auch die Mehrheiten, die Ansichten, die Feinde soweit klar, hier und da Natur noch Natur. Irland manchmal. Wind wie vom Meer, Mittelalter leidvoll und köstlich, Kargheit und Vitalität. Eine gute Gegend für Geschichten. Hier liegt das Theater Lindenhof. Mitten im Dorf unter den Linden an der Allee. Kneipe und Kultur, Theater als Lebensform.²

This thesis presents a detailed analysis of Theater Lindenhof, a socially critical *Volkstheater* in Baden-Württemberg. Founded in 1981 in the small village of Melchingen in the Swabian Alps, Theater Lindenhof has grown into a well-known and widely-praised theatre.³ The village of Melchingen is approximately 62 kilometres south of Stuttgart and 33 kilometres

¹ See photographs 6 and 7 in Appendix III.

² *Es ist Melchingen und es sind die Sterne*, information pamphlet produced by Theater Lindenhof.

³ For press commentary on the theatre see Appendix I.

south of Tübingen by car.⁴ The Swabian Alps region reaches from the upper part of the river Neckar in the northwest to the river Danube in the southeast. The region is said to stretch 220 kilometres from North to South and up to 70 kilometres from East to West.⁵ Theater Lindenhof members claim that their theatre is ‘Schwabens höchste Bühne’ as it is situated 736 metres above sea level. Whether performing in the ‘Scheune’,⁶ the theatre's converted barn in Melchingen, or on the rehearsal stage of the Berliner Ensemble, the theatre has a national and international reputation for staging socially critical content and unique productions.

In the chapters to follow I seek to provide a comprehensive study of an organisation which I will argue has redefined the theatre landscape in the conservative Swabian Alps region and breathed new life into a confusing, controversial and under-researched genre of contemporary German theatre. I will analyse the Lindenhof's origins and development from its emergence in the early 1980's to the present-day debates regarding its future. My examination of the theatre's role as a medium for social criticism and political comment will question its influence in the local community and explore its political and socially critical aspirations. The theatre's aims and theatrical works spring from politics born of the counterculture student movement of the 1960s. I will consider the Lindenhof in the context of the 1968 generation in culture and society and justify the theatre's place in the academic conversation relating to the period, which has been profoundly influential in German and global society. An analysis of Theater Lindenhof's plays and productions will accompany an exploration of the tensions of the political and the popular, the local and the global and the traditional and the progressive.

⁴ Maps of the area can be found in Appendix II.

⁵ Maps of the area can be found in Appendix II.

⁶ See photograph 2 in Appendix III.

I employ an interdisciplinary methodological approach in this study. Later in this opening chapter I will present my reasons for doing so and my arguments regarding the advantages and limitations of gathering and presenting data within an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. Alongside German Studies and Theatre Studies, Ethnography is a leading component of this theoretical framework. Autoethnography, a subset of Ethnography, allows me to explore my bias towards the theatre and the manner in which it impacts my research method and findings. A brief description of the manner in which I employed ethnographic and autoethnographic methodologies will conclude this section, but I will continue into further analysis of the subject in the chapter to follow.

A comprehensive study of Theater Lindenhof as a contemporary form of German regional *Volkstheater* is valuable in the context of German Studies research, given that Theater Lindenhof can claim to be modernising the theatre scene in an already saturated theatre market. The level of sophistication Theater Lindenhof achieves in its productions is unusual given the small scale of its operation.⁷ The theatre's ability to put critically acclaimed and provocative plays onstage with limited financial means has impressed the theatre community in German-speaking countries. Lindenhof's use of the local dialect, *Schwäbisch*, in its productions is a reason for its wide appeal within the region and beyond. Its commitment to preserving its local history by telling Swabian stories and critiquing Swabian culture onstage goes hand in hand with its wish to protect and preserve the local Swabian identity and to serve the community into which its founding members were born.

While preferring to tell local stories in the local language, the theatre also renders its performances nationally and globally relevant by striving for universality in its productions and for originality and distinctiveness in its staging of shows. An article in *Die Zeit*

⁷ I will address the question of my bias towards the theatre in Chapter Two.

regarding Theater Lindenhof's summer 2013 production of *Ein Dorf im Widerstand* comments on the theatre's ability to remain rooted in its rural origins but at the same time achieve relevance on a wider regional and national level by describing it as '[Die] klein[e] Bühne des grossen Regionaltheaters in Melchingen'.⁸ The term *Regionaltheater* is unique to Theater Lindenhof within the German theatre scene and it has yet to be analysed in an academic study. Alongside my examination I will offer a definition of this new term coined by the theatre to describe its new type of productions, which fall into the broader *Volkstheater* genre and which I will discuss in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Theater Lindenhof performs in theatres throughout the Swabian region, as well as further afield in Switzerland and Berlin. Bringing their productions to theatre venues throughout the region means that the political influence of the Lindenhöfler has extended beyond its immediate locality to the wider German-speaking community. In a theatre landscape populated by many state-run theatres, how has the Lindenhof survived? An analysis of its development since its beginnings in the early 1980s takes into account not only the changing face of the theatre but also the political movement of the 1960s which its ideology sprang from and the changes taking place in German society since the Lindenhof's inception. It also considers the practice of the Lindenhof as a local and regional theatre that reflects on and engages with a globalised and cosmopolitan German theatre scene.

1.2 State of research

Theater Lindenhof, although well-known among theatre critics in German-speaking countries, has not to my knowledge been the subject of a full-length academic study.

⁸ Schweikle, Johannes, 'Schaut auf Mössingen!', *Die Zeit*, 13 July 2013, <http://www.zeit.de/2013/28/theater-moessingen>. Accessed 16 June 2016.

Conscious of the lack of academic writing regarding this theatre, I nevertheless hope that I can make a meaningful contribution to knowledge in this field and provide a preliminary critical analysis of the Theater Lindenhof. The lack of academic literature pertaining to the Lindenhof might be seen as a shortcoming as regards research on the subject, but I hope nonetheless that the pioneering nature of this work will go some way to remedying the situation and that it will be of value as a contribution to German Studies. The single most important academic article relating directly to Theater Lindenhof that was available to me while working on this research is a contribution⁹ written by Alison Phipps in which she examines the theatre's production of *Hexenfeuer* in the context of an analysis of local German theatre and gender. In her article Phipps remarks on the importance of the Lindenhof in the context of German Studies:

[...] [T]he reception of the work of the *Theater Lindenhof* among the culturally powerful is indeed significant, and speaks perhaps of the quality of their work, giving any literary scholar a reason for claiming a literary find, a cultural coup [...].¹⁰

I have also drawn from Phipps' ground-breaking investigation into South West German *Naturtheater*¹¹ which pioneered a widened conception of German studies to include both phenomena such as this form of popular theatre and an eclectic methodological approach to such phenomena. Aside from this, the interdisciplinary methodological approach which I employed in the footsteps of Phipps required familiarity with the plentiful research relevant to ethnography and autoethnography. Similarly, the contextualisation of the theatre as part of the 1968 generation warranted thorough study of published research pertaining to post-

⁹ Phipps, A., 'Breaking Frames and Burning Witches: From Local German Women to Intercultural Theatre'. In: Lengel, L., Warren, T. J., (eds.): *CASTING GENDER: Women and Performance in Intercultural Contexts*, Peter Lang, New York: 2005, pp. 97-107.

¹⁰ Phipps, 'Breaking Frames', 2005, p. 99.

¹¹ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000.

war Germany and the student movement of the 1960s with which the theatre is linked.

Perhaps the most meaningful sources on which I have relied in this study are the recorded and unrecorded ethnographic interviews which I conducted in Germany with members of the theatre and of the local community between September 2010 and July 2011. During this time, I also took my own notes and photographs and made videos which were helpful in putting together a comprehensive view of the theatre. I had visited Theater Lindenhof several times since 2007, but spending the academic year 2010/11 at the University of Tübingen provided me with the opportunity to visit the theatre regularly over a prolonged period, and made it possible for me to engage in participant observation and ethnographic interviewing. From October to December 2010, as part of my participant observation, I worked as assistant to the director on the Lindenhof production of *Älles Onser! Die Legende vom schwäbischen Paradies*.¹² This opportunity to work side-by-side with members of Theater Lindenhof allowed me to gain first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day workings of the theatre.

The principal printed sources used otherwise for this study were newspaper articles and archival materials produced by the theatre, such as programmes, pamphlets, scripts and short information publications. Valuable insights can be garnered from these sources, provided they are deployed critically with appropriate disclosure of and references to their provenance and potential bias. The theatre's website and YouTube videos of trailers for Lindenhof productions are also sources on which I have drawn. Although I have endeavoured in my text to bring to life the world of the Lindenhof for the reader, I have also included photographs and interviews¹³ to enhance the written study.

¹² Henceforth referred to as *Älles Onser!*

¹³ In the body of the text, on CD-ROM and in the Appendices.

At various points throughout this thesis I use the terms ‘Lindenhof’ and ‘Lindenhöfler’.

‘Lindenhof’ denotes the place, Theater Lindenhof. ‘Lindenhöfler’ is intended to describe the members of the Theater Lindenhof team, who use that term to describe themselves. The name ‘Melchinger’, which they also use to refer to themselves, is synonymous with ‘Lindenhöfler’, although it can also refer to the community of Melchingen. Both titles are used in the Lindenhof’s constitution: ‘[E]in *Regionaltheater*, das sich in der Region, im Land und darüber hinaus großer Beachtung erfreut und sich einen einzigartigen Ruf schafft: Die Melchinger! Die Lindenhöfler!’¹⁴

1.3 Theater Lindenhof in the context of post-war Germany

In anticipation of its fortieth anniversary, the 1968 student movement received renewed interest and research by scholars in the field. Now as we look towards the fiftieth anniversary, we continue to understand and examine this period of German history from the point of view of non-participant historians. The founding of the Lindenhof was influenced by the ideals of the student movement. It is therefore necessary to discuss this era in German and global history to fully understand the Lindenhof and the Lindenhöfler, who situate themselves as participants and products of the 1968 student movement. That their aims and ideals were shaped by those of the student movement is asserted by the Lindenhof’s founding members in official, self-produced literature pertaining to the theatre. In this introductory chapter I will discuss the theatre in the context of the wider student movement of the sixties and seventies, acknowledging the paradoxes of belief, action and change which are documented for this generation by scholars. I will justify why and how the Lindenhof’s aspirations, values, works and history fit in with the findings of scholars in

¹⁴ Stiftungssatzung des Theaters Lindenhof, p. 3. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

relation to the 1968 movement. In the following brief survey of aspects of the events and their participants subsumed under the heading '1968' I will focus on outcomes and later trajectories in order to elucidate the relevance of contextualising the theatre's emergence and aspirations within research into the unrest among young German people and post-war German society. My theoretical framework for this study is drawn primarily from German Studies and Ethnography, but the student movement, its impact on the Lindenhof and the theatre's promotion of 1968 values and ideals will be a leitmotif throughout the thesis which will offer a contribution to the literature on the 1968 student movement. I will refer to the subject of the counterculture movement of the 1960s as necessary in the central chapters of the thesis, because Theater Lindenhof's aims, mission and artistic output is bound up with those of the student movement. In the closing chapter I will draw conclusions on the theatre in the context of the German and global student movement, reflecting explicitly on the extent to which the Lindenhof is a typical product of that generation and how or if it will survive for future generations of Swabians and Germans.

Members of the 1968 generation sought the right to self-determination and liberation.

Norbert Frei describes the changes the members of the student movement wanted to see in society: 'Der Grundgedanke, der "um 68" hinter allem stand, und die Richtung, in die alles strebte, hieß Befreiung - von Autoritäten und aus Abhängigkeiten, aus Konventionen und von Traditionen, von lästigen Pflichten und überkommenen Moralvorstellungen'.¹⁵

Reinventing, re-evaluating and rethinking societal norms were mantras of the 1968 generation, who challenged the anti-communist mentalities popular in Cold War West Germany, championed non-conformity, and struggled with their parents' generation's complicity in the Nazi legacy. They strongly opposed the war in Vietnam which became an

¹⁵ Frei, N., *1968: Jugendrevolte und Globaler Protest*, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich: 2008, p. 134.

issue central to the 1960s counterculture movement across the globe. Klimke remarks, 'in the footsteps of an international pacifist network that had protested nuclear armament since the 1950s, the anti-war movement was also able to gather a worldwide following of protesters by the late 1960s, all of whom had one thing in common – their opposition to the Vietnam War'.¹⁶ Alongside their strong emphasis on anti-war protests the members of the student movement also lobbied for the disadvantaged populations of developing countries and debated and protested about the inequalities in their own society. The student movement of the 1960s marked a notable shift to the left on the part of students in Germany and around the world. In response to their parents' generation's complicity in National Socialism and the German government's support of American military intervention in Vietnam, the student activists sought openness in society and in the press, a more democratic society, and an amelioration of conditions in developing countries. Social inequality between rich and poor was re-examined by the movement who wished to overturn injustice in their society.

As remarked above, the members of the student movement were strongly anti-war and opposed particularly the German government's support of America's military action in Vietnam. The 1968ers emulated the peace protests and sit-ins in various parts of the United States, particularly the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley, California. Timothy Scott Brown describes this response to a local issue within the context of the wider global counterculture movement and the enthusiasm for sharing and borrowing ideas from movements all over the world: 'Reaching abroad but also into the past, activists sought to construct new traditions out of both the material of the local past and the global present.'¹⁷

¹⁶ Klimke, M., *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties*, Princeton University Press, Princeton: 2010, p.4.

¹⁷ Scott Brown, T., *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Anti-Authoritarian Revolt, 1962-1978*, Cambridge University Press, New York: 2013, p. 66.

Senior members of staff at universities, politicians and other leading members of society had in some cases had a role in the National Socialist past in Germany. Although they were a minority, significant numbers of the new generation of Germans found this unacceptable and protested against this hypocrisy in their society. They questioned their parents' and grandparents' generations and demanded a total break with the National Socialist period of German history. Whether their target was the National Socialist past in Germany or the War in Vietnam, the student movement believed in change and action.

One of the generation's foremost goals was to topple the status-quo and to create a new more open, more just and more socially critical society. Given that these goals are core to Theater Lindenhof's mission and to the Lindenhöflers' goals and aspirations, it is natural to marry one with the other, especially considering the theatre members' own proud admission that the 1968 student movement's goals and philosophies mirror their own. This will be further supported and illuminated in each chapter of this thesis, but particularly in Chapter Three and Chapter Four where the origins, history, development and socially critical, political mission of the Lindenhof will be discussed.

The Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS) became one of the leading groups for the organisation of the student protests. Kommune 1 was established by the more radical fractions of the movement who wanted an absolute break from what they perceived to be bourgeois society. By the mid-1960s the movement had gathered momentum and political factors were bringing tensions to a boiling point. The government and establishment response to the students was to further curtail rights of students, to reduce funding to university organisations and allow the Axel Springer right-wing tabloids (*Bild Zeitung*) to circulate unflattering articles in the press relating to the student movement. Kraushaar describes the reaction of the members of the movement to the condemnation of their actions

and misrepresentation of their aims and ideals in the tabloids as follows: 'Ohne eine funktionierende Öffentlichkeit, so die Überzeugung, konnte auch keine funktionsfähige Demokratie zu erwarten sein.'¹⁸ The students however were undeterred and their numbers continued to swell. A turning-point came when student protestor Benno Ohnesorg was shot and killed by a policeman at a protest rally in Berlin. Support for the students grew. Protests occurred throughout the country in response to the killing of Ohnesorg on 2 June 1967 but the situation in Berlin became tenser than ever as the student protesters took over the Freie Universität and were lampooned by the right-wing press for their violence, while this same press turned a blind eye to that of the authorities. The situation continued to heat up with protests becoming more dangerous throughout 1967 and into 1968. The attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke, a prominent member of the SDS, caused uproar among the members of the student movement, whose protests became focused on preventing distribution of Axel Springer's newspaper, which they considered was misrepresenting their movement to the German people. Student injuries during the protests and two deaths reflected the passion and force with which they were fighting for their rights. Alongside the philosophies and aims of the movement was the young people's desire to experiment and be part of a new Bohemianism which swept developed countries in the 1960s and whose effects on society can be seen to the present day. Experimentation in all forms was championed by the movement's members. Self-help, self-invention, gender equality, sex, drugs, new music and art all became part of the new culture of the young people of this generation.

1968 remains the highpoint of civil unrest during the era of uprising and protest, not only in Germany but throughout the world, and as a result it is the year which so often connotes the entire era of youth and civil unrest. In fact, it could hardly be denied that the German

¹⁸ Kraushaar, W., *Achtundsechzig: eine Bilanz*, the University of Michigan: 2008, p. 142.

student movement drew strong influences from their counterparts in other countries, as mentioned in previous paragraphs. Improving communications technology throughout the world meant that student and youth protest movements in developed and developing countries all around the globe could share, communicate and solidify their ideals, mission, fashion and vision for their local and global futures. Klimke comments on this as follows:

The transnational interaction among activists in the 1960s thus drew its strength from a collective protest identity that consisted of shared cultural and political reference points and was strengthened by a global media discourse.¹⁹

In France students and other protesters marched against the Charles de Gaulle government and occupied universities and factories. In the United States the counterculture of the 1960s promoted the civil rights movement and the removal of the American military presence in Vietnam. Free speech, gender equality, environmentalism, gay liberation alongside the anti-war and anti-nuclear movements were among some of the most hotly debated and protested issues in the student movement in the United States. The assassinations, in 1968, of Robert Fitzgerald Kennedy and Dr Martin Luther King further fuelled the atmosphere of revolt and change.

Norbert Frei remarks that what characterised the 1968 movement was their aim, 'im Eintreten für eine bessere Welt sich selbst zu beweisen. Und das bleibt festzuhalten: Es ging um nichts Geringeres als um eine bessere Welt.'²⁰ This desire to change the world for the better is core to the Lindenhof's mission. Long-time Lindenhöfler Franz-Xaver Ott expressed the following view of the theatre's political origins, its aims and aspirations now and since the founding years in interview on 4 November 2010:

¹⁹ Klimke, M., *The Other Alliance*, 6.

²⁰ Frei, N., *1968: Jugendrevolte und Globaler Protest*, 216.

Wir sind ganz stark aus einem politischen Beweggrund entstanden. Aus einem Beweggrund [...]: Wir wollen die Welt ändern, wir wollen die Gesellschaft ändern, wir wollen die Verhältnisse ändern, wir wollen sie verbessern.²¹

This desire to change the world for the better springs from the philosophies of the student movement. As Ott remarked in interview, this aim is still one which is central to the theatre's mission and philosophy. This desire to remain socially critical and to question the status quo has been an element of Theater Lindenhof's plays and productions since its foundation in 1981. In the chapters which follow in this thesis, the 1968 student movement aims, which are also aims of the theatre, will be illuminated as I examine and analyse the history and development of the theatre, and undertake a textual analysis of select Lindenhof plays and productions, and an examination of the wider *Volkstheater*, *Volksstück* and *Regionaltheater* genres of which they are part.

Before entering the next section of this chapter, in which I will introduce the methodologies I employed and the theoretical framework for my study, I will examine how the theatre's biography has followed a similar trajectory to that of political players who were at the forefront of the student movement. The history of the aftermath of 1968 and its rippling and multi-faceted effects on German society is most interesting, in respect to this study, when it is placed alongside that of Theater Lindenhof. The theatre was founded in 1981, thirteen years after 1968 and the period in which the most significant protagonists of that generation came to prominence, and it went on to become a beloved feature of the cultural life of Melchingen and the Swabian region. As former members of the 1968 student movement such as Joschka Fischer and Daniel Cohn-Bendit were becoming recognised as politicians

²¹ Interview with Franz-Xaver Ott on 4 November 2010.

in the mainstream, Theater Lindenhof developed from a small company made up of young people performing provocative plays in a small, remote village in the Swabian Alps, which did not feel at all inclined to welcome them initially, to a treasured and lauded feature of the region. Uwe Zellmer, who was a founding member of Theater Lindenhof, is an example of individuals within the theatre who espoused radical policies in the 1968 movement. He organised student groups during his student years in Tübingen and was an admirer of Mao Zedong. However, the theatre which he helped to found and with which he has been associated all his life came to reflect a more moderate political stance, though it still continues to reflect much of its earlier radical positions in its artistic aspirations. It evolved as the years passed just as high profile members of the student movement such as Fischer and Cohn-Bendit had done. The once highly socially critical and shocking theatre became a part of the mainstream left in local society, just as former high-ranking members of the student movement became policymakers in Germany's Social Democratic Party and Green Party. Fischer and Cohn-Bendit became leading figures in the Green Party following their high profile engagement in the student movement. The Lindenhöfler become respected and revered members of the artistic community in the Swabian Alps region. Their plays and productions are socially critical in nature and espouse the cause of equality, self-critique and an environmentally-friendly lifestyle. Their alignment with left-wing and Green Party politics is largely unspoken in Melchingen, as the theatre maintains an ostensibly neutral stance in political matters, but close inspection of its mission statement, its plays and productions, and the history of its foundation and history reveals undeniable reflections of the political views its members share. A production such as *AUSSEM PARADIES: Eine Stadtgeschichte*, which is analysed in Chapter Four of this thesis, is weighted heavily in favour of green living and was performed in an area of Tübingen, the French Quarter, which is home to Lindenhof members and supporters as well as Green Party members and supporters.

The movements and issues arising from or becoming reinvigorated by the 1960s movement are subjects which are explored and championed by Theater Lindenhof. Wolfgang Kraushaar quotes from the speech by then President Richard von Weizsäcker on the first day of German unity, which came two decades after the highpoint of the student movement of the 1960s. He remarks on the lasting impact the 1968 generation had on German and global society: 'Die Jugendrevolte am Ende der Sechziger Jahre trug allen Verwundungen zum Trotz zu einer Vertiefung des demokratischen Engagements in der Gesellschaft bei'. Theater Lindenhof is a product of and player in the aftermath of the 1968 student movement, and similarly to other members of that generation, the Lindenhöfler have helped to effect positive change and promoted left-wing values. This will be reinforced in the chapters which follow in which 1968 will remain a leitmotif throughout each section.

Frei remarks²² that the 1968 protests are an aspect of German history which is commented on a great deal but which remains under-researched. It is an area which adds value to research projects in fields beyond history and politics. Frei comments on the broad and far-reaching relevance of this once provocative topic:

68 ist ein Assoziationsraum gesellschaftlicher Zuschreibungen und auktorialer Selbstdeutungen, eine beispiellos florierende Bewegungsstätte, in der die Aussagen der Akteure und die Entgegnungen ihrer Kritiker, die Wahrnehmungen der Zeitgenossen und die Beobachtungen der Nachgeborenen aufeinandertreffen.²³

The 1968 movement became a signifier of left-wing leanings. To say one was an 'achtundsechziger' anywhere in Germany became a straightforward manner in which to

²² Frei, N., 1968: *Jugendrevolte und Globaler Protest*, 273.

²³ Frei, N., 1968: *Jugendrevolte und Globaler Protest*, p. 271.

clarify one's political positioning and one's philosophical leanings. That Theater Lindenhof is an 'achtundsechziger' theatre company means that it is part of the 1968 history and a product of an exciting period of post-war German political history. Founded in 1981 - before the fall of the Wall and Reunification -, the Lindenhof began, in the 1990s and into the new Millennium, to become a more professional and middle of the road organisation, during a time when Germany was maturing into its new role as a reunified country and a leading member of the European Union. At a time when Germany was changing rapidly and the members of the student movement who had shaken up German society were becoming part of the establishment, the Lindenhöfler were experiencing a similar transformation and development from experimental, commune-like artistic expression and productions into both a viable business and a left-wing, socially critical organisation within their local community in Baden-Württemberg. The ideas which emerged from the time of the student movement, it could be argued, still buoy the theatre today, and as such it is relevant to ask what the future holds. This subject will be analysed later in this thesis alongside an examination of the constitution and the new legal basis for the theatre which was created in 2011.

1968 was a global phenomenon but also a local one for the Lindenhof. The anti-war movement, environmentalism and the desire to go back to a simpler, greener form of life in the countryside are some of the philosophical and political aspirations which the Lindenhöfler have lived and espoused. That they deliberately set their theatre up in the very rural and conservative Swabian Alps region they were natives of suggests a desire on their part to return to simpler, more instinctual modes of life but at the same time to bring to that world the sophisticated ideologies and aspirations of the political, cultural and social movement of which they were convinced members. Scott Brown commented on the tension

between the local and the global in the context of the counterculture movement of the sixties:

If the 68er movement was global in its orientation, it was, simultaneously, intensely local, not only in the spaces in which it was played out [...] but in the concerns with which it engaged. Nowhere does this come out more clearly than in the new focus, in the 1960s, on the personal sphere. This reorientation, which represented a shift away from the iron laws and dour demeanor of twentieth-century Marxist collectivism, was lined with a new emphasis on feelings and emotions [...].²⁴

Thus, given that Theater Lindenhof was founded on ideals and aspirations born of the 1968 student movement, it is prudent to seek signs of the aims and ideals in the theatre's actions and artistic output both today and throughout its history. Throughout this thesis a constant theme in every chapter will be the embedding of 1968 values in the day-to-day workings of the theatre and in its artistic output and socially critical political aims. In the chapters to follow the founding members' direct involvement with goals and aspirations of the student movement will be illuminated by extracts from ethnographic interviews with key players from the theatre. The Lindenhöfler's inextricable links with and entanglement in the promotion of the ideas and aims of the movement will be illuminated by passages drawn from the theatre's constitution which was drawn up in 2011 when Lindenhof changed the basis on which it operated from that of a *Verein* to that of a foundation. An analysis of its plays and productions will provide further material to examine and situate its emergence and evolution in the student political movement of the sixties.

²⁴ Scott Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties*, 8.

1.4 Methodology

In my bid to produce a rounded study of Theater Lindenhof I have used a theoretical framework which embraces methodologies from a variety of disciplines. An interdisciplinary approach allows, as Phipps argues, for ‘the dialectical testing of evidence and theories against each other – a kind of triangulation’.²⁵ The methodological approaches deployed in this study embrace disciplines such as German Studies, ethnography, cultural studies and theatre studies. Ethnographic methodology allowed me to collect empirical data in the field in Melchingen and to examine my findings in a scientific manner in accordance with experiences of experts in the field. Tools from Cultural Studies equipped me to study the practice and rituals of the Lindenhof and its place within the community, as well as helping me to place the Lindenhof with respect to the counterculture movement of the 1960s. I examined terms such as *Volkstheater*, *Volksstück*, and *Regionaltheater* in the context of Theatre Studies. German Studies is, I would argue, the overarching discipline within the study which also provides a unifying shape. At its root this is a German Studies’ research project, given the Lindenhof’s emergence and existence in Baden-Württemberg and within the contemporary German theatre scene, but I will return to a reevaluation of this subject in the concluding chapter. Although the topic remains firmly rooted in the German Studies discipline, methodologies from ethnography, theatre studies and cultural studies have allowed me to create a more comprehensive study than would have been possible had I used German Studies tools alone.

However, this thesis does not set out to be an in-depth exercise in ethnography or theatre studies as such. Rather these disciplines inform the interdisciplinary investigation, providing a theoretical framework within which to present and critically analyse the data I have

²⁵ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities*, 35-36.

collected regarding Theater Lindenhof. Phipps' investigation into the South West German *Naturtheater* has already demonstrated that an interdisciplinary methodological framework is a successful manner in which to present a project such as this. The interdisciplinary theoretical framework which I have chosen to employ is an appropriate response to the many facets of the Theater Lindenhof organisation.

While it might have been possible to write this thesis from a German Studies perspective alone, the use of an interdisciplinary theoretical approach allows me to present my findings on Theater Lindenhof not simply in terms of its plays and productions, or its history, but to study the theatre as a cultural organisation and set of cultural practices. The history and development of Theater Lindenhof is examined in the context of the ethnographic framework and methodologies I employed in the field in Germany. The findings related to the theatre are embedded in the context of research into post-war Germany and the aftermath of the 1968 student movement. Naturally, my being in the field at the Lindenhof and working day to day with members of the theatre, raises ethical questions regarding my objectivity in carrying out this study. I will examine this in the following chapter which will analyse the ethnographic methodological approach that I used to carry out my research in Melchingen. In doing so I will employ autoethnographic methodology and will explain my reasons for choosing this approach by examining relevant scholarly literature on the subject.

1.5 Overview of the project and limitations of the research

This first detailed academic study of Theater Lindenhof aims to show that this theatre is modernising the *Volkstheater* genre with its contemporary form of socially critical German regional *Volkstheater*. *Volkstheater* is a genre on the contemporary German theatre scene which is under-researched and under-valued. The members of Theater Lindenhof have

embraced and reinvigorated this type of theatre. Lindenhof's community-based theatre is worthy of academic research. It has achieved acclaim despite its lack of funds. Its rural location and use of the Swabian language in many of its productions is highly distinctive, as well as its frequent inclusion of members of the local community as part of the cast of its productions. This study involved multiple steps which included traditional scholarly work and ethnographic field work. The project had four main steps:

- planning a framework for the study and completing preparatory reading and planning in advance of field work
- carrying out ethnographic research in the field, including participant observation and ethnographic interviews and autoethnography
- analysing the data collected in the field in order to create a body of knowledge regarding the theatre
- converting this knowledge into a written study

The implementation of each step was contingent upon the success of the previous one, and completing each step fully provided me with the data and tools to write this study. The preparation for the year of field research provided me with a solid methodological foundation of knowledge which informed my approach to gathering data. Although all of the steps were challenging, the careful analysis of the data I had collected at Theater Lindenhof and the shaping of that data into a thorough ethnography of the theatre was the most important for the success of the study, for I wished to represent the theatre as accurately as possible. Spending eleven months in the field meant that I gathered a large quantity of information relating to the theatre. The task of sifting through the interviews, information and mountain of ethnographic notes bulked large in the third year of the project. Choosing the most illuminating points of information and analysis, and transforming them

into a satisfactory study of this multi-faceted theatre became the task in the final years of work which I will discuss in Chapter Two.

Theater Lindenhof is a modern, evolving theatre. Even as I was undertaking this project the theatre was adapting to new challenges and opportunities. Beginning as a group of enthusiastic young people, it has transformed itself into a regular business which must turn a profit in order to survive. How does the theatre balance its need to make a profit with its desire to retain its socially critical political outlook? Questions such as this formed part of my ethnographic interviewing at Theater Lindenhof and the answers to them that I received will constitute a significant section of my study of the theatre in the chapters which follow.

I faced two particularly difficult challenges in this research project, namely the interdisciplinary nature of the theoretical framework and the lack of academic literature and sources relating to Theater Lindenhof on which I could draw. Although the interdisciplinary approach creates a larger workload for the researcher and renders the thesis more difficult to write, given the need to observe the principles and pitfalls of several methodologies, the interdisciplinary methodological framework enriches this study by allowing the subject of the research to be viewed from multiple perspectives and through the lens of various disciplines. In order to prevent confusion on the part of the reader and to facilitate a smooth reading process, I have aimed as far as possible to have the theoretical framework of each section be dominated by one discipline. The lack of secondary sources on the subject of Theater Lindenhof is problematic in some sections of the thesis, but in others secondary literature on subjects such as ethnography or *Volkstheater* are more plentiful, and these chapters are informed by an analysis of other scholars' opinions and writings on the subjects in question. Writing Chapter Six, in which I analyse Theater Lindenhof productions, was hampered by the sparseness or, indeed, non-availability of secondary sources, which is

explained by the fact that this is the first time the original scripts have been analysed in any context, let alone an academic one.

1.6 Chapter overview

In Chapter Two I will outline the ethnographic methodological approach which I employed in order to carry out research in a structured and planned manner while I was in the field. The chapter will analyse the benefits and limitations of my use of ethnographic methodology and seek to demonstrate that this choice of methodology was appropriate for my research project. It will continue to introduce the scope of the research and will end with an introduction to the next chapter, Chapter Three, in which I will examine the history and development of Theater Lindenhof. In this chapter the interdisciplinary theoretical framework of the study will become apparent. Autoethnography and ethnographic ‘dense’ or ‘thick’ description will be employed to bring to life the development of Theater Lindenhof from an idea among friends to the modern theatre it has become. Tools from German Studies will also be employed in this chapter to add depth and relevance to points relating to German culture and history. In this chapter citations from ethnographic interviews which I carried out with members of the theatre and the local community will begin to appear interspersed throughout the text to reinforce the critical analysis. As well as this, other secondary sources, such as Lindenhof programmes and newspaper articles will be cited. Chapter Four will give an insight into the day-to-day life of the theatre, particularly during the period in which I acted as assistant to the director for the Lindenhof production of *Älles Onser – Die Legende vom Schwäbischen Paradies!*

Chapter Five will investigate the future of the theatre. Having celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in 2011, the theatre is at a crossroads in its existence. How it will interact with

the political and theatre landscape in the Swabian region in the future is one of the questions with which I will engage. In Chapter Six, the ethnographic theoretical framework will give way to a textual analysis approach, which will inform the critical analysis of three Lindenhof plays. Theatre Studies tools will also be employed to examine the productions; staging, lighting, costumes and movement on set. The detailed analysis of Lindenhof plays and productions is central to the thesis. Theater Lindenhof is a theatre and its purpose is to put productions on stage for its audience. It is for its productions that the theatre has achieved acclaim and it is through them that the Lindenhof communicates with its audience members and wider community. The political commentary in these productions and the socially critical tone are in effect the official statements the Lindenhöfler make as artists. Chapter Seven, the penultimate chapter in the thesis, remains firmly rooted in German Studies and its theoretical framework reflects this. This chapter is the final one before my conclusions in Chapter Eight. In the context of the thesis title, 'Theater Lindenhof as a form of contemporary German Volkstheater', this chapter examines what *Volkstheater* is and how Theater Lindenhof has repurposed and redefined the term in contemporary Swabia. It seeks to define Theater Lindenhof's form of socially critical, regional German *Volkstheater* and add new knowledge to the discussion regarding *Volkstheater* by offering a definition of the Lindenhof's form of *Volkstheater*. This chapter will also ask what *Regionaltheater* is and offer a definition of the term. In the concluding chapter, Chapter Eight, I will summarise the arguments made in previous chapters and formulate conclusions to questions posed by the thesis.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has served as an introduction to the project which will unfold in the chapters to follow. In it I have argued that this thesis is an original contribution to knowledge within the

German Studies discipline given that it is the first full-length study of Theater Lindenhof as a contemporary form of contemporary German *Volkstheater*. I have introduced the location of the theatre in a small village in a region of Germany in the Swabian Alps of Baden-Württemberg. A brief introduction to the history of the theatre and its socially critical political ideology has allowed me to convey the relevance of the theatre to and indeed the part it plays in post-war German culture. Founded in the early eighties, the theatre's founding members' aims and mission for their artistic output was born of the ideals and philosophies of the counterculture movement. Contextualising the thesis in respect of this period in German and global history in this introductory chapter emphasises its centrality within the thesis and its strong links with Theater Lindenhof and the Lindenhöfler. The subject of 1968 and its far-reaching aftermath is discussed in relation to the theatre as a leitmotif throughout the study so that the theatre can be understood in the context of post-war German culture. Introducing the interdisciplinary theoretical framework which I employed in this study was a key component of this introductory chapter. Why and how I went about this project, using tools from a number of academic disciplines was discussed, including the model I used to carry out my research, that is the ground-breaking interdisciplinary study of the *Naturtheater* in South West Germany by Alison Phipps. Phipps argued for the advantages of employing tools from outside of German Studies in research in that discipline in order to create a more comprehensive and rounded study that analyses the topic in question from more than a German Studies' perspective alone.

This introductory chapter has also allowed me to introduce the steps involved in carrying out the research project, the contents of the chapters to come in this thesis and the limitations of the work at hand. That a paper by Phipps is the only published academic research work on the subject of Theater Lindenhof is a potential problem of the project, because fewer scholarly voices are at hand to bolster my findings, but, on the positive hand,

this research constitutes a long overdue preliminary but comprehensive consideration of one of the most significant *Volkstheater* in contemporary Germany and it is to be hoped that others will now soon follow. 'Theater Lindenhof as a contemporary form of German regional *Volkstheater*' aims in its essence to be a comprehensive study of Theater Lindenhof and to offer a definition of the Lindenhof's distinctive type of critical *Volkstheater*, *Regionaltheater*. The theatre, which celebrated thirty years of existence in 2011, is rooted in the local community yet is simultaneously relevant on the wider national and global stages. I have endeavoured to extract the most illuminating points of information about the theatre to form part of a study which does justice to the theatre and makes a meaningful contribution to the study of contemporary *Volkstheater*. Covering every aspect of the theatre's history, politics, plays, productions, people, audiences and hopes for the future, as well as explaining my theoretical framework and contextualising the study within a historical context, is a challenging goal. All possible elements cannot be examined in a doctoral thesis such as this. I have taken time to choose carefully what to include. Further avenues of study relating to this field are manifold and I will refer to these throughout the thesis, in particular in the concluding section. The problematic nature of my own considerable bias towards the Lindenhof and the Lindenhöfler is a subject which I will discuss in the next chapter. My bias is undeniable and I will express my awareness of this and discuss scholarly commentary on the subject from expert voices such as Pink and Behar from the fields of Ethnography and Autoethnography, who argue that this conscious subjectivity is also a strength of this type of research.

In Chapter Two I will now engage more thoroughly with my employment of ethnographic and autoethnographic methodology, discuss how I put the theory into practice in the field in Melchingen as well as analysing the advantages and limitations of using ethnographic methods in a German Studies doctoral study. How I collected, recorded and eventually

sifted through the ethnographic data I collected in the field is also dealt with.

Chapter Two

2.1 Introduction

Although I emphasise how important the tools from German Studies were in the creation of this thesis, the new information relating to the theatre which I gathered in Swabia during the academic year 2010/11 is the primary source from which I have drawn my findings. This data is the product from which this study was created. Processing the raw information relating to the theatre became a major task for me on my return from Germany. In this chapter I will give a critical appraisal of the methods I employed to gather my empirical data in the field and I will assess the challenges and limitations of the approach I adopted. I will detail how I documented, archived, and managed the large body of material relating to Theater Lindenhof which I collected in Germany during my year in the field and in the prior and subsequent phases when I was studying the theatre less directly. I will explain how I reflected upon this mass of information and how I analysed it for key themes.

A degree of reflexivity with regard to my role as researcher has been incorporated into this study to take into account possible unconscious or conscious bias towards Theater Lindenhof's productions and sympathy with its political mission. Critics might ask how, if I am not an unbiased witness making objective observations about the theatre, I can claim to be writing an academic study of the theatre. I will address this question of how my own subjectivity might be seen to be interfering with my ability to bear witness and record accurately in the ethnographic field in Melchingen. I will examine the autoethnographic nature of my work for this project and show why I have employed this method. In examining the role of autoethnography in my project I will attempt to answer questions such as what the key paradoxes, tensions and contradictions were in my role at the theatre and to

what extent I would characterise myself as an ethnographer who is both ‘translator’ and ‘vulnerable observer’? In this chapter I have created a roadmap for the reader to gain an understanding of how this project has been undertaken, and an insight into the weaknesses and strengths of the model I followed.

2.2 Autoethnography - a typical morning drive to Melchingen

The metallic clanging noise of the alarm on my German mobile phone woke me at 5am each morning during the months I spent in Baden-Württemberg studying Theater Lindenhof. The exhaustion I felt in my weary body was counterbalanced by encouragement from my mind which was racing with thoughts and ideas about the exciting new materials I was gathering about the theatre each day. Having enrolled at the University of Tübingen as a guest doctoral student I had requested student accommodation in the Französisches Viertel knowing that outside of Melchingen itself this area of Tübingen was where the greatest concentration of Lindenhöfler lived. This morning was a typical one in that I was giving a lift to rehearsals in Melchingen to cast and crew members who lived nearby. The apartment I shared with three other students from the University was situated at the very top of a four-floor building on Landkutschersweg. As usual I came bounding down the stairs and ran across the street to the opposite side where my car was waiting for me in the underground car park of another building. How lucky I was to have snagged a student parking spot for my tiny black car. I reversed out, drove up the ramp, indicated right, swerved to avoid the first bus of the day on Landkutschersweg before turning right onto Mirabeauweg and continuing onto Aixier Str. where Oliver Moumouris and Luca Hallmayer were already outside the Café LaTour waiting for my arrival and promised lift to Melchingen for rehearsals. I pulled up in front of the café which had not yet opened for the day. On a chilly

and crisp morning such as this there was no reason to delay outdoors. Oliver and Luca jumped into the car and we zoomed out onto the B27.

We were leaving Tübingen behind and discussing the details of the day of rehearsals. I knew it would be another day filled with coffee-making, note-taking for the director, Philipp Becker, and above all observing and gathering data on my own behalf in my role as ethnographer. Oliver Moumouris and Luca Hallmayer quizzed me; Had I updated the script? Was I ready for the choreographer's arrival? As assistant to the director it was my role to update the script which was largely written in Swabian, to send out email notifications about when and where rehearsals would take place, to scout for props and to support the director, actors and stage crew as best I could. As I pressed my foot on to the accelerator pedal and listened to Moumouris' description of the choreographer's arrival, I realised that I would be charged with the task of memorising the routine so that I could help the actors to remember the movements required of them, as I did with the script when they needed a prompt. My mind swam with premonitions of another day of trying to fulfill the role of ethnographer and assistant to the director simultaneously and in a seamless manner, and of course *auf Schwäbisch*. Having spent the previous academic year planning my ethnographic field research in the library in Dublin, I was prepared in theory. However, I had not foreseen that the field research would require such a high level of concentration and how much it would stretch my abilities both physically and intellectually. Indeed, working with highly energetic and passionate people was exhausting and exhilarating. I was losing weight and growing tired.

In hindsight, I wonder why I kept going at these times and how I did not foresee that the pursuit of a doctorate in the humanities would have led me to such physically and emotionally draining activities? Swallowing deeply, with eyes narrowed to focus on the

road, I attempted not to appear overwhelmed by the task of memorising choreography which was to be run through in the hours to come. At that moment, conducting my ethnographic field research was my number one occupation and performing the duties of assistant to the director to the best of my abilities was my ticket to spending time with the Lindenhöfler at the theatre. I steered the conversation in my usual manner back to the questions central to my study which I repeated constantly and put to as many people as possible in as many manners as possible. Soon I was slowing the car down as we arrived on Unter den Linden and Theater Lindenhof's navy and green banner became visible on the theatre's façade. No one was on the street at this hour and as I indicated to turn into the car park behind the theatre Oliver and Luca were already unfastening their seatbelts ready to get out of the car and into the rehearsal space in the theatre's main house. I locked the car quickly and slipped past the *Scheune* and into the Lindenhof's main building where I darted straight to the kitchen to brew the coffee and jot down notes from the car journey in my well-worn diary.

2.3 Writing an ethnography

Upon my return from the field, Behar's words, 'The ethnography serves as the only proof of the anthropologist's voyage'²⁶, rang in my mind. The mass of ethnographic data I had collected, the access I was granted by the theatre and the months I spent working in the field would mean much less if the study I created was inadequate. An autoethnographic approach to creating a comprehensive description of life in the field fitted well with my research because I could not write about this project without acknowledging my own considerable bias towards the theatre and my own involvement at the theatre. In her groundbreaking study of *Naturtheater* in South West Germany Alison Phipps comments on the impossibility

²⁶ Behar, R., *The Vulnerable Observer*, Beacon press, Boston: 1997, p. 7.

of remaining unbiased as a participant observer in the field: 'The problem with such a personal involvement is firstly, that any pretense at neutrality is lost.'²⁷ Acknowledging the ethnographer's loss of objectivity, Behar encourages ethnographic writing in a narrative style similar to storytelling. She challenges the ethnographer to reveal in his or her writing the personal struggles or stresses encountered during field research in order to illuminate not only what the ethnographer witnessed but also his or her influence on the situation and his or her feelings at the time. Ellis and Bochner comment on the relevance of the first person voice in ethnographies:

By not insisting on some sort of personal accountability, our academic publications reinforce the third-person, passive voice as the standard, which gives more weight to abstract and categorical knowledge than to the direct testimony of personal narrative and the first person voice.²⁸

I have embraced the 'first person voice' in my study of Theater Lindenhof because I am lodged in the research by virtue of my employment of methods such as participant observation. Phipps remarks that

[...] the constellations in the field have to adapt to incorporate the new participant; the field is changed by the researcher's mere presence, particularly if that presence is deemed to be in some way 'other'.²⁹

Behar describes the contradictory nature of attempting to be a participant and observer simultaneously:

²⁷ Phipps, *Acting Identities*, 38.

²⁸ Ellis, C., Bochner A., *Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject*, *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*: 2000, p. 734.

²⁹ Phipps, *Acting Identities*, 38.

Our intellectual mission is deeply paradoxical: get the ‘native point of view’, *pero por favor* without actually ‘going native’. Our methodology, defined by the oxymoron ‘participant observation’, is split at the root: act as a participant, but don’t forget to keep your eyes open.³⁰

It is required of the ethnographer to be both present and distant, both local and global. As described in Chapter 4, my presence at rehearsals for *Älles Onser!* prompted the addition of some Irish language to the production³¹. My influence and ‘otherness’ as an Irish student of German was present in every conversation and every stage of my participant observation at the theatre. In order to represent this subjectivity in a reflexive manner without losing the storytelling style encouraged in autoethnographic methodology, Clifford and Marcus comment on the need to express oneself in a firsthand, creative manner while remaining as close to the reality as possible:

Moreover, to recognize the poetic dimensions of ethnography does not require that one give up facts and factual accounting for the supposed free play of poetry.³²

In the autoethnographic sections of this thesis I have not given up factual accounting. I use a narrative, first person style which involves me and leaves me and my role open to more scrutiny than if I were an outsider in the text. Although I was set apart as an ethnographer and a foreigner I was also present at staff meetings, rehearsals and productions. The tension between the insider and outsider roles was valuable to the outcome of my research but challenging in day-to-day life. By writing myself into the text I expose my feelings and actions at the time but also allow the reader a closer view of the workings of the theatre from the same distance I was examining them from. Carolyn Ellis remarks as follows on the

³⁰ Behar, R., *The Vulnerable Observer*, 5.

³¹ The islander’s song which was performed in Irish (translated by the author) can be read in Appendix VI

³² Clifford, J., Marcus G., *Writing Culture*, 25-26.

challenge of personal exposure in academic writing and how the author's self-consciousness dissipates over time: 'Now it felt less risky to write something other than the traditional social science, something that would be engaging, therapeutic and socially useful.' In Ellis' view the ethnographer's discomfort in relation to writing an autoethnography is a small obstacle in the search for the most successful mode of describing the subject of the research project. However, Behar remarks that including any degree of reflexivity into the thesis must be done solely in order to illuminate aspects of the study which would otherwise remain unseen:

Vulnerability doesn't mean that anything personal goes. The exposure of the self who is also a spectator has to take us somewhere we couldn't otherwise get to. It has to be essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake. It has to move us beyond that eclipse into inertia, exemplified by Rolf Carle, in which we find ourselves identifying so intensely with those whom we are observing that all possibility of reporting is arrested, made inconceivable.³³

During my ethnographic field research, I was constantly taking notes, asking questions, scheduling interviews and generally involving myself in as much as possible. My world became fully Swabian, and it was exhausting and not always pleasant. On cold mornings in the *Scheune* when I had been there for several hours and I was moving around the stage as a human prop to test the efficacy of the spotlight, I was not moved '[...] beyond that eclipse into inertia [...]',³⁴ as described above by Behar. On the other hand, the ethnographic research materials I was gathering were forming into a body of information that could create the first in-depth study of Theater Lindenhof, and that was an exciting prospect.

³³ Behar, R., 'The Vulnerable Observer', 14.

³⁴ Behar, R., 'The Vulnerable Observer', 14.

2.4 The chaos of ethnography, participant observation and autoethnography

Sarah Pink describes participant observation as a methodological approach which ‘[...] often entail[s] ethnographers participating in, observing (or sensing) and learning how to do what the people participating in their research are already engaged in (and presumably would have been doing anyway)’.³⁵ This might arguably be seen as relevant to my research, as this is precisely what I was doing during the year I spent in the field in Germany.

Similarly, Karen O’Reilly’s definition of ethnography could be applied to the methodology I employed to undertake my ethnographic field research in Swabia:

interactive-inductive research (that evolves in design through the study), drawing on a family of methods, involving direct and sustained contact with human agents, within the context of their daily lives (and cultures), watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, and producing a richly written account that respects the irreducibility of human experience, that acknowledges the role of theory as well as the researcher’s own role and that views humans as object/ part subject.³⁶

O’Reilly’s definition is cited by Pink and other leading voices in the field of anthropology as a sensible, basic definition of what doing ethnography entails. I went into the field knowing that I wanted to carry out ethnographic field research which would involve

- participant observation
- ethnographic interviews
- gathering of materials relating to the theatre such as flyers, programmes, scripts, reviews and, crucially, my own notes and diary entries detailing my observations

³⁵ Pink, S., *Doing Sensory Ethnography*, Sage, London: 2009, p. 10.

³⁶ O’Reilly, K., *Ethnographic Methods*, Routledge, London: 2005, p. 3.

My impact on the field, my bias and the advantages of employing autoethnographic methodology became apparent and a natural occurrence as the project developed in the field. In *Doing Visual Ethnography*, Sarah Pink describes how at the beginning and planning stages of an ethnographic project it is not possible to fully understand the scope of the field research or where the data will lead you.³⁷ Alison Phipps remarks that '[r]esearch with human subjects is never going to be tidy, easily concluded or neatly managed.'³⁸ Autoethnography as a subset of participant observation requires a greater degree of reflexivity on the part of the field researcher in the penning of his or her ethnography. It is described as follows by Adams, Jones and Ellis: 'Autoethnographic stories are artistic and analytic demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experience.'³⁹ Clifford and Marcus remark on the ethnographer's subjectivity and lack of objectivity in the field:

Since Malinowski's time, the 'method' of participant-observation has enacted a delicate balance of subjectivity and objectivity. The ethnographer's personal experiences, especially those of participation and empathy, are recognized as central to the research process.⁴⁰

In my ethnographic writing on Theater Lindenhof I have incorporated and acknowledged my own active involvement in the field and my bias towards the theatre. Rather than hinder my project, this has advanced the ethnographic study of Theater Lindenhof which makes up part of the contribution to knowledge which this thesis provides.

³⁷ Pink, S., *Doing Visual Ethnography*.

³⁸ Phipps, *Acting Identities*, p. 46.

³⁹ Adams, T., Holman Jones, S., Ellis, C., *Autoethnography – Understanding qualitative research*, Oxford University Press, Oxford: 2014, p. 1.

⁴⁰ Clifford, J., Marcus G., *Writing Culture*, 15.

Spending months dedicated to gathering ethnographic data in the field meant that I accumulated a mass of material relating to Theater Lindenhof. Shoe boxes, cardboard boxes and file box after file box full of materials relating to the theatre. Flyers, notes jotted in a multitude of notebooks, old scripts annotated by members of the theatre, memorabilia given to me by audience members and fans of the theatre, reviews of the theatre cut from the local newspapers, pages of links to reviews of the theatre's productions which appeared online, hours of recordings of ethnographic interviews and voice memos I left to myself during the field research, hundreds of photographs of activities at the theatre and of the building and surrounding area, videos of rehearsals for *Älles Onser!*, and saved email correspondence and daily diaries saved on external hard drive. Leaving Germany, my suitcases were weighed down with the ethnographic materials and since then I have moved five times and brought my precious, carefully organized, yet unwieldy collection of data with me on each occasion. Critically analysing the data was a time-consuming process which required weeks of examining the carefully labelled and filed documents.

2.5 Ethnographic interviews

Having the good fortune to be granted interviews by the theatre's directors, ensemble members and administrative staff provided me with information with which to complete my study. This was particularly useful given the dearth of secondary literature relating to the theatre. Fortunately for me many of my interview partners, as seasoned actors, were comfortable being recorded for the purposes of my research. This provided me with a detailed resource to draw from. Those who wished not to be recorded allowed me to take notes as they answered. However, I have drawn far less on these latter interviews for this research because their accuracy is not as demonstrable. There are three main types of interview, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In the case of this research the

interview style I chose was semi-structured. This method meant that I asked many of the same questions of each interview partner in order to have a selection of answers to the same questions which I could then compare and contrast to reach an analytical conclusion. These questions which I asked of every interview partner coupled with various other questions which were only relevant to the specific person I was interviewing or questions that happened to come up naturally in the course of the conversation improved the richness of the data. Nigel King describes cases in which this semi-structured interview style should be employed:

1. Where a study focuses on the meaning of particular phenomena to the participants.
2. Where individual perceptions of processes within a social unit – such as a work-group, department or whole organization – are to be studied prospectively, using a series of interviews.
3. Where individual historical accounts are required of how a particular phenomenon developed.⁴¹

Each semi-structured interview required me to schedule a time and date with my interview partner. Other less formal interviews occurred naturally during passing conversations prior to a performance, a break during rehearsals or while driving.

In the year prior to going into the field I planned carefully the methodology I would adopt and vowed enthusiastically to leave no stone unturned in my quest to create as rounded a view of the theatre as possible. Ethnographic interviewing would fulfil a central role in my process and I carefully devised the questions I would ask of all interview partners:

⁴¹ King, N., 'The Qualitative Research Interview', In: *Qualitative methods in organizational research: A Practical Guide*, Ed. Cassel, C., Symon, G., Sage Publications, London: 1994, pp. 16-17.

- How did you first come to know about Theater Lindenhof?
- Were you a founding member? If so, could you describe the early days of the theatre?
- What is the theatre's political mission?
- Why is the theatre based in Melchingen?
- Is the theatre socially critical?
- What is *Volkstheater*?
- What is a *Volksstück*?
- What is your favourite Lindenhof production and why?
- Why is the Lindenhof becoming a foundation on the occasion of its thirtieth anniversary?

These seemingly simple and straightforward questions formed the core line of questioning for all of my ethnographic interviews, both recorded and not. In a small number of interviews, I might have deviated slightly depending on the context in question, and in every interview I added questions based on who the interview partner was, how forthcoming they were and, although I usually listened and spoke as little as possible, there were times when I needed to interject to ask for clarification regarding information I did not want to misunderstand. The firsthand responses which I collected in recorded formal ethnographic interviews became a primary source on which I drew for information relating to the theatre.

Participant observers are described by Lundy-Dobbert as researchers who '[...] typically work alone, living full time in the field, doing their own observing and interviewing of

informants, and recording their data in written form'.⁴² As a foreigner, a young person and someone whose native tongue is not German or Schwäbisch, the regional variety of German, I was in a position to ask many questions. Kutsche remarks that a part of ethnographic method is the '[...] time-honoured tradition of making a fool of oneself for a point'.⁴³ Implementing this technique provided me with a selection of answers to the same questions. These were questions about the management of the Lindenhof or its history, among many others. Interpreting the meaning of these answers as well as drawing from other information I gathered in the field has helped me to create a rounded picture of the Lindenhof which I hope to give in what follows in this thesis.

The question as to whether I should include the interviews verbatim in the text or simply paraphrase the content was something which led to some experimentation in drafts of this study. Paraphrasing the responses of my interview partners was useful as a means of noting information heard during unrecorded casual ethnographic interviews. However, the true value of the quotations from interview was difficult to evaluate when I simply paraphrased. Including exact quotations from interviews proved difficult in many ways. I could not, as I have mentioned earlier, reproduce the spoken word exactly due to the mixture of High German and *Schwäbisch* spoken and the numerous false starts and redirections of topic throughout the interview, which in addition often played out in the manner of a conversation in accordance with the semi-formal interview style of which Nigel King was a proponent. In order to facilitate readability, I have edited the verbatim transcripts as explained below, whilst seeking to reduce subjective intervention as far as possible.

⁴² Lundy Dobbert, M., *Ethnographic Research: Theory and Application for Modern Schools and Societies*, Praeger Publishers, New York: 1986, p. 226.

⁴³ Kutsche, P., *Field Ethnography: A Manual for Doing Cultural Anthropology*, Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey: 1998, p. 5.

A difficulty which I had transcribed the content of the ethnographic interviews was that the language viewed in written form, seemed unnatural and awkward. Diligent and exact repetition of what was said in interviews provided me with citations which were dotted with starts, repetition and slang. The mixture of Swabian dialect and High German in the interviews contributed to the high frequency of unusual formulations. Interviewees' remarks which were perfectly coherent and clear when heard in the recording, in many cases, possess the same clarity when transcribed directly into the written. In order to counter this difficulty, I decided to correct grammatical or syntactic inaccuracies in the language used in the interviews, so that the meaning and relevance of particular citations would not be lost. The original interviews are included on CD with this thesis so that the original, authentic dialogue may be heard by the reader in conjunction with the modified versions. The decision to use slightly modified versions of the citations in the body of the text is, in my view justified, especially given that the aim of this thesis is to describe Theater Lindenhof and not to analyse the Swabian language or aspects of its poetics. It was for the sake of the clarity of the text that I corrected irregularities in the language used in the citations. In making the changes, I attempted to ensure that the meaning of the original utterance was not in any way diminished. Some unusual formulations were allowed to stand when it was deemed best to do so in order to preserve the full meaning of a passage.

Gathering data about Theater Lindenhof was my way of life in the field in Swabia. As previously remarked, in all interviews my questions followed the usual structure with little interjection from me other than in order to receive clarification. In one case as I was conducting an ethnographic interview with the theatre's co-director, Stefan Hallmayer, at the Cafe LaTour in the Münzösisches Viertel, several people stopped by briefly to say a few words. It was a very busy afternoon on Aixer Str. and we were sitting outdoors at

one of a number of small metallic bistro tables on the pavement of the café. Other ethnographic interviews conducted inside and outside the café members of the theatre had been punctuated in a similar fashion by the usual interrupting coffee and having quick conversations with acquaintances who were passing.

What marked this interview out was that Siegfried Bühler, a freelancer who frequently worked with the Lindenhof, was knocked off his bicycle by a pony outside the café. No one was harmed and even the bicycle emerged unscathed, but confusion, alarm and excitement caused a ruckus typical of the heated discussions about the theatre and productions at the theatre. Members of Theater Lindenhof who lived in the neighborhood including Stefan Hallmayer and his family, and Oliver Moumouris, rushed to see what happened and a flood of Schwäbisch spoken at a fast pace in excited tones reverberated through the air in the surroundings of the café. In the midst of the hubbub and panicked by what appeared to be a serious accident I turned off my recording device and captured the sounds of the incident. In hindsight I feel that turning off the device was a mistake and in fact even the simple sounds of ordering cappuccinos which surrounded the interview would have been relatively valuable elements of the scene to be recorded. Regardless, the fact that I was swimming in ethnographic data and that I took notes related to the incident meant that the project was not too much poorer. Perhaps in light of the chaotic situation surrounding the crash it was ethically appropriate to switch the recording device off. There is a blurring of the lines here between what constitutes exploitation and what does not. Perhaps, given that the formal interview was the only part of the conversation which the interview partner had agreed to have recorded meant that switching the voice recorder off was the appropriate response. Ethical questions such as these require careful consideration on the part of the ethnographer who has a responsibility to report her findings in an ethically sound manner without exploiting the subjects of the research.

2.6 The ethnographer as 'translator'

In my role as ethnographer I was translating from Schwäbisch to German and to English but I was also transforming or translating the ethnographic data I had created into an ethnography about Theater Lindenhof. Clifford and Marcus remark that ethnography '[...] describes processes of innovation and structuration, and it is itself part of these processes'.⁴⁴ In writing about the Lindenhof in this thesis I have taken inspiration from Clifford Geertz's remark on ethnography that 'What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, "thick description"'.⁴⁵

Ethnographic 'dense' or 'thick' description, a method devised by Geertz,⁴⁶ describes the process of writing ethnographically, that is, telling the story of a place, people or institution in as detailed and vivid a manner as possible so that the writing could be described as being heavy or dense with descriptive details which aim to give the reader as comprehensive a view as possible of the subject in question. A criticism of this approach is that it can be overly-descriptive and apparently lacking in critical content. Aware of this drawback, I have persevered with its employment in conjunction with other ethnographic methods described above such as autoethnography and participant observation. In Chapters Three and Four I will rely heavily on ethnographic thick description and autoethnography in examining the history of Theater Lindenhof and the day-to-day life and workings of the theatre during the period of time when I was working there.

⁴⁴ Clifford, Marcus, *Writing Culture*, 2-3.

⁴⁵ Geertz, C., *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, Hutchinson & Co., London: 1975, p. 6.

⁴⁶ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 6.

Fetterman describes ethnography as being both a 'method' and a 'product'.⁴⁷ An ethnographer attempts to study a culture by doing ethnography. He/she then 'translates' this knowledge into an ethnography. The latter is usually a written text created by the ethnographer to be understood by his/her native culture.

The access I had been granted to Theater Lindenhof as an outside researcher was unprecedented, but I was several thousand miles away from my then fiancé, now husband. Why would a month or two of ethnographic field research not have sufficed for the study to have been a success in my eyes? I had committed to doing the research for a year and I wanted to carry it out in as comprehensive a manner as possible. The field research plan which I created before going to Germany has remained the framework for this study, but it is the transformation or translation of the piles of ethnographic field notes, transcribed interviews and assorted memories into an ethnography that is the final step in creating a rounded and effective study. The task of unpacking, both literally and metaphorically, the ethnographic materials collected in the field has been a grueling one. How to transform the data I had gathered into a well-structured study was the next challenge I faced, once I had removed myself from the field. Ruth Behar describes the challenge of penning an ethnography that conjures as accurately as possible the scenes witnessed by the ethnographer in the field:

[...] conversations and interactions in the field can never again be exactly reproduced. They are unique, irrecoverable, gone before they happen, always in the past, even when written up in the present tense. The ethnography serves as the only proof of the anthropologist's voyage, and the success of the enterprise hinges on how gracefully the anthropologist shoulders what Geertz calls the 'burden of

⁴⁷ Fetterman, D., *Ethnography: Step-by-Step Third Edition*, (Applied Social Research Methods Series; v. 17), Sage Publications, London: 2010, p.1.

authorship'. The writing must convey the impression of 'close-in contact with far-out lives.'⁴⁸

In order to produce an accurate picture of the Lindenhof, this step on the path to writing this thesis required much attention. The ethnographer is often described as a 'translator' between cultures. Spradley describes the ethnographer's 'translation competence'⁴⁹ as '(...) the ability to translate the meanings of one culture into a form that is appropriate to another culture'.⁵⁰

And what of the traditional notion of translating language? Communicating with members of the theatre was vital for the success of the project and gaining the trust of members of the community in order to write an ethnography required that I speak the language of the informants. Phipps remarks that the acquisition of language (i.e. the language of informants) is a skill traditionally associated with '(...) the training of a linguist'.⁵¹ Language skills from German Studies alongside ethnographic methods allowed me to gain an understanding of the Lindenhof community that would have been impossible had I been unable to communicate with interview partners and other members of the community through the local dialect, Schwäbisch.

By moving between cultures the ethnographer has the opportunity to observe both his/her native culture and the one being studied from various perspectives. Becoming part of daily life at the theatre meant adapting quickly to its workings and lingua franca. Bryman comments as follows on the use of the native language in the field:

⁴⁸ Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer*, 7.

⁴⁹ Spradley, J. P., *The Ethnographic Interview*, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New York: 1979, p. 19.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵¹ Phipps, *Acting Identities*, 43.

Since the goal of ethnography is to describe a culture in its own terms, the ethnographer seeks to encourage informants to speak in the same way they would talk to others *in their cultural scene*.⁵²

As a first-time ethnographer working full-time at the Lindenhof in a role for which I was unqualified was challenging, but without speaking the local language and understanding the local way of life I could not have carried out this research project.

2.7 What of my bias towards and enjoyment of the theatre's plays and political mission?

In their ground-breaking study Clifford and Marcus remark that:

Ethnographic truths are thus inherently *partial*—committed and incomplete. This point is now widely asserted—and resisted at strategic points by those who feared the collapse of clear standards of verification. But once built into ethnographic art, a rigorous sense of partiality can be a source of representational tact.⁵³

Acknowledging that my position is not one of total neutrality in relation to the Lindenhof, I remained aware and highly conscious of my own position in relation to the field of study throughout the research and writing-up process. The directors of Theater Lindenhof, Bernhard Hurm and Stefan Hallmayer, understood my genuine interest in and enjoyment of the theatre's artistic output and political mission. I felt a responsibility to complete the research given the insider role they allowed me at the theatre, despite my lack of local relevance or training as an actor or director. Critics might suggest that given my bias towards the theatre, I am not qualified to write an academic study of the theatre and its

⁵² Bryman, A. (ed.), *Ethnography: Volume II*, Sage Publications, London: 2001, p. 335.

⁵³ Clifford, Marcus, *Writing Culture*, 7.

workings. In response I would assert that my direct involvement in the day-to-day life of the theatre and my attempt to assimilate as fully as possible granted me an intimate view of the structure and culture of the theatre which I could not have gained without the trust and cooperation of its members. My success as an ethnographer hinged upon the trust I was granted by members of the theatre and the local community. Fetterman remarks that '[e]thnographers need the trust of the people they work with to complete their task'.⁵⁴ Without this trust, gaining useful insights into the workings of the community through participant observation and ethnographic interviewing would not have been feasible.

In order to undertake the task of collecting ethnographic data, the ethnographer must be granted entry into the community. I will describe my journey to becoming a trusted ethnographer at Theater Lindenhof in Chapters Three and Four. A level of trust must be built between the ethnographer and the players involved in the culture in question. Berg remarks,

These persons [guides] must be convinced that the ethnographers are who they claim to be and that the study is worthwhile. The worth of the study must be understood and be meaningful to the guides and their group. Similarly, these guides must be convinced that no harm will befall them or other members of the group as a result of the ethnographers' presence.⁵⁵

As mentioned above, skills from German Studies and cultural studies were an advantage to me as they allowed me the knowledge to navigate everyday life situations. In this regard my German Studies training became an advantage; a non-German-speaking ethnographer would have faced serious challenges in undertaking research of this kind. Working daily

⁵⁴ Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step-by-Step*, 145.

⁵⁵ Berg. B. L., *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Pearson International, Boston: 2007, p. 185.

with members of Theater Lindenhof as a colleague while at the same time performing informal and formal ethnographic interviews and constantly carrying out participant observation meant that I was simultaneously an insider and an outsider in the ethnographic field. I could roam around the theatre freely and was listed as a member of the support team for the December 2010 production.⁵⁶ On the other hand, the members of the theatre were aware of my status as an ethnographer and conscious that I was carefully recording information and collecting data by taking notes, taking photographs or making recordings. Being a part of the group for this time but also playing the role of ethnographer was a demanding one but its challenges were far outweighed by the beneficial insights into the theatre's workings, people and artistic output which I gained as a result.

Kutsche remarks that '[t]ogether, scholarly care and creative flights create scenes vivid enough that the reader can say, in Clifford Geertz's phrase, "I was there because you were there"'.⁵⁷ Clifford comments on the subject: 'Ethnographers are more and more like the Cree hunter [...] when administered the oath he hesitated: "I'm not sure I can tell the truth.... I can only tell what I know"'.⁵⁸

2.8 Interdisciplinary framework

The chaos of ethnography discussed widely by ethnographers is a situation I found myself in with the abundance of ethnographic data I had collected. Applying a framework and a critical methodology to this data while simultaneously undertaking the research project from an interdisciplinary theoretical standpoint left me with a plethora of entry-points into academic conversation about Theater Lindenhof. This method has allowed me to gain a

⁵⁶ See the scanned document bearing my name as a member of the team in Appendix V.

⁵⁷ Kutsche, *Field Ethnography*, 11.

⁵⁸ Clifford, Marcus, *Writing Culture*, 8.

better understanding of the empirical reality behind the claims or myths about the theatre. By following these pathways into the workings of the Lindenhof, using tools from German Studies, ethnography and theatre studies, I have endeavoured to paint as accurate a picture as possible of what I observed during my period of field research. Its interdisciplinary framework is a strength of this thesis. Alison Phipps employed an interdisciplinary methodological framework in her study of the *Naturtheater* phenomenon in South West Germany and commented in her study that:

German Studies offers little in the way of methods that will enable an understanding of human behavior beyond text. It is for this reason that I have turned particularly to anthropology and *Volkskunde* for methodological support.⁵⁹

I employed a similar methodological approach in my study of Theater Lindenhof as a contemporary form of *Volkstheater*, and its successful implementation as the interdisciplinary theoretical framework for my project furthers the case Phipps made '[...] for the inclusion of other methodological and theoretical approaches to the study of culture and society in German Studies'.⁶⁰

If a 'blurring of genres' (Geertz 1983) within the very social science disciplines which appear to offer greatest methodological scope to an investigation of *Naturtheater*, is indeed in process, then a movement away from the traditional methods of German Studies and towards an exploration of other possibilities is justified.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Phipps, *Acting Identities*, 27.

⁶⁰ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities*, p. 28.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Chapter Three

3.1 History and development of Theater Lindenhof

In this chapter and the following one I will present and analyse the history and development of Theater Lindenhof from its earliest days. A study such as this would be incomplete without a history of the theatre and a description of the circumstances surrounding its foundation and development. Despite the relevance of the subject of Theater Lindenhof to the German Studies, Theatre Studies and Cultural Studies disciplines, there is no full-length study of the theatre from which to draw. In fact, to date the only academic source which discusses the theatre is the aforementioned article written by Alison Phipps.⁶² Therefore, the ethnographic field research I conducted in Germany during the academic year 2010/11, and in particular the responses to ethnographic interviews which I conducted while I was in the field, form the basis for my description of the theatre's history and development. What follows in this chapter and the next one will be written in the context of the ethnographic theoretical framework which I laid out in Chapter Two. Ethnographic and autoethnographic methodologies will be employed and I acknowledge my potential bias towards the theatre, its people and its productions.

In 1973, after graduating from the University of Tübingen, Uwe Zellmer,⁶³ one of the founding members of Theater Lindenhof moved to nearby Reutlingen to work as a trainee teacher. Fresh out of the student movement of the late sixties, Zellmer and his contemporaries sought to improve conditions for marginalised groups in society. In Reutlingen, he set up a theatre group composed of teachers, trainees and pupils which

⁶² Phipps, 'Breaking Frames and Burning Witches'.

⁶³ Uwe Zellmer was a founding member of Theater Lindenhof. Although retired, he sits on the board of Theater Lindenhof and was described by the *Intendant*, Bernhard Hurm as the theatre's 'Ehren-Präsident'.

would eventually develop into Theater Lindenhof. Theater Lindenhof's *Intendant* and founding member, Bernhard Hurm described the early days in interview:

Seit dem Beginn bin ich hier dabei. Ich bin als fünfundzwanziger nach Melchingen gekommen. Es gibt für dieses Theater hier, das Theater Lindenhof, eine Vorgeschichte: Uwe Zellmer, Dietlinde Ellsäßer, Hans Schenk, (der ab und zu immer noch hier als Regie-assistent arbeitet) und ich waren früher Mitglieder einer Schultheatergruppe. Uwe Zellmer war damals Lehrer an der Ferdinand von Steinbeis Schule, ein berufliches Gymnasium in Reutlingen. Das war in der Zeit nach '68. Er war sehr aktiv in der Deutsch-Chinesischen Gesellschaft, ein grosser Verehrer von Mau Tse-tung, von seinen Ideen und von der Chinesischen Revolution. Er hat sozusagen mit Jugendlichen aus der Schule gearbeitet, also die Schüler, die SMV (Schülermitverantwortung) gemacht haben. Er war Vertrauenslehrer und hat angefangen politische Arbeit und Emanzipationsarbeit für Schüler in Reutlingen zu machen. Es gab unter anderem eine Theatergruppe, die da im Jahr '75/'76 entstanden ist. Im Jahr 1977 haben wir unser erstes Stück gemacht: *Klassenspiel oder der abenteuerlicher Alltag des Lehrlings Tom* und ich habe zum ersten Mal Theater gespielt. Ich habe den Lehrling Tom gespielt, die Hauptrolle. Meine damalige Freundin Dietlinde Ellsäßer hat mitgespielt. Hans Schenk war auch dabei und Uwe Zellmer auch. Wir haben auch ein anderes Stück gemacht: *Viva Argentina*, ein Stück über Fußball und Faschismus während der Fußballweltmeisterschaft im Jahr '78 in Argentinien. So waren die erste Theaterstücke. Diese Kompanie bestand sowohl aus Schülern als auch aus Lehrlingen, die in der Berufsschule waren oder sonst im Betrieb.⁶⁴

After some time, the original theatre group from Reutlingen broke up because of disaffection and discouragement. Hurm remarked: 'Diese Gruppe hat sich dann irgendwann aufgelöst. Die Arbeit war vorbei. Sie hat sich nicht mehr so gehalten. Sie war zu heterogen.'⁶⁵ However, a few members who still shared the dream of combining storytelling

⁶⁴ Interview with Bernhard Hurm on 2 March 2011. The full interview is available on the CD-ROM submitted with this thesis.

⁶⁵ Interview with Bernhard Hurm on 2 March 2011.

and theatre continued to work together: 'Aber ein Kern davon ist geblieben und wir haben dann angefangen, ich glaube in '79/'80 eine neue Gruppe zu gründen. Die wollten ein Stück über Jugend aus dem Dorf machen. Und dann ist auch Stefan zugekommen, mein Bruder Michael und Eberhard Schillinger.'⁶⁶ Bernhard Hurm, Dietlinde Ellsäßer and Hans Schenk⁶⁷ were three of the original members of the Reutlingen theatre group who would later become founding members of Theater Lindenhof. The theatre was finding its feet and had yet to find its base in Melchingen. Stefan Hallmayer, Lindenhof's co-director, also joined the company at this stage. Hurm remarked, 'Diese Kompanie hat zunächst in Reutlingen und dann später in Tübingen am Landestheater geprobt. So haben die Aktivitäten dieser Kompanie angefangen'.⁶⁸ However, one major obstacle that remained in their path was choosing a location for their theatre. Where would they base the organisation they wished to create? Hurm explained: 'Uwe und ich haben dann versucht eine Heimat für diese Kompanie zu finden: ein Haus, wo man einfach sein könnte. Und da ist die Idee für ein Theater irgendwo in der Gegend von Tübingen entstanden. Wir haben Bauernhäuser angeschaut um zu gucken, was wir daraus machen konnten.'⁶⁹ In 1980 they read an advertisement in the *Reutlinger Generalanzeiger*: 'Ein Landgasthaus auf der Sonnenalb zu verkaufen.'⁷⁰ They went to Melchingen to view the property which was in a prime position in the centre of the village next to the town hall.⁷¹ They decided to purchase the property to create their theatre. Hurm described the old rural buildings which the young people envisioned as a theatre:

Wir sind auch wegen einer Anzeige nach Melchingen gekommen und haben uns diesen Landgasthof, diese Linde hier angeguckt. Der Saal war ganz leer mit alten

⁶⁶ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

⁶⁷ All three are still associated with the theatre.

⁶⁸ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

⁶⁹ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, March 2011.

⁷⁰ Heard by the author in casual conversation at Theater Lindenhof.

⁷¹ See photographs 3,4 and 5 of Theater Lindenhof and the town hall in Appendix III.

Böden und Brettern. In den fünfziger Jahren war er ein Nähsaal gewesen. Nähmaschinen haben dort gestanden. Aber als wir gekommen sind war er eigentlich leer und er war toll. Wir haben die Scheune angeguckt und gesagt, 'Die Scheune ist gross! Wir können etwas daraus machen!'. Dann hat Uwe Leute gesucht, die zusammen mit ihm dieses Projekt finanzieren würden. Es ging auch ziemlich bald um Geld, weil es damals 400,000 DM gekostet hat das Haus zu erwerben, es zu kaufen. Und er hat dann mit drei weiteren Gesellschaftern dieses Haus gekauft.⁷²

By pooling and borrowing they raised the capital to afford the pub and took ownership of the property which they immediately began to renovate with their small financial means. Although the ownership of the property passed through different hands in the early years, it ultimately remained in the possession of a group of four: Bernhard Hurm, Uwe Zellmer, Dietlinde Ellsäcker and Jürgen Buchegger. Although the young group had purchased the property in Melchingen, they had not yet founded Theater Lindenhof. It was in 1981 when the theatre performed its first play *Semmer Kerle Oder Koine!* that it officially became Theater Lindenhof. Hurm commented: 'Im Jahr 1980 haben wir es gekauft und 1981 war die Eröffnung mit dem Stück, *Semmer Kerle Oder Koine*. Also, sind wir Kerle oder nicht? *Sind wir Kerle oder Koine!* war ein Stück im Dialekt und unter den Titel *Ein Heimatabend*.'⁷³ Discussion of the term *Heimat* will follow in Chapter Five.

Discovering the building in Melchingen was due to good luck, according to Hurm and Hallmayer. Hallmayer remarked: 'Und plötzlich waren wir da so drin und war das so eine Marke. Und wir sind ja auch schon irgendwie, sage ich mal, hineingestolpert. Das ist nicht so planmäßig gekommen.'⁷⁴ Although the choice of the village of Melchingen may have been accidental, the decision to base their theatre in the Schwäbisch-Alb was not an entirely accidental one on the part of the young group. Moving to rural, even remote areas such as

⁷² Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

⁷³ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

⁷⁴ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

the Swabian Alps was part of a wider trend following the 1968 student movement in the late sixties and early seventies. Offshoots of the 1968 movement included the *Landprojekte*, *Kommune*, *Anti-AKW Bewegung*, *Grüne Bewegung* and *Anti-Krieg Bewegung*. Young German people were questioning the way of life of their parents' generation. Some desired a different, greener life in the countryside. They wanted to determine their own future.⁷⁵ Hallmayer comments on the early days of the theatre and how it was a place of refuge for young people who wished to change the status quo:

In den ersten Jahren, nicht nur für mich, ich glaube für die Gruppenmitglieder, ist diese Theatergruppe auch ein Zufluchtsort gewesen: Ein Ort der Selbstfindung. [...] [E]s war damals eine andere Zeit, wo wir überlegt haben: Was will man eigentlich von dieser Welt? [...] Und diese Fragen haben wir uns gestellt und das Theater lag so daneben als eine Möglichkeit darüber sich zu äussern, über diese Befindlichkeiten.⁷⁶

In the early days the theatre was more of a group of like-minded young people who wished to determine their own future. Although theatre was the manner in which they expressed their dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in their locality and country, it was not their mission at the time to create the professional Theater Lindenhof as it exists today: '[...], dass das Theater das Zentrum unseres Handels wurde, das kam erst über die Jahre. Wir haben nicht gesagt wir gründen den Lindenhof. Wir haben uns gefunden, weil wir auf der Suche waren.'⁷⁷ Hurm described a similar situation, 'Am Anfang war Melchingen eigentlich ein Glück, ein Zufall vielleicht. Wurde aber nachher zum Prinzip, nämlich dieses auf der Alb sein'.⁷⁸ Although Melchingen has become an important element of the Lindenhof's image, it was not initially devised to have such an effect. Moving to the

⁷⁵ Discussion on the 1968 student movement is a leitmotif throughout the thesis.

⁷⁶ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

⁷⁷ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

⁷⁸ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

countryside was simply part of a desire to be closer to nature in line with the *Heimatbewegung*⁷⁹ of the 1968 student movement. According to Hurm:

Einfach, weil wir damals junge Leute waren, die auch Schwäbisch waren aber es gab damals auch eine neue Heimatbewegung [...] Nach '68 sind verschiedene Bewegungen entstanden, also Bürgerinitiativen allgemein [...] Selbsthilfegruppen, Landprojekte und Kommunen wurden angefangen, also landwirtschaftliche Art anderes zu wirtschaften. Und dann die ganze Anti-AKW-Bewegung, die in dieser Zeit richtig Schwung gekriegt hat mit den Ostermarschen hier in Deutschland – gegen Krieg und gegen das Atom. Alle diese Bewegungen. Die Grüne Bewegung ist sozusagen zeitgleich auch entstanden. [...] Das waren ja schon auch so Bewegungen, die [...] eine andere Gesellschaft wollten, eine andere Art des Lebens und Arbeitens mitorganisieren wollten. [...]⁸⁰

3.2 Melchingen

Franz-Xaver Ott, a full-time member of the ensemble who joined the theatre in 1986 and who has been a member of the management team, remarked on the theatre's political aspirations, born of the philosophies and aims of the 1968 student movement, and the connection those aims had with Melchingen in the early years:

Es hat natürlich ein bisschen 'was mit unserer Lage zu tun. Das wir uns hier verorten und auch die Leute, die hier wohnen ansprechen wollen. Das hat auch mit unserer Herkunft zu tun, denke ich. Wir sind Leute, die alle eher aus dem Volk kommen, die alle keine grosse Theaterausbildung haben oder die wenigsten von uns. Und ich denke, das hat auch mit der Interesse zu tun. In den achtziger Jahren ist das Theater entstanden. Da war natürlich auch diese Bewegung von Volksnähe und alternatives Leben und ursprüngliches Leben und raus auf's Land. Auf dem Land leben und diese Volksbewegung, sei das jetzt noch beeinflusst von den 68ern oder von der

⁷⁹ Further discussion of *Heimat* on p. 127.

⁸⁰ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

Friedensbewegung oder von der ökologischen Bewegung. Also der Gedanke, dass auch das Volk Gestaltungswillen hat und, dass man die Meinung und die Haltung und das Denken des Volkes ernstnehmen soll. Das hat in unserer Gründungszeit eine grosse Rolle gespielt und ich glaube es hat uns auch in unserer Verortung, was die volkstheatrale Umsetzung auch betrifft, auch viel damit zu tun.⁸¹

Setting up their theatre in the Swabian countryside was a natural development for the members. It allowed them a safe place from which to develop their ideas but was also in their home place high in the Schwäbisch-Alb. All of the Lindenhof's founding members were born and raised in small villages in the Swabian Alps. Berthold Biesinger, a full-time member of the Theater Lindenhof ensemble, who joined the theatre in 1986, lives in the region. Biesinger described his connectedness with the area in interview: 'Ich bin sehr gern hier oben und natürlich auch mit Familie. Ich wohne hier und meine Kinder gehen hier zur Schule und spielen hier Fußball. Von da her bin ich schon sehr verwurzelt hier oben.'⁸²

Aside from being part of the founders' own identities and pasts, Melchingen was also still relatively easily accessible from nearby cultural and commercial centres such as Tübingen, Reutlingen and Hechingen where founding members had attended university and taught at schools. This proximity to more densely settled centres has remained important throughout the development of the Lindenhof who have traditionally drawn audience members from these cultural and urban hubs which surround the rural area where Melchingen is situated. By car Melchingen is 21 kilometres east of Hechingen, 33 kilometres south of Tübingen and 24 kilometres south-west of Reutlingen.⁸³ In interview Hurm described Melchingen as a place which was accessible from the region's larger towns and which throughout the years became a place that the Lindenhöfler could find no reason to leave:

⁸¹ Interview with Franz-Xaver Ott, 4 November 2010.

⁸² Interview with Berthold Biesinger, 16 December 2010.

⁸³ See maps in Appendix II.

Es ist ein Dorf an der Alb darauf, am Rand der Alb [...] es hat sich auch verkehrstechnisch einigermaßen so zu erreichen von Hechingen, Reutlingen und Tübingen her. Von Anfang an hatte es für uns etwas großes, war sowas herausgehobenes, Melchingen. Wir haben gesagt, 'Gut das machen wir hier'. Hier gibt's den Ort. Wir haben nach und nach dann eher so die Argumente gefunden, was es für Melchingen spricht.⁸⁴

Franz-Xaver Ott remarks on the importance of the town of Melchingen to the Lindenhof's reputation or image and how its location sets the theatre apart from others:

Man verortet uns hier. Wir beziehen auch einen Teil unseres Stoffes aus diesem Standort und auch unsere sprachliche Identität und (Identifikation/ Identifizierbarkeit) hat auch etwas mit diesem Ort beziehungsweise mit dieser Region oder diesem Dialekt zu tun. Ich glaube dadurch unterscheiden wir uns von vielen anderen Theatern hier im Umfeld und geben uns dadurch auch einen gewissen Wiedererkennungswert.⁸⁵

As mentioned already the Lindenhöfler are also referred to by the name 'Melchinger'.

Performing an internet search for 'Melchingen' generates links to the theatre's website and other articles relating to the Lindenhof. The combination of the theatre's remote location and its ability to produce critical theatre marks it out on the German theatre landscape.

Cutting-edge theatres in the country's largest cities could never imagine being known simply as 'Die Stuttgarter' or 'Die Bonner'. Journalists refer to the members of the theatre as *Die Melchinger*. In a recent reference to Theater Lindenhof in *Die Zeit* we find the phrase 'Am Melchinger Lindenhof-Theater auf der Schwäbischen Alb [...]'.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

⁸⁵ Interview with Franz-Xaver Ott, 4 November 2010.

⁸⁶ Meiborg, M., 'Scheitern ist die höchste Kunst', *Die Zeit*, 13 April 2013, <http://www.zeit.de/2013/15/theater-regisseur-antu-romero-nunes>, accessed on 15 September 2013.

Theater Lindenhof's association with Melchingen certainly marks it out from mainstream theatres and this in turn attracts patrons from Tübingen and further afield. It appeals to the local audience too, who are proud of the fact that Theater Lindenhof is part of their local community and who take pride in the fact that it tells stories about their local place and is praised by critics from further afield. Oliver Moumouris, a full-time member of the Theater Lindenhof ensemble who joined in 2008, commented on the importance of Melchingen to the theatre: 'Ein sehr großer Reiz des Theaters lag und liegt vielleicht immer noch auch daran, dass wir Theater spielen, wo man eigentlich kein Theater spielt [...] und dass nicht nur volkstümliche Stücke stattfinden sondern auch richtiges Theater.'⁸⁷ This pride is recent. The initial response to the theatre was much more negative, a point which I will make more fully later on.

In this extract Moumouris refers to an appeal that performing in the rural Swabian Alps holds in the eyes of critics and audience members. Performing critically acclaimed, socially critical and political theatre in an unusual location has become synonymous with the Lindenhof. Moumouris is also making reference to the other non-traditional theatre spaces the Lindenhof has performed in throughout the Swabian region such as the Pausa in Mössingen or the Panzerhalle in Tübingen's Französisches Viertel.⁸⁸ In fact the theatre is well-known for its successful outdoor productions and theatre promenades. Such productions include the Tübinger Sommertheater productions for which the Lindenhöfler have achieved critical acclaim. One of the most famous of the Tübinger Sommertheater productions is *Hölderlin. Tübingen. Turm* which was performed on the Neckarinsel⁸⁹ in

⁸⁷ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 June 2016.

⁸⁸ See photograph 13 in Appendix III.

⁸⁹ See an aerial view of the Neckarinsel in Appendix II.

Tübingen in 1986⁹⁰. Theater Lindenhof returned to the familiar location in summer 2011 with the production *Schiller... weil es die Freiheit ist, durch welche man zur Schönheit wandert!*. Performing in unusual venues or locations is part of the Lindenhof ethos and basing their theatre in Melchingen offered the founding members the opportunity to perform critical theatre in an unexpected area.

By founding their theatre in the heart of the Swabian Alps, the founding members of Theater Lindenhof made sure that the theatre would be easy for the local, rural person to reach yet still accessible to the city-dwellers of Tübingen who had theatres in their city. The theatre however thrived from the beginning on the support it received from students, teachers and other members of the Tübingen and Reutlingen community. The notion of performing critical theatre in a rural village such as Melchingen is a differentiating characteristic of Theater Lindenhof which has contributed to its success.

Theater Lindenhof and Melchingen are inextricably linked. The mythologised notion of Theater Lindenhof's idealistic founding years binds it to Melchingen. In the theatre's constitution the link with Melchingen is made legally binding: 'Hauptproduktionsort und -aufführungsstätte für die Theaterinszenierungen ist Melchingen.'⁹¹ Although provision is provided for other rehearsal and performance spaces to be created elsewhere in the region in future years, the strong association with the village of Melchingen is valued. Stefan Hallmayer commented on how Melchingen is a kind of spiritual home for the Lindenhöfler where new ideas and productions can be developed:

⁹⁰ See a list of all Theater Lindenhof's productions in Appendix IV.

⁹¹ Stiftungssatzung des Theaters Lindenhof, p. 6. Received from Christine Heinz, 24 February 2011.

Aber auch, dass wir Stücke in Melchingen produzieren und das ist für mich auch ganz wichtig. Melchingen ist auch ein Ort in der Natur, also weg vom wilden Getrieb, wo man auch gut Dinge erarbeiten kann. Ist auch eine Produktionsstätte, nicht nur eine Spielstätte und wir gestalten viele Produktionen absichtlich so, dass wir diese Produktionen hinaus ins Land tragen können.⁹²

Linda Schlepps, a full-time member of the Theater Lindenhof ensemble, who joined the ensemble in 2004/5, remarks on her connection to the Lindenhof: 'Das ist eine sehr heikle Frage auch für das [Theater] Lindenhof. Für mich ist eher wichtig so der Geist. Also das was ich mein Zuhause nenne, das ist auch was anders bei den anderen Kollegen, weil ich eben auch keine Schwäbin in dem Sinne bin.'⁹³

Schlepps acknowledges Melchingen's importance to the theatre as a symbolic home place but indicates that the question of how vital Melchingen is to the Lindenhof is one which is up for debate within the theatre. Even if Melchingen had not been listed in the legally binding constitution as the base for the theatre, it is unlikely that the link would be lost. Despite a desire to expand, the spirit of the organisation remains firmly associated with Melchingen, and Theater Lindenhof's ability to perform plays 'where no one else does'⁹⁴ gives the theatre a distinctive characteristic to differentiate itself from other theatres. In interview Uwe Hund, Lindenhof's technical director, remarked on the advantage gained by being located in the small village in the Swabian Alps by citing the following example: 'Wenn wir ins Ruhrgebiet fahren, zum Ruhrfestspiele, haben wir den Exotobonus, weil wir aus einem kleinen Dorf sind. Das ist ein Marketing-Vorteil ganz sicher.'⁹⁵

⁹² Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

⁹³ Interview with Linda Schlepps, 7 December 2010.

⁹⁴ A phrase used frequently by Theater Lindenhof members and in the theatre's promotional literature.

⁹⁵ Interview with Uwe Hund, 25 November 2010.

Although basing their theatre in a rural setting differentiates Theater Lindenhof from others in the region, it also leaves the theatre vulnerable to low attendance rates, especially in the cold winter months. The fact remains that for a resident of Tübingen ducking into the Landestheater or Zimmertheater would be far less time-consuming than taking on the journey to Melchingen. Theater Lindenhof is difficult to reach in winter. Parts of the road to Melchingen are winding and treacherous, especially in winter. There is not much public transport to speak of. Even in the warm months public transport to the theatre is not readily available. Thus the theatre's location combines elements of accessibility and inaccessibility; it is accessible to the local community in its rural surroundings but more difficult to reach for audience members without a car who travel from further afield. Performing from a village with such a small population, Theater Lindenhof relies on audiences to make their way to the theatre.

Why then do audience members make the journey to Theater Lindenhof? During my field research I asked this question of audience members and members of the Lindenhof. A consensus was reached among both sets of interview partners in relation to this question. They cited the ritual of making the journey from their homes to Melchingen as a unique feature of the theatre which was to be savoured. The journey to the Lindenhof was described as an event in itself. Berthold Biesinger remarks: 'Wobei es viele auch natürlich geniessen. Sie verbinden es fast mit einem Ausflug. Das ist ein Vorteil.'⁹⁶ Melchingen which is reached via twisty and steep roads is in a rural area where the sky and earth seem to meet. The theatre spaces there are different to the typical auditoriums of the urban, state-run theatres. Audience members who travel to Melchingen take part gladly in this phenomenon or ritual by journeying from their homes to the spiritual home and physical location of Theater Lindenhof, Melchingen. Similarly, the actors of the theatre are seen as

⁹⁶ Interview with Berthold Biesinger, 16 December 2010.

undertaking the journey in the opposite direction when they travel throughout the region to perform their productions.

The themes of travelling or journeying are often exploited by the Lindenhof in its productions, both literally and metaphorically. In particular, in Lindenhof's famed Sommertheater productions the audience is normally expected to join in and to walk with the actors in an outdoor setting. Other plays, performed in the theatre's converted barn, 'die Scheune', are traditional auditorium productions but bring the audience, as a member of the theatre commented, on a metaphorical journey. The Lindenhof aims to bring its audience on a journey into the unknown, the uncomfortable or the challenging within the familiar environment of the Swabian Alps. This is referred to in the theatre's statute document: 'Wo wir herkommen und wo wir hinwollen. Das sind wir, das erzählen wir.'⁹⁷

Theater Lindenhof in Melchingen comprises a prime location in the centre of the village. Upon entering the building one comes into a hallway with two doors on either side; one leads to a room which houses the theatre's box office and the other leads into the pizzeria, bar and restaurant which is often busy in the hours before and after productions.⁹⁸ Beyond these doors at the end of the short hallway are two sets of stairs; one short flight leading downstairs into an open courtyard on the opposite side of which is the converted barn which is now the 'Scheune', the Lindenhof's largest stage. The other stairway leads to flights up to the first floor of the building. Upon reaching this landing the door directly ahead leads into an office area where the theatre's administrative work is undertaken. Another room at the back of the first floor contains a cramped kitchen where members of the theatre come and go saying a quick word to each other and pouring a cup of coffee. Here and on the balcony

⁹⁷ Stiftungssatzung des Theaters Lindenhof, p. 3. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

⁹⁸ See photographs 3 and 5 in Appendix III.

outside the kitchen is where I undertook a number of my formal and informal ethnographic interviews. The left-hand side of the first floor is a large room with a small stage at the far end. This room known at the Lindenhof as the 'Saal' is where performances, staff meetings, parties and rehearsals take place. The third floor of the building is where Uwe Zellmer, one of the founding members of the theatre, still lives today. Theater Lindenhof is therefore not a modern, purpose-built theatre space. The state-run theatres have much more modern facilities. In Winterthur where the Lindenhof perform during their touring schedule I was immediately struck by the late 1970's architecture and design of the building. The glass exterior walls allowed the evening light to stream into the large high-ceilinged foyer which housed not only the box office but also a cloakroom, side entrances to backstage, an area for lectures to be given, a concessions section for the interval and large, imposing staircases leading to the audiences' seats. The Lindenhof has the physical appearance of a theatre which lacks funds. However, this too is part of its appeal for its audience. The theatre could be described as a foil to the state-run theatres of the region.

Theater Lindenhof is the second largest employer in the village of Melchingen after Himmel Maschinen which produces agricultural machinery. The theatre has become, as discussed already, a cornerstone of the Melchingen community. It attracts visitors to the village and gives the place relevance far afield. This influence is rarely acknowledged by the Lindenhöfler and it is ironic that they should have this status, considering that the young founding members of the theatre were shunned by the local community when they first arrived.

3.3 Audience

Many members of the Lindenhof audience have also been followers of the theatre for over thirty years. In the course of my participant observation at the theatre I had an opportunity to observe its patrons. In this section I will discuss the Lindenhof's audience in the knowledge that making assertions about it is problematic given that I could not physically attend every performance. However, the audience is a vital part of the life and survival of a theatre and it must therefore be given adequate attention. I will discuss the demographics of audience members at a variety of Lindenhof productions. My observations are based on my attendance at Lindenhof productions since 2007, but particularly from September 2010 to August 2011.

Franz-Xaver Ott remarked that the Lindenhof's audience could be described as being of a generation that has matured with the founding members of the theatre: 'Ich denke, dass das Publikum eigentlich auch mit uns gealtert ist.'⁹⁹ It consists to a considerable extent of people who when young wanted to change the world, but who have since become middle-aged, middle-class and less radical in their political views. Middle-aged, middle-class people are the common denominator in any German theatre audience, so why does the Lindenhof stand out if this is true of it too?

Linda Schlepps, a younger member of the ensemble also made a similar statement about the majority of middle-aged audience members in attendance at Lindenhof productions: 'Ich würde sagen im Durchschnitt im Lindenhof haben wir eher älteres Publikum. Das merkt man sehr stark.' Who are these audience members and why did they begin to follow Theater Lindenhof? Oliver Moumouris comments that: 'Das Publikum hat sich ein bisschen

⁹⁹ Interview with Franz-Xaver Ott, 4 November 2010.

geändert. Ich glaube, dass das Publikum früher, als es gegründet wurde, das Theater, mehr Leute aus Tübingen waren – junge Leute, die es ein bißchen satt hatten mit diesem normalen subventionierten Theaterbetrieb und dann etwas ganz neues gesucht haben.’¹⁰⁰

It may be inferred from Moumouris’ remark that the contemporary Theater Lindenhof audience is made up of members of the local community as well as those from the urban centres in the surrounding region. The less homogenous nature of the theatre’s audience is a success in terms of its inclusive political aims. In the early days the Lindenhof performed less regularly and the political undercurrent was more radical. With the dawn of professionalisation at the theatre in the early nineties the repertoire became more varied, including productions in which the emphasis was on entertainment, such as comedies.

Alison Phipps comments on the documented phenomenon of German theatregoers who turned away from the state-subsidised theatres in favour of private theatres or festivals at the time Lindenhof was founded: ‘The Theater Lindenhof [...] was founded in 1981 [...]. The hugely subsidised state theatres were, at this time, haemorrhaging their audiences (Mumford and Phipps) and seeking ever more avant-garde forms of direction and performance.’¹⁰¹

This movement away from the state-subsidised theatres on the part of audiences around the time of the Lindenhof’s foundation was in line with the mood of the founders themselves, who wished to create their own utopian existence in the rural Swabian Alps. They along with their peers were turning away from the establishment and the injustices they felt it perpetrated and represented. The loyalty of its original audience members is positive for the theatre but a challenge they now face is how to attract a younger audience. Attempts are being made by the Lindenhof to bring a new generation of theatregoers to their

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

¹⁰¹ Phipps, ‘Breaking frames’, 98.

productions.¹⁰² Senior members of the theatre remarked to me in interview that at the beginning the theatre attracted an audience which came mainly from Tübingen. Over the past ten years it has a much larger audience from the local community, that is Melchingen and the surrounding region.

Over the past thirty years, since its foundation, the Lindenhof has succeeded in coaxing members of the local community into the seats of its theatre in Melchingen. The turning point came at the turn of the century when the theatre began to notice many more people from the local area attending productions. Interview partners informed me that the change came about simply because of the popularity of the theatre, which attracted people to the area, and which received good reviews in the newspaper. The increasing numbers of people who were coming to the theatre from outside the rural area and the acclaim the Lindenhof was receiving in the press may have been factors in convincing local people from the rural surroundings of the theatre to come to a performance. Stefan Hallmayer remarked in interview:

Ich glaube schon, dass wir vor allem, was das Ankommen in der Provinz betrifft, mit Sicherheit in den ersten 10, 15 Jahre hauptsächlich städtisches Publikum an Melchingen gezogen haben. Aber in den letzten Jahren haben sehr viel ländlichgeprägtes Publikum den Weg ins Theater gefunden. Das ist, glaube ich, eine starke Veränderung. [...] Zum einen, weil sie neugierig sind, weil sie dann irgendwann gesagt haben, 'Da kommen immer Leute und die [Das Theater Lindenhof] kommen in die Zeitung und so, vielleicht ist das gar nicht so schlecht. Ich gehe mal hin'. Da gab's bestimmt erst Ressentiments gegenüber der Lindenhof-Kompanie und dann war das auch so, [...] ich weiss es jetzt nicht ganz genau, entweder '95 oder '96, dass wir unsere erste Komödie gemacht haben.¹⁰³

¹⁰² I will discuss this later in the chapter.

¹⁰³ In interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 26/01/2011.

The Lindenhof has succeeded in attracting people who otherwise might not go to the theatre but many people have never been there even though they have heard of the theatre. As part of my participant observation I discussed the Lindenhof with members of the local community who had a formal third-level education¹⁰⁴ and who attended the theatre's productions regularly, some of whom have been attending since its inception. On the other hand, I also met teenagers, students and people with special needs who are regular members of the audience at the theatre's performances. When I visited the Mariaberg home for people with special needs some of the residents discussed Lindenhof plays with passion and lamented its outdated wheelchair access to the 'Scheune'. School pupils from local schools and adult members of the local community take part in Lindenhof productions throughout the year and this draws them into the life and work of the theatre. The Lindenhof's 2010 performance of *Die Schutzsuchenden* in Mössingen is an example of such a production where school pupils and other members of the local community take part¹⁰⁵. Many of the pupils had been aware of Theater Lindenhof before their involvement in *Die Schutzsuchenden* but only a rare few had ever been to Melchingen. In interview at the school pupils informed me of their prior knowledge of the theatre.

By involving ordinary people of all ages, but particularly young people in their performances, the Lindenhof attracts a new group of theatregoers to its plays. Going out into the community and performing plays in symbolic places with local people taking part in the performance is a specialty of theirs and an area which I will examine further later. A cynical view of the theatre's desire to perform in parts of the region which are easier to access might be that the choice of location is a desire to boost audience numbers or that the involvement of for example local people or school pupils is a ploy to attract family and

¹⁰⁴ University professors, local Gymnasium teachers and the local doctor in the Französisches Viertel.

¹⁰⁵ See photograph 13 in Appendix III.

friends of those taking part. These practical advantages would not be denied by the Lindenhof. Seeking the balance between the practical realities of fulfilling their financial responsibilities on the one hand while also remaining true to their artistic sensibilities on the other is the challenge for Theater Lindenhof.

A section of the community which is under-represented at all Lindenhof productions, whether in Melchingen, Tübingen or elsewhere throughout the theatre's touring schedule is students. Among the students at the university with whom I discussed the theatre all had heard of Lindenhof and knew of its acclaim. At the University of Tübingen's Ludwig-Uhland Institut's Doktorandenkolloquium, at which I read a paper on the Lindenhof, the students had prior knowledge of the theatre. However only a handful of them had been to the theatre. This they attributed to difficulty reaching Melchingen without a car and the forward-planning a trip to the rural village in the Schwäbisch-Alb required. At the Lindenhof this reason as well as the ticket prices were cited as potential reasons for the lack of students at productions. The prices at a private theatre such as Melchingen would be far higher than the rates charged for a student production.¹⁰⁶ Linda Schlepps commented on the lack of students who come to Lindenhof performances in Melchingen and how that is a market where a clear gap can be seen: 'Studenten. Da haben wir die grösste Lücke. Also es kommen jetzt eher Schüler durch Schulprojekte [...]. Studenten habe ich das Gefühl sind eher so Mangel.'¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ticket prices at the theatre range from €3.00 to €23.00.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Linda Schlepps, 7 December 2010.

3.4 A changing repertoire

When the theatre was founded there were approximately four performances a month, according to founding members. In those days the members were young people who were time-rich and cash-poor.¹⁰⁸ They had plenty of time to rehearse and come up with ideas, unlike today when running the theatre as a viable business is a major concern. In the early days, when plays were produced on an amateur basis, every play could be experimental, but this has changed as the theatre has developed over the past thirty years. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the theatre is now the second largest employer in the Melchingen area, and it must pay the wages of its employees among other bills. The increased professionalisation of the theatre since the early nineties was accompanied by some subsidisation from the state, but it still must earn revenue through ticket sales in order to survive. The equation is simple: the Lindenhof need their audience to survive.

In planning the schedule of performances for an upcoming season it is imperative that the management try to draw viable audience numbers with the plays they put on stage. The directors of the theatre have commented to me that they plan the schedule with emphasis on both the theatre's artistic mission and its financial situation. By 2011, thirty years since its foundation, Theater Lindenhof was putting on 350 performances annually.¹⁰⁹ 230 of these productions are performed in Melchingen, while the other 120 are guest performances by the theatre on stages in its many partner towns all over Baden-Württemberg, but also beyond the local region in places such as Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and Winterthur. The Lindenhof entertains 20,000 people annually at its theatre in Melchingen, and a further 25,000 on stages in many other parts of the region.¹¹⁰ Schedules typically feature two

¹⁰⁸ See the development of the theatre's repertoire in Appendix IV.

¹⁰⁹ Zukunft: Theater Lindenhof: Umbau und Erweiterung, Flier, April 2011.

¹¹⁰ In conversation with Stefan Hallmayer, acting-director of Theater Lindenhof.

performances, an experimental piece and an entertaining or crowd-pleasing play. A discussion of the theatre's artistic mission, its budget for a given production and how the audience will receive the production is part of the decision-making process in choosing a play. A Franz-Xaver Kroetz play was to be produced at Christmas 2010 but the cost of the production as well as the serious subject-matter, which might have alienated some audience members, meant that *Älles Onser!* by Franz-Xaver Ott and Oliver Moumouris was staged instead.

The make-up of an audience at Lindenhof depends on the play being performed. Mostly local, middle-aged women attended *Die Drei vom Dohlengässle*¹¹¹ on the evenings I was present, whereas *Georg Elser - Allein Gegen Hitler*¹¹² had a more varied audience of mostly middle-aged but also some young people from villages in the Swabian Alps and also from Tübingen and Reutlingen. At a performance of *Kohlhaas*¹¹³ many young people were present, as well as older people. All three plays are part of the repertoire at the Lindenhof and as such are performed regularly both in Melchingen and on tour. The reason more local women attended *Die Drei vom Dohlengässle* than any other section of the public is firstly that it has as its central characters a trio of Melchingen women, Josephe, Martha and Hildegard. These women are from a small village and dream about the world beyond their local area in word and song. A reference must be made here to a theme seen in most Lindenhof productions, that is the emphasis not only on the local area but also the global. A popular theme of Lindenhof plays is the Schwäbisch-Alb. Often the main characters of productions are either stuck there and dreaming of a utopia far afield or they are abroad and dreaming of their idyllic home place. This theme is also consistent with the Lindenhof

¹¹¹ See photograph 12 in Appendix III.

¹¹² From here on referred to as *Georg Elser*.

¹¹³ See photograph 18 in Appendix III.

founders' desire to create a sort of utopia for themselves in Melchingen and their constant questioning of their own identity while at the same time remaining strongly loyal to it.

*Georg Elser: Allein Gegen Hitler!*¹¹⁴ is another Lindenhof production which touches on themes which are both locally and globally relevant. However unlike *Die Drei vom Dohlengässle*, it attracted a crowd which spanned a broader demographic range. The play tells the story of the Swabian resistance fighter Georg Elser who worked alone to try to assassinate Adolf Hitler and did not breathe a word of his plan to anyone. The audience at this play included a majority of middle-class, middle-aged people, both male and female, but also seemed to attract a younger middle-class audience of boys and girls in their teens. Another Lindenhof production, *Kohlhaas* is performed by father and son Stefan Hallmayer and Luca Zahn. They tell the story of *Kohlhaas* from different perspectives as they leaf through the play by Kleist. They step outside of their characters to tell the story in the language of Kleist in their own words. *Kohlhaas* attracts a much younger audience than is common at the Lindenhof. An important factor in this is that the play was a set text for the 2011 secondary school leaving examination, the *Abitur*. As well as being an opportunity to produce this important play, performing it is a nod to the anniversary of Kleist's death and also, it must be noted, in view of its inclusion on the *Abitur* syllabus, a sure way of earning profit.

3.5 Professionalisation

The early nineties marked a change of pace at the theatre. Plays were being produced more frequently and the movement from performing solely plays with serious political undertones to also performing more light-hearted plays heralded a new era for the Lindenhof, who,

¹¹⁴ See photographs 14 and 15 in Appendix III.

perhaps, as well as becoming more professional, were becoming more commercialised. The decision to expand the repertoire seems to have been a very pragmatic one. The theatre wished to attract more audience members to its performances in Melchingen, so it diversified the content of its repertoire. Brigitte Wagner, Theater Lindenhof's *Kaufmännische Leiterin* at the time commented in interview: 'Damals ist der Schritt vollzogen worden von dem wirklich kleinen Theater zu einem Regionaltheater. Das heisst irgendwie auch viel mehr Zuschüsse durchs Land und dadurch auch hat sich die Personalsituation weiter entwickelt. Es sind viel mehr Beschäftigte jetzt hier und dadurch mehr Spieltermine.'¹¹⁵

As the founders matured and developed in Melchingen, so too did their sensibilities. Their policy of reaching out to a smaller audience with more critical plays such as Kroetz's *Bauernsterben* became less important and the order of the day became reaching as many people in the region as possible and delivering a milder, though still socially critical message. Aside from maturing and becoming a part of the status quo, the need to run a functional business became a factor for the Lindenhof from the 1990s onwards, when the theatre became more professional and when most of the founders were working there full-time and had families who required their financial support. Franz-Xaver Ott remarked in interview on the stark change which occurred in the early 1990s when the Lindenhof moved from its semi-professional form to the professional theatre it is today:

Am Anfang war es viel weniger professionell. Es ist [...] aus dem Amateur Bereich entstanden. [...] Wir haben dann einmal im Monat gespielt oder so. Anfang der 90er Jahre hat das sich verändert. [...] Dann haben wir öffentliche Subventionen

¹¹⁵ Interview with Brigitte Wagner, 8 February 2011.

bekommen und dadurch konnten wir uns auch mehr leisten. Ab '91 hat das sehr wesentlich verändert.¹¹⁶

During the 1990s the theatre found itself in a position to expand its audience base from a group of loyal fans made up mostly of students and academics from Tübingen and Reutlingen to a wider group spanning a much larger demographic from the village of Melchingen and further afield in the surrounding towns and villages. The Lindenhöfler's political aims were evolving at a fast pace during this period of the theatre's existence and its desire to reach as many members of the local community as possible with its socially critical *Volkstheater* was coming to the fore. The inclusion of more light-hearted topics performed in the local language was a bid to reach a wider group of audience members and is in line with the theatre's contemporary political mission to include as many members of the local community as possible in its socially critical productions. The serious themes of the play favoured by the founding members in the early years of the theatre were not appealing to a broader range of local society. The theatre's move towards a more diverse repertoire was in line with its desire to expand its theatre and more importantly to expand the reach of its political influence. Theater Lindenhof is regularly referred to as a semi-professional theatre but Stefan Hallmayer remarked in interview: 'Es ist kein Amateurtheater. [...] Natürlich waren wir [...] formal gesehen ungefähr die ersten 10,15 Jahren Amateure. Aber die Auseinandersetzung mit dem jeweiligen Stück, Stoff war immer sehr tiefgreifend, also in Anführungszeichen: Professionell.'¹¹⁷

The Lindenhöfler were a self-proclaimed amateur company in the early years of the theatre's existence prior to its move towards greater professionalisation beginning in the early 1990s but according to Hallmayer in the present day the term amateur does not

¹¹⁶ Interview with Franz-Xaver Ott, 4 November 2010.

¹¹⁷ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

accurately describe the theatre. Although Theater Lindenhof has been a self-professed professional theatre company for thirty-two years, an ambiguity with regard to the labelling of the theatre as professional became evident over the course of my field research. The theatre functions as any private theatre would but private and semi-professional theatres are not necessarily mutually exclusive. There is an ambiguity here to which I refer in the next paragraph.

Several factors have led to the confusion regarding whether the Lindenhof is a professional theatre or a semi-professional one. As remarked above, Theater Lindenhof was an amateur theatre in its early days. Although it has been professional since the nineties, it retains many of the characteristics it had in the early years following its foundation. Having largely the same cast of actors as it did at the beginning, as well as its location in Melchingen, its emphasis on local stories, its use of the Swabian dialect and its desire to produce socially critical *Volkstheater* are all characteristics of the theatre which have remained largely unchanged throughout the years. On the other hand, with the onset of a more professional approach at the theatre, marked differences did occur such as the noticeable increase in the number of productions staged in a given year. However, the overriding sense in the community that the theatre as it exists today shares more similarities than differences with the theatre in its early days has perhaps contributed to the perpetuation of the myth that Theater Lindenhof is a semi-professional or amateur organisation. The theatre itself is also responsible for allowing itself to be viewed as semi-professional but achieving professional standards. I described above how the members of the theatre relish situations in which a performance achieves critical acclaim despite the fact that the financial resources available for the production were very limited.

Another factor giving an impression of the theatre as an amateur one is its performance

spaces. They are not cutting-edge. The ‘Scheune’ is old with uncomfortable wooden seats and the ‘Saal’ on the upper-level of the main building is simply a medium-sized room with a small raised stage at one end. Plastic chairs are moved in and out of the room for audience members to sit on. The room also serves as the Lindenhof’s rehearsal space and the room in which parties and staff meetings are held. Such facilities must contribute to the notion that this is an amateur or semi-professional theatre. The fact that to this day a majority of the theatre’s ensemble members do not have formal training in acting and directing could be cited as another reason why the Lindenhof is considered to be a semi-professional or amateur theatre. A final reason why the Lindenhöfler are still associated with amateur theatre is that they strive to include amateur actors in their productions. This aim is central to the socially critical mission of the theatre and it is set out in their constitution. In the summer 2011 performance at Stetten am kalten Markt¹¹⁸ for instance, all of the performers were local people. Equally in *Ein Dorf im Widerstand* at the Pausa in Mössingen in 2013 local people performed alongside professional actors from the Lindenhof ensemble. However, the most important factor is, as mentioned above, that a large proportion of the theatre’s audience has been following it since its foundation. As a result of this they have known the theatre since the days when it was an amateur organisation. Perhaps this long-held view of the theatre is difficult to redefine, especially given the theatre’s apparent lack of interest in dispelling the myth in its marketing.

3.6 Political aims

In the beginning the founders were part of a movement out of the city, out of the mainstream, globalised world and back to the countryside, to nature and a simpler life:

¹¹⁸ See Stetten am kalten Markt on a map in Appendix II.

‘zurück zur Natur, zum ursprünglichen, zur nicht entfremdlichen Arbeit.’¹¹⁹ They were inspired by the aims and ideals of the 1968 student movement. Hallmayer tells of the early days:

Wir haben uns getroffen, über die Stoffe geredet und mal geprobt. Das war ja eher so eine alternative Bewegung zum vorgefundenen bürgerlichen Leben, eine Parallelbewegung zur grünen Bewegung. Eine Bewegung zum Anti-Atomkraftwerk. Es gab auch einige wie die etablierten Stadttheatermacher, die dann ausgestiegen sind und entweder bei uns ’was gemacht haben oder freie Gruppen gegründet haben. Ende der Siebziger und Anfang der Achtziger war das eine ganz, ganz starke Bewegung.¹²⁰

This desire to create their own destiny and to improve conditions in their local area motivated the young founding members to create their own theatre in the Swabian Alps. In an informational pamphlet published by Theater Lindenhof, the theatre’s founding years are described in the context of what motivated the young founding members in those early days, and what their vision was. At this critical developmental stage in the history of Theater Lindenhof, the core political aims of the theatre were developed. Theater Lindenhof’s current political mission is still in line with the aims the young group started out with:

[...] die Wurzeln in der linken städtischen Studentenbewegung und der eigenen Jugend auf dem Land, zog es die ungestüme Schauspieltruppe vor Jahren in die 700-Seelen Gemeinde Melchingen. Wo die schwäbische Alb am rauhesten ist, fernab der Kulturmetropolen, kauften sich die Theaterleute die Dorfwirtschaft ‘Linde’. Mit feueireifer bauten sie daraus ein Zuhause für sich und ihre Kunst [...]¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

¹²⁰ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

¹²¹ *Es ist Melchingen und es sind die Sterne*, informational pamphlet produced by Theater Lindenhof.

Hurm described the young founders' reasons for setting up their theatre in Melchingen. According to him it was an anti-establishment move. Similarly to other interview partners, he too saw the founding of the theatre as the manifestation of the young group's desire to take their destiny into their own hands and redefine and reclaim their future and that of the local community in the rural Swabian Alps region: 'Es war der Gegenentwurf zu dem ein Rädchen zu sein in irgend einem Getriebe. So sich selber zu gestalten, sein Leben selber in die Hand zu nehmen. Eigene Entwürfe für sein Leben zu machen und, die in die Tat umzusetzen. Und unter anderem auch ein eigenes Theater zu gründen.'¹²² This is in line with the thinking and philosophy of the 1968 student movement.

The young group's wish to change the status quo, to challenge societal norms and to examine society's beliefs has remained one of the missions of Theater Lindenhof. Theater Lindenhof has achieved its aim of creating a theatre which is influential in its local community and which carries out its political mission. Ticket sales at the theatre indicate that it is reaching its local community and the press attention which it receives for its socially critical theatre spreads its message further throughout the community.

This stance which the theatre adopted from its earliest emergence was part of a wider cultural movement in Germany at the time which sprang from the student movement of the sixties and seventies. The movement was adopted wholeheartedly by the young Lindenhöfler and today those who founded the theatre remain true to the belief system which they developed together early on. In the following extract from an interview Hallmayer describes some of the political movements to which the Lindenhof subscribed and the manner in which the theatre's audience at the time made up a critical and well-informed opposition in contemporary society:

¹²² Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

Und es hat so, dieses was ich beschrieben habe, mit gesellschaftlicher Bewegung und Protest gegen rechtskonservative, verkrustete Strukturen, gegen Ausländerfeindlichkeit, gegen Ausrüstung, gegen Kernenergie, gegen Wahnsinn der unendlichen Wissenschaftsgläubigkeit. Also, dass wir dann da als Theatergruppe, die sich kritisch mit der Gesellschaft auseinandersetzt hat. [...], dass wir nicht allein waren, dass wir Publikum hatten, dass uns gesagt hat 'genau das ist mein Theater. Das unterstütze ich auch in Form von Spenden und so'. Das ist gut, weil sie sich hinstellen und sind im Prinzip eine Opposition, eine kultivierte kritische Opposition ohne Gewalt.¹²³

Bernhard Hurm remarked to me in interview that one of the major factors which drew the young group to set up a cultural centre with a strong emphasis on theatre in the Swabian Alps was the intellectual romantic movement in the 1980s associated with the notion of *Heimat*. The notion of *Heimat* and the Lindenhof are inextricably linked. I will discuss questions of *Heimat* in Chapter Five. Inspired in part by the Swabian romantic movement, the Lindenhof developed a strong passion for telling local stories onstage and honouring its local heroes, language and stereotypes:

Inspiriert war es auch ein bißchen von der schwäbischen Romantik. Die schwäbische Romantik war eine literarische Richtung von Ludwig Uhland, Kerner,¹²⁴ Gustav Schwab und Eduard Mörike. Das hat auch eine Beziehung zu den alten Geschichten, zu den Ruinen draussen auf dem Land, zur Beschwerung von Mittelalter, von mittelalterlichen Geschichten und so. Es war auch ein bisschen dabei in dieser Suche nach der Ursprünglichkeit. Es hat ein bisschen so etwas Post-Romantisches mitten drin genähert, oder auch diese Post-Romantik natürlich. Es war auch eine Bewegung, die damals einen studentischen Zusammenhang hatte und bei den Kunstwissenschaftlern gab es das Aufkommen einer neuen Heimatsdiskussion. [...] Erstmal haben sie sich von dem Heimatbegriff abgegrenzt, weil er von den

¹²³ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

¹²⁴ Justinus Kerner was a nineteenth century Swabian poet who collaborated with Uhland and Schwab.

Nationalsozialisten vereinhmt war und so mit Blut und Boden verhaftet war. Aber es kommt auch in der neuen Intellektualität eine neue Heimatsdiskussion: auf sich die Gegenden wieder auch sozusagen von links her oder vom Aufgeklärten her sich wieder zu besetzen. Auch dieser Begriff und es war auch Teil dieser Bewegung – auf dieses Land hin und auf diese Heimat neuzubeleben... also Heimat neuzubeleben, nämlich auch über die Wunde und Narbestellen auch von Geschichten. Nicht nur immer jubeln, sondern die Heimat auch sich genauanzugücken, wie geht die Heimat mit Fremden um. Wie hat sie auch Leute fremd gemacht und ausgestossen, die nicht dazugehören dürften.¹²⁵

In interviews with audience members who have followed the Lindenhof since its earliest days, I have heard many remarks on the manner in which the Lindenhöfler created an alternative life for themselves. Although the theatre has become more institutionalised as it has become more professional, particularly over the past twenty years, it still maintains its image of being a place which fosters free and creative thinking and creative theatre. Aligning themselves with left-wing issues from the peace and ecological movements among others gave the theatre a left-leaning political mission from the early days which it retains to this day. The fact that it has retained much of its original audience means that this image of Theater Lindenhof as a radical, free-thinking organisation has survived more easily due to the thirty-year-old preconceptions these audience members have. One of the Lindenhof's aims is to attract as many people as possible to the theatre, and to create critical and entertaining plays which deal with topics relevant to the local people. The theatre's constitution which was made legally binding in 2011 calls explicitly for this. Its mission is to offer: 'Gesellschaftsrelevante und -kritische wie auch unterhaltende Themen und Stoffe, die aus der Region kommen und zu den Themen der Zeit passen.'¹²⁶ Bernhard Hurm

¹²⁵ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

¹²⁶ Stiftungssatzung des Theaters Lindenhof, p. 5. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

remarked in interview upon the theatre's desire to include every member of society in its theatre (*Gesamtgesellschaftliche Ziele*):

Wir möchten auch noch immer wieder eine Einladung an die Bevölkerung hier formulieren. Auch, wenn auch nicht alle hierherkommen. [...] Eine Einladung für die normalen Leute, die hier leben und arbeiten, die vielleicht mal Bauern waren oder vielleicht aus bäuerlicher Herkunft sind, dass sie auch ins Theater gehen können.¹²⁷

Hölderlin's exhortation 'Komm! Ins Offene, Freund!' is frequently associated with Theater Lindenhof. In fact, the first eight lines of the poem are written in large font at the top of the theatre's constitution. Hölderlin is in the words of Oliver Moumouris 'der Haushelige',¹²⁸ at Theater Lindenhof. The words 'Komm ins Offene, Freund!' are the first in *Der Gang Auf's Land*, one of Hölderlin's famous poetic works. The exhortation as used by the Lindenhöfler is a challenge to themselves and members of the local community. It springs from the political aspirations which the group of young founding members who were critically engaged in redefining their own identity and that of the community in which they founded their theatre. The phrase is energetic and heraldic in nature. In the case of the Lindenhöfler, the audience members join them by attending a production or taking part in one. The word 'Offene' is positive and also rather vague and all-purpose. It invokes images of the wide-open space in the Schwäbisch-Alb where Theater Lindenhof has its spiritual home in Melchingen. This word might also indicate light or freedom. The phrase however is embraced by the Lindenhof to reflect its wish to attract all strands of society to the theatre, in other words it is in line with the theatre's politically and socially motivated aim to

¹²⁷ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

¹²⁸ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

include all members of the community in its theatre. Ways in which Theater Lindenhof accept the invitation or challenge inherent in Hölderlin's exhortation are

1. writing plays which can be understood by a diverse range of people on various levels and combining straightforward colloquial language with complicated classical speech
2. including lay people from the local community in certain productions as actors or stage crew

In its productions Theater Lindenhof uses a variety of registers with a view to catering for as diverse a section of the local community as possible. Berthold Biesinger remarked: 'Also wo, wie soll ich sagen, der Professor genauso angucken kann wie ein Handwerker.'¹²⁹ The theatre's success in fulfilling its aim to include local people in productions is evident upon revisiting its performances. Productions embracing all members of the community, including groups who are traditionally seen as marginalized, are favoured by the theatre, and per annum an average of three plays of this type are produced. Stefan Hallmayer who has been part of numerous productions of this nature commented: 'Es ist eine persönliche Meinung von mir, die hat auch mit den Anfangsjahren zu tun und mit Joseph Beuys und so, dass jeder spielen kann. Jeder Mensch hat kreative Seiten und in jedem Mensch steckt Potential.'¹³⁰

Perhaps Hölderlin's phrase invites the reader or audience member to break free from possible deterrents and reach his / her potential? The belief that each citizen can contribute to the local community is a strongly-held one at Theater Lindenhof. Oliver Moumouris remarked on this subject: '[...] wenn man zu den Gründern anschaut, ist es so, dass sie alle

¹²⁹ Interview with Berthold Biesinger, 16 December 2010.

¹³⁰ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

mitzunehmen versuchen. Also wenn jemand sagt, "Ich möchte mitmachen", dann werden alle mitgenommen. Das ist auch eine politische Haltung. Das ist so eine einheitliche, gesamtgesellschaftliche Position. Nicht nur begabte Menschen, sondern auch Leute, die einfach Leidenschaft dafür haben.'¹³¹

The Lindenhöfler succeed in including members of the local community in their productions. On the other hand, however, the group of Lindenhof employees and ensemble members is an extremely close-knit community to which outsiders do not often gain access. The slow and careful manner in which they have approached recruitment of members of the ensemble is a testament to this. The younger members of the ensemble who granted me interviews came into contact with the Lindenhof while they were still at school and remained in contact with the theatre for many years before finally joining the ensemble. Oliver Moumouris remarked that he was one of the first ever to audition for a part. He joined the ensemble in 2008. In general, the Lindenhof's recruiting method seems to revolve more around who they know and who they meet. When I took on the role of assistant to the director for the Lindenhof production of *Älles Onser!* it was Stefan Hallmayer's son Luca who worked alongside me¹³² and when a trailer needed to be made it was the wife of Uwe Hund, the theatre's technical director, who took on the role. The Lindenhof use the resources they have at their disposal.

The Lindenhof is not a state theatre run by a director employed by local government. It is a local theatre, established and run by people from the Swabian Alps who were not formally educated to fulfil these positions but rather created the roles for themselves. Despite its success, the theatre remains firmly rooted in the local culture: 'In Burladingen und im

¹³¹ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2011.

¹³² See the scanned document including Zahn's name as a member of the team in Appendix VI.

Zollernalbkreis daheim, über Schwaben und Württemberg hinaus, weit in der Welt zuhause. Provinz ist Welt. Welt ist Provinz.¹³³

The founding members of the Lindenhof have a strong passion for their local place, culture and language. Rather than decamping to Berlin, London or any other free-thinking metropolis, where they would have found people with similar ideals, they stayed in their own place, and battled in the early years to be accepted by the local community. This in itself could be described as a political statement on their part. In this chapter I have engaged with topics relating to Theater Lindenhof, such as its history and development, which members of society its audience is composed of and how the theatre underwent a wave of professionalisation in the nineties. Ethnographic methodology played a significant role in this chapter. I employed 'dense description' to offer the reader a 'tour' of Theater Lindenhof's performance spaces in Melchingen. I engaged with the question of why Melchingen is so important to the Lindenhöfler, and lastly I explored the political aims of the theatre. In the next chapter, Chapter Five, I will continue my analysis of the workings of Theater Lindenhof within an ethnographic theoretical framework.

¹³³ Stiftungssatzung des Theaters Lindenhof. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

Chapter Four

4.1 Introduction

Significant changes have occurred in Germany during the period 1981 to 2016.

Reunification and Germany's emergence as a European financial and technological power are defining events of this period. In addition, Germany has become a leading member of the European Union and the Eurozone. The members of Theater Lindenhof were expanding their theatre and making it more professional at a time when Germany was experiencing reunification and rebuilding and renegotiating its domestic and international identity as had been defined in the aftermath of World War Two. The ideas and mission of the 1968 student movement from which the theatre's political aims and philosophies spring were crucial to the founding members' thinking in the theatre's earliest years and as a result the left-leaning, free-thinking, open-minded ideologies of the student movement have remained beliefs which are still upheld at the Lindenhof. The theatre's productions are characterised by a strong element of social criticism and this is reflected in its repertoire throughout the years since its foundation, which includes productions relating to social development in a local and global context, as well as performances on the subject of the German resistance during the National Socialist era. During ethnographic interviews relating to the theatre's history and development I learned how the theatre's members hoped the modern, rapidly-changing Germany which they witnessed in the 1990s would be socially responsible and would value the rights and freedoms of the individual, protect the environment and care for those in need. Stefan Hallmayer mentioned some of these aspirations in interview in reference to the ideological movements from which Theater Lindenhof sprung. As mentioned above, these aspirations have remained part of the Lindenhof's philosophy to this day.

This historical backdrop, in my view, contributed to the feeling of momentum and the wish to create a professional and viable theatre. This was a time in German history when there was an emphasis on regrowth, rebuilding and perhaps most significantly renegotiating the German identity. To a non-German student of German culture, language and history, developments during the period in which the Lindenhof was becoming more professional in nature seem to mirror the growth and expansion of the theatre itself. Although this was never mentioned to me by members of the theatre or the local community, parallels between the country and the theatre in this respect might be drawn. An aspiration on the theatre's part to renegotiate, rebuild and repurpose is also discernible. In line with the philosophies and ideology of other members of the 1968 student movement the Lindenhof did not leave their local place but decided to remain and renegotiate traditional ideas of local, rural identity in the Swabian Alps. From their earliest plays they questioned traditional mores and did so in the local tongue.

The members of the Lindenhof also changed with the theatre as it grew from humble beginnings in the early eighties to the household name it is in the region today. This obvious development of the cast of members of the troupe as they changed from young students, to adults, parents and so on, meant a natural change as priorities turned from making a change in society at all cost, to also providing a home and support for their children. There also was a mellowing in terms of more extreme political agendas.

4.2 Work ethic, finances

I witnessed the work ethic of the theatre firsthand while working as part of the Lindenhof team. Moumouris remarked upon it: 'Es ist Melchingen und es sind die Sterne. [...] Das

trifft es sehr gut, finde ich. Es gibt immer Schmutz unter den Nageln. Es ist nicht nur Parfüm.¹³⁴ Uwe Hund remarked how members of the theatre go above and beyond for the theatre and do so gladly: ‘Hier macht jeder mehr [...] Deine Aufgabe fällt ein bisschen breiter als das, was im Arbeitsvertrag beschrieben ist auf jedenfall. [...] Ein großes Theater mit 150 oder 200 Beschäftigten – das wird verwaltet. Und bei uns gibt es mehr Reibungspunkte, die auch wieder frischen Wind bringen und uns zum Überlegen zwingen.’¹³⁵ Having worked at larger theatres throughout the region but having always followed Theater Lindenhof, he wished to be part of this theatre where he could take part in many aspects of stage design, organisation and production: ‘In den größeren Theatern war ich nie mehr auf der Bühne. Es gab nur Administration und das ist auf Dauer langweilig. Und hier hat man die Möglichkeit, mal ein Bühnenbild zu gestalten. Es ist einfach unheimlich vielseitig und sehr familiär.’¹³⁶ Although it is not in their strict job description, he describes one of the unusual activities the members of the theatre become involved in: ‘Wir haben eine kleine Marketing-Gruppe, zum Beispiel. Da drin sind Oli, Linda, Christine und ich, und wir bereiten zum Beispiel Feste vor, und kümmern uns um organisatorische Sachen für den Tag der offenen Tür.’¹³⁷

After all, the team of the theatre is quite small. The stated number of people employed at the Lindenhof varied from interview partner to interview partner. Most however cited a number between 15 and 19. Brigitte Wagner, the *Kaufmännische Leiterin* of the theatre, commented as follows on the employees of the theatre: ‘Sechszehn sind angestellt, festangestellt, wobei wir dann nebenher immer noch ganz viele Schauspielerinnen und Schauspieler [bezahlen], die für bestimmte Stücke verpflichtet sind, und nur dann.’¹³⁸ The small size of the team is

¹³⁴ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

¹³⁵ Interview with Uwe Hund, 25 November 2010.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Interview with Brigitte Wagner, 8 February 2011.

striking, especially considering it includes box-office ticket agents, office workers, management, stage crew and full-time actors. This feature of Theater Lindenhof's image marks it out from other state-run and larger theatres in the region such as the Landestheater Tübingen which has much greater staff numbers.¹³⁹

The Lindenhof employees must therefore work hard to run the theatre. They frequently carry out tasks which are not in their job descriptions. They work very long hours that would not be allowed in state-run theatres, whose employees tend to be unionised. Rehearsals often last late into the night or continue until shortly before actors are due to perform in productions currently running at the theatre. Sacrifices are made in order to achieve the highest quality production. Actors work in cold or less than comfortable conditions. The director and members of the lighting crew may work much longer hours than they are contracted for. The manner in which the members of the theatre joined it or came to be involved in it gives a reliable indication of the style in which the theatre is managed. Judging from the profile of the employees at the theatre, there is a clear preference for locals who speak the dialect of the region. Many of the founding members of the Lindenhof have remarked to me that the theatre developed organically into the business it is today. This may be true but by only recruiting people who have shown real commitment¹⁴⁰ to the theatre, they have managed to create a loyal team.

The youngest members of the Lindenhof ensemble, Linda Schleppe and Oliver Moumouris, described how they both first came into contact with the theatre in their school days.

Gradually becoming more involved in the activities of the Lindenhof as they grew up, they

¹³⁹ An in-depth comparison of Theater Lindenhof and other theatres in the region, country and international theatres would be worthwhile but was outside the scope of this study.

¹⁴⁰ I will provide an example of this kind of commitment to the theatre later in this chapter.

both eventually became full-time members of the ensemble. Berthold Biesinger described his path to becoming a member of the theatre:

Ich habe eine Lehre als Maschinenmechaniker gemacht und wie es dann in den Anfangsjahren bei allen natürlich war, Lindenhof oder die Schauspielerei haben wir nebenher als Hobby, als Freizeitbeschäftigung gehabt. [...] Ich habe dann nochmal eine Lehre als Orthopädisch-Schuhmacher angefangen. Ich habe da auch eine Weile gearbeitet – und Lindenhof nebenher – und war dann halb/halb: Halb Schuhmacherei, halb Lindenhof, und irgendwann dann ich glaube vor 12 oder 13 Jahren, dann Lindenhof ganz: '97/'98.¹⁴¹

In the early years, the Lindenhof even offered overnight facilities to raise some extra funds. Hurm describes: '[...] Übernachtungsbetrieb haben wir auch noch gemacht. Da wo unser Büro ist, haben wir Stockbetten für Studenten und Schüler gehabt.' An interview partner who wished not to be recorded described cycling through the Swabian Alps as a young person in the early eighties and stopping at the Lindenhof to spend the night.¹⁴²

The Lindenhof receive sponsorship from companies based in the locality. It is sponsored by three companies; GMG Color¹⁴³, Alb Gold¹⁴⁴, and Barth Logistikgruppe¹⁴⁵. GMG Color, which is located in the French Quarter in Tübingen, approximately 24 kilometres from Melchingen, supply and develop high-end colour management software. Alb Gold, which has its headquarters in Trochtelfingen, approximately 11 kilometres south of Melchingen in the Swabian Alps, manufactures noodles and pastas, in particular the traditional Swabian varieties such as Spätzle and Maultaschen. Barth Logistikgruppe, which operates from

¹⁴¹ Interview with Berthold Biesinger, 16 December 2010.

¹⁴² Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

¹⁴³ GMG Color's website: <http://www.gmgcolor.com/deutsch/ueber-gmg/kontakt.html>, accessed on 23 September 2013.

¹⁴⁴ Alb Gold's website: <http://www.alb-gold.com/de/aktuelles>, accessed on 15 June 2016.

¹⁴⁵ Barth Logistikgruppe's website: <http://www.barth.eu/de/>, accessed on 15 June 2016.

Burladingen, approximately 12 kilometres from Melchingen, are specialists in freight transport.

Theater Lindenhof's emphasis on the local is evident again here in its sponsors which are all companies which have their bases in the region. The companies which sponsor Theater Lindenhof have relevance in the local community and beyond. Despite the sponsorship which it receives from these companies as well as other financial sources such as the subsidy received from the federal state within which it is situated, Baden-Württemberg, the theatre also earns a substantial part of its income from ticket sales.

The team at the Lindenhof has expanded greatly since the early days when all members of the theatre were required to supplement their income. At first the members required full-time employment outside of the theatre. Little by little the gap closed and the theatre became their full-time job and their sole source of income to live from. To this day financial resources are low at Lindenhof, as Hurm remarked:

Die Landestheater sind natürlich vom Land gewollt und das ist auch ihre erste Verpflichtung. Aber letztendlich machen wir das gleiche wie sie, bloss halt viel, viel billiger und viel, viel eigenwirtschaftlicher. Also, die machen es mit viel mehr Subventionen. Wir machen es mit viel mehr Idealismus, und Selbstaussbeutung auch vielleicht.¹⁴⁶

Linda Schlepps described the repercussions in terms of job description and workload caused by the theatre's small team and weak financial situation:

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

Dadurch das es so klein ist, bringt man viel mehr mit. Man ist viel mehr in allen Strukturen mit darin, was oft auch anstrengend ist. Wo man sonst nicht zu viel zu tun hätte, da ist jeder irgendwie mit involviert oder jeder sagt auch zu allen irgendwie was, was oft anstrengend ist. [...] Ein bisschen wie eine Familie, mit allen Problemen dieser Familie – mit Ablösungsproblemen, die Jungen von den Alten.¹⁴⁷

Schlepps' likening of the Theater Lindenhof team to a family is repeated by other interview partners. The tight-knit community at Lindenhof allows for a situation where opinions are heard as they might be in a family. At staff meetings at the theatre I was struck by the open debates between team members which one would not associate with a traditional workplace. Oliver Moumouris commented on the characters at the Lindenhof and how they work together:

Ein Streitpunkt innerhalb des Ensembles ist, was die Ästhetik ist und was wir wollen. Wir haben wirklich unterschiedliche Ansichten von dem, was gutes Theater ist, und es gibt ganz heterogene Ansätze. Es gibt auch heterogene Haltungen zum Beruf. Also manche haben ein unglaubliches Fleiß-Ethos und manche machen es eher locker. Manche sehen, dass das Theater eher für sie was ist, manche sagen, 'Ich bin fürs Theater da'. Es gibt eine sehr heterogene Haltung dem Theater gegenüber und das ist nicht so einfach aber das ist auch der Reichtum. Es gibt kein *corporate identity* [...], was man so an *behaviour codex* oder sowas gibt es nicht, aber wir haben immer einen guten Groove, eine gute Stimmung, und wir haben sehr, sehr unterschiedliche Personen, die zusammenkommen.¹⁴⁸

It became evident that it was not necessarily the harmony among staff members that led to the success of many productions despite a serious lack of resources. Despite their differences the staff at the Lindenhof have a pride in their theatre and passion for it that causes them to work for hours extra voluntarily in order to achieve the highest possible

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Linda Schlepps, 7 December 2010.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

quality of production. I can attest to this spirit as it was evident while I worked at the theatre. In a letter to the Lindenhof's audience Stefan Hallmayer describes the scene at the Stadttheater in Heidelberg where the Lindenhof perform their plays. Upon arriving at the theatre in Heidelberg he is greeted by nine members of Stadttheater Heidelberg's stage crew. Expecting to meet an equal number of stage crew from the Lindenhof, they are surprised to see only Hallmayer along with his son Luca, who played opposite him in the theatre's successful production of *Kohlhaas, Schauspiel nach Kleist*, and an apprentice stage hand who works at the theatre. He describes the resulting confusion on the part of the employees of the Staattheater as they proceed to assemble the stage for Lindenhof's production of *Kohlhaas*: 'Dann öffne ich den Kofferraum an meinem Kombi, sage, dass da alles drin sei, was wir auf der Bühne brauchen: Mikro, Nebelmaschine, Schwert, Kostüm. Es gab nicht einmal für jeden dieser arbeitswilligen Männer etwas zu tragen.'¹⁴⁹

Uwe Hund told a similar story about how surprised the stage crew at the Stadttheater in Stuttgart were at how few resources the Lindenhof required to stage a performance. He commented as follows: 'Zum Beispiel in Stuttgart haben wir das erlebt. Der technische Leiter ruft fünfmal bei mir an und sagt, das kann nicht sein. Ihr müsst mehr brauchen als das bisschen schwarzes Vorhang und die sieben Scheine.'¹⁵⁰

Hund went on to explain that the theatre's *Technische Leiter* finally required the list of what the Lindenhof needed in written form to be sure there would be no confusion on the day of the performance. The Lindenhöfler seem to relish this type of situation and they pride themselves on making theatre which with minimal financial means manages to receive critical acclaim as a socially critical *Volkstheater*. The free-flowing style of management

¹⁴⁹ Theater Lindenhof's letter to the audience. April 2011.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Uwe Hund, 25 November 2010.

practiced at the theatre seems to stem from the early days of its existence and is in line with its political aims. In the early days, money was scarcer and the members of the theatre had to work elsewhere to make their living. However, when it did receive some money Hurm described how the funds were simply divided on the basis of whoever needed it. There are parallels between this type of approach and that practiced at the theatre currently where the management style does not involve the *Intendanz* dictating to the rest of the staff. If a member of staff wishes to take time off to work on a project of their own or take a break, then this is granted where possible. Whether the management style will continue in this manner into the future remains to be seen, especially with the transformation of Theater Lindenhof into a foundation and the legalisation in 2011 for the first time of an official statute for the theatre. I will examine this in greater depth in Chapter Five.

4.3 *Regionaltheater*

Theater Lindenhof is described as a *Regionaltheater*. It is the only *Regionaltheater* in Germany and it invented the term. The *Stuttgarter Zeitung* commented, in an article published 18 May 2011 relating to the Lindenhof's 30th anniversary, 'Es ist das einzige Regionaltheater Deutschlands und inzwischen weit über die Landesgrenzen hinaus bekannt'.¹⁵¹

The term *Regionaltheater*, similarly to the titles 'Die Melchinger' or 'Die Lindenhöfler' is becoming interchangeable with the name Theater Lindenhof. It is a word the Lindenhöfler have claimed as their own. Each interview partner with whom I discussed the question of

¹⁵¹ Hemminger, L., 'Theater Lindenhof feiert Jubiläum: Bodenständig, heimatverbunden, weltoffen', *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 18 May 2011, <http://www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/inhalt.theater-lindenhof-feiert-jubilaum-bodenstaendig-heimatverbunden-weltoffen.8e11a2cc-1037-4d0a-8480-efbab726044a.html>, accessed on 15 June 2016.

the origin of the term maintained that Theater Lindenhof had invented it along with politicians from the region. According to them, being designated a *Regionaltheater* means that Lindenhof serves not only the village of Melchingen but also the entire Schwäbisch-Alb region which surrounds it. The Lindenhof claim this entire region as its home soil. Stefan Hallmayer commented on how the Lindenhof's role as a *Regionaltheater* gives them a sense of responsibility and allegiance to the region:

Ja, das ist nicht umsonst Regionaltheater. Und darüber hinaus, suchen wir, ob das jetzt die Pausa ist,¹⁵² in Mössingen, ein denkmalgeschützter Ort, ein wunderbarer Ort, der kurz vor dem Abbruch stand, wo wir auch so uns als Verantwortliche für die Region sehen und einfach wünschen, dass das nicht abgerissen wird und, dass was schönes daraus wird. Dass wir den allgemeinen Wandel der Zeit, wo eben aus Industriehallen vielleicht Konzert- oder Eventhallen entstehen können, mit Modeschauen, Ausstellungen, Theater und Musik. Da wollen wir uns daran beteiligen. Ebenso, dass wir Projekte aufsuchen: Tübinger Sommertheater. Jetzt wieder aktuell, wo wir aus dem Silcher-Denkmal¹⁵³ ein Schillerplatz machen wollen, ein Skulpturenpark.¹⁵⁴

This notion that the theatre is responsible for the region and must raise awareness and engage with contemporary social themes onstage was a part of the founders' original philosophy. The designation of Lindenhof as a *Regionaltheater* came in the early nineties. As mentioned earlier, it was at this juncture that the theatre became more professional and less extreme in its political motivations. The adoption of the designation *Regionaltheater* was an important turning-point, and being the only one in Germany gave the theatre a unique position on the German theatre scene. The use of *Regionaltheater* to describe

¹⁵² The Pausa in Mössingen was a textile printing factory. The buildings are in the Bauhaus style. Theater Lindenhof have performed *Die Schutzsuchenden* (2010) and *Ein Dorf im Widerstand* (2013) in the Pausa. Further information: <http://www.moessingen.de/de/Politik/Pausa>, accessed 15 June 2016.

¹⁵³ Philipp Friedrich Silcher was a nineteenth-century Swabian composer. See photograph 17 of the Silcher Denkmal in Appendix III.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

Lindenhof coincided with the theatre's increase in funding from the state. Having such a term associated with them allowed the Lindenhof to become more of a part of the mainstream theatre scene in its region. The term *Regionaltheater* suggests that the Lindenhof's role is to perform for the region and this is what the theatre set about achieving in the years' following 1990. Typically of Theater Lindenhof, the term *Regionaltheater* sets them apart but also draws them into more institutionalised and established settings. These kinds of tensions are characteristic of Theater Lindenhof and make the subject valuable as a focus of academic research. Hallmayer described the upcoming performances in Tübingen, Stetten am kalten Markt and Mössingen in summer 2011, and included them as part of Theater Lindenhof's vision of a *Regionaltheater*: 'Im Sommer sind wir in Tübingen und in Stetten am kalten Markt. Im September öffnen wir unsere Spielzeit in der Pausa in Mössingen und gehen dann wieder hoch auf die Alb. Wir sind schon ein Theater der Region. Melchingen ist wichtig als Ausgangspunkt.'¹⁵⁵

This regional engagement has positive financial implications for the theatre. Its touring programme allows it to survive financially. Bringing a production to the stage in Melchingen requires the theatre to advertise, employ box-office staff, pay for insurance, lighting, and actors and other staff for the duration of the performance. However, by performing on stages owned by their many tour partners Lindenhof takes on less financial risk, as the tour partner must shoulder the expenses of advertising, ticket sales, staff etc. The Lindenhof's tour programme also allows it to reach a greater number of people in the region and as such expand its audience base to include people from all over the Swabian region and further afield. Hurm remarks on the financial necessity touring has become: 'Wir brauchen sie zu überleben. Unsere Art Theater heißt Regionaltheater. Das hat vor dem

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

Lindenhof als Wort gar nicht gegeben. Das haben wir sozusagen für uns in Verbindung mit Kulturpolitikern erfunden.¹⁵⁶

The significance of the meaning of the term *Regionaltheater* is important but it also serves, as mentioned already, a very practical purpose. It provides the Lindenhof with the money it needs to survive and facilitates a corridor through which the theatre can receive extra subsidies from its federal state, Baden-Württemberg. Hurm explained the financial workings in interview:

Regionaltheater: das soll ja heißen, dass das Land Baden-Württemberg auf jedem kommunalen Euro, zwei Euro vom Land zugibt. Also, wenn wir von unserer Stadt zwanzig kriegen, kommt vom Land nochmal vierzig dazu, und wir haben dann sechzig. Und dann gehört zum Regionaltheater auch, dass wir eine Region bespielen müssen, eine grosse Region. Und wir können dann sozusagen Partnerschaften mit Städten machen. Sie geben uns auch Geldzuschuss und wir geben ihnen Theater dafür. Aber sie geben uns das nicht pro Abend, sondern geben uns jedes Jahr fünf Jahre lang zehntausend Euro. Felbach oder Bietigheim, sie geben uns dreißig Tausend Euro auf immer, also bis wir sie kündigen, bis sie es kündigen. [...] Deswegen, wenn uns Bietigheim dreißig [Tausend] pro Jahr gibt, kriegen wir nochmal vom Land 60 Tausend für diese dreißig Tausend. Dann haben wir neunzig [Tausend]. Und dann für die dreißig Tausend, die Bietigheim uns gibt, müssen wir natürlich, im Laufe der Zeit, immer wieder 'was tun.¹⁵⁷

The term *Regionaltheater* allows Theater Lindenhof to function with greater state funding than would be possible if it did not hold this status. The very fact that politicians in the region felt it would be appropriate to bestow this title upon Theater Lindenhof reflected the importance of the Lindenhof to the region. The term *Regionaltheater* suggests a serious and

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

socially responsible theatre company which acts to enrich its community, engage with its pitfalls and look to the future. A *Regionaltheater* is both the organisation itself and the type of regionally relevant productions put on stage at the theatre. The Lindenhof's claim to this term as its own elevates it and marks it out in a saturated theatre market. It also provides a modern alternative to the term *Volkstheater*.¹⁵⁸ Although the Lindenhof is modernising the *Volkstheater* genre and repurposing it, in respect of *Regionaltheater* it has a blank slate and an authoritative position as Germany's only theatre of this kind.

Being so designated, as remarked above, means that the Lindenhof travel throughout the region on a regular basis to perform plays for its region. Its designation as a *Regionaltheater* dovetails with the theatre's desire to include as many people as possible in its productions, allowing it to perform more frequently throughout the entire region and not simply in Melchingen or Tübingen.

Burladingen, the district (*Kreis*) in which the theatre is situated, also provides financial support to Theater Lindenhof, without the conditions attached to the agreement formed with towns to which the Lindenhof travel on tour as a *Regionaltheater*. For example, according to Hurm, Bietigheim gives the theatre an agreed sum of money on the proviso that they perform a certain number of times per year. Each play has its own price depending on the number of actors and stage crew who must travel and the level of stage design and props.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ I will return the subject of *Volkstheater* in Chapter Seven.

¹⁵⁹ Example of charges – *Theatertreffen*: €6,500 *Georg Elser*: €5,500.

4.4 Amateur performers from the community

The desire to include members of the local community in their theatre is part of the political mission of the theatre. Every year the professional actors at Theater Lindenhof perform alongside locals whose day-job is not acting. Stefan Hallmayer described in interview how the Lindenhöfler go about deciding on the plays which will be added to the theatre's repertoire in a given season. Productions involving lay people from the local community are included in this advance planning:

Eigentlich machen wir mit Profis zusammen einen Spielplan mit drei bis vier Produktionen pro Spielzeit, und darüber hinaus noch Projekte, die ich gern bezeichne. Ich weiss nicht, ob es eine gültige Definition ist, aber in dem Moment, wo wir eine Kooperation mit Mariaberg machen oder Stetten, wo dann andere Leute mitspielen und nicht nur unsere Schauspieler, dann ist es für mich schon ein Projekt. Wenn wir selber sagen, wir machen *Älles Onser!* und wir holen einen Regisseur und es spielen unsere Schauspieler, dann ist es kein Projekt, dann ist es eine Produktion.¹⁶⁰

The inclusion of members of the local community means a much larger number of performers and a lot more organisational or administrative tasks alongside rehearsals. Oliver Moumouris, author of *Die Schutzsuchenden* and co-author of *AUSSEM PARADIES: Eine Stadtgeschichte*, described in interview how rehearsals for performances in which amateur actors from the local community took part involved much more rehearsal time than a regular production with only professional actors. Both *Die Schutzsuchenden* and *AUSSEM PARADIES: Eine Stadtgeschichte* are *Projekte* by Hallmayers definition. Each play had dozens of members of the local community taking part as actors and stage crew. In Stetten am kalten Markt a large cast and crew were involved in their summer 2011 production

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

which took place on the town's main square. Why is the inclusion of local people in their productions so important to the Lindenhof? The theatre's socially critical aspirations which spring from the political movements it was part of in the eighties and its *Gesamtgesellschaftliche Ziele*, which are summed up in Hölderlin's phrase 'Komm! Ins Offene Freund!' – a tag-line the theatre associates with closely – are of central relevance. Hallmayer explains the ideological reasoning for the Lindenhof's inclusion of local people in its productions:

Was ist Theater am Rand? Das ist eben nicht nur dieser Ort mitten in der Stadt, und da sind Schauspieler und Zuschauer, sondern das ist auch die eine kleine Performance mit Laien, Amateuren, Menschen mit Behinderungen, Menschen mit einer Vergangenheit im Gefängnis – also mit ganz bestimmten Erfahrungen. [Zu diesen Leuten sagen wir], 'Kommt mal herein ins Theater' und 'Wir brauchen Euren Erfahrungsreichtum'. Erstmal grundsätzlich muss das nicht gleich dahin führen, dass einer auf der Bühne steht, aber, dass wir diese Menschen mit ihrem Reichtum mitaufnehmen. Ich finde, dass das ein sehr wichtiger Bestandteil des Lindenhofs ist. Es ist auch eine grosse Lust von mir, in die Richtung Theater zu machen: projekthaft. Eben deshalb, weil es auch ein Experiment ist, weil es keine professionellen Schauspieler sind, aber trotzdem sie eben in dieses Theater mit seiner ganzen professionellen Struktur reinzuholen.¹⁶¹

Naturally the inclusion of members of the local community in plays has the benefit of creating a sort of *self-made* audience. The theatre is constantly striking a balance between remaining socially critical and not alienating its audience. The theatre must sell tickets to survive, so its dependence on its audience is very real. The inclusion of amateurs allows the Lindenhof to fulfil one of its political aims and simultaneously boost attendance numbers.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

4.5 *Schwäbisch*

Hurm remarked that the intention behind using *Schwäbisch* in the theatre's first play in 1981, *Semmer Kerle Oder Koine: Ein Heimatabend*, and ever since was to reach the local people and honour local traditions. *Schwäbisch* is one of the most divisive subjects discussed with interview partners during the ethnographic field research carried out for this study. There was no consensus among members of the Lindenhof team on the topic of the importance of the dialect to the theatre and its identity. Some members described *Schwäbisch* and its use in the theatre as being of central importance to its image. Others saw the use of the dialect simply as a consequence of the fact that the theatre is located in the Swabian Alps region. It is rare to meet someone at the theatre who does not speak *Schwäbisch*. The sound of Theater Lindenhof is that of *Schwäbisch*. Most people in the village of Melchingen speak *Schwäbisch* while going about their normal daily activities. Thus, to many outsiders unfamiliar with the dialect, travelling from Tübingen to Melchingen is like journeying to a foreign place. The central importance of the dialect to its work is thus a distinguishing feature of the Lindenhof. The theatre's constitution refers specifically to study of the dialect and its relevance as a medium in the performance of plays: 'Untersuchung des Dialektes und seiner Relevanz als wesentliches poetisches Mittel bei der Umsetzung von Stücken.'¹⁶²

This importance of the Swabian language at the Lindenhof is a subject of contention at the theatre. In interview I received varying descriptions of the importance of the dialect to members of the theatre. The appearance of a reference to Swabian in the constitution of the Lindenhof cements in our minds the link between the theatre's artistic output and the dialect, however the response from interview partners left this less clear, particularly from

¹⁶² Stiftungssatzung des Theaters Lindenhof. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

those members of the theatre who see themselves as striving to be as professional as possible and to shake off any links between the banal, uncritical connotations that references to local, community theatre and local dialect conjure up. There is tension between ensemble members who wish to simply perform local community theatre in the local language and those whose desire is to create productions which are relevant on a national and international level and which are performed in a more universally intelligible tongue such as High German. Amidst this tension the theatre finds itself in a unique position, performing theatre that is simultaneously local, community-based and in the local language and yet is relevant on a wider global level. This characteristic feature of Lindenhof's productions gives them a critical relevance for research in German Studies.

Hallmayer remarks in interview that the decision to use the Swabian dialect is, in his opinion, 'überhaupt nicht vordergründig.'¹⁶³ Although the Lindenhof claim that its theatre grew organically out of their love for performance and their wish to create community-based theatre in the Swabian Alps, their hard work and dedication to building up a theatre which is highly regarded by critics on a national level is, in my view, also derived from their collective ambition for wider recognition for their theatre which does not simply perform trivial *Volkstheater*. The theatre's wish to question the Swabian identity and its flaws as well as engaging with globally relevant questions regarding the environment or ethics has given it an edge on many of its competitors in the Swabian region.

Biesinger as a life-long resident of the Swabian Alps was a strong proponent of the use of the Swabian dialect in day-to-day life at the theatre and also, most importantly, in Lindenhof productions: 'Ich persönlich finde es ganz arg-wichtig: Ein grosses, wichtiges Standbein, dass wir haben, und das ist eine Ausdrucksform, wie die Musik sein kann, wie

¹⁶³ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

die Requisiten sind oder das Bühnenbild. So ist unsere Sprache eine sehr wichtige Farbe um Geschichten zu erzählen.¹⁶⁴

For Biesinger *Schwäbisch* was more than a colloquial language to make daily communication quicker and easier. Rather it was a form of expression and a carrier of meaning which he as an artist valued highly, particularly in the context of telling local stories. Hallmayer on the other hand is not as passionate about the necessity for the theatre to use the Swabian dialect; he reiterates its importance as the vernacular all over the Swabian region: ‘Klar, auf der Alb ist die Umgangssprache Schwäbisch. Ich schwätze auch Schwäbisch. Das ist natürlich je nach dem, wo man sich bewegt.’¹⁶⁵ Although it is the language of the theatre in day-to-day offstage life and is very frequently heard onstage. Hallmayer commented on the outside pressure on the Lindenhof to produce plays in their native dialect:

Ich finde, dass jeder Stoff, jedes Stück seine angemessene Sprache finden muss und selbstverständlich wählen wir oft, wenn wir, nehme ich wieder das Beispiel von Georg Elser, wenn wir das machen oder auch wenn wir Schiller machen, denken wir – schon auch wird das von Theaterexperten an uns herangetragen, ‘Schiller hat lebenslang Schwäbisch gesprochen und Hochdeutsch geschrieben. Also ihr müsst doch als schwäbische Truppe, ihr müsst ’was zu Schiller machen, der wie Sie am Tisch gesprochen hat’. [...] Dieses Spannungsfeld begeben wir uns gern.¹⁶⁶

Schwäbisch is the vernacular at Theater Lindenhof, however all members of the theatre speak High German. When *Schwäbisch* became a barrier to me understanding something at Theater Lindenhof, High German was the lingua franca used to communicate. Schleppe, who was born and raised in Tübingen, described her difficulties with the language as

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Berthold Biesinger, 16 December 2010.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

¹⁶⁶ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

someone who did not grow up in the rural Swabian Alps and whose parents were not speakers of the Swabian dialect: 'Für mich ist es auch gar nicht so einfach, weil ich eben die Sprache nicht so spreche wie die anderen. [...] Das Schwäbische – ich konnte das als kleines Kind aber meine Eltern sind nicht von hier, deswegen habe ich das nicht so extrem als Kind mitbekommen.'¹⁶⁷ According to her when she speaks *Schwäbisch* onstage the locals would always hear that she did not grow up speaking the dialect: 'Man würde mich immer raushören.'¹⁶⁸ She continues: 'Das merkt jeder, der in den Lindenhof geht, wenn wir etwas spielen, was auf schwäbische Sprache geschrieben ist und, was durch Schwäbisch gesprochen wird, dann falle ich 'raus.'¹⁶⁹

The extremely local nature of the dialect is perhaps evident in Schleppe's remark, 'Ich bin ein bisschen Migrant von der Sprache her'.¹⁷⁰ The close identification of the language with the people of the region and its adoption by the theatre marks Lindenhof out from other theatres. The theatre's ability to use this local language, often in connection with a local story, and nonetheless to make the production globally relevant, is a significant part of its artistic success.

Geographical distinctions in Swabian dialect usage were discussed regularly while I was working at the theatre. Some of the Lindenhof members could hear extremely subtle differences in pronunciation which indicated what village a speaker was from. This pride and proximity to the true nature of its local culture is unique to Theater Lindenhof and likens it to a centre or a museum for Swabian culture. Defining the Lindenhof as a museum is very problematic. The theatre's productions, although often based on true stories, also

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Linda Schleppe, 7 December 2010.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Linda Schleppe, 7 December 2010.

regularly include a great deal of imagination and creativity. This would not be the case in a museum where historical facts are emphasized. The Lindenhof is also an organisation which is constantly evolving and creating new productions. However, even if Lindenhof does not function as a museum, it collects much that is relevant to local culture in its productions and that will be valuable in years to come.

The theatre also translates classic plays into the Swabian dialect, both fully and partially. A recent example of such a production is the 2011 play *Don Quijote* which was translated in parts from Swabian to High German. In discussing the Lindenhof's translation of complex literary texts such as the poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin, Moumouris remarks that:

Es gibt einen ganz eigenen Geruch plötzlich von dieser Sprache und sie ist nicht mehr so: Das ist keine elitäre Grausamkeit mehr, sondern das hat auch 'was mit uns zu tun. Also es kommt irgendwo her. Und das ist auch eine Stärke des Lindenhofs, dass es in einer Lage ist, vom Boden, von der Erde heraus bis zu den Sternen alles irgendwie hinzukriegen.¹⁷¹

Moumouris describes how the dialect is seen as belonging to the residents of the region. Hearing their local tongue juxtaposed with words from classical texts attracts audience members to the theatre. The dialect could also be described as having the effect of demonstrating insider/outsider status. The Lindenhöfler wish to make all members of the local community welcome and the use of the Swabian dialect is seen as an essential for this.

4.6 Press

A key to the success of the Lindenhof is also the support it receives from the local press.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

The *Schwäbische Tagblatt* is a daily newspaper in the Swabian region which reports on local and international news stories and events. The Lindenhof's plays have consistently been given space and indeed are frequently reviewed positively in the paper. During the period of ethnographic field research undertaken for this study in Tübingen, the newspaper even distributed a special multi-page feature about Theater Lindenhof on the occasion of its change of status from Verein to Stiftung, and of course the thirtieth anniversary of its foundation. The newspaper, whose main office is located on the banks of the River Neckar in the heart of Tübingen, is only a few steps from where the Lindenhof's 2011 Sommertheater performance of *Schiller!* took place and where the widely acclaimed *Hölderlin. Tübingen. Turm.* was performed in 1986. The paper has accompanied the theatre throughout since its earliest days.

The Lindenhof members are well-known in the Swabian Alps and as such the people whom I met, all of whom I asked about the theatre, seemed always to communicate to me a level of pride and ownership they had in the theatre. This proprietorial disposition on the part of people of the region is surely a success for the Lindenhof. Moumouris remarked on what he viewed as the theatre's inability to define itself from within and its reliance on the press, its sponsors and its audience to show it its identity: 'Meines Erachtens haben wir eigentlich keinen Konsens. Der Konsens kommt von Aussen. [...] Die Kritik oder die Sponsoren sagen, "Ihr seid das" und dann sagen wir, "Ja, das sind wir". [...] Von innen heraus können wir, glaube ich, nicht sagen, was wir sind.'¹⁷²

Perhaps the Lindenhof is defined by outside sources. Perhaps in this regard it does conform to a democratic ideal that is inherent in *Volkstheater*. If they want to be a theatre for all the people, as they frequently state, perhaps the people should decide what they are. Perhaps it

¹⁷² Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

is simply too difficult for the theatre to define itself given the deep attachment its members have to it. As a theatre which evolved organically from the early days when there was nothing but a group of idealistic young people, the Lindenhof, it could be argued, requires this outside source to define it, because it itself is evolving and developing its next idea, its next project and has little time to reflect.

4.7 Participant observation at Theater Lindenhof

From October to December 2010, as part of my participant observation, I worked as assistant to the director on the production of *Älles Onser!* at Theater Lindenhof. This provided me with the opportunity to become part of the everyday working life of the theatre and to become even more familiar with the world of the Lindenhof, its people and its practices. Being a part of the rehearsals for *Älles Onser!* and being involved in the work on stage design, costume design, marketing and ticket sales enabled me to observe first-hand the entire process involved in a Lindenhof production, from the original idea to the script, the staging, and finally to the preparation for the opening night. This has been invaluable in terms of my research, allowing me to gain insights which have helped me to create a comprehensive picture of the workings of the theatre.

Linda Schlepps, Berthold Biesinger, Thomas Maos, Franz-Xaver Ott and Gerd Plankenhorn performed *Älles Onser!* Apart from Thomas Maos, who composed the music for the production, these performers are all full-time members of the Theater Lindenhof ensemble. They are all from the Schwäbisch-Alb and perform the play in *Schwäbisch*. Oliver Moumouris co-wrote the script with Franz-Xaver Ott. Similarly to Ott, Moumouris is also Swabian and employed as full-time members of the Lindenhof ensemble. A freelance director and actor, Philipp Becker, who is also Swabian and who has been working with

Theater Lindenhof since his teenage years, directed the play. Maria Abt, the theatre's tailor, who lives in the village of Stetten unter Holstein, approximately 4 kilometres from Melchingen, made the costumes¹⁷³. Luca Zahn, the son of the theatre's acting director, Stefan Hallmayer, was *Hospitant*.¹⁷⁴

The inspiration for *Älles Onser!* came from a radio show by Udo Zindel on SWR2 called 'Sender am Ende der Welt'. The broadcast was a Fasching¹⁷⁵ prank about Swabians who live on a small island in the Pacific but still maintain their distinctive Swabian culture, dialect and practices. They speak in tongue-twistingly dense Swabian and sing about Swabian delicacies like *Spritzgebäck*, *Maultaschen*¹⁷⁶ and *Wackelpudding*, which are not available to them on the island. Zindel's idea caught the imagination of the Lindenhöfler who asked him for permission to write a script based on the story. The resulting production tells of four Swabian explorers who crash-land on a tropical island and decide to turn it into their very own Swabian paradise where wonders like a 'Lebenslange Laugenbrezel-flatrate', 'Das Sparschwein als Wappentier' and 'Freier Zugang zur Maultasche' exist. However, someone already lives on the island. How long will it take the idealistic Swabian explorers to accept the existence of this other being in the place that they have named their Swabian paradise?¹⁷⁷ Co-author of the play, Franz-Xaver Ott described in interview the origins of the production and why Lindenhof decided to present this offering in December 2010/ January 2011:

Wir wollten schon nochmal ein Stück machen, dass mit den schwäbischen
Karaktereigenschaften umgeht. Diese thematisieren wir. Wir wollten aber

¹⁷³ See map showing Stetten unter Holstein in Appendix II.

¹⁷⁴ Trainee

¹⁷⁵ The carnival season before Lent.

¹⁷⁶ Pasta pouches filled with meat and vegetable. A Swabian speciality. A large Maultasche represented the island on which the Swabian explorers crash-landed in the promotional posters for the production. See Scan 1 in Appendix VII.

¹⁷⁷ See photographs 9 and 10 in Appendix III.

gleichzeitig ein bisschen, sagen wir mal, weiterkommen oder ein bisschen tiefer an dem Punkt schürfen. Und wir wollten auch ein bisschen frecher sein und trotzdem glaube ich, dass das Stück eigentlich vom unterhaltenden Punkt ausgeht und hoffentlich ein paar Punkte auch böse ist, oder die Schwaben auch in einem Licht zeigt, wo sie dann doch imperialistisch sind oder gemein oder kapitalistisch und so. Also insofern ist es vielleicht eine Hybrid-aufführung, wobei darin, sowohl die unterhaltende als auch die dunkle Seite des Schwabens ist, und die böse Sicht auf dem Schwaben vorkommt.¹⁷⁸

The play pokes fun at stereotypes such as the ‘hard-working Swabian’ or the ‘frugal Swabian’ with plentiful comedic scenes about and references to potential dangers such as closed-mindedness, stubbornness or frugality. In discussing the role of comedy in German drama Gillian Pye remarks that: ‘[...] as a battle for discursive mastery, the comic can play a particularly important role in both the exploration of the breakdown of systems of signification and the expression of the potential of the theatre itself to signify.’¹⁷⁹ The employment of comedy in the examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the Swabian identity is typical of Lindenhof productions such as this.

The tropical island setting is an alien environment in which the Swabian language, cultural practices and habits of the four explorers are highlighted. The ‘native’ on the island (the musician) speaks an unintelligible tongue. The language used to represent it is Irish or Gaelic, the native language of Ireland, which has been spoken there since ancient times. I speak Irish and was therefore able to represent in that language the native islander’s songs and utterances, and teach the actors the correct pronunciation.¹⁸⁰ Oliver Moumouris commented on the production which he co-wrote with Franz-Xaver Ott:

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Franz-Xaver Ott, 4 November 2010.

¹⁷⁹ Pye, G., *Approaches to Comedy in German Drama*, E. Mellen Press: 2002, p. 355.

¹⁸⁰ See the islander’s song in Appendix VI.

Wir wollten irgendwie den Schwaben als Studienobjekt von aussen betrachten [...]. Es [Älles Onser!] ist schon irgendwie auch kritisch. Also wenn man über dieses ganze Lied bedenkt: Diesen Kehrwochenterror, also Sauberkeit und so. Es gibt schon Seiten des Schwabens, die sehr unangenehm sind. [...] Also der Schwab ist sehr verschlossen. Er ist Fremden gegenüber sehr kritisch. Er hat nicht diese offenen Arme. Er ist schweigsam, er ist kleinkariert vielleicht auch. Aber wenn man es nur so sieht, ist es viel zu kurz. Der Schwabe ist auch grosszügig. Die grössten Dichter Deutschlands, die Schwaben sind, z. B. Hölderlin ist der grösste Dichter [...]¹⁸¹

The play was presented to the audience as a mild examination of the Swabian character and a fun and absurd journey. The budget for the production was not large. The technical director, Uwe Hund, and the tailor, Maria Abt, usually build the stage or make the costumes to the specifications of a stage or costume designer, but in this case they created the costume and stage design themselves. The four Swabian explorers, D'Flamm, Dr Bolla, Dr Luft, and Dr Nass, were dressed as fire, earth, wind and water, and the Lindenhof auditorium, 'die Scheune', was transformed into a tropical paradise with actual earth on stage as well as rocks and foliage. The stage even featured a real waterfall for added effect.

The rehearsals took place at Theater Lindenhof in Melchingen. For lack of funds there is no specific rehearsal stage for most productions. During the day we would rehearse in the 'Saal', a smaller auditorium located upstairs in the Lindenhof building. This room is used for all kinds of productions, a number of times a week. We began to rehearse in 'die Scheune' later in the process. Since the stage for *Älles Onser!* included soil and a water feature, it was reserved for performances alone. The props for the play were often sourced in the 'Fundus'. This treasure trove of props is the Lindenhof's storage space in Melchingen. It is a large barn which is a three-minute walk from the theatre and reaching it involves walking through the quiet village of Melchingen past the local bank and a horse grazing in a

¹⁸¹ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

resident's back garden.

Budgetary issues did not lead to any curtailment of the theatre's ambitions for the production. The opening scene of the play featured a short film of the four Swabian explorers travelling through space. This was shown on a large white kabuki screen which shielded the stage itself from the view of the audience. As the explorers crash-landed on the island in the movie, the four actors dressed in space costumes were lowered from the ceiling on an open-sided lift.¹⁸² The short film had been shot in knee-deep snow in a field near the theatre where in summertime the grass is lush and green.¹⁸³ Dressed in warm clothes, we had trekked to the field to carry out filming with the permission of the owner, a local man. The 'Swabian explorers' were dressed in outfits made from tin piping bought at a hardware store and water polo hats.¹⁸⁴

In the short film the actors walked along the snowy ground as though they were walking in space until they eventually arrived at their spacecraft, a large wind turbine. Wind turbines dot the landscape of the Swabian Alps around Melchingen. For the locals or anyone who has travelled to the theatre they would be a recognisable feature of the local landscape. With the help of a blue screen and some sparklers a model of the wind turbine was made to look like a rocket about to take off into the starry sky. This link to the local landscape from the very beginning of the play, in the form of the wind turbine/ rocket, is typical of Lindenhof productions, which rarely leave local places unacknowledged.

Having crash-landed on the island, the Swabian explorers, who were lowered from the roof

¹⁸² See photograph 8 in Appendix III.

¹⁸³ See photograph 6 in Appendix III.

¹⁸⁴ A short trailer for *Älles Onser!* which can be seen on YouTube features some of the footage from the opening video sequence, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzSMoD5iWBA>, accessed on 30 October 2011.

of the 'Scheune' onto the front of the stage, begin their adventure in their new tropical home. As already remarked, the costumes for *Älles Onser!* were designed and made by Maria Abt and her team of seamstresses in the nearby village, Stetten unter Holstein. The warehouse, which is rented by the Lindenhof, is full of costumes from years of productions. The local women who make them live in the area and speak pure Schwäbisch. They all think highly of the theatre. In interview many of them remarked that they thought that the Lindenhof's location was very important and, similarly to other interview partners, they thought that it is the people of the Lindenhof and their dedication and inspiration that make it successful. For them the fact that the Lindenhof perform quality theatre that often tells local stories in their own dialect makes it a theatre that they want to call their own.

Many of them attended the premiere of *Älles Onser!* and the celebration afterwards at which they had a meal of *Maultaschen* and *Kartoffelsalat* as they sat at beer hall tables decorated for the occasion. *Maultaschen* are pasta pouches filled with meat and vegetable. They are similar to Italian ravioli but larger. In keeping with the Lindenhof custom of keeping everything at the theatre local, the 'Maultaschen' are prepared by the local butcher shop, which is the most prominent feature in the town, after the Lindenhof itself and the town hall. This shop is visited regularly by members of the theatre, who are greeted warmly by the butcher when they walk in with a hello followed by a fast-paced conversation in Swabian.

4.8 Theater Lindenhof – a tightly knit group

My participant observation in the *Älles Onser!* production brought home to me how closely-knit the groups involved in such a project at the theatre become. Where outside help is required it is often a friend or spouse or someone local who is asked to step in. I was

struck by their passion for their work and their determination to make the production a success, especially with limited financial resources. Schlepps commented: 'Wir haben nicht viel Geld. Wir machen alles selber.'¹⁸⁵

During the *Älles Onser!* rehearsals I noted that Lindenhof performers have a significant say in most matters relating to the productions in which they take part, for example stage design and costumes. They can also have a major impact on the script, with the permission of the authors; at rehearsals there is constant discussion between performers and the director or authors about the script. Co-author of the text, Oliver Moumouris, remarked that the play was not a finished-product when the rehearsals began and it was not meant to be: 'Es ist ein Vorschlag, Material. Es gibt auch schon eine Dramaturgie, eine Idee. [...] Es gab eine Konzeption und einen Text. Es ist nicht so wie *Die Schutzsuchenden* zum Beispiel, wo ich es geschrieben habe und ich wusste: So muss es sein.'¹⁸⁶

Linda Schlepps who played D'Flamme commented: 'Es war als Ensemblestück gedacht, also es war auch so gewollt, dass es zwar geschrieben wird als eine Vorlage aber, dass alle daran arbeiten.'¹⁸⁷ For example, the original intention was that Icelandic would represent the language of the 'native islander', but the arrival of a speaker of Irish prompted the logical and sensible switch to that language. The performers constantly come up with ideas for props and so on. For example, in *Älles Onser!* they used price-tagging machines, which they sourced themselves, to mark their territory on the island. Thus there was no sense that changes and improvements were the responsibility of the director alone. The basic attitude to changing things was very positive and accommodating.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Linda Schlepps, 7 December 2010.

¹⁸⁶ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Linda Schlepps, 7 December 2010.

By only recruiting people who have shown real commitment to the theatre and a passion for it, they have managed to create a loyal team. An example of the type of small, closely-connected group typical of Theater Lindenhof productions is provided by *Kohlhaas*, in which Stefan Hallmayer, founding member and acting-director, performs alongside his son Luca Zahn. The play was directed by Antu Nunes, *Theater heute's* Nachwuchsregisseur des Jahres 2010, who, like Hallmayer and Zahn, has strong ties with the theatre. He was born and raised in the locality and has been involved with the Lindenhof since his school days. It was through his links with the theatre that he became aware of his passion for performing in and directing plays. The youngest members of the Lindenhof ensemble, Linda Schlepps and Oliver Moumouris, describe a path to Theater Lindenhof similar to that of Nunes. They both also came across Lindenhof in their school days when they joined the theatre club at their school, the Geschwister-Scholl Gymnasium, theatre club or performed in the play put on by their literature class. Gradually becoming more involved with the Lindenhof as they grew up, they both eventually became full-time members of the ensemble.

Some of the administrative staff at the theatre and the actors have done voluntary work or paid work at Mariaberg e.V. which is an organisation that helps young people and those with special needs. It is situated 14 kilometres south-east of Melchingen. The desire to be engaged with the local community and to help it prosper is part of the philosophy of the Lindenhof which springs from the ideology of the 1968 student movement. According to interview partners, another Lindenhof philosophy or aim is to promote local culture and local stories. The two employees who are responsible for media relations, Christine Heinz and Herbert Carl, both studied Swabian culture at the Ludwig-Uhland Institut at the University of Tübingen. In the next chapter we will turn to the theatre's future as a *Stiftung* or Foundation. The Lindenhof's aims and philosophies, such as promoting local culture and stories, are set out in the Foundation's statute document.

Chapter Five

5.1 Die Stiftung and its implications for Theater Lindenhof

As Theater Lindenhof approached its thirtieth anniversary in 2011, members began to ask questions about its future. For instance, what would happen once the founding generation was no longer directing the theatre? In what form could the theatre continue to survive? Who would take over the mantle from the current management? Would the political aims of the theatre remain the same? Although some of these questions will not be answered for many years to come, formal steps have been taken by the Lindenhöfler to protect their theatre in the hope that it will last into the future. Thus, in a bid to, in their view, protect the integrity of the theatre, the current members set conversations in motion to discuss the best options for the future. The result was the establishment, on the 1st of January 2011, of the *Stiftung* Theater Lindenhof (Theater Lindenhof Foundation). In this chapter I will examine the stance at the theatre in relation to its future and the mechanisms the Lindenhof has put in place to preserve its existence in the Swabian Alps. Theater Lindenhof's discussions around its legacy and internal organisation are key to wider questions of place, identity and to the passing of the 1968 generation at the theatre. The description of the changes occurring at the theatre in this chapter will be situated within the wider context of the concepts of community and particularly the concept of *Heimat*. The orientation of Theater Lindenhof with respect to the discourse on *Heimat*, particularly in current German studies scholarship, will be considered. A critical analysis of the changes which took place at the theatre when it became a *Stiftung* will accompany reflection on questions such as how these changes affect the ideals of the theatre going forward. I will ask why traditional or conventional forms of management common in capitalist enterprises have been set up and whether forms of participatory democracy would be more conducive to the theatre's ideals.

This chapter will begin with a description of the legal and managerial changes which took place at Theater Lindenhof in 2011, including an outline of how the legal terms have been defined both in the Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch and by academics. Following this, responses from ethnographic interviews will aid in illuminating the position of both the management and members of the Lindenhof in relation to the changes which have occurred at the theatre. Alongside critical discussion relating to the responses of members of the theatre, I will outline how the changes mark a new era at the theatre with the passing of the 1968 generation. The chapter will conclude with an analysis of what the future holds for the Lindenhof, particularly now that its form of self-governance and management has changed. A response to questions such as whether the recent legal transformation to a *Stiftung* at the theatre is for the better or not and whether other forms of management would have been more appropriate will conclude this chapter.

5.2 Theater Lindenhof eingetragener Verein

Until 2011 the theatre had existed as a ‘Verein’ (club, society or association): ‘Seit seiner Gründung im Jahre 1981 wurde das Theater Lindenhof in der Rechtsform eines eingetragenen Vereins betrieben.’¹⁸⁸ Anette E. Zimmer explains that ‘[d]ie meisten Vereine, die gemeinnützige, mildtätige, sportliche und kirchliche Zwecke verfolgen, sind e.V.’¹⁸⁹ Alison Phipps comments on how the employment of the ‘[...] abbreviation “e.V.”, meaning “eingetragener Verein”, thus further demonstrate[es] the importance of the status of the institution in the public sphere and/ or the cultural distinction that is attached to membership

¹⁸⁸ Pressemitteilung des Theaters Lindenhof. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

¹⁸⁹ Zimmer, A., E., *Vereine: Zivilgesellschaft Konkret 2. Auflage*, VS Vereine für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden: 2007, p.22.

of officially sanctioned community groups'.¹⁹⁰ Theater Lindenhof e.V., which existed until early 2011, was a legal entity and one of the *Vereine* in the Federal Republic which enjoyed the legal protections, rights and responsibilities afforded by the designation. *Vereine* in Germany have a very wide variety of purposes; community theatre groups, sports clubs, debating societies, knitting societies, religious associations, political associations, dance groups and so on. According to the Bundesverband Deutscher Vereine und Verbände e. V., by 2016 there were over 600,000 *Vereine* in Germany.¹⁹¹ In July 2013 a headline in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* read: 'Deutschland hat so viele Vereine wie nie zuvor.'¹⁹²

The proliferation and popularity of the *Verein* has contributed to the challenge facing academics who wish to define the phenomenon. Despite the profusion of *Vereine*, which are rooted in the everyday lives of ordinary Germans, they are under-researched by scholars. The *Verein*, a phenomenon which is an integral part of German society, remains a confusing entity that warrants more analysis than I can afford it in this chapter. However, I will outline some of the defining features of such groups in Germany in the twenty first century, which will help illuminate the differences between a *Verein* and the new form the Lindenhof have chosen, that is the *Stiftung*. Anette E. Zimmer describes the difficulty of defining the term *Verein*: 'Nicht zuletzt aufgrund dieser Vielfältigkeit gibt es keine allgemein anerkannte Defnition des Vereins (Märkle 1984: 15, Horch 1983: 31). Selbst das um Präzision bemühte Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch enttäuscht zumindest in puncto Vereine. Der Begriff des Vereins ist im BGB in den massgebenden Vorschriften der §§ 21-79 nicht definiert (Ott 1991: 13).'¹⁹³

There are five different types of *Verein*:

¹⁹⁰ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p. 60.

¹⁹¹ <http://www.bdv.de/statistik-erstmal-ueber-600000-vereine>. Last accessed: 13 June 2016.

¹⁹² <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/menschen-wirtschaft/neuer-rekord-deutschland-hat-so-viele-vereine-wie-nie-zuvor-12288289.html>. Last accessed: 13 June 2016.

¹⁹³ Zimmer, A., E., *Vereine: Zivilgesellschaft Konkret 2. Auflage*, VS Vereine für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden: 2007, p.15.

- der nichtrechtsfähige Idealverein
- der rechtsfähige Idealverein
- der nichtrechtsfähige wirtschaftlichen Verein
- der rechtsfähige wirtschaftlichen Verein
- der ausländische Verein¹⁹⁴

Theater Lindenhof belonged to the former category, that is an *Idealverein*, or in other words a *Verein* which does not have the creation of profit as a central aim. According to Phipps, ‘The *Vereine* possess a distinctive, democratic, hierarchical structure, with the *Vorstandschaft* consisting of the *Vorstand* or *Vorsitzender* and their deputy, the *Beirat* as the middle tier, and the ordinary membership forming the base of the pyramid’.¹⁹⁵ This democratic structure affords the *Verein* a distinct legal status and allows its members a vote in directing its future development. Phipps remarks upon how ‘[t]he internal politics of the *Verein* demonstrates the way [it] functions as a form of popular and accessible democracy’.¹⁹⁶ This form of popular and accessible democracy was the dominant form of management at the Lindenhof during its years as a *Verein*. However, with the dawn of 2011 and the theatre’s legal conversion to a *Stiftung* in January 2011, the organisational and democratic structure of the theatre has changed in ways which I will describe in the next section of this chapter alongside an outline of some of the defining features of the *Stiftung*.

¹⁹⁴ Neufant, B., Geckle, G., *Der Verein: Organisations- und Musterhandbuch für die Vereinsführung*, WRS Verlag: 1993, pp. 8/1 1-2.

¹⁹⁵ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p. 163.

¹⁹⁶ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p. 162.

5.3 Die Stiftung Theater Lindenhof

Similarly to the term *Verein*, the term *Stiftung* is not defined accurately in the Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch. Dominique Jakob remarks: ‘Die Frage, was die Stiftung ist, ist gleichzeitig diejenige nach ihrer Definition. Das BGB der Jahrhundertwende hat eine solche nicht festzuschreiben gewagt und auch die reformierten Passi halten nur einen Katalog ihrer Gründungsvoraussetzungen bereit, keine Legaldefinition.’¹⁹⁷ According to Werner and Saenger:

Der Begriff der Stiftung ist schillernd. Eine verbindliche Legaldefinition fehlt. Mit der Stiftung wird die dauerhafte Hingabe eines Vermögensgegenstandes für einen bestimmten Zweck ebenso verbunden wie die daraus gegebenenfalls entstehende juristische Person. Prototyp der Stiftung ist in Deutschland die rechtsfähige Stiftung des bürgerlichen Rechts nach den §§ 80-88 des Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuchs (BGB). Sie wird als selbstständige Organisation verstanden, die bestimmte in einem Stiftungsgeschäft festgelegte Zwecke aus einem ihr dazu dauerhaft verwidmeten ausreichenden Vermögen verfolgt.¹⁹⁸

Despite the debate over a precise definition of a *Stiftung* (foundation) in Germany, it is typically a not-for-profit organisation operating on a public or private basis. Money generated by the Foundation should only be used to support its aims as set out in its statute. The legal categorisation, foundation, means that it is an entity which supplies the financial means to support itself and often donates to specific causes of its own choosing. Section 80 of the Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch lays out the legal requirements and regulations for the setting up of a foundation. Schoenblum comments that ‘[t]his civil law construct differs

¹⁹⁷ Jakob, D., *Schutz der Stiftung: die Stiftung und ihre Rechtsverhältnisse im Widerstreit*, Mohr Siebeck Tübingen: 2006, p. 37.

¹⁹⁸ Werner, O., Saenger, I., *Die Stiftung: Recht, Steuern, Wirtschaft; Stiftungsrecht*, Berliner Wissenschaftsverlag, Berlin: 2008, p. 62.

from the trust in that it is a juristic person. But like the trust, it has proven quite versatile in achieving charitable and family estate planning goals'.¹⁹⁹ The authorities of the federal state of Baden-Württemberg govern legislatively over all of the foundations in Baden-Württemberg, of which Theater Lindenhof is now one. Jakob describes three distinguishing characteristics of a German foundation; a mission, property and an organisation:

Entscheidende Unterschiede im materiellen Gehalt der Definition sind mit solchen Differenzierungsnuancen in der Regel nicht verbunden. Die Stiftung des deutschen BGB zeichnet sich aus als personifiziertes und verselbständigtetes Zweckvermögen ohne Mitglieder, gebildet aus drei konstitutiven Grundmerkmalen, die noch näher zu bestimmen sein werden: dem Zweck, dem Vermögen und der Organisation.²⁰⁰

Theater Lindenhof had all three of these key ingredients required to become a *Stiftung*. The mission of the theatre and the people who directed its organisational structure were in place. The final important legal element was the transfer of ownership of the land and buildings which make up Theater Lindenhof from Uwe Zellmer, Bernhard Hurm and Dietlinde Ellsäßer to the Theater Lindenhof Foundation. This indicated the onset of the new era of the Theater Lindenhof. Having witnessed the official signing over of the property and having attended the party which followed, I was aware of the importance of this occasion for the theatre. The more casual legal structure which the status of *eingetragener Verein* had allowed at the Lindenhof prior to the creation of the Foundation sheds light on the high level of trust and sense of common ownership which had prevailed among the ensemble members and throughout the wider community in the region. Although the theatre buildings were legally in the ownership of Hurm, Zellmer and Ellsäßer, the other Lindenhöfler and the wider community in the region felt they had a real stake in the theatre.

¹⁹⁹ Schoenblum, J., *Multistate and Multinational Estate Planning*, CCH incorporated, Chicago: 2008, §18.04.

²⁰⁰ Jakob, D., *Schutz der Stiftung: die Stiftung und ihre Rechtsverhältnisse im Widerstreit*, Mohr Siebeck Tübingen: 2006, p. 38.

As part of the structure of a foundation, the importance of an organisational hierarchy became even more pronounced. A board of directors was elected and they were charged with safeguarding the integrity of the theatre's statute by ensuring that its elected management team were carrying out their duties effectively: 'Die Stiftung und ihre Leitung verfügt über ein ehrenamtlich besetztes Kontrollorgan. Der Stiftungsrat überwacht die Geschäftsführung und die Einhaltung des gemeinnützigen Stiftungszwecks.'²⁰¹ At Theater Lindenhof 'Der Stiftungsvorstand', or board of directors, consists of Bernhard Hurm and Stefan Hallmayer in the role of directors of the theatre, and Christian Burmeister-van Dülmen in the role of commercial manager. Members of 'der Stiftungsrat', or the Foundation's board, are as follows: Dr. Peter Krause (Chairman), Philipp Becker, Markus Hipp, Manfred Hoepken, Rainer Hummel, Dr. Inge Jens, Prof. Dr. Thomas Knubben, Dr. Albrecht Kroymann, Klaus Kupke, Claudia Mogg, Franz Peschke, Andreas Vogt, Dr. Heiner Völker and Guido Wolf.²⁰² 'Der künstlerische Beirat', or the artistic advisory board, has four members. They are Dietlinde Ellsäßer (Chairman), Susanne Hinkelbein, Reinhold Ohngemach and Rainer Tempel.²⁰³ A Lindenhof press release upon the creation of the Foundation remarked upon the function of the board as follows:

Der Stiftungsrat setzt sich aus Personen des öffentlichen Lebens zusammen. Ständige Mitglieder sind das Land Baden-Württemberg, die Stadt Burladingen, der Zollernalbkreis, der Landkreis Reutlingen, der Landkreis Tübingen, der Förderverein Theater Lindenhof e.V., der Theaterbetriebsrat bzw. der von den Stiftungsmitarbeiterinnen und -mitarbeitern bestimmte Sprecher.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ <https://www.theater-lindenhof.de/index.php?docid=515>. Last accessed: June 20, 2016.

²⁰² <https://www.theater-lindenhof.de/index.php?docid=515>. Last accessed: June 20, 2016.

²⁰³ <https://www.theater-lindenhof.de/index.php?docid=515>. Last accessed: June 20, 2016.

²⁰⁴ <https://www.theater-lindenhof.de/index.php?docid=515>. Last accessed: June 20, 2016.

5.4 Why did the theatre change its legal status?

In an ethnographic interview, Theater Lindenhof's director, Bernhard Hurm, described the characteristics of a *Verein* in his own view: 'Früher war es ein Verein aber ein Verein hat einen Vorsitzenden und Mitglieder und die Mitglieder bestimmen. [...] [W]enn wir alt werden und sozusagen nicht so viel Kraft haben [...] und irgendwann sagen dann die, denen das Gebäude gehört, "Ja wir möchten nicht mehr Theater machen. Wir möchten hier Wohnungen machen oder wir möchten hier eine Disko machen."' ²⁰⁵ The potential exposure to unforeseen change due to members' ability to vote to change the theatre's future development was seen by Hurm as a weakness of that structure. According to the *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*, Hurm's depiction of a managerial structure in which the members can vote to change the club in a radical manner is the legal reality. In interview, the Lindenhof's co-director, Stefan Hallmayer drew a distinction between a *Verein*, whose aims can be changed by means of a vote among its members, and a *Stiftung*, which has a legal statute which must be followed by future members of the organisation: '[e]in Verein kann immer formal seinen Zweck mit einer Mehrheit, in der Regel zwei-drittel Mehrheit, ändern. [...] Mit einer Stiftung geht das nicht. Also alle die, die nach uns dieses Geschäft [...], diese schöne Arbeit machen wollen, müssen sich an die von uns festgelegten und vererbten Ziele halten.' ²⁰⁶

Hurm and Hallmayer shared a similar view of the weaknesses in the structure of a *Verein*. They did not want to see the main aims and goals of the theatre being changed by future generations. The protective stance of founding members of the Lindenhof in relation to the organisation they built is evidence of their pride in it and sense of ownership. However,

²⁰⁵ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

²⁰⁶ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

Hurm and Hallmayer's desire to dictate terms to future generations raises questions. Never before were the theatre's goals, rights and responsibilities laid out for the members without an opportunity to make changes in the future by means of a vote. Will the changing of the legal status of the theatre mark a decisive point in its history? Hallmayer described the drawbacks of creating permanent aims and responsibilities for future generations to follow:

Das ist auch in gewisser Weise ein bisschen dreist, dass wir die Nachunskommenden vorschreiben, in welchen Korridors sie sich bewegen sollen, aber nun ist die Satzung nicht sehr eng geführt. Es geht letztlich um Theater und auch um Bezug zur Region, aber es ist auch sehr offen formuliert: Kreativität und Auseinandersetzung mit Stoffen und Themen der Zeit, mit Menschen.²⁰⁷

The very premise of dictating terms to a future generation in a legally-binding statute seems to pull against some of the core beliefs that the Lindenhof espoused down the years, such as the importance of freethinking, critical thinking and self-determination. However, the members of the theatre persevered with their plan to create a *Stiftung* in the belief that: '[...] die Stiftung [ist] ein Garant dafür, dass die Unverwechselbarkeit, das Einzigartige des Theaters auch für die Zukunft erhalten bleibt. Bei der Verfolgung des Stiftungszwecks sind alle, die die Geschicke des Theaters jetzt und in der Zukunft lenken, an in der Satzung festgelegte Kriterien gebunden.'²⁰⁸ It was also remarked upon in the theatre's press release that,

²⁰⁷ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

²⁰⁸ Pressemitteilung des Theaters Lindenhof. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

[d]er Übergang in eine Stiftung ist für die Theatermacher von der Alb ein wichtiger, zukunftsweisender Schritt, da sich das Regionaltheater nicht nur in künstlerischer, sondern auch in organisatorischer und finanzieller Hinsicht neuen Anforderungen stellen will und muss. Die Stiftungsgründung macht zum einen den Satzungszweck auf Dauer unantastbar. Er ist von den Stiftern, den Gründern und jetzigen Betreibern als Erbschaft sozusagen für „die Ewigkeit“ festgelegt worden. Und zum anderen kann das Theater auf diese Weise seinen öffentlichen Förderern und Partnern eine verlässlichere Organisations- und Rechtsform bieten.²⁰⁹

Therefore, the importance of the ‘Satzung’, or the theatre’s statute, cannot be underestimated. It is by the terms set out in this legal document that future generations of Lindenhöfler must abide.²¹⁰ Months of heated meetings produced the statute document. I will analyse sections of the statute later in this chapter. The Lindenhof sought legal advice from a local lawyer and expert in law relating to foundations, Dr. Peter Krause from the Voelker law firm in Reutlingen. Intense debate and hours of conversation and discussion were held at the theatre in preparation for the creation of the statute. For the founding members of the theatre it would be an important part of their legacy. It would form part of the representation of their life’s work. A nostalgic examination of the founding years of the Lindenhof coloured the discussions of how the statute should read. This milestone in the development of the theatre was an opportunity to view its history and to judge it. The description in the statute of the theatre’s early days gives the impression of an idyllic situation in which a group of young people with high hopes for their theatre and their community thrived. An extract from the stylised and romanticised view of the founding years of the then fledgling theatre reads as follows

²⁰⁹ Pressemitteilung des Theaters Lindenhof. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

²¹⁰ For a full copy of the theatre’s statute see Appendix VII.

Ein Theatertraum ist auf der Schwäbischen Alb, in Melchingen, Unter den Linden, Wirklichkeit und Lebenswerk geworden. Aus der 'Spinnerei' von ein paar jungen Leuten entsteht seit 1981 eine Theaterbewegung, ein 'freies Theater' mit festem Ensemble und einer eigenwilligen und eigenständigen volkstheatralen Handschrift; dann seit Anfang der 90er Jahre ein Unternehmen, ein Betrieb, eine Institution, ein Regionaltheater, das sich in der Region, im Land und darüber hinaus großer Beachtung erfreut und sich einen einzigartigen Ruf schafft: Die Melchinger! Die Lindenhöfler!²¹¹

The statute gives a sweeping and rose-tinted account of the early days of the theatre. The Lindenhof has enjoyed success in its region and beyond but, as already remarked, for many of the early years after it first arrived on the scene in Melchingen it and its founders were not welcomed by the local community. Elements of its history and development such as that are not referred to in the preamble to the statute, possibly in order to keep it succinct and readable. Another reason might be that the group could only come to a consensus on that much, or that this rose-tinted view of the theatre's history was preferable. Hurm hints at the strategy that was adopted in the process of creating the document as follows: 'Das war ein wichtiger und auch schwerer Prozess, weil jeder natürlich es anders definiert, anders sieht. Also wir müssten dann die Schnittmenge finden.'²¹² For him the Stiftung is '[...] ein Zukunftsgerichtetes Modell, um sozusagen dieses Theater auch für nachfolgende Generationen von Künstlern, von Theaterschaffenden zu haben'.²¹³ As the theatre's director and one of the original members, his desire for the theatre to continue to exist for future generations seems natural. According to senior members, the Foundation is seen as a safe path into the future as it ensures that the Lindenhof's mission will be upheld in the years to come, no matter who takes over the role of director or who the members are.

²¹¹ Theaters Lindenhof's statute. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

²¹² Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

²¹³ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

The notion that the political aims of the theatre developed organically throughout the years since its foundation is evident when one looks at its history, in particular its defining moments. The creation of the Theater Lindenhof Foundation heralded a new era in 2011. It was another major step towards professionalisation and moved the theatre on from its earlier anti-establishment status. A similar turning-point occurred in the early nineties when the theatre became a *Regionaltheater*, a concept which I will define in the concluding chapter.

The creation of a legally binding document such as the theatre's statute which is a formal statement on its origins and development and on how it should be run in future years suggests an unease on its part at passing on the reins to a new generation. Younger members of the theatre remarked to me that the founding members were reluctant to hand over their theatre to the new generation. The binding nature of the statute suggests that this might be the case, given that it does not allow future generations a great deal of scope within which to experiment. On the other hand, the early experimental days of the theatre can never be relived. Now, thirty years on, the theatre is successful and has over the course of its existence honed its identity and created a viable and functioning business model. Perhaps most importantly, in the context of this study, it has been a significant influence on the contemporary German theatre scene. By becoming Germany's only *Regionaltheater* and redefining critical *Volkstheater* in its own terms, the theatre members have created an organisation that is worthy of protection. However, theatre should be a living and evolving institution and not a museum housing old ideas. By writing a description of its past in the statute, the theatre is seeking to safeguard the story of its development for future generations. Does this preclude the possibility of moving forward with plans for the future?

Desire for change and upheaval in the system their parents championed were elements underlying calls to protest in the 1968 student movement which had a profound impact upon the founding members of the theatre. Identifying their theatre as one which sprang from the ideology of the 1968 student movement, the Lindenhöfler have retained throughout their history and development ideals which were fought for during that period of unrest. In ethnographic interviews Lindenhöfler came to strikingly similar conclusions when the conversation turned to my questions regarding the theatre's political aims, particularly those relating to social justice or the environment. The socially critical nature of productions and the aim to promote local stories and the local dialect, as well as the wish to serve the whole region, are among the political aspirations identified at the theatre. The championing of environmental causes, the discussion of sore-points in local history and the desire to look beyond the local to a wider global society were elements of the theatre's mission which were cited by interview partners.

Hurm remarked that the goals of the theatre as set out in the new statute were in line with the aims of the theatre since its inception in 1981: 'Das ist eigentlich eine Fortsetzung dieser Ziele und die Konkretisierung dieser Ziele. Am Anfang waren die Ziele sehr viel undefinierter. Man hat irgendwie so vage [Ziele]: tolles Leben und Theater. Was waren wir dann fünfundzwanzig oder zwanzig Jahre alt. Man hat einfach 'was angefangen ohne das ganz genau zu wissen, wo es hinführt. Im Laufe der Zeit haben wir die Ziele einfach stärker entwickelt.'²¹⁴ One reason for the fact that some of the aims have not been altered greatly is that the personnel has not changed very much since the early 1980's. The founding members are still involved in the running of the theatre, for example Bernhard Hurm and Stefan Hallmayer, as directors. Change and development was therefore bound to occur slowly at Theater Lindenhof

²¹⁴ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

Section two of the theatre's statute document contains the aims of the Foundation. Part One reads as follows: 'Zweck der Stiftung ist die Förderung von Kunst und Kultur. Dieser wird verwirklicht durch den Betrieb eines Theaters und durch die Gewährleistung der Finanzierung dieses Theaters unter Einbeziehung von öffentlichen und privaten Drittmittelgebern.'²¹⁵ This is a very open-ended statement of what the Theater Lindenhof Foundation must be in the future. However, it is simply the opening part of this section detailing the theatre's legally-binding aims. Other than the fact that the Lindenhof must remain a theatre which promotes art and culture, it does not greatly reduce the theatre's ability to change. In Part Two the parameters for future change and development begin to narrow, when it is stated that:

- Das Theater versteht sich als poetisch-kritisches Volkstheater
- Das Theater hat einen Kernbezug zur Region Schwäbische Alb²¹⁶

In these two points the theatre lays out two of its characteristic features, namely its specific political aesthetic and its regional linkage. Both points are accurate descriptions of the theatre today. Following on from this point the statute goes further by suggesting the type of content future productions will be expected to comprise:

- Gesellschaftsrelevante und -kritische wie auch unterhaltende Themen und Stoffe, die aus der Region kommen oder zur Region und den Themen der Zeit passen
- Untersuchung des Dialektes und seiner Relevanz als wesentliches poetisches Mittel bei der Umsetzung von Stücken
- Erforschung des 'Theaters im öffentlichen Raum' (bspw. Sommer- und Wintertheater, Unterwegs-Theater)²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Theaters Lindenhof's statute. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

These aims are in line with those I have discussed in Chapter Three and Four of this thesis, where I describe the history and development of the theatre in the context of my ethnographic field research. The first point above states that themes and content which are relevant to society, and which are critical as well as entertaining, but which also refer to the region and fit in with the contemporary themes of the region should be produced and performed at the Lindenhof. An examination of the use of Swabian, particularly in the translation of plays, is another key aim, which was described in Chapters Three and Four. Exploration of productions performed as part of the theatre's touring schedule and of summer and winter large-scale theatre performances is also a prerequisite of the statute. These requirements are in line with the theatre's mission as laid out in previous Chapters Three and Four.

However, the parameters within which future generations of Lindenhöfler must work are without doubt narrow and restricting, ensuring that the aims of the founding members and the Lindenhof in its present form are upheld. The question arises however, whether this is a viable path to the future for the theatre. Will future generations comply with the demands of the statute whilst also being creative enough to continue to have an impact on the contemporary theatre scene? The theatre's aims are detailed further: 'Das Wirken und die Unverwechselbarkeit des Theaters Lindenhof werden von der Vielfalt der Erzählkunst bestimmt. Dazu zählen auch neue Formen. Der Spielplan soll dies wiedergeben.'²¹⁸

Although the aims set out here do provide distinct artistic lines along which future generations of the theatre must remain, the scope of these is rather widely stated. Part Two of Section Two concludes with an assertion of the importance of the role of the theatre's directors who must ensure that the directives of the statute are followed accordingly.

²¹⁸ Theaters Lindenhof's statute. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

Part Three of this section of the statute document details that the aims described in Part Two referring to the theatre's own small-scale cabaret or musical performances need not always have a social critically undertone. Part Four describes the venues where Theater Lindenhof productions must take place. The main artistic centre for the theatre will continue to be Melchingen, although performing throughout the region and beyond will remain a central feature. Part Five outlines that the existence of an ensemble in the theatre to act in productions will continue to be necessary. Lastly, Part Six explains that outside groups may perform as part of the theatre's programme. Finally, Part Seven states that the Theater Lindenhof Foundation must follow all applicable taxation laws. Having viewed the aims as laid out in the statute, it could be remarked that while they are quite prescriptive, they are nevertheless also in part broad and open to interpretation²¹⁹. The theatre appears thus to have striven to set down aims that allow for some flexibility of interpretation by future generations of the theatre. The unique central aims are however stated in unequivocal terms and there is little room for doubt about the new rules by which future generations must abide.

A major concern in relation to the future is how the theatre will remain financially viable. For the management, dealing with a lack of financial resources is a constant burden. The facilities at the theatre, as described earlier, are in need of repair and expansion. An initiative to raise funds for a construction project is underway. For instance, one Euro of every ticket purchased is put towards the construction fund. Further institutionalisation and professionalisation with the dawn of the *Stiftung* should allow the Lindenhof to receive grants and financial aid from local government. According to interview partners, the fact

²¹⁹ 'Zweck der Stiftung ist die Förderung von Kunst un Kultur.' Theaters Lindenhof's statute. Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011.

that Theater Lindenhof became a foundation means that it has a greater opportunity to receive vital additional funding. The decision to create the Foundation therefore, was also a very pragmatic one. This route was chosen by members as they saw it as the most effective manner by which to preserve the Lindenhof for future generations. On the other hand, the new entity, Theater Lindenhof Foundation, could be decried as militating against the philosophies of its founding members and their 1968 politics and ideas of openness and free will, because they are dictating to future members. This tension, reflected in the juxtaposition of seemingly permissive language in the statute on the one hand and clear directives on the other, makes it difficult to decipher the level to which the theatre's management and members succeeded in creating an open and fair statute for future generations at the theatre.

The very act of dictating parameters within which the theatre's future can unfold is at odds with the freethinking ideals of the young founding members who championed 1968 values. However, that the founding members care to uphold and preserve their values and aims for future generations also speaks to how invested they are in the promotion of their beliefs. As discussed in Chapter One, a widespread phenomenon among members of the 1968 student movement has been a move away from radicalism and towards the establishment. A great proportion of former members of the student movement eventually took up roles in politics or government, in universities or schools, in the finance sector and in many other influential areas of mainstream society. That the Lindenhof has laid out its aims in a statute document preserves the movement's political position for posterity and further strengthens the influence of 1968 politics on Germany's future. A danger of putting the theatre's mission and aims in writing in a legally-binding format is that this could give rise to a situation in which members of the theatre become less critically engaged. Rather than feeling that they are taking their lives into their own hands and fulfilling their own destinies, the statute could

be described as part of a spoon-feeding culture where the future generations are required to accept the status quo. Time will tell if this is true.

Similarly to the increased professionalism which marked a turning-point at the theatre in the early 1990s, the creation of the *Stiftung* could also be seen as a move towards a less radical type of theatre, one where less freedom is afforded to members. The repercussions of the creation of the *Stiftung* are still unclear, but those of the professionalisation in the 1990s are not. When the Lindenhof experienced that wave of professionalisation it became a stronger political presence in its community. As it entered the twenty-first century, it held more influence over local society than ever before, with the number of audience members and productions increasing. However, with the era of professionalisation also came the demise of the Lindenhof's reputation as a wholly independent and radical theatre. As mentioned before, its audience members are for the most part growing older with the founding members. At first the theatre was radical and extremely socially critical, performing plays which challenged its audience of young urban-dwellers. As the founding members aged and had families of their own, their desire for Lindenhof to provide a real income and to be more widely acclaimed led them to professionalise the theatre. In 2011, as retirement loomed in the distance, the founding members wished to make provisions for the survival of their life's work.

With the creation of the *Stiftung*, the theatre has, in my view, further embraced its role as advocate for its region. A *Stiftung* is often set up as the legal entity within which a charitable organisation is structured. As they move further into the new millennium, the Lindenhöfler are exploring more and more topics which analyse their local community and advocate for the marginalised. The theatre seeks to remind local people of its roots and honour them but at the same time to look beyond the Swabian Alps to the world outside.

The Lindenhöfler rely on the local community for survival and for inspiration. It is in this manner that the theatre will continue to thrive, and therefore its own discourse with regard to the subject of *Heimat* cannot be ignored. It would be remiss of me not to discuss it in the context of this thesis, but particularly in this chapter in which the theatre's championing of the local community in the Swabian Alps region is discussed as a characteristic of the theatre which has been cemented with the inauguration of the Theater Lindenhof Foundation.

As explained earlier in this chapter, until 2011 the Lindenhof buildings in Melchingen were under private ownership. With the theatre's legal transformation from *Verein* to *Stiftung* the Lindenhof Foundation took over ownership of the entire property. In addition, the theatre's statute states that Melchingen is to be the theatre's base as it moves into the future. At the same time, it will serve the entire region with its performances in venues throughout the Swabian Alps. However, Melchingen will remain the focal point.

That the Swabian Alps and Melchingen are literally the *Heimat* of Theater Lindenhof has been enshrined incontrovertibly in the statute of the new *Stiftung*. In a more metaphorical understanding of *Heimat*, the theatre has made legal its mission to honour *Heimat* stories, people, heroes, language and landscape in its productions. This has been a long held aim of Theater Lindenhof, but that it is now represented in writing in a legally-binding statute is significant and justifies including discussion on the term *Heimat* in this chapter. Indeed, the debates on *Heimat* which took place at the Lindenhof during the preparation of the theatre's statute were often heated and complicated.

5.5 *Heimat*

German Studies academics agree that the word *Heimat* is an umbrella term which eludes an exact and satisfying definition but which is integrally important to the understanding of German history and culture. Peter Blickle comments on the difficulties of definition as follows:

It is the unconsciously perpetuated omnipresence of the word and its multiplicity of referents that make the idea of *Heimat* such a challenge for the scholar. If we consider the various translations of *Heimat* into English, we find such diverse results as 'home', 'Homeland', 'Fatherland', 'nation', 'nation-state', 'hometown', 'paradise', 'Germany', 'Austria', 'Switzerland', 'Liechtenstein', 'homestead' – and the list could be continued.²²⁰

Monika Shafi comments that '*Heimat* denotes a linguistic and cultural archive that is presented as fluid and malleable thus eschewing static perceptions of *Heimat*'.²²¹ Boa and Palfreyman discuss the meaning of the term and its development:

The core meaning of the word 'Heimat', its denotation, is 'home' in the sense of a place rather than a dwelling, but as the many combinations such as *Heimatstadt* (home town), *Heimatland* (native land), *Heimaterde* (native soil), *Heimatliebe* (patriotism, whether local or national), *Heimatrecht* (right of domicile), *Heimatvertriebene* (refugees driven out from a homeland), *Heimatforschung* (local history), *Heimatkunde* (local geography, history, and natural history) suggest, it bears many connotations, drawing together associations which no single English word could convey. [...] Hidden within the difficulty of translation lies the sediment of the troubled history of the German-speaking lands. The transition from the particularist patchwork of states to the Prussian-dominated, unified Germany of

²²⁰ Blickle, P., *Heimat: a critical theory of the German idea of homeland*, Camden House, Suffolk UK: 2002 (first published) reprinted in paperback 2004 p. 4

²²¹ Monika Shafi, p. 185

1871 was marked by tensions between regional and national identity which were intensified by the extreme rapidity of industrialization and urbanization. In the period from the 1840s to 1900 Germany overtook Britain to become the second biggest industrial power after the USA and her population was changing from being predominantly rural to becoming urban.²²²

Eigler and Kugele comment that ‘over time notions of *Heimat* have accumulated multiple connotations that have turned the concept into a rich reservoir for scholars in the social sciences and the humanities’.²²³ The term *Heimat*, similarly to other terms such as *Volk* and *Volkstheater*.²²⁴ which are also closely linked to Theater Lindenhof, has seen its meaning evolve and develop and take on negative connotations over the course of Germany’s history: ‘[...] over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries the notion of *Heimat* acquired multiple and problematic connotations due to its appropriation for nationalistic ends.’²²⁵

For Theater Lindenhof, *Heimat* is relevant in many contexts. The content style and staging of their productions champion the notion of *Heimat* and often make use of the language of the *Heimat*, that is the local dialect, *Schwäbisch*. *Heimat* authors such as Hölderlin and Kroetz have had a far-reaching impact on the theatre’s artistic output. Boa and Palfreyman describe Kroetz as ‘[...] a central figure in this widespread move to reject traditional *Heimat* forms as uncritical and politically reactionary. The anti-*Heimat* rhetoric of his early plays is designed to shock spectators with the brutality of rural life, the cruelty of dysfunctional families, and the scapegoating of the disabled or of outsiders. But in line with his joining of the German Communist Party in 1972 Kroetz’s work increasingly took on a critical, activist

²²² Boa, E. Palfreyman, R., (eds.) *Heimat: A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990*, Oxford University Press: 2004, p. 1.

²²³ Eigler F., Kugele, J, *Heimat: At the intersection of memory and space*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin: 2012, p. 1.

²²⁴ The terms *Volk* and *Volkstheater* in Chapter Seven.

²²⁵ Eigler F., Kugele, J, *Heimat: At the intersection of memory and space*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin: 2012, p. .2

tendency designed to alert the public to the destructive environmental effects of industrial pollution on a Heimat worth fighting for'.²²⁶ It is worth reflecting that Kroetz is not Swabian. This kind of critical approach to Heimat is both rooted in the socioeconomic realities of a particular area and transferable. It is not simply local colour.

A critical appraisal of the notion of *Heimat* are common themes of Lindenhof productions. The theatre's commitment to serving the people of its *Heimat* is a fundamental characteristic. The productions tell local stories in the local dialect and highlight strengths and weaknesses of local people's thinking, philosophy and actions. Alongside what could be described as the devotion of the Lindenhof to its *Heimat* and to *Heimat* themes, the theatre itself has become a type of *Heimat* or home place for its members, many of whom have spent their entire career there. It also acts as a type of *Heimat* for the wider community who feel they have a stake in it, particularly those who have performed alongside Lindenhof ensemble members in the theatre's large-scale (often outdoor) productions which take place a few times per year. Eigler and Kugele comment:

Beyond the social and political roles of *Heimat* for German nation building, the concept has served as a point of crystallization for grappling with the effects of modernity in literary and aesthetic writing from the late 18th century to the present. For instance, poetological concepts of the naïve and the sentimental, central to German Classicism, are closely bound up with notions of lost primordial belonging – to be remembered or imagined in the literary realm.²²⁷

²²⁶ Boa, E. Palfreyman, R., (eds.) *Heimat: A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990*, Oxford University Press: 2004, p. 1.

²²⁷ Eigler F., Kugele, J, *Heimat: At the intersection of memory and space*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin: 2012, p. 1.

Although the notion of *Heimat* remains a challenge to define for academics because of the multiplicity of meanings and emotions it provokes, a naïve view of an idyllic *Heimat* is a type of sentimentality which is rarely seen at the Lindenhof, whose treatment of *Heimat* is in the tradition of Kroetz's critical *Volkstheater* or Hauptmann's naturalist descriptions of *Heimat*. In the next chapter I will analyse three Theater Lindenhof productions which are characteristic of its artistic output.

The village of Melchingen is an adopted *Heimat* for the theatre. Although its founding members are from similar small villages nearby, it was chance and the sale of the pub on Unter den Linden which initially brought them to the village to which they are inextricably linked, even being hailed as 'Die Melchinger'. Members of the theatre are united in their belief in the importance of Melchingen and the Swabian Alps to the image of the theatre. It is the birthplace of the Lindenhof and will forever have a high degree of importance in the story of the theatre's history and development. The converted barn, 'Die Scheune', where the Lindenhof perform the majority of their plays has become a well-known theatre space within the region. The notion of well-received, socially critical productions onstage in a barn in a small village of around 900 residents in the Swabian Alps is memorable. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the theatre is raising funds for a building project aimed at the renovation and expansion of the theatre spaces in Melchingen. However, despite this many of the members of the theatre, particularly the younger generation, feel that the theatre's continued expansion out of Melchingen and into other parts of the region is vital for its survival. Linda Schlepps commented, '[Ich] glaube nicht, dass das Theater Lindenhof nur da oben ist'.²²⁸ She continued on the subject of *Die Schutzsuchenden* which I attended at the *Pausa* in Mössingen in 2010:

²²⁸ 'Da Oben' in reference to Melchingen in the Swabian Alps

Das war nicht am Lindenhof aber das war für mich zu hundert prozent ein Lindenhof-Projekt. Wenn man einen Raum erschliesst und mit Laien zusammen spielt und auch einen sehr anspruchsvollen Text bearbeitet und den in der eigenen Sprache [...] ²²⁹

Although this play was not performed at Melchingen, aspects of it such as the inclusion of members of the local community were characteristic of Theater Lindenhof. The adaptation of a complex literary text such as this one by Aeschylus is also characteristic of the theatre. There was a clear sense during ethnographic interviews that the younger generation were eager to take on more responsibility but the founding members were reluctant to let go of the theatre which they so carefully developed over the years. The founding members however are more open to the young members' wishes than the young members realise. As mentioned above, young members remarked in interview that a development they were in favour of was a move to performing to a greater extent in the urban centres where they could reach students and young people with the Lindenhof's brand of socially critical *Volkstheater*. The older generation of founding members also expressed their desire for such a situation, yet the younger generation did not seem to recognise this. Moumouris remarked, 'Melchingen ist schon wichtig [...] Aber es ist falsch zu sagen, dass Melchingen das Maß aller Dinge ist'. ²³⁰ In fact, all members of the theatre seemed to agree on this point, but also conveyed the view that they felt others would feel differently. In order to succeed in the future, it is this kind of internal confusion in particular which must be resolved so that rather than acting, to some extent, as competing factions, the younger and older members of the theatre can recognise the high degree of compatibility between their viewpoints on how the theatre should progress.

²²⁹ Interview with Linda Schlepps, 2 February 2011.

²³⁰ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

The Foundation's statute is broad enough to allow a future director to perform an increasing number of plays throughout the region rather than in Melchingen itself. Although Melchingen is regarded by all as the theatre's epicentre, its *Heimat*, the theatre's desire to perform throughout the entire region (which is already happening) might widen its notion of *Heimat* further as Lindenhof edges towards fifty years of existence in 2031.

5.6 Concluding remarks

The standardisation and further professionalisation of the theatre was welcomed by the younger members of the Ensemble who were eager to take over the reins from the founding members. The younger generation of Theater Lindenhof members, who in their thirties and forties are no longer that young, wish to take over the theatre and reenergise it. Oliver Moumouris describes the rejuvenating effect he thinks an influx of younger people would bring:

Es hängt davon ab, wie diejenigen, die das Theater gegründet haben sich verhalten. Wenn sie wollen, dass das Theater weiterlebt, müssen sie Massnahmen treffen, die das ermöglichen. Das heisst, sie müssen uns das Ruder abgeben. [...] Wenn sie das nicht tun, dann wird das Theater sterben. [...] Das muss sich verjüngern das Theater, weil am Anfang war das Theater wild, war protestierend, hat schmerzhaftes Heimatfragen betrieben und im Laufe sozusagen eines Lebens wird man auch etwas reicher oder man wird auch etwas bequemer, und darum muss das Theater sich verjüngern. Sonst stirbt das Theater.²³¹

By creating the Stiftung the founding members are paving the way for a gradual take-over by a younger generation. Hurm remarked, as mentioned earlier, 'Die Stiftung wird auch

²³¹ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

gegründet für die Ewigkeit. Die ist nicht abhängig von einer Generation der Gründer'.²³²

Whether a younger generation will eventually take over the directorship of the theatre from the founding members remains to be seen, but it is likely they will. Linda Schleppe commented, 'Ein Theater kann nicht stehenbleiben, wenn's weiter leben will'.²³³ Only time will tell whether the parameters of the statute will allow the Lindenhof to evolve organically as it has done in its existence to date. This is an area which warrants further research in years to come, when the directorship of the theatre has been passed on and the results of that change become clear. As mentioned above, although the prescription of rules via a statute pulls against the free-thinking, self-determining philosophy of the 1968 movement and that of the founders of the theatre, the statute remains in its legal and linguistic formation to a significant degree open to interpretation for future generations. Whether the older generation will hand over the reins and whether the younger generation can reach a similar level of enthusiasm and work ethic remains to be seen.

The coinciding of my ethnographic field research at the theatre with its celebration of its thirtieth anniversary and the creation of the Stiftung Theater Lindenhof was fortuitous. It allowed me to gain insight into this exciting turning-point in the theatre's development. Eras of major interest in the Lindenhof's evolution are its foundation in 1981 and the professionalisation of the theatre in the early nineties, when it began to call itself a *Regionaltheater*. The year 2011 can, in my view, also be added as a moment in Lindenhof's development when the most substantial structural change in its history occurred: the transfer of its physical and intellectual property to the Theater Lindenhof Foundation and the ratification of a formal constitution. Prior to 2011 there was no legal document describing Theater Lindenhof's mission. The internal tension at the theatre

²³² Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

²³³ Interview with Linda Schleppe, 2 February 2011.

between the viewpoints of its various members was evident in the ethnographic data which I collected. In the theatre's mission statement in their statute, however, the voice of its members is united and professional. This in itself is a major development. Living up to this professional standard and responding to the demands of the Theater Lindenhof board is further professionalising the theatre in the twenty-first century.

Whether the results of the decision to change their theatre's structure from that of a *Verein* to that of a *Stiftung* will be positive or not will in time become clear. As a living and constantly evolving artistic institution, further study of the theatre into its future is warranted, especially given the changes in 2011. An interesting subject of research would be the effects of the structural changes caused by the Foundation. An analysis of the repertoire and how it is responding to the shift in the Lindenhof's legal status would also shed light on the repercussions of such a move on the part of the theatre.

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Chapter Six

6.1 Introduction

My first opportunity to see a Theater Lindenhof production came in Spring 2008 when the theatre performed *Leonce and Lena* at Theater Winterthur in Northern Switzerland. As I boarded the train bound for Winterthur I did not realise that *Leonce und Lena* would turn out to be the first of many Lindenhof plays that I would see in the years to follow and that my actions that day would set in motion the research which has occupied me in the years that followed. On that train bound for Winterthur my mind was full of questions: why had the Lindenhof been founded, how had it managed to survive in the rural Swabian Alps, who were the founders and actors and what were their motivations? The responses to those first questions about the theatre and about contemporary German *Volkstheater* have been the subject of my research since.

Upon arriving in Winterthur that evening I was busy trying to locate the theatre in what to me was an unfamiliar place. As luck would have it, when I arrived at the theatre I discovered that prior to the play there would be a presentation about the Lindenhof given by the then acting director, Stefan Hallmayer. I approached the media representative of the theatre, who I would later find out was named Bibi Deibler, who was handing out Lindenhof literature and fliers and answering my many questions and those posed by my fellow audience members. Similarly to other Lindenhof plays, *Leonce und Lena* was not only performed by members of the theatre, but also by people from the local community. In this case members of the theatre worked alongside people with special needs from the Marienberg e.V., which is situated in Gammertingen, 17 kilometres south of Melchingen. The Lindenhöfler, many of whom have volunteered or worked at Marienberg, are familiar

with the care home and seem to see it as part of the landscape of society in their home place. The wish to include all members of society in their theatre, including those who are sometimes marginalised, is evident in the case of the production of *Leonce und Lena*. This political statement on the part of the Lindenhöfler is consistent with their mission to include as many members of the local community as possible in their work and to make productions with a view to reaching as many people as possible in the region. In this case the production probably did reach members of the community in the region who would not have attended the production under other circumstances; the performances by actors with special needs attracted their family and friends into the audience, as well as other interested parties such as staff at special needs facilities and those who make charitable donations or who volunteer at special needs organisations.

Much like the scholar whose research is less valuable if not written down, the theatre makes less sense if it is not producing plays. The stage is the setting for the most revealing aspects of Theater Lindenhof. Although its people are its driving force, the plays are the product. They are what the Lindenhof is judged upon. This chapter will include a textual analysis of Lindenhof productions. The three plays of which I will carry out as detailed an analysis as possible are *Schwabenblues - Mei Feld isch d'Welt*, *Georg Elser – Allein Gegen Hitler* and *AUSSEM PARADIES - Eine Stadtgeschichte*. These plays are, in my view, representative of the Lindenhof's repertoire to date. They are an example of the theatre's role as a medium for social criticism and political comment. The plays explore the tension between the political and the popular, the traditional and the progressive and the local and the global. I will examine these and other fundamental elements of the Theater Lindenhof philosophy and political mission. My belief is that analysing the productions in depth will be more productive than a more superficial survey of a larger sample of plays because the themes, subject matter, dramatis personae, style and staging of these productions are typical of

Lindenhof's artistic output. For the sake of clarity and to aid in making comparisons, I have examined each production under sub-headings some of which are duplicated, for instance *Local and Global* and *Das Volk versus Die Autorität*.

I will examine the plays' simultaneous representation of local and global issues in the context of our changing relationship with the local and the wider world. Jane Wilkinson, in common with many anthropologists, attributes academic interest in the local directly to the phenomenon of globalisation and cites Nadia Lovell (1998, 1): 'The exploration of how notions of belonging, localities and identities are constructed seems particularly relevant in current political contexts of "globalisation", where the interface between localised understandings of belonging, locality and identity often seem to conflict with wider national and international political, economic and social interests.'²³⁴ Roland Müller remarks in *Die Zeit* that this juxtaposition is central to much of Theater Lindenhof's work, which links 'die Heimat mit der Fremde, das Lokale mit dem Globalen, die Tradition mit der Moderne. Im Abstrakten das Konkrete suchen, im Konkreten das Abstrakte: typisch Lindenhof'.²³⁵

6.2 Schwabenblues Mei' Feld ischt d'Welt

In *Schwabenblues Mei' Feld Ischt d'Welt*, the story of Matthias Hohner, a young man from Trossingen in the Swabian Alps, and of his family is told. Finding himself too young and too poor to marry his sweetheart, Matthias who until then has been a clockmaker, decides to design and manufacture mouth organs. He has heard the instrument sells well and with the dream of owning his own factory soon begins production. The product is small and light

²³⁴ Wilkinson, J., *Performing the Local and the Global: The Theatre Festivals of Lake Constance*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2007, p. 22.

²³⁵ Müller, R., 'Die Alb sie schwebt', *Die Zeit*, 18 April 2008, http://www.zeit.de/2008/18/Die_Al_b_sie_schwebt, accessed 27 September 2013.

and therefore portable. The design is also simple which makes it easy to use. Matthias' product becomes more and more popular. His impressive business sense and ability to grow his firm is communicated in word and song in the play. When export of the organ to other parts of the world, particularly the United States, begins, the company takes off and Hohner becomes a world-renowned name in the world of popular music. The episodic structure of the play allows for it to follow the fates of three generations who in turn take over the running of the family business. The play follows the firm from the early humble beginnings to the days of boom and finally to the demise of the family business. Despite the closure of the Hohner family's mouth organ company, the success story lives on in the Swabian conscience. The Lindenhof seek to retell the rise and fall of this Swabian family business in a play written by Felix Huby and Jürgen Popig with lyrics by Eric Gedeon.

6.2.1 The local and the global I

The phrase 'Mei Feld Ischt Die Welt' appears in the title of the play as a subtitle alongside 'Schwabenblues'. Of course the main title contains local (Schwaben) and global (blues) elements, but the subtitle confirms the predominance of this tension between the local and the global in the play. Matthias Hohner's field is not only the one which is literally outside his front door in his familiar rural environment, but it is also the entire world. He is ambitious enough to feel he can grasp hold of the wide world from his village of Trossingen in the Swabian Alps. The use of dialect in the title of the play distinguishes it from traditional titles featuring High German only. The title is sophisticated but the dialect's provinciality gives it a comic undertone. The idea of Swabian blues music and of a Swabian comparing his/her field to the world also has a comic undertone. Shakespeare's famous saying that 'the world is a stage' is similar to Hohner's assertion, but Hohner's has the

added local and rural twist,²³⁶ which is characteristic of the Lindenhof's work. Peter Brook shares a similar idea about making space one's own remarking, that 'I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage'.²³⁷ Brook stresses that a performance can happen anywhere, while Hohner claims that his provincial anchoring does not prevent him from becoming a 'global player'. Indeed, Shakespeare's Hamlet says that all of life is performance.

Matthias Hohner, who designs a new style of mouth organ, does so to save himself from financial and personal ruin, yet by doing so he also starts a company which goes on to have global success. Hohner's Swabian temperament and characteristics are both gently critiqued and praised in the play. His determination, ingenuity, foresight and cautiousness when it came to spending money contributed to the early success of his company but also deterred him when it came to developing his business on a grander scale in the wider global economy. This gentle teasing of Swabian characteristics is typical of many Lindenhof plays. Although the deconstruction of Swabian characteristics is often far more loving than cutting, they do prompt the largely Swabian audience to engage with the question of their identity and urge them to re-evaluate habits and stereotypes.

The image of the Hohner mouth organs, which were designed and produced in the Swabian Alps, being bought and played by musicians worldwide, reflects the Lindenhof's aim to encourage its audience to engage in thoughts about the relationship between the local and the global, the regional, national and international. This simple but powerful image highlights the ability of one person or one small instrument to have a strong impact in the global arena while retaining its local identity. The Lindenhöfler convey this sense of

²³⁶ 'Feld' is a rural, agricultural term. 'Ischt' for 'Ist' is typically Schwäbisch.

²³⁷ Brook, P., *The Empty Space*, London: Penguin, 1968, p. 11.

possibility through the retelling of a local story on their stage in Melchingen and on stages across the region.

In this production the Lindenhof champion a local hero and a local family. Trossingen is approximately 55 kilometres south west of Melchingen or approximately 14 kilometres south of Rottweil. A local tale such as this allows the Lindenhof to tell a story which is unlikely to be told in Berlin, Paris, New York, Stuttgart or even at the Landestheater or Zimmertheater in Tübingen. Telling the stories of local people for local people seems mundane and a clever way to attract high numbers of local residents to productions, but the Lindenhöfler also have a political aim: to give a voice to the voiceless and to empower members of the local community. This story, which might easily be forgotten, is brought to life by the theatre and is a reminder to locals, whether they believe in multiculturalism or not, of the possibility the world has in store for them and the positive and negative influences of their Swabian attributes both in their locality and further afield.

The juxtaposition of the local Swabian dialect with High German and English, as well as other languages such as Italian, reminds the audience that Swabian is living side-by-side with other languages. The ability of many characters to speak the local dialect, High German and indeed English highlights the relationship between the cultures associated with each language. The juxtaposition of languages is particularly evident in the section of the play in which Hans Hohner is in Hollywood. In this extract he speaks with a film producer of Swabian extraction who is making an advertisement for Hohner mouth organs.

LÄMMLE: Have a Pause, have some coffee. – Herr Hohner, es ist mir eine Ehre, dass Sie unser Studio besuchen.

HANS: Die Ehre ist ganz meinerseits. Universal Pictures Hollywood. Reschpekt! Was Sie da für ein Studio hingstellt haben ond des in so kurzer Zeit.²³⁸

The obvious combining of dialect with High German and other languages seems to reinforce the idea that having a Swabian identity allows that person to live in an intensely local manner but also reach out into the richness of a wider world whether it is Berlin, London or New York, and still be relevant.

6.2.2 Tradition and change I

The theme of music runs throughout the entire play. Members of the cast periodically begin playing the mouth organ which reminds the audience that music and particularly music played on the mouth organ is central to the production. Musicality is evident in the extract below from the script:

Die Welt ischt a Feld
Ond des wird bestellt
Stück om Stück
Mei Feld ischt die Welt
Do mache mir Geld
Mit Musik²³⁹

²³⁸ *Schwabenblues Mei' Feld ischt d'Welt*, original script, written by Felix Huby and Jürgen Popig with lyrics by Eric Gedeon. Received from Christine Heinz.

²³⁹ *Schwabenblues Mei' Feld ischt d'Welt*, original script, written by Felix Huby and Jürgen Popig with lyrics by Eric Gedeon. Received from Christine Heinz.

The lasting image in the play is of a mouth organ. Its sound rings in the audiences' ears from the start of the play to the finish. It is the simple product with which Matthias Hohner sought to make his name in the world.

The traditional business approach adopted by Hohner contrasts with the modern and fast-paced atmosphere of the world which his company becomes part of as it expands. The tension between the traditional ideals of Matthias Hohner and the modern progressive ideas of his son become a central theme of the play as the plot develops. This typical tension between two generations is reinforced by the contrast between the thick Swabian dialect spoken by the father and the High German and English of the son. The contrast however is not absolute. The Lindenhöfler's struggles with their parents' generation is mirrored in this storyline. The founders of the theatre rebelled in their own way against what was expected of them by the generation who raised them. Their values and ideals sprang from the 1968 student movement. Rather than working on the family farm, becoming teachers or working in the city as their parents wished, they decided to walk a different path. That path led them to set up Theater Lindenhof.

The Swabian rural tradition juxtaposed with the modern Hollywood advertising and marketing strategies is conveyed through song in the play. The Swabian lyrics dwell on traditional ideals and themes, whereas the English songs have obviously modern messages about good business, money making and competition. The subject of the play and many of its songs is capitalism and the success Hohner garners by manufacturing and selling his harmonicas on a local, national and global scale. Although the Lindenhöflers' mission and aims are partly inspired by the philosophy of the 1968 student movement, they are not anti-capitalist or hardline socialists. This is also borne out in the manner in which they have turned their theatre into a viable business, which is the second largest employer in the

village of Melchingen and a legitimate attraction. Situated in the centre of the village, the theatre attracts audience members from across the region.

The structure of the play conveys the passing of time and the transition and overlap between generations. The black business suits which the actors wear allow for a smooth move from a rural Swabian setting to American movie sets or from the early days of the company to its demise. There is no need for costume change or set adjustment to make the audience aware of the change of scene. The dialogue and the actors' body language transmit this information to the audience.

6.2.3 *Das Volk versus die Autorität I*

In one of the first scenes of the play Matthias Hohner enters a shop to observe a mouth organ with the aim of drawing a sketch of it to help him with his own design. The shopkeeper with whom Hohner is familiar from his school days soon realises that Hohner is acting suspiciously and a heated argument between the two ensues. Hohner vows that he will make a success of his vision and in this exchange with the shopkeeper (Weiss) he also makes clear to the audience how ambitious he is. Hohner's social standing is lower than that of Weiss but he means to change that. Weiss doesn't accept Hohner's points and when Hohner asserts, 'Mei Feld ischt die Welt', Weiss scoffs and retorts that the only field that is truly Hohner's is the one outside in the rural Swabian area in which they live.

HOHNER: ... Net so kloie ond verzagt wie du ond der Messner. Ihr bleibet doch euer Lebtag kloine Krauter.

WEISS: Abhaue sollscht. Raus hier, du Schmarotzer.

HOHNER: Ihr könnet Euch ja net amal vorstelle, was man da für a Gschäft draus mache könnt. In ganz Deutschland...

WEISS: Warum net gleich in der ganze Welt?

HOHNER: Ja, warum eigentlich net? – Wenn i so was mache dät, dann wär mein Feld die ganze Welt!²⁴⁰

The script shows Hohner reverting to a thicker or more marked form of Swabian when provoked, which is common among those who have adopted another language or language register. In the heat of the moment they may revert to their normal, native usage. Perhaps Hohner is also made to use more Swabian dialect in order to appear to be conveying his meaning more clearly to Weiss. The significance of the use of Weiss' more pronouncedly Swabian version of the phrase 'Mein Feld ist die Welt' in the title of the play is a reflection of the fact that a Swabian version would be considered to be more distinctive. It would convey more clearly to prospective audiences of the production that the use of dialect would be prevalent in the production:

WEISS: Ja, mit dr Gosch! »Mei Feld ischt die Welt«! Dei Feld ischt der Acker in der Steinhalde drauße! Ond jetzt verschwend!

HOHNER: Ihr werdet Euch no wundera. Älle. Ihr älle werdet no amol Auge mache!²⁴¹

Conflict within the family and business environment is a central theme of the play. Hohner, the patriarch of the family, has very distinct ideas about the running of his family and

²⁴⁰ *Schwabenblues Mei' Feld Isch D'Welt*, original script, written by Felix Huby and Jürgen Popig with lyrics by Eric Gedeon. Received from Christine Heinz.

²⁴¹ *Schwabenblues Mei' Feld Isch D'Welt*, original script, written by Felix Huby and Jürgen Popig with lyrics by Eric Gedeon. Received from Christine Heinz.

business. He believes in slow and steady growth of his business and discourages his young son from dreaming of becoming rich from the company's success. Rather than taking risks, he favours following the principles by which he lives such as hard work and never putting the cart before the horse. His own references to his mother and other local people and family members convey his keen sense of tradition and respect for the immediate and the local. Unlike his son, he is not attracted to worldly adventure and riches. In this extract young and old Hohner discuss the business model. The conflict between young people, who question conventions, and their elders is evident here and reminiscent of the generational conflict between the 1968 generation and their parents. At this stage of the play Hohner, the father, is dominant, yet the young son challenges his ideas with his childish dreams of success. Young Hans sees himself riding in a horse and carriage in new clothes and shoes. The father however sees himself earning a steady wage, which he will salt away for a rainy day:

HANS: Und dann werdet mir reich!

HOHNER: Langsam!

HANS: Und du bauscht a große Fabrik! Und mir fahret vierspännig mit wunderschöne Rösser in wunderschöne Kutsche. Und ich krieg neue Kleider und Schuh. Und mir hent emmer so viel zum Essa, dass mir nie mehr Honger leide müsset, und... Und ich krieg a Stub ganz für mich alloi oder doch bloß mit dem Andreas zusamme.

HOHNER: Pass auf, was du schwätzscht. Schon dei Großmutter hat emmer g'sagt: Wenn dr Bettelmann aufs Ross kommt, reitet er's zu Tode.

HANS: Aber du willscht doch...

HOHNER: Ich will Mundharfe baue, ja. Gute, solide, wohlklingende Instrumente, die d' Leut gern kaufe möget. Ich will jeden Pfennig, den ich damit verdien, auf die Seite lega. Reich werde ischt was anders, Kind. Die Sorgen sollet weniger werde, das Leben a bissle

leichter. Scho dei Großmutter hat immer g'sagt: »Danke Gott fürs Brot, bevor du um Kuchen bittest.«²⁴²

As the son, Hans, matures, the clashes regarding business practice between him and his father become more serious. Hans believes in a spend money to make money approach whereas the older Hohner believes that they have money because they do not spend it.

HANS: Aber wenn i nach Amerika geh, muss ich dort au lebe könne!

HOHNER: Du hascht den Hang zur Großmannsucht. Als einziger in onserer Familie! Mir, deine Brüder, dei Mutter und ich müsset sehr streng schaffe. Mir dürfet au net in feine Hotels gehen. Onserer ischt zufriede mit gewöhnlicher Koscht und a bissle Bier zum Veschper.

HANS: Und das macht den geschäftliche Erfolg, ja?

HOHNER: Wir hent onser Geld vom Nichtausgeben!

HANS: Ja, ja, ich weiß: Schaffe schpare Häusle baue, Hond verkaufe, selber bella. Aber wenn ich schon hinausgehe in die Welt, dann ist die Welt auch mein Feld!²⁴³

The business suits which the characters wear create an impression of uniformity. The notion of *das Volk* as a large group of similar people or as all the people comes to mind here. Is a political statement being made by means of the costumes? The employment of the business suit as a costume gives the play a serious yet comical visual appeal. Although the suit is dark, familiar and perhaps dull, the fact that all of the actors onstage wear it makes their overstated gestures and exaggerated movements stand out from the corporate backdrop which consists of a boardroom with a large rectangular table for meetings and a sleek, rich wooden finish on the floors and walls²⁴⁴. The uniform image created by the suit is also an

²⁴² *Schwabenblues Mei' Feld Isch D'Welt*, original script, written by Felix Huby and Jürgen Popig with lyrics by Eric Gedeon. Received from Christine Heinz.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ See photograph 16 in Appendix III.

indicator of power and the united front presented by the actors is striking onstage. The suit is a sort of blank canvas, especially given that all members of the cast wear one. The actions and dialogue of the characters convey to the audience what kind of emotional state they are in and what their personality is. The suit is the backdrop for all emotions from tears of pain to comedic elements. It might be argued that the uniformity of the costume creates an image of conformity, but the opposite is the case. The suits create a stable background for the audience, allowing them to focus on the performance and dialogue which reveals the unfolding plot onstage. The choreographed movement of the actors and their expressions and gestures are amplified by the plain, uniformity of the costume. Comedic elements of the productions are similarly enhanced by the serious and monotone nature of the suits. The political undertones of the production are conveyed to the audience during comedic sequences and the simple backdrop of the corporate boardroom and the actors' suits allows the performance and dialogue to take centre stage. Gillian Pye remarks on comedy in German drama as follows:

[...] the discursive method adopted here has aimed to shed light on the role of the comic as a 'liminal zone between art and life', providing an interface between social behaviours, psychological dynamics and the aesthetic. In particular, this has provided important insights into the way in which the recurring sites of comedy may be perceived to interact with sites of social anxiety.²⁴⁵

The 'recurring sites of comedy' in Theater Lindenhof productions could be argued to indicate subjects which are core to its political aspirations. In this production the desire to become successful in one's own right but to still remain firmly rooted in the local *Volk* despite travelling far. Comedy is often employed in Lindenhof productions in highlighting the strengths and particularly, weaknesses of the local Swabian character. This can be seen

²⁴⁵ Pye, G., *Approaches to Comedy in German Drama*, E. Mellen Press: 2002, pp. 355-356.

in almost all Lindenhof production, but particularly those which set out to specifically analyse the Swabian identity, such as *Älles Onser!* which was discussed in Chapter Four.

In *Schwabenblues*, family, music and business are three of the most important themes. From the opening scene the audience is aurally and visually reminded of this fact. The actors are in business suits and seated around a large and imposing conference table. The conference table reinforces the stiff sense of distance and professionalism of business but also all the familiarity of a family sitting around the table talking, arguing and laughing. The table could be a conference table in a formal corporate setting or the kitchen or dining room table around which all kinds of family matters are discussed. This type of tension between two opposing yet similar realities is also typical of Lindenhof productions and a regular and expected theme in most of its artistic output. Positioned underneath the conference table is a character who is also wearing a suit but who lies limp on the floor beneath the table hidden from the other actors onstage. He is the *Musiker* or the musician who plays his accordion – not a mouth organ, which is played by the actors – and fills the auditorium with blues tunes.

As the family business moves into its final cycle before its demise and as the play draws to a close, the modes of practice within the firm and the family become more unprofessional. In the years following the death of the company's founder the sales of mouth harmonicas flounder and the dominance of the Hohner name in the musical instrument business is weakened.

6.2.4 National Socialism

According to Gassert and Steinweis:

Every generation of Germans since the end of World War II has been confronted by the challenge of working through the moral and historic implications of Nazism and the Holocaust – Germany’s problematic history of dictatorship and genocide has had profound consequences not only for the political system and the international relations of the two post-war German republics, but also for national identity, religious faith, education, legal practice, social policy, gender roles, and other dimensions of daily life.²⁴⁶

This engagement with the negative heritage of National Socialism and the Holocaust is evident in *Schwabenblues*. The passing of time in a chronological sense is clear to the audience as the play progresses. The beginning and end of World War One and World War Two provide clear historical markers. In the period at the beginning of the Great War, the Hohner family market a particular brand of mouth organs for the homesick soldier at the front. As World War II draws closer however, the mood changes within the firm. All periods of history are skipped over quickly within the play, but the period up to and including World War II is marked in the minds of the audience members by scenes pertaining to that time in Germany. In one scene Hohner is not pleased to find that his usual greeting is being replaced by the salute of the National Socialists. Hohner, clearly a leader within his local community, does not manage to dissuade even some of his own workers from following the siren song of the National Socialists. This part of the play does not fit neatly into the rest of the plot. The jarring of forms or styles, the ‘not fitting in’, is part of the process of raising awareness. It seems to be a manner in which the Lindenhöfler show their desire to educate their audience historically and to promote their political beliefs in the minds of their audience.

²⁴⁶ Gassert, P., Steinweis, A. E., *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, Berghahn Books: 2006, p. 1.

In summary *Schwabenblues* is characteristic of Theater Lindenhof's artistic output. The play features a combination of High German and *Schwäbisch* which is a typical attribute of the theatre's productions. Telling the story of a local person is also a common theme for the Lindenhöfler, who seek to represent their region onstage. The production is also an example of the manner in which the local/global synthesis aspired to by Theater Lindenhof works. The juxtaposition of *Schwäbisch* with English and Trossingen with Hollywood allows the audience to examine the co-existence of the local and global onstage. In this production, as in many of those of Theater Lindenhof, music is central. The combination of local songs with English-language ones is also in line with the theatre's desire to contrast the local and the global. The socially critical message the production delivers is not radical or forceful, and this too is typical of the theatre's contemporary repertoire. The play raises awareness about a success story from the Swabian Alps, about the benefits of being open to the outside world and about the risks of avarice. Another agenda the theatre pushed in the production was a social justice message relating to the period leading up to World War II. The figure presented most positively in the play and the production was unhappy with the rise to power of the National Socialists and this mirrors the response of the Lindenhöfler to it and other oppressive regimes. The subject of resistance in Nazi Germany is the main theme of several Lindenhof productions, one of which I will analyse in the next section of this chapter.

6.3 Georg Elser- Allein gegen Hitler!

In this play the Lindenhof again seeks to tell a story of local relevance, and in this case honour an unsung hero, Georg Elser. A Swabian carpenter and otherwise quiet man, he devised a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler and put an end to National Socialism and the suffering which he thought was being endured by the nation at the behest of Hitler. Despite spending months making plans, collecting materials and building a bomb, Elser never spoke

a word of his intentions to anyone else. Working alone, he went to the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich night after night in 1939 and hid at closing time so he could build his bomb into part of a stage where Hitler was due to give a speech. Elser had a simple yet powerful plan and was able to work alone. On the 8th of November 1939, the day that Hitler was due to give his speech at the Bürgerbräukeller, everything appeared to be going to plan. The Führer however made a shorter speech than Elser had expected and left the podium sooner than was scheduled. The bomb went off but Hitler was not hurt. Elser tried to flee to Switzerland but was captured by Nazi officials in Konstanz as he tried to cross the border.

This story of a solitary but heroic figure who risked his own life in the pursuit of freedom from dictatorship, injustice and war is one which the Lindenhof revel in telling. The play was first produced in 2009, the 70th anniversary of Elser's almost successful attempt on the life of the Führer. As well as performance in the 'Scheune' in Melchingen and at theatre venues throughout the region, this production was also performed by the Lindenhöfler at the Berliner Ensemble. It is visually dramatic and draws the audience in with heavy use of symbolism in costume and set design, and a clear and chronological order of events. The set was elaborate compared to the more basic ones which Lindenhof typically opts for. It provided a detailed depiction of scenes in the beer hall, Elser's accommodation, and the cell where he was tortured. Lighting was used effectively to create these separate areas onstage. The costumes of the cast were era-specific versions of casual clothing.²⁴⁷ The make-up and lighting transformed the characters onstage into ghost or zombie-like figures with white faces. I will return to this subject of the staging later in this chapter.

²⁴⁷ See photographs 14 and 15 of the costumes in Appendix III.

6.3.1 *Das Volk versus die Autorität II*

Artistic reproductions of this era in German history are consumed by audiences throughout the world. The Lindenhof takes pride in telling the distinctive story of a local hero, especially that of an unsung hero. There is a similarity between Elser and Matthias Hohner in *Schwabenblues*. Both were unassuming Swabians, who each had a vision which they sought to make a reality. Although the success of the Hohner family business eventually ground to a halt and Elser's attempt to assassinate Hitler was a failure, both men shared a strong determination and singular vision that the Lindenhof likes to attribute to the Swabian temperament. The focus on Swabians who have demonstrated courage and determination corresponds with the Lindenhof's mission to promote local culture and stories, but as is typical of its plays, it is also a globally relevant piece of theatre given that in essence it tells the story of a man standing up for his beliefs by planning an action which he hopes will bring an end to the horrors of war and to facism and oppression in Germany and Europe.

The idea of one person making such a difference is attractive and romantic and can readily be transferred to the stage. The empowering of the 'ordinary person' in the face of authority or adversity is a notion that seems to sit well with the Lindenhöfler, who themselves challenge the status quo by means of their plays and political messages, and their unusual choice to establish their theatre in a rural setting rather than basing it in an urban environment, where critical theatre is more commonly found. In the play, Elser's identity as Swabian is made evident in several ways, some more subtle than others. The Lindenhof are happy to claim him as a fellow Swabian. His thick dialect is prevalent throughout the play and from the beginning is often contrasted with High German spoken by other, less sympathetically viewed figures such as the unpredictable Hitler character. In Bavaria, when

asked if he is Swabian, he answers in the affirmative. This leaves the audience in no doubt as to where he calls home.

This play is not the only one the Lindenhof has staged about Swabian resistance fighters against Nazism. *Stauffenbergs Schwur*, a play about the aristocratic Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg also dealt with the theme of German resistance to Nazism. Stauffenberg, who was a leading member of a group who participated in a failed attempt to assassinate Hitler, hailed from the Swabian town of Albstadt. The similarities between Elser and Stauffenberg are that both are Swabian and both attempted to remove the National Socialist leader.

However, the two men held quite contrasting positions in society, Stauffenberg, the landed aristocrat, and Elser, the humble carpenter. Although a comparison between Elser and Stauffenberg can be drawn, they were very different kinds of heroes. Stauffenberg was part of a group of resistance fighters who made multiple attempts on Hitler's life. Elser on the other hand worked alone with meagre resources. Despite this however, Elser masterminded one of the effective assassination attempts on Hitler.

6.3.2 Tradition and change II

The aims and philosophies of Theater Lindenhof, which were born from the ideas of the 1968 generation, come to the fore in the theatre's productions. In *Georg Elser*, the theatre's treatment of the subject is in line with their political ideology. Gassert and Steinweiss remark: 'During the "tumultuous sixties," West German youth, much like young people elsewhere, rebelled against a culture that many believed had become excessively materialistic. They criticized the politics of West German realignment toward the West, and they looked critically at their own nation's past and present, pointing to alleged continuities

that persisted from the Nazi era.²⁴⁸ The debate about and struggle with the National Socialist past is a recurring theme for the theatre. A struggle with the past, tradition and the status quo and a desire to provoke reflection in its audiences is born of the theatre's aims and mission which can be traced back to its roots in the student movement of the 1960s.

Actors – especially in small ensembles – often play several roles in a production. In the play *Georg Elser*, each actor plays at least two roles during the performance but there is no costume change. Most notably, Bernhard Hurm plays both Elser and Hitler. As Elser he is depicted as a solitary and single-minded man. His quiet determination is evident, as is his isolation and the manner in which he is haunted by the National Socialists surrounding him. They are completely unaware when the play begins that he is plotting to murder their leader. In this scene the cast members switch roles from rowdy members of the crowd at the Bürgerbräukeller to limp and zombie-like, ghostly figures who surround Elser and taunt him. Apart from Elser they each wear a black square of cloth between their upper lip and nose to represent the distinctive moustache which became synonymous with Adolf Hitler.

This transition from beer-hall rowdies into spectral Nazis brings home to the audience the terrors and risks that are near at hand for Elser, and makes a specific historical point about the threat of sudden changes in public opinion and how society must remain vigilant in order to ward off such threats in the future. Elser's position as a brave and single-minded free thinker was highlighted by having him move differently from zombies who were portraying National Socialist party members.

²⁴⁸ Gassert, P., Steinweis, A. E., *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, Berghahn Books: 2006, p. 1.

Elser is championed for his heroic attempt to bring down a dictatorship and for his ability to see the evil around him, and for having the ability to come close to thwarting it. Attaching one of Hitler's most distinctive features, the dark square moustache, to the faces of the zombies is to be a clear prompt to the audience that those figures are a manifestation of his evil. Elser was portrayed as a quiet man, so rather than verbalising his fears, the ghostly figures with moustaches have the effect of conveying his inner turmoil as he carefully plotted against Hitler and his intense emotions once he was arrested.

The moral message of the production seems very straightforward: Elser is good and Hitler is evil. However, although the hero of the play is Elser, he is not painted in a purely positive light. As he struggles to come to terms with the prominence and power of forces he is planning to destroy, Hitler and National Socialism, Elser becomes more solitary and gruff, unattractive attributes in a leading character onstage. He deceives his way to realising his aims. He tricks his way to realising his aims. To get access to the beer-hall, for instance, he charms a waitress or in another scene we find him lying to a carpenter in order to obtain tools. In Bernhard Hurn's portrayal of Elser and Hitler, Elser is the determined, quiet and unassuming Swabian who contrasts with the loud, animated and shrill Hitler. The shift from Elser to Hitler required no costume changes but rather a change in body language, posture and tone of voice. In fact, the Hitler figure did not wear the moustache which adorned his followers. In the later scenes where Hitler conversed with the incarcerated Elser, the two men, Elser and Hitler, were pitted against each other, both determined, each man sure of his side of the argument. Viewing Elser onstage with a bucket over his head in a torture scene, audience members were left to ask themselves if they could act so bravely? Although this scene suggests an idealisation of Elser on the part of the Lindenhof, he is not painted in as positive a light as this in other parts of the production.

Elser is an ordinary member of society, but so are the prison officers who guard him while he is incarcerated. Nill was a carpenter like Elser prior to the war and Kallbrecher was a policeman. All three men are flawed, but who is ultimately in the wrong? Is it Elser for murdering innocent people and plotting for months to kill one man, or is it Nill and Kalbach who joined the National Socialist party ranks and followed the orders of their superiors? The audience is left with a question, the answer to which must be favourable to Elser, but which also makes them uncomfortably aware of how moral frailty is exposed in extreme situations and how the powerless become pawns as the strategems of those in power are acted out. The play is not a straightforward championing of Elser. In the following extract he engages in a discussion of right and wrong with Kalbach and Nill:

ELSER (<i>Zu KALBACH</i>):	Der Hauptscharführer Nill will wieder zur Polizei, wenn ..., also wenn alles vorbei ischt. Aber ob die ihn wieder nehmen?
KALBACH:	Ja, warum denn net?
ELSER:	Ha wege dem, was em KZ alles gwese ischt.
KALBACH:	Ist doch alles gesetzlich. Wir haben immer nur unsere Pflicht getan. Befehl ist Befehl.
NILL:	Genau. Was heut Recht ist, As kann doch später nicht auf einmal Unrecht sein! ²⁴⁹

The prison guards, Nill and Kalbach, have justified their actions by simplifying the situation and stating they were simply following orders. This is a challenge from the Lindenhof to the audience to think for themselves and take responsibility for their own actions and their own lives, and it raises questions about the role and responsibility of the individual in Germany during the Third Reich. Nill and Kalbach seem to be aware of moral questions they may

²⁴⁹ *Georg Elser – Allein gegen Hitler!*, Volksstück von Dieter de Lazzer und Felix Huby. Received from Christine Heinz.

face from themselves and others at a later time but for now hide behind the orders they claim to have followed, while Elser decides to act in accordance with his conscience and take action.

A difficulty in staging a production about Georg Elser lies in the fact that whilst for a long time he was forgotten and still does not have the status of the July 1944 plotters, he has nonetheless entered the pantheon of anti-Nazis. Finding him more sympathetic than his opponents thus creates no real moral dilemmas, no drama. However, the Lindenhof does create this suspense by re-examining the reasons behind peoples' actions. This is the main political message of the production. It does not simply seek to champion Elser, although that is an important part of the theatre's motivation, it also wishes to make a political statement with regard to peoples' ability to determine their own destiny. The uniformity of the dancing of the beer hall crowd turned Nazis is reminiscent of the movement of a mime. The characters have rendered themselves voiceless by following Hitler. The Lindenhof challenges its audience to think critically, to be the informed opposition and not merely to follow the crowd or opt for the childish excuse of obedience to a higher authority.

Values of the 1968 student movement such as the importance of self-determination and of creating one's own destiny are an important part of the motivation of the young founding members to set up their theatre and as such this play's underlying socially critical message is characteristic of the Lindenhof. Another strong political or social aim of the Lindenhof is to give a voice to those marginalised in society. Their production tells the story of Elser who could be described as marginalised, given his solitary, working class existence and the lack of coverage of or awareness of his assassination attempt until recently. However, the truly voiceless section of society who were exposed in the production are those who lacked the capacity to think critically and lacked the ability to take responsibility for their actions,

such as the prison guards, Nill and Kalbach. In its production Theater Lindenhof reminds the local community not to repeat mistakes of the past, not to fall into a stupor and accept injustice in society. The theatre also warns against judging people at first glance. Elser, as mentioned earlier, was depicted as gruff and anti-social in the production. By comparison, the group in the beer-hall seemed at first sight to be a lot more attractive and colourful.

6.3.3 Conclusion

Elser's plot, had it succeeded, would have altered the course of history and would have had a major effect on a global scale. A quiet man from the Swabian Alps took matters into his own hands. His thick Swabian dialect and tradesman's skills were rural, ordinary and familiar in nature, but his idea, foresight and execution of his plan had wide and global significance. To the very end Elser is defiant. He articulates this in High German in the final scene:

Du behauptest, du hättest Großes geleistet? Abscheuliches hast du geleistet. Und das alles, weil du dich selber minderwertig gefühlt hast. Deshalb hast du die Menschenverachtung, den Rassismus und die Gewalt zu deiner Sache gemacht und bist zum feigsten Mörder der Weltgeschichte geworden, ohne auch nur einmal selbst Hand angelegt zu haben. Und da hätt' man einfach zuschauen sollen? Ich habe immer gehofft, dass ich Nachahmer finde! Ich war allein. Stauffenberg war nicht allein. Aber ich - ich war allein.... – Rede nicht von Vorsehung, wo es doch nur ein Zufall war, Hitler!²⁵⁰

Georg Elser is a production typical of Theater Lindenhof's artistic output because it tells the story of a local hero. Stefan Hallmayer invokes *Georg Elser* as an example of the

²⁵⁰ *Georg Elser – Allein gegen Hitler!*, Volksstück von Dieter de Lazzar und Felix Huby. Received from Christine Heinz.

development of the theatre's style: 'wie wir heute dann ein Stück wie die Elser machen, da gibt es ja Entwicklungen in der Ästhetik.'²⁵¹ Berthold Biesinger commented on the production as follows: 'Wir waren schon zweimal oder dreimal mit Stücken in Berlin und jetzt mit *Georg Elser! Allein gegen Hitler*, das ist einfach auch ein sehr politisches Stück und von da her jetzt in der heutigen Zeit eigentlich sehr spannend.'²⁵² Biesinger remarks on the relevance of the production to the modern audience. It delivers an important socially critical message which does not simply pertain to the specific period in history in which the play is set, rather it delivers a political message relevant to its contemporary audience.

6.4 AUSSEM PARADIES: Eine Stadtgeschichte

Sommertheater productions and large-scale outdoor projects, often involving people from the local community, are characteristic of the Theater Lindenhof. Together with the Landestheater Tübingen and the Zimmertheater Tübingen, they take turns performing the annual Tübinger *Sommertheater*. That the Lindenhof shares rights to performing its *Sommertheater* in Tübingen with two professional and well-established theatres reflects the esteem in which it is held as a theatre and the level of professionalism it has achieved by. Bernhard Hurm commented in interview on the theatre's *Sommertheater* and other large-scale outdoor productions:

Sie sind so vergänglich diese Sommertheater, diese grossen Inszenierungen an einem Ort. Man kann sie nicht irgendwo anders spielen, also sie sind ein Sommerlang und dann sind sie vorbei und verweht. Die sind auch ganz grosse Sachen. Die bleiben ganz nachdrücklich den Menschen in Erinnerung. Die Bilder sind irgendwie ganz grosse Bilder, die Leute nach Jahren noch erinnern. Das ist

²⁵¹ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

²⁵² Interview with Berthold Biesinger, 16 December 2010.

eigentlich eine ganz grosse Leistung im Theater: das wir nicht am anderen Tag alles vergessen, sondern über Jahre uns an Bilder erinnern [...] ²⁵³

Theater Lindenhof's 2008 *Sommertheater* production *AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte* plots the Fall of Man and mankind's subsequent wanderings around the world in search of a new paradise or simply a place to call home in cities, towns, settlements and communities. The play begins in the forest area above the Französisches Viertel in Tübingen, south of the river Neckar, and concludes in a more conventional theatre space in the Panzerhalle, which is situated below the forest area within the Französisches Viertel itself. The first part of the play in the forest above the French Quarter takes the form of a *Theaterspaziergang* or promenade production. As they walk through the forest area, the audience are accompanied by actors who ask them questions, present humorous vignettes, play out scenes, or quote from local, national and international sources. The play includes scenes in the local dialect, Schwäbisch, alongside many extracts from world-renowned authors such as Aristotle, Milton, Brecht, Grillparzer, Sloterdijk, Schiller, Fried, Goethe, Jacobs, Tucholsky, Arendt, Shakespeare, Hölderlin, Pessoa, Grass, Lanoye, Baudelaire, Sophocles, Heine and more. This juxtaposition of local dialect and anecdotes with world-famous extracts creates an experience which, typically for Theater Lindenhof, is rooted in the local and at the same time has national and global associations and echoes.

6.4.1 The local and the global II

French troops were stationed in Tübingen's Französisches Viertel until 1991. The Panzerhalle, the Panzerallee and the name of the district itself are some of the marks left by their presence in this area of the city since the time of the Second World War. The area has

²⁵³ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

been undergoing reconstruction and the building programme has been watched with critical interest not only within Tübingen itself but also throughout Germany and around the world. In the past the area consisted largely of factory buildings and barracks left behind by French troops. Therefore, creating a sense of community was central to the reconstruction programme, which focused on making the area a space for both working and living. For instance, the programme required each building to have a restaurant, café, shop or other type of business on the ground floor.

A global dimension to the theme of the play is reflected in a statement by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) concerning the growing wave of urbanisation. According to the statement, in 2008, for the first time, more than half of the world's population would be living in towns and cities.²⁵⁴ According to the UNFPA, smaller towns and cities with fewer resources to respond to the magnitude of the change will see the greatest growth and face the largest challenges with regard to the fast increasing urbanisation of the planet.²⁵⁵ Tübingen fits into the category of smaller town or city. As such it is similar to places in Germany and elsewhere in the world that will be challenged by increasing urbanisation.

The central themes of the play therefore reflect the concerns expressed in the UN statement. The local space in the Französisches Viertel is used by Theater Lindenhof to bring to the fore concerns regarding urban growth, community and development, both locally and globally. The Französisches Viertel reconstruction programme provides an apt local backdrop on which the play can present themes of local and global relevance.

²⁵⁴ UNFPA website, <http://www.unfpa.org/pds/urbanization.htm>, accessed 15 June 2016.

²⁵⁵ Bühr, S., Moumouris, O., *Theater Lindenhof Melchingen, Tübinger Sommertheater 2008 AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte*, 20.6.2008 [unpublished type-script].

When the audience reach the first of three makeshift stages in the forest area they find that they are cut off from the representation of paradise by a high, forbidding fence. Behind it a male angel brandishing a sword is on patrol. Is the angel protecting his paradise from the audience members? Is he trapped within it? What is this alternate or parallel universe? ‘HANO, HANO, han ich eich verwischt! Erscht meine scheene Äpfel klaua ond na die Sauerrei’!²⁵⁶ Again, juxtaposition here of the fruit farmer’s dialect with extracts in High German from Milton is typical of Theater Lindenhof productions, which often contain a mixture of registers: ‘Sie gingen Hand in Hand, langsamen Ganges.../ Durch Eden einsam wandern ihren Weg’.²⁵⁷ From this point on the play mirrors mankind’s journey, since the Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden, to find a new paradise, and in this case a new paradise in cities, towns, settlements and communities.

During the first part of the play in the forest area above the Französisches Viertel the audience travels both literally and in their imagination through space and time to the Panzerhalle in search of the paradise lost in the first scene. The audience move quickly through a meadow and on to a short patch of concrete road before once again entering the forest area. The road is littered with words written in white paint: ‘Hierhergekarrt, Ausgewiesen, Einwanderung, Auswanderung, Migrationshintergrund, Der Fremdling’.²⁵⁸ The words all refer in some way to one of the central themes of the play, humanity’s wanderings around the world since the Fall of Man in search of a new paradise or somewhere to call home. These identity and *Heimat*²⁵⁹ issues are relevant not only for the local residents of the Swabian Alps but for communities all over the globe. Themes such as immigration and emigration, be it one hundred miles or thousands of miles, are considered.

²⁵⁶ Bühr, S., Moumouris, O., *Theater Lindenhof Melchingen, Tübinger Sommertheater 2008 AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte*, 20.6.2008 [unpublished type-script].

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ *Heimat* was discussed in Chapter Five.

The audience is challenged by the Lindenhof to engage in a conversation about community and home place and how it is defined in modern society on a local level and nationally and internationally. The influences of the philosophy of the 1968 student movement and the Lindenhof's keenness to protect the environment come to the fore in this production. The Lindenhöfler are urging their audience to acknowledge that people and communities are the change-makers and driving force in humanity and that living in harmony with each other and with nature and working together is the best path into the future. The theatre makes this socially critical point without any cynicism which might be expected given the clichéd impression such a desire gives. The Lindenhöfler however seem to want the audience to believe such a world would be possible. They demand that the audience members not only see the relevance of this point within their own local community but also within the wider context of the globalised world in which they exist.

As the audience move along they are surrounded by the hum of the actors who simultaneously quote from all sorts of literary, journalistic, philosophical, local, mythological and Biblical sources. As the audience try to find their footing on the uneven ground in the forest area their attention is constantly drawn by figures in the play who walk among them, for example a knight strolling by, a group of angels quoting in unison or individually Schiller, Milton, Shakespeare or Bachmann, or a group singing a poem by Heine in an opening in the trees above a path. The play's script also allows for the actors to add 'Weitere Privatimprovisationen und Fragen an die Zuschauer'.²⁶⁰ This experiential form of theatre is an onslaught on the senses of the audiences who can't imagine what will happen next.

²⁶⁰ Bühler, S., Moumouris, O., *Theater Lindenhof Melchingen, Tübinger Sommertheater 2008 AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte*, 20.6.2008 [unpublished type-script].

Next, the audience is introduced to a character who embodies the dual-roles of Moritz B, a local man, and the Titan Prometheus in Greek Mythology. He recites Goethe's poem *Prometheus*. In Greek mythology Prometheus is punished by the Gods for introducing fire to mortals on earth. This story has parallels in that of Adam and Eve who were punished by God for their Original Sin. This is followed by the multiplication of the species, starting with Adam and Eve. We are quickly whisked through time and space by the playwright and are ushered through the forest area by Theater Lindenhof actors and inhabitants of the Französisches Viertel: 'Der Mensch/ Aus zwei war drei und weiter mehr, und seine/ Zahl, sie wird bald unermesslich sein, wir wissen's schon.'²⁶¹

The play's discussion of the Fall of Man and humankind's subsequent wanderings around the world in search of a place to call home in towns, cities, communities and settlements is presented in many styles and registers and from many perspectives, personal, local, national, global. The play therefore is multi-layered and engages the audience on whatever level they choose. Some members of the audience identify extracts from Sophocles or Grillparzer, while others focus on songs by Heine or the anecdotes of the fruit farmer. This desire to reach all members of society from the eldest person to the youngest child or the most disinterested party is striking. The play falters in a sense due to the sheer volume of quotes and the variety of registers. Has the Lindenhof sought to do too much in the play or is its ambition inspiring? What will the audience take from the play? In interview with members of the local community and audience members, the feeling conveyed was always one of pride and belonging to the Lindenhof. The theatre inspires a sense of community, identity and belonging, which outweighed any doubts about the play's literary or theatrical qualities as such.

²⁶¹ Bühr, S., Moumouris, O., *Theater Lindenhof Melchingen, Tübinger Sommertheater 2008 AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte*, 20.6.2008 [unpublished type-script].

6.4.2 *Das Volk versus die Autorität III*

Ideas like that of a 'Schicksalsgemeinschaft' or of 'Hirn abschalten und folgen' are allusions to the danger of apathy among the general public. The terms are written on large placards held high in the air by actors for audience members to see. This notion of the importance of critical thinking among the general public is a theme typical for the Lindenhof. It is a theme which was born from the philosophies and ideals of the 1968 generation. The involvement of the founding members of the theatre in the movement is reflected today in the presence of such themes in the theatre's productions. In *Aussem Paradies* the chorus of performers who walk with the audience and surround them call on them to reflect on the history of mankind, 'Lasst für eine Weile uns besinnen'.²⁶² A creative use of space not only makes the play more entertaining but also, crucially, encourages the audience to engage more with its themes by forcing the audience to be in very close proximity to the actors and to engage in the act of walking with the actors through the scenes.

The audience, who are heading in the direction of modern times, move quickly along towards the modern reality of *die Stadt*, which is represented in the Panzerhalle in the Französisches Viertel: '[w]o stehn wir jetzt? Wohin führt der Weg?! Zu einem Ort, der uns ist alle Orte. Einem Raum, für viele./ Zur Stadt'.²⁶³ The lightning pace at which the text of the play moves through the ages, the steady rhythm of the chorus of the actors' voices and the constant onward movement of the audience give the play increased momentum at this point. The chorus of actors continues and demands to know of the audience how such a

²⁶² Bühler, S., Moumouris, O., *Theater Lindenhof Melchingen, Tübinger Sommertheater 2008 AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte*, 20.6.2008 [unpublished type-script].

²⁶³ Ibid.

disastrous situation came about. Why had people decided to abandon the natural world in favour of one where:

[n]icht mehr Natur nun des Menschen größter Widersacher/ bleibt, sondern er/
selbst: der Mensch sieht nun im anderen/ seine größte Möglichkeit und seinen/
schlimmsten Feind.²⁶⁴

They challenge the audience to be socially critical and to reflect upon the way they live and behave. Gillian Pye comments on the role of trash in our culture as follows:

[i]n an age of post-memory (Hirsch, 1997), characterised by ever-increasing consumption, both of material goods and information, the role played by things in remembering - and forgetting - takes on increased significance. This reflects a shift in attitudes towards material culture in the late twentieth century and a renewed engagement with the complex relationships between subjects and objects, which no longer seen as antagonists in the formation of identities, give way to the concept of networks of interrelationships between humans and non-humans.²⁶⁵

Discussion of the role of discarded objects, places and marginalised people and their interrelationships with each other and the wider world follows in this part of the production. The play is constantly moving from theme to theme and moves on quickly to broach issues such as power, violence and fascism in a treatment typical of the aims and philosophies of the 1968 student movement. The texts quoted by the actors discuss the barriers people build between each other and the resulting conflicts, which in the past have led to destruction:

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Pye, G., *Trash Culture: Objects and Obsolescence in Cultural Perspective*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt: 2010, pp. 2-3.

Für ein ganz schlechtes Leben zwischen unseren Häusern, und Selbst die Luft darin wird dicker, wenn sich die Wände schon zu unsrem Nächsten durch Zwang dann umso mehr verhärten.²⁶⁶

The question of the importance of open engagement with the successes and failures of history is one which is much discussed in German schools and society. In this part of the play the widely accepted notion that education and the open discussion of history are desirable is put forward. It could be argued that in productions such as this the Lindenhof become entangled in a kind of theatre that is endlessly well-meaning but exhausts itself in moral positions with which its audience will likely agree. This production's repetition of widely accepted ideas might discourage the audience members from engaging with the social issues discussed because they are not fresh or entertaining enough, or indeed because they are 'entertaining', but in a particular way which does not energise them. This risk however is off-set by the creative staging, particularly the promenade feature of the production, as well as the diversity of styles presented in the montage approach of the playwrights. Creative use of space is characteristic of the theatre's performances. The opening words of *AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte*, a quotation from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, echo their belief in the importance of moving away from a conventional theatre space in favour of an outdoor performance and a more creative use of space.

²⁶⁶ Bühr, S., Moumouris, O., *Theater Lindenhof Melchingen, Tübinger Sommertheater 2008 AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte*, 20.6.2008 [unpublished type-script].

... laßt uns nicht diese abschließenden Schauspiele (Schauspielhäuser) übernehmen, bei denen eine kleine Anzahl von Leuten in einer dunklen Höhle trübsinnig eingesperrt ist, furchtsam und unbewegt in Schweigen und Untätigkeit verharrend (...)

In frischer Luft und unter freiem Himmel sollt ihr euch versammeln und dem Gefühl eures Glücks überlassen ... ihr seid es selbst, das würdigste Schauspiel, auf das die Sonne scheinen kann (...)²⁶⁷

Peter Brook, Ariane Mnouchkine and Theater Priessenthal in Mehring, Bavaria have all served as models for Theater Lindenhof of how theatre space can be used creatively.²⁶⁸ The theatre is particularly influenced by Brook with whom they have collaborated in the past.²⁶⁹ They take particular inspiration from his famous words: 'I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.'²⁷⁰ The space or place in which they perform is very important to Theater Lindenhof. In planning for this production their first step was to choose the spaces where the performance would take place. They then adapted the script, by Siegfried Bühler and Oliver Moumouris, to suit these locations.²⁷¹

Similarly to Lake Constance in the case of the *Bregenzer Festspiele*, described by Jane Wilkinson,²⁷² the local backdrop in the Französisches Viertel constitutes a defining feature of the play. But like the Bregenz operas, this play looks beyond its locality.²⁷³ It

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Vogel, T., in Zusammenarbeit mit Renner, B.G., *Komm! Ins Offene, Freund! Theater Lindenhof Melchingen*, Tübingen: Klöpfer und Meyer, 1997, p. 11.

²⁶⁹ Heard in private communication with members of Theater Lindenhof, June 2008.

²⁷⁰ Brook, P., *The Empty Space*, London: Penguin, 1968, p. 11.

²⁷¹ Heard in private communication with members of Theater Lindenhof, June 2008.

²⁷² Wilkinson, J., *Performing the Local and the Global: The Theatre Festivals of Lake Constance*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2007.

²⁷³ Wilkinson, J., *Performing the Local and the Global: The Theatre Festivals of Lake Constance*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2007, p. 1.

simultaneously juxtaposes and merges the local and the global onstage. Wilkinson argues that our increased awareness of globalisation has made us ever more conscious of our own local setting and identity within the context of the wider global one. She cites the following remark by Wagner (2001, 15): ‘Inzwischen ist unstrittig, dass Globalisierung immer auch mit “Lokalisierung” und “Regionalisierung” einhergeht und es gerade in Anbetracht von Globalisierung und Globalität überall in einer neuen Betonung des Lokalen kommt.’²⁷⁴ It is the staging of the production and the creative use of space which encourages the audience to reflect from new angles on old ideas. A reassessment from new perspectives of these locally and globally relevant social issues is in this respect not redundant.

Theater Lindenhof advertised in the Französisches Viertel for residents in the local area who might wish to take part in the play. The local people’s participation, as audience, actors and stage hands, mirrors in real life the play’s engagement with the theme of community. One local man commented, in a television report about the play, on the effect his participation in Theater Lindenhof’s 2008 Sommertheater production had on himself and others, ‘[...] uns als Mitspielenden hilft es, dass wir uns besser kennenlernen, ja, das hilft auf jeden Fall mal die Tatsache, dass wir auch zusammen spielen’.²⁷⁵ The play conforms to Barba’s vision of the theatre in the west which is described by Phipps: ‘[a] theatre which is alive and which performs a vital and energising role in a community where the activity, the aim and the sacrifice required, contribute to the quality of community life.’²⁷⁶ The choice of the *Theaterspaziergang* form for the first part of the play creates a sense of community and connectedness among the audience members as they walk together through the different scenes. The central theme of community is therefore mirrored in real life not only by the

²⁷⁴ Wilkinson, J., *Performing the Local and the Global: The Theatre Festivals of Lake Constance*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2007, p. 252.

²⁷⁵ Television interview, *DW-TV Kultur.21*, June 2008.

²⁷⁶ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: an investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000, p. 51.

local residents' participation in the production but also by the sense of community provoked among audience members. Creating a sense of community is a central aim of the reconstruction programme. By making community the central theme of their production and by choosing the Französisches Viertel as the space in which it is performed, the theatre seems to be simultaneously endorsing the reconstruction programme and reinforcing their central theme.

6.4.3 Literary references

Without much warning the audience is moved forward again from this third makeshift stage area. Along the way they are confronted with large numbers of extracts relating to the central themes of the play, from Shakespeare and the Book of Lamentations in the Old Testament, which refers to destroyed cities. This is followed by a short list of cities which were destroyed or damaged very badly by the violence resulting from conflict. Next comes an extract from Ingeborg Bachmann's 'Malina', in which she portrays the end of the world. The writings of Kurt Tucholsky appear in the production with descriptions of the German landscape. According to Colin Riordan, Tucholsky was '[...] using landscape to articulate a sense of belonging'²⁷⁷ and he describes his writings:

²⁷⁷ Riordan, C., *Environment, landscape and culture*, in: Germany, Phipps, A. M., [ed.] *Contemporary German Cultural Studies*, Arnold, Oxford University Press: 2002, p. 65.

[w]hat the writer and journalist hated was the chauvinist, militaristic parody of Germany portrayed by German nationalists and indicated by the inverted commas. What he loved about the country, it emerges from a later illustrated essay called 'Heimat' ('Homeland'), was the landscape; to be 'in den Bergen, wo Feld und Wiese in die kleinen Straßen sehen, am Rand der Gebirgsseen, wo es nach Wasser und Holz und Felsen riecht, und wo man einsam sein kann' [...] (Tucholsky 1985b, 313). Tucholsky here is using landscape to articulate a sense of belonging, an alternate sense of Germanness in a way which has been characteristic of German culture for centuries, and which can still be detected today.²⁷⁸

Short passages from Kurt Tucholsky are included alongside extracts from the Bible, Shakespeare, Bachmann, and Hölderlin which all ring in the ears of the audience as they walk forward through the scenes. Little vignettes along the path portray what paradise means for different people. A family is turned away by guards as they try to enter the city where they might build better lives for themselves. Children climb in vain up a ditch to try to scramble into the place on the other side where they might have a better life. Accepted notions of paradise as something unattainable, something almost magical are merged here with the realities of overcrowding, asylum seekers and rapidly increasing urbanisation which are real, contemporary issues of vital importance. The people represented in the vignettes are unable to pass the border into their paradise. Similarly, at the beginning of the play the audience were physically separated from the Garden of Eden by a tall, forbidding wire fence.

The notion of needing the appropriate key (or passport) for a border-crossing is explored in the play's quest for paradise. This image might equally be applied to the various levels on which the play can be accessed given its multiple literary registers. The kind of passport one

²⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 65.

holds determines the kind of borders one can cross, or, in this case, which or on how many levels one can engage with the play on. An understanding of *Schwäbisch* is an indispensable key to unlocking the parts of the play which are in that dialect, and a knowledge of classical literature, mythology and history illuminates some of the literary allusions in the production. The desire to break down barriers and allow as many members of the audience as possible access to a satisfactory understanding of the play reflects the theatre's desire to reach every audience member and not simply an elite few who can decipher complicated literary passages. This also reflects the theatre's wider political mission which aims to promote social justice and to champion those marginalised in society.

6.4.4 Dwellings

Is a place only worthy of the name paradise if it is unattainable? The play suggests that it is possible to create a 'modern paradise', like that in the Französisches Viertel, as long as community is at its heart. The audience and actors undertake a journey together in their imagination towards this new paradise. The images of the journey, including border-crossings, are visible in the play, for instance in the vignettes just described. Mankind's journey through history since the Fall of Man is presented as a series of rites of passage which provide the keys to access a new paradise, which in the context of the play is *die Stadt*.

The audience move with the actors to a scene which is more like a political rally than a scene from a traditional play. A real life member of the *Wagenbürger* community simply stands up on the podium and speaks in defence of their way of life. At the end of the speech, children from the *Wagenbürger* community pass pamphlets about their community around to members of the audience.

Das rechte und gerechte Leben findet nicht dort statt, in good old Tübingen, ne ne, das Unglück der Menschheit (...) begann in dem Augenblick als ein Mensch auf eine Wiese schritt und einen Pfahl in die Erde rammte, eine Grenze zog und sagte: das gehört mir!²⁷⁹

Na ja ihr wisst schon was ich mein... also mir liegt nichts am Besitztum. Ich fordere lediglich Respekt. Für mich und für euch, für die Natur.²⁸⁰

The *Wagenbürger* are a group of people who, despite their otherwise ordinary lives (for example, working as civil servants, teachers and parents), live in temporary abodes in the area above the Französisches Viertel. They moved into the area in 1991 when the French troops moved out: '[...] vorbei am Wagendorf, einer abenteuerlichen Siedlung von sechzig Erwachsenen und Kindern, die für den Regisseur ein Geschenk des Himmels sind: Diese Aussteiger leben in alten Last-, Bau- und Zirkuswagen und verstehen sich als Nomaden des 21. Jahrhunderts.'²⁸¹

In this *Wagenbürger* scene the play shines a light on an aspect of life and a way of living which seldom receives attention. On a local level, this could be described as Theater Lindenhof giving the *Wagenbürger* an opportunity to speak about their choice of lifestyle. However, it also introduces the idea of life without cities and town planning at the point in the play when we are moving from the forest into the representation of the modern reality of *die Stadt* in the Panzerhalle, where the second part of the production is performed in a more traditional theatre space. As part of the action onstage in the Panzerhalle, Susanne Hinkelbein, musical director of *AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte*, presents songs

²⁷⁹ Bühr, S., Moumouris, O., Theater Lindenhof Melchingen, Tübinger Sommertheater 2008 *AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte*, 20.6.2008, [unpublished type-script].

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

composed for the production as well as her *Hinkelbeinsche Zeitungsooper*. In this she brings new energy to the traditionally monotone narrative voice of news reportage. In one of the articles chosen from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, for example, the journalist discusses the greater than average number of environmentally conscious citizens who live in Tübingen. However, it also introduces the idea of life without cities and towns:

14. Mai 2008 Das Zentrum des ‘moralischen Hedonismus’, der ökologisch korrekten Bessermenschen, liegt in Württemberg: Die Universitätsstadt Tübingen ist angeblich die Hauptstadt der ‘Lohas’.

Lohas? Das sind Menschen, die einen ‘Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability’ pflegen und zuerst von amerikanischen Soziologen in der dortigen Mittelschicht entdeckt wurden.²⁸²

Hinkelbein follows in the tradition of authors such as Bertolt Brecht, Karl Kraus and others who used newspaper reports in their plays. In fact, an extract from Brecht’s

Dreigroschenroman, which relates to cities and in which he employs reportage, is quoted shortly before the end of the play: ‘Legionen von Elenden, in lautlosem Marsch, durchsichtig und gesichtslos, unaufhaltbar, marschieren durch die Mauern, ein in die Kasernen, die Restaurants, die Gemäldegalerien, das Parlament, die Gerichtspaläste [...]’.²⁸³

During the second part of the play in the *Panzerhalle*, an actor who plays the *Hausmeister* or *Stadtoberamtmann* appears with the first of many large yellow signs which he affixes to the front of the scaffolding. These signs remain for the rest of the play and are a constant visual reminder of its main themes:

²⁸² Bühr, S., Moumouris, O., Theater Lindenhof Melchingen, Tübinger Sommertheater 2008 AUSSEM PARADIES eine Stadtgeschichte, 20.6.2008, [unpublished type-script].

²⁸³ Ibid.

Die Welt hat Hauscharakter. Ihr Hausmeister P.S. / P.S.: Der Mensch ist von Grund auf ein Wohnwesen. Sein Verhältnis zum Weltganzen ist ein Einwohnerverhältnis.
(P. S.)

The statements on the signs reflect the play's socially critical message as well as themes which are important to the Lindenhof, such as the combination of the local and the global: 'Die Welt hat Hauscharakter'. The initials P.S. on the signs refer to the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk, the author of the statements. The meaning of the latter is accessible to all members of the audience, but only those who are familiar with the writings of the author might recognise the significance of the initials P.S. Onstage the audience see what appears to be an ordinary piece of scaffolding which is a few storeys high and as wide as a few large houses. On one hand the scaffolding represents a block of apartments in the Französisches Viertel in Tübingen and on the other a block of apartments anywhere in the world - the anonymity of the city. The scaffolding therefore represents the microcosm and the macrocosm simultaneously - the local and the global.

A large number of actors are onstage in this part of the production. The desire to include as many local residents as possible may have been a factor in this. However, it may also have been a ploy by the director to reflect the large number of people and personalities existing within the local community and the wider global one. The constant movement of the spotlight between actors conveys the idea of both the multitudes and individuals within the community; some of those in the spotlight cite Grass or Nietzsche in Hochdeutsch, while others speak Schwäbisch. The actors represent a cross-section of society, from young children to the elderly, reflecting diversity in the local and global community.

The Lindenhöfler themselves could be described as being part of a generation of Germans who moved from the cities to more rural environments in a bid to improve their lifestyle. In

this play they question community and modern society's modes of living together in cities and towns. Questioning how to live in a local environment within the broader global context is typical of the theatre's themes, but also reflects the members' ongoing discussion about the best way of life in the Swabian Alps. Not only the preservation of the local culture but also that of the environment is important to the theatre. In fact, the founders and members of the Lindenhof were part of the discussions to have power generating wind turbines erected in the rolling hills surrounding the theatre and the village of Melchingen.

6.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter is intended as an analysis of three Theater Lindenhof productions which are characteristic of its artistic output. It contains an assessment of their themes, staging, language use, dramatis personae, special effects, costumes and acting style typical of the theatre's productions. Rather than structuring this chapter as an overview of the Lindenhof's repertoire in its entirety, this more focused examination of three exemplary productions gives greater insight into the type of contemporary German *Volkstheater* produced at the Lindenhof. Nonetheless I have included a full list of the productions performed by the theatre to date in Appendix VI for the sake of completeness.

Chapter Seven

7.1 Introduction

Alongside its uniquely dense network of state-subsidised theatres Germany has an equally extensive tradition of amateur and semi-professional groups, especially in rural and small-town locations, that perform *Volkstheater*, popular performances that often combine entertainment with a strong element of social and political criticism, and also play a key role in sustaining local and regional identity against the pressures of national and global homogenisation. In this section I will explore the terms *Volk* and *Volkstheater* with a view to reaching a better understanding of how the Lindenhof has renegotiated and repurposed these terms in twenty-first century Swabia. Theater Lindenhof's role as a medium for social criticism and political comment in its community allows it to explore the tensions between the political and the popular, the traditional and the progressive, the local and the global. The theatre's plays have probed into issues such as local identity and cultural mores in Swabia, but have also called into question definitions of terms such as *Volk* and *Volkstheater* by reimagining them and giving them new meaning in the modern context in which the local and the global are closer than ever. Defining the Lindenhof's renegotiated version of the terms *Volk*, *Volksstück* and *Volkstheater* will form the basis for my critical analysis and argument in this chapter. It is hoped that the addition of these definitions to the collection of data regarding the Lindenhof will help to create a more rounded picture of the theatre, a socially critical *Volkstheater* existing within the contemporary Swabian, German and global theatre landscape.

An important precursor to my study of Theater Lindenhof is the examination of the *Naturtheater* phenomenon in South West Germany by Alison Phipps. My thesis follows in

the footsteps of Phipps' research by employing the interdisciplinary methodological framework she pioneered.²⁸⁴ However, the use of an interdisciplinary framework within the context of a German Studies project is not the only element of Phipps' research that has a high degree of relevance to my own. The subject of her book, *Naturtheater*, is an appropriate point of comparison to the subject of my thesis. In this chapter I will outline some of the most striking similarities and differences between the Lindenhof and the *Naturtheater* phenomenon, focusing in particular on the Naturtheater Hayingen for reasons which I will outline below. In drawing a comparison between Theater Lindenhof and the Naturtheater Hayingen, which was studied by Phipps, I will attempt to illustrate how the Lindenhof and Lindenhöfler have been influenced by the local theatre scene and how they have carved a place for themselves within an already overcrowded theatre market. Although Phipps' study of the *Naturtheater* phenomenon will be the main point of comparison, the Landestheater and the Zimmertheater in Tübingen will also provide reference points. Beyond the regional, on a national level, the Berliner Ensemble and the Privattage in Hamburg will also provide a backdrop and context within which to place Theater Lindenhof and its productions. These comparisons, ranging from the most local to the national, will, I hope, convey to the reader Lindenhof's position within the context of the wider theatre community in its region and beyond. The theatre's impact on the theatre scene and that of its members and collaborators will be discussed to further establish its place within the contemporary German theatre scene.

This chapter would be incomplete without an examination of the history of the term and genre of the *Volksstück*, from which the Lindenhof's form developed. This is a wide field, however, warranting much further discussion than I can undertake here. In view of this I

²⁸⁴ It is the aim of this study, accepting the validity of both theoretical and practical approaches to the analysis of culture and of theatre, to use tools and theories offered by different disciplines, in order to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of *Naturtheater*.

will outline in this chapter only what is useful to the pursuit of definitions of *Volk*, *Volksstück* and *Volkstheater* in the case of the Lindenhof.

Ethnographic method will form part of the theoretical framework for this chapter. With the aim of defining Lindenhof's version of *Volk*, *Volksstück* and *Volkstheater* I will draw from ethnographic interviews which I carried out in Swabia during the academic year 2010-11 as well as participant observation undertaken during the same period of field research. The first-hand explanations of the meanings of the terms from key players at the Lindenhof provide a further layer of insight into the theatre and its workings which enhance the conclusions I put forward, rendering them more holistic and comprehensive than if I had employed German Studies or Theatre Studies tools alone.

In concluding this penultimate chapter, I will explain the manner in which the theatre is reimagining and reinvigorating this often overlooked form of contemporary German theatre. I will offer my definitions of the terms *Volk*, *Volksstück* and *Volkstheater* in the context of Theater Lindenhof.

7.2 Theater Lindenhof in the context of the wider theatre community

In a bid to provide a context within the contemporary German theatre scene within which to place Theater Lindenhof, I will outline similarities (and differences) between it and comparable theatres. In this section I will also discuss the influence of the Lindenhof and Lindenhöfler on the contemporary German theatre scene both locally and nationally.

The three *Naturtheater* Phipps' analysed in most detail in her investigation into South West German *Naturtheater* are in Hayingen, Reutlingen and Hornberg. Other theatres which

provide points of reference in her study are the *Naturtheater* in Renningen, Fridingen, Sigmaringendorf, Heidenheim, Neuenstadt, Illertissen and Grötzingen.²⁸⁵ It would be beyond the scope of this study to compare the Lindenhof effectively to each of these *Naturtheater*, therefore I have chosen the Naturtheater Hayingen because it shares the greatest number of similarities with the Lindenhof. Although differences do mark the two theatres apart, the similarities outweigh them. The Naturtheater Hayingen is 33 kilometres from Melchingen. Therefore, the geographical proximity between the two theatres links them at once, in a spatial manner at least. The area surrounding Melchingen and Hayingen is dotted with numerous small villages. For instance, one passes through Pfronstetten on the road from Melchingen to Hayingen. With a population of 1,469²⁸⁶ as of June 2014, Pfronstetten is an example of a small Swabian village which is similar to Melchingen or Hayingen, which has a population of 2,160²⁸⁷ as of March 2015. Melchingen is even smaller with a population of 937 residents in December 2015.²⁸⁸

This rural Swabian setting marks Theater Lindenhof and the Naturtheater Hayingen out from the majority of mainstream theatres in Germany (and throughout the world) which are typically located in well-populated, metropolitan locations such as the city centres of major towns and cities. According to Phipps '[a]n important feature of the *Naturtheater* other than the fact that they are situated in the open air, is their geographical location. The theatres are situated on the very edge of the towns or villages they serve, or, as mentioned earlier in places of communication and local significance such as a market place or a cathedral square'.²⁸⁹ Theater Lindenhof is in the middle of the main street, at the heart of the village

²⁸⁵ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, pp. 2-3.

²⁸⁶ <https://pfronstetten.wordpress.com/ueber-uns/daten-zahlen/>. Last accessed: June 10, 2016.

²⁸⁷ http://www.hayingen.de/cms/stadtentwicklung/zahlen---fakten_30.html. Last accessed: June 10, 2016.

²⁸⁸ <http://www.burladingen.de/Lde/Startseite/Stadtinformation/Einwohnerzahlen.html>. Last accessed: June 10, 2016.

²⁸⁹ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p. 126.

of Melchingen, and thus has a physical position of significance at the centre of village life. Beyond this physical presence in Melchingen, the Lindenhöfler also operate a busy touring schedule with performances throughout the region in venues varying from town halls to town squares, pubs and large purpose-built auditoria. Communities such as Gammertingen Schlosssaal, Burladingen, Balingen, Denkendorf and Winterthur provide venues for Theater Lindenhof performances throughout the year.

However, alongside its performances in more traditional, indoor theatre spaces in Melchingen and throughout the region, Theater Lindenhof also performs in outdoor venues all over Baden-Württemberg. For instance, *Aussem Paradies: Eine Stadtgeschichte*, which was analysed in the preceding chapter, is an example of the type of performance held in the open air by the Lindenhöfler, namely in the tree-lined area of Tübingen's French Quarter. The cast of *AUSSEM PARADIES* included members of the local community who performed alongside the theatre's ensemble. Similarly, local adults and school pupils performed alongside Lindenhof actors in performances in less usual theatre spaces such as the town square in Stetten am kalten Markt and the 'Pausa' in Mössingen (a large factory building which formerly housed a textile printing company²⁹⁰). These kind of largescale Lindenhof productions which include local people are those which bear most striking similarity to the *Naturtheater* phenomenon which Phipps describes as a:

[...] form of intimate, popular and localised theatre, performed outdoors in villages and small towns for example in Swabia. Plays are performed by the indigenous population after being written or transposed into dialect by local dramatists. Those active in the theatre groups represent all age groups. In the towns and villages where

²⁹⁰ The 'Pausa' is a local landmark in Mössingen due to its architecture and the fact that it houses a wide breadth of information relating to the development of the textile printing industry in Germany. The 'Pausa' building exemplifies Bauhaus architecture. Its newer extension was designed by Manfred Lehmbruck.

Naturtheater is performed it is apparent that the *Naturtheater* is an integral part of cultural life.²⁹¹

Similarly to *Naturtheater* as defined by Phipps, Theater Lindenhof's *Volkstheater* is 'intimate, popular and localised', however I would argue that it cannot be described as always having been popular in the mainstream of the local community. In the early days of the theatre it was deemed much too politically radical by the villagers of Melchingen who made clear their distaste for the young Lindenhöfler's artistic output and presence. Over the course of the years that followed, notably after the professionalization of the theatre in the 1990s, the Lindenhof and Melchingen became synonymous with each other. The Lindenhof received positive reviews and awards from within the region and beyond, putting the village of Melchingen 'on the map'. This is indeed a common process, whereby a particular cultural activity is initially treated with suspicion or rejection within its local environment only to become locally accepted once its wider reputation begins to bear favourably on that of the region or community as a whole. Examples of such a process are the work and figures of Heinrich Böll in Cologne, Marieluise Fleißer in Ingolstadt, or the Citizens' Theatre in the Gorbals area of Glasgow.

In her definition of *Naturtheater* Phipps describes plays which are '[...] performed by the indigenous population after being written or transposed into dialect by local dramatists'.²⁹² Theater Lindenhof productions are performed by the indigenous population and by amateur actors. However, rather than being members of the local community who have everyday jobs alongside rehearsals for theatre performances, the ensemble, despite having no formal training in acting, are fulltime actors and are dependent on the salaries they receive from the

²⁹¹ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p.5.

²⁹² Ibid.

theatre to live. Theater Lindenhof productions are performed throughout the year and the theatre is a viable business entity which supports the lives of the families of its employees. Lindenhof plays are also written in dialect by local authors, however the Lindenhöfler have very few productions which contain dialogue solely in *Schwäbisch*. As discussed in the previous chapters, a variety of linguistic registers are typically employed, so that High German and literary language are interspersed with colloquial, contemporary German and passages in thick Swabian dialect.

Phipps comments that another distinguishing feature of *Naturtheater* is the wide ranging ages of those actively involved. As has been described in the preceding chapter, the Lindenhof has outreach programmes which include visits to local schools to recruit pupils to take part in productions, or reaching out to the local community in the Französisches Viertel in Tübingen or the town of Stetten am kalten Markt to perform and work alongside Lindenhof ensemble members to put on a *Volkstheater* performance. Including members of the local community in these largescale projects encourages discussion about and enthusiasm for the theatre. I heard frequently in ethnographic interviews with local performers taking part in the summer productions that their involvement encouraged them to attend Lindenhof productions in Melchingen. Although the theatre's audience is primarily local, it is not solely the 937 residents of Melchingen who pack the benches of the *Scheune* and theatre venues across the region. Theater Lindenhof has proved to have the ability to draw into the audiences of its productions members of the local community, including Melchingen villagers, who otherwise would have no interest in attending a theatre performance. Phipps describes how in the case of *Naturtheater*

[...] kinship, or social bonds that act as equivalents, gather the community together in performance, but the audiences are still fee-payers, even if they are not entirely the fee-paying strangers characteristic of the modern age of theatre. The difference

between this form of popular culture and other forms such as cinema or novels is that the profits go directly to the *Naturtheater* and not to rich capitalists, whose primary aim is to increase their own profits. This is not, however, to say that the *Naturtheater* are in some Romantic way survivors, unscathed, from a pre-modern age.²⁹³

Theater Lindenhof may also be described as gathering the community together in its audiences and in productions which involve members from the local community.

Performing socially critical *Volkstheater* which relates to the region and which they bring to various theatre spaces throughout the Schwäbisch-Alb has given rise to discussion of political issues. In ethnographic interviews with members of the local community both in Melchingen and further afield, locals expressed pride in the theatre. As distinct from a commercial theatre, which aims to raise as much profit as possible, the Lindenhof, like the *Naturtheater* Hayingen, has the aim of serving the local community rather than earning as much profit as possible. Which is not to say that profit is unimportant at Lindenhof, for without ticket sales the theatre would perish.

Regarding *Naturtheater* productions, Phipps refers to plays which '[...] tend towards entertainment, showing a preference for light comedy, local colour and popular theatre rather than experimental or mainstream drama'.²⁹⁴ She elaborates by remarking upon how it is '[...] interesting to note the variety of plays chosen by the *Naturtheater*, before dismissing the phenomenon as *Massentheater* or *Boulevardtheater* and thus unworthy of further scrutiny, as would seem to have been the case in the past'.²⁹⁵ In Theater Lindenhof plays the artistic output is consciously socially critical and political in nature. This is a

²⁹³ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p. 73.

²⁹⁴ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p. 7.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

reflection of the history and development of the theatre, which are undoubtedly influenced by the political convictions of the members of the theatre. Phipps refers to the influence of Martin Schleker at the Naturtheater Hayingen, who steered productions in the direction of being more socially critical: '[d]ifferent collective aims were also identifiable within the *Naturtheater* of the region. The Hayingen *Naturtheater* took its lead from Martin Schleker and from his desire to produce a political form of the *Naturtheater* which was able to make his audiences reflect on issues of social and political justice.'²⁹⁶ The aim of being more political than other *Naturtheater* in the region aligns Hayingen more closely with the Lindenhöfler. In her article about the Theater Lindenhof production of *Hexenfeuer*, which was very well-received on the local theatre scene and even shown on television in South West Germany, Phipps describes the Lindenhof as a theatre which

[...] enjoyed increasing success as a radicalized, semi-professional *Volkstheater*, touring internationally, residing for a season in Berlin, producing their own Swabian-dialect plays to packed audiences and being awarded prize after prize for their innovative work.²⁹⁷

The dedication of members of the *Naturtheater* community is described by Phipps who remarks that '[t]he sense of tradition, of continuity and of loyalty to the *Heimat*, as expressed by members of the *Naturtheater* and in literature produced by the *Naturtheater*, is striking.'²⁹⁸ The sense of community and local pride inspired by the *Naturtheater* is also a strong feature of Theater Lindenhof's success. In previous chapters, particularly those regarding the theatre's history and development, I have described the type of dedication and

²⁹⁶ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p. 154.

²⁹⁷ Phipps, A., *Breaking Frames and Burning Witches: From Local German Women to Intercultural Theatre*. In: Lengel, L., Warren, T. J., (ed.): *CASTING GENDER: Women and Performance in Intercultural Contexts*, Peter Lang, New York: 2005, p. 98.

²⁹⁸ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, pp. 7-8.

loyalty to the *Heimat* inspired by the Lindenhöfler who chose to locate their new theatre in the Schwäbisch-Alb and to use local dialect and local stories and heroes in their productions. The actors who have been with the theatre for decades have described it as a home place for them, indeed the familial atmosphere of staff meetings and conversations at which I was present during my time in Melchingen highlighted this. Lastly, the local people, both those actively involved in certain Lindenhof productions and those who attend as audience members, feel proud of the theatre as a form of community achievement. A similar feeling is described by Phipps in her study of the *Naturtheater* phenomenon.

A distinctive feature of the Hayingen *Naturtheater* is that it is an exception to the way the *Naturtheater* are organised into *Vereine*²⁹⁹ (society, club or association). Not as yet having established itself as a *Verein*, Hayingen does not have a *Vorstand* (managing committee) or a *Beirat* (advisory committee). Nonetheless the various responsibilities involved in the running of the *Naturtheater* are shared between those who are active members: ‘The reliance in this theatre is on good will, without the added responsibility of a certain, official, elected status. The status, where it is apparent, in Hayingen, revolves around the authority of Martin Schleker and the other members of his family [...].’³⁰⁰ Theater Lindenhof, as discussed in Chapter Five, is a *Stiftung* (foundation) since 2011, and as such its management and constitution are laid out legally. This marks the theatre out as being structured more formally along legal lines than Hayingen.

The *Naturtheater* Hayingen provides the closest parallel with Lindenhof, but it shares similarities with other theatres throughout its region which I will outline below. Here I will discuss not only other theatres in the vicinity of Melchingen which share audience members

²⁹⁹ See Chapter Five for definitions of *Verein* and *Stiftung*.

³⁰⁰ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p.163.

and other similarities with Theater Lindenhof, but I will also engage with the question of the theatre's influence on the regional theatre scene, in particular bringing to the fore members of the Lindenhof community who have worked in other theatres and indeed started their own individual projects in the Schwäbisch-Alb and further afield. The Landestheater Tübingen and the Zimmertheater Tübingen are examples of theatres in Lindenhof's catchment area for audience members. Despite Lindenhof's rural location in Melchingen, its ability to attract audience members from the local urban centres such as Tübingen and Reutlingen is striking. In addition, its position as a *Regionaltheater* or theatre for the region allows it to appeal to a wider section of the Swabian community, far beyond the village limits of Melchingen. The annual outdoor production in Tübingen each summer falls in rotation to Theater Lindenhof, the Landestheater Tübingen or the Zimmertheater Tübingen. This highlights the fact that the three theatres are competitors, and relative equals, vying for the same audience.

The Landestheater Tübingen and the Zimmertheater Tübingen both employ professionally-trained ensemble members, although the Zimmertheater has not always had a full ensemble at its disposal. It houses around 60 audience members in each of its two theatre spaces and has been a GmbH, or limited liability company, since circa a decade after its inception in the late 1950's. The city of Tübingen is a major stakeholder in the theatre. The Landestheater on the other hand, is heavily state-funded. The theatre's main auditorium accommodates over 350 audience members and alongside this it has two other smaller theatre venues. It serves as the main theatre for Tübingen and Reutlingen and its staff of over a hundred far exceeds Theater Lindenhof's group of employees which numbers only 15 to 19. Similarly to Theater Lindenhof, the Landestheater serves the wider community in the region by performing in theatre venues throughout Baden-Württemberg and even in parts of Switzerland. The Landestheater's *Jugend-* and *Kindertheater* programmes are

similar to the outreach programmes operated by Theater Lindenhof, which aim to draw children and young people from the region into conversations about socially critical issues, and to involve them in the workings of the theatre.

On a national level Theater Lindenhof has performed at the Berliner Ensemble and the Privattage in Hamburg where they have been award winners and nominees. In its championing of Brechtian techniques in productions and in its left-leaning politics, Lindenhof could be described as being comparable in its aspirations, though not of course in its scale or its resources, to a theatre such as the Berliner Ensemble. Given its large scale and central location in Germany's capital city, the Berliner Ensemble is primarily noteworthy here because of its invitations to the Lindenhof to perform in its theatre space. Similarly, that the Lindenhof has been invited to perform at the Privattage in Hamburg highlights the acclaim and appeal it has achieved beyond its immediate locality in the Swabian Alps. The theatre has also performed at the *Theater der Welt* international theatre festival. Lindenhof productions, such as *Hexenfeuer*, have been broadcast on the German television networks, SWR and 3sat.

Similarly to Theater Lindenhof the Ohnsorg Theater in Hamburg performs plays in the local dialect, Plattdeutsch. However, according to McGowan the theatre exemplifies 'commercialised popular drama' and its 'stage language simulates dialect for comic effect. Subtlety is sacrificed to crude comedy and the happy ending. Where modernity encroaches on this world it is to be defeated by moral backbone, homespun wisdom and native wit'.³⁰¹ The Ohnsorg Theater's employment of dialect and indeed comedy in its plays shows

³⁰¹ McGowan, M., *Volksstück*. In: Sandford, J., (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*, Routledge, London: 1999, p. 630.

parallels to Theater Lindenhof. However, unlike the Ohnsorg Theater, Lindenhof productions follow in the tradition of critical Volkstheater.

The rotating of Lindenhof actors, and particularly directors, highlights the porosity of the theatre and the manner in which it influences other theatres in the region as well as in the wider national landscape. Although it operates from Melchingen, the actors, dramaturgs and directors the theatre supplies to and borrows from other theatres, in the locality and on a national level, is of note. For instance, Franz Xaver Ott, a founding Lindenhöfler, remarked in ethnographic interview on his involvement in the Hayingen Naturtheater prior to Theater Lindenhof. Siegfried Bühr who has written and directed critically acclaimed Lindenhof productions was also director of the Zimmertheater Tübingen in the early 1980s and while working freelance has directed productions at theatres ranging from the Landestheater Tübingen to the Thalia Theater in Hamburg and the Maxim Gorki in Berlin. Antú Romero Nunes, who acted and trained at Theater Lindenhof as a youth, went on to produce Theater Lindenhof productions such as the 2010 production of *Kohlhaas*. Described by *Die Zeit* in 2013 as '[...] einer der erfolgreichsten jungen Theaterregisseure im Land'³⁰², Nunes was named 'Nachwuchsregisseur des Jahres' and became director in residence at the Maxim Gorki theatre in Berlin. He is currently director in residence at the Thalia Theater in Hamburg. My own first contact with the theatre was with its media director at the time, Bibi Deibler, who was working at an information stand outside a production of *Leonce und Lena* by the Lindenhof which was staged in Winterthur. She has since moved on to work in Stuttgart at the city's network of Staatstheater.

³⁰² *Die Zeit, Feuilleton*, 4. April 2013, p. 50.

7.3 Volkstheater

Throughout the history of *Volkstheater*, since the eighteenth century, critical analysis of the phenomenon has often been accompanied by warnings of its demise. Despite this, *Volkstheater* and the *Volksstück* have survived. Playwrights have constantly endeavoured to renew this form of theatre and it is perhaps for this reason that there are as many definitions as there are forms of *Volkstheater* and *Volksstück*. Rather than attempting to create my own general definitions, I will seek only to define the terms as they relate to the Lindenhof. Jürgen Hein remarks on ‘die Vieldeutigkeit des Begriffs Volksstücks’.³⁰³ Phipps comments that ‘[t]he history of *Volkstheater* and its reception are chequered. It is indeed possible to suggest that the meanings of the term in various cultural or historical contexts are so varied as to make it impossible to reach a unifying definition’.³⁰⁴ The problematic nature of defining the terms is well documented by scholars. Moray McGowan describes the *Volksstück* as being made up of ‘[...] two related, but essentially antagonistic genres’³⁰⁵. He describes the first as ‘commercialised popular drama’³⁰⁶ in which ‘[s]ubtlety is sacrificed to crude comedy and the happy ending’³⁰⁷. This first kind of uncritical *Volksstück* is the predecessor to: ‘[...] the *Neues Volksstück* (NV), which emerged in the late 1960s with the work of Martin Sperr, R.W. Fassbinder and F.X. Kroetz, and which does not draw on these popular comedies, except sometimes to negate them explicitly, as in Peter Turrini’s *Sauschlachten*’.³⁰⁸ In examining the *Volksstück*, Gilbert Carr points to Hein’s argument that the predecessor to the contemporary *kritisches Volksstück* is relevant to research relating to

³⁰³ Hein, J. (Hrsg.), *Theater und Gesellschaft: Das Volksstück im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag GmbH, 1973, p. 9.

³⁰⁴ Phipps, A., *Volkstheater*. In: Sandford, J., (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*, Routledge, London: 1999, p. 630.

³⁰⁵ McGowan, M., *Volksstück*. In: Sandford, J., (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*, Routledge, London: 1999, p. 630.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

the genre because it too is linked to the trivial, uncritical form which preceded it: 'Eine erste, einfache Begründung liefert Hein selbst, nämlich das moderne Volksstück sei "ohne die Folie des alten nicht zu denken", das es seit Horváth zu überwinden gelte.'³⁰⁹

The development of *Volkstheater* after its renaissance in the mid-twentieth century is particularly relevant to this study because the critical *Volkstheater* which came to the fore at this time is what the Lindenhöfler drew inspiration from. Nonetheless, a brief overview of the genre as it existed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is worthwhile, for these plays and productions are the predecessors to the *Kritisches Volksstück* which the Lindenhöfler embraced to create their own form of contemporary regional *Volkstheater*. I must stress here that Volksstück and Volkstheater may overlap but are not identical and must not be seen as such.

Katherine Arens comments that: 'German theatre history has been made poorer by people's insistence on isolating the *Volkstheater* [...] from Europe's contemporaneous theater context, and from the unique public spaces it offered its audiences.'³¹⁰ Playwrights such as Joseph Felix von Kurz and Joseph Anton Stranitzky experimented with *Stegreiftheater* (improvisational theatre), a type of play which was eventually banned in the mid-eighteenth century due to its tendency to criticize the status quo. The *Besserungsstück* ('play of improvement'³¹¹), a predecessor to the improvisational play, was, as its name suggests, more deliberately didactic than its cousin the *Zauberstück*, but both included features generally considered characteristic of the *Volksstück*, that is use of dialect, stories about the ordinary people of the area or directed towards them. Coulson describes the

³⁰⁹ Cf. Gilbert Carr, "Konflikte um die Modernität", in *Das zeitgenössische deutschsprachige Volksstück*, hrsg. Hassel, Herzmann (Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag, 1992), pp. 13-22 [p. 13].

³¹⁰ Arens, K., *Vienna's Dreams of Europe: Culture and Identity Beyond the Nation-State*, Bloomsbury, New York: 2015, p. 90.

³¹¹ Roe, I., F., *Biedermayer Period*. In: Konzett, M., (ed.), *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, Routledge, London: 2000, p. 105.

Besserungsstück as ‘[...] comedies about misfits and miscreants who are restored to the proper path’.³¹² Doll remarks on the *Besserungsstück* as follows:

Bekanntlich zeigt das *Besserungsstück*, wie jemand, der mit seinem Schicksal unzufrieden ist, mit Hilfe der Geister und Feen aus seinem Stand ausbricht, aber schließlich, die Dummheit und Vermessenheit seiner Ausprüche erkennend, zufrieden und glücklich sich mit seiner ursprünglichen Lage bescheidet.³¹³

The *Besserungsstück* could be described as being closer to the contemporary German *Volksstück* and to this extent at least there is support for Hein’s reference to the existence of socially critical *Volksstücke* as early as 1848 (Hein, 1973:13). The nineteenth-century *Volksstück* often took the form of a fairytale. The most acclaimed playwrights of this period, Ferdinand Raimund (1790-1836) and Johann Nestroy (1801-1862), are known for their *Zauberstücke* and *Besserungsstücke*, whereby it is important to note that Nestroy was always more sarcastic and more inherently critical of the genre than Raimund. These types of nineteenth-century play included fairy tale or magical elements which were often mixed with satirical and socially critical elements. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, as Jones points out, ‘[...] increased industrialization, migration to the city, and economic crises [...] led to more expensive theater tickets [...]’ which the working class found particularly difficult to afford.³¹⁴ Aside from price, another reason he suggests for the general public’s disinterest in a more literary kind of *Volksstück* was that the ‘idealized and edifying *Lebensbilder* were popular with critics but the general public tended to prefer ‘trivial farces’ or ‘operetta’³¹⁵.

³¹² Coulson, A., *Johann Nepomak Nestroy 1801-1862*, In: Konzett, M., (ed.), *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, Routledge, London: 2000, p. 753.

³¹³ Doll, J., *Theater im Roten Wien: Vom sozialdemokratischen Agitprop zum dialektischen Theater Jura Soyfers*, p. 202.

³¹⁴ Jones, C., N., *Negation and Utopia: The German Volksstück from Raimund to Kroetz*, New York: Peter Lang, 1993, p. 11.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

In the late nineteenth century Vienna's Deutsches Volkstheater and Berlin's Freie Bühne were founded. Sagarra and Skrine commented as follows on the kind of performance typically staged by Berlin's Freie Bühne:

[..] on 20 October 1889, the *Freie Bühne* had premiered Hauptmann's *Vor Sonnenaufgang* and set in motion a development which soon overtook Wildenbruch's success. Hauptmann's first (unpublished) play had been a verse drama on a national theme, the defeat of the Romans by the Germans under Hermann, cast in the Wildenbruch mould. But Hauptmann was a man of the people, without Wildenbruch's establishment connections, and his new play set out to reveal to theatre-going audiences a very different aspect of the new Germany: the appalling condition of exploitation, degradation and disease prevalent in a country which was beginning to see itself as the dynamic leader of the modern world.³¹⁶

These theatres attempted to attract working-class audiences into their auditoria. Part of their strategy to achieve this was to produce and show performances with themes relating to the lives of the workers themselves. This type of play was not a *Bauernstück* but might be more aptly described as working-class theatre, that is theatre aimed at the lower or working classes only. There is still disagreement among scholars as to whether the *Volksstück* is for, about, or takes the (political) side of the *Volk*, or some combination of these. At the same time as theatres such as these were performing largely didactic forms of *Volkstheater* without much critical acclaim or interest from scholars, there were other theatres, mainly in rural parts of German-speaking Europe, performing plays which also bore the name *Volksstück* but which consisted entirely of purely entertaining and uncritical content. The prevalence and proliferation of these unchallenging plays caused a stereotype to be born,

³¹⁶ Sagarra, E., Skrine, P., *A Companion to German Literature From 1500 to the present*, Blackwell, Oxford: 1997, p. 169.

namely that *Volkstheater* productions were purely unchallenging, uncritical types of performance which were non-intellectual and only valuable as a form of escapism. The poor reputation the *Volksstück* acquired because of its proliferation in forms designed purely for entertainment meant that fewer academics took note of it and those who did generally added to the ever-present warnings of its demise. Despite this, the trivial, uncritical type of *Volkstheater* remained popular among the lower and middle classes who made up the majority of the population.

7.4 Renaissance of the *Volkstheater* genre in the mid-twentieth century

In discussing *Volkstheater* in its critical form, Phipps comments that '[w]hile encompassing the impulse towards the traditional and expressing a sense of belonging it is also a form which demonstrates radical tendencies, politically and critically reflecting upon the life of everyday people and urging action'.³¹⁷ Jones argues that Ludwig Thoma's plays '[...] represent a transition between the *Volksstücke* of the nineteenth century and those of the twentieth'.³¹⁸ Along with Anzengruber and Thoma, authors such as Carl Zuckmayer (1896-1977), Ödön von Horváth (1901-1938), as well as Marieluise Fleißer (1901-1974) and Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) were leading lights of the emergence of the critical *Volksstück*, a term and form which is still present on the contemporary German theatre scene. It refers to the socially critical and literary form of the play. This *Neues Volksstück* or *Anti-Volksstück*, as Adorno named it,³¹⁹ is the one that bears the strongest resemblance to the plays performed by the Lindenhöfler and it is this type of play which they claim to produce for their audience in the Schwäbisch-Alb.

³¹⁷ Phipps, A., *Volkstheater*. In: Sandford, J., (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*, Routledge, London: 1999, p. 630.

³¹⁸ Jones, C., N., *Negation and Utopia: The German Volksstück from Raimund to Kroetz*, New York: Peter Lang, 1993, p. 11.

³¹⁹ Quoted in Schmitz, T., *Das Volksstück*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990, p. 19.

From the mid 1960's onwards, when plays by writers such as Kroetz and Fleißer gained notice, the *Volksstück* experienced a renaissance. The rediscovery of Fleißer and emergence of Kroetz and the political situation in Germany at the time played a role in reawakening interest in *Volkstheater* and the *Volksstück*. Sagarra and Skrine described Kroetz's plays:

[...] relatively short, laconic and dark, but not without a certain humour. They took the lid off contemporary goings-on in a section of the German population – the peasant farmers of Bavaria – which had missed out on the rise in living standards in postwar Germany and lacked the educational advantages of the urban audiences whose members watched aghast as Kroetz's often drastic down-to-earth dramas unfolded.³²⁰

At this point in German history, post-war reconstruction was over and the first economic crisis of the period was threatening. Belief in the political system was faltering. According to Schmitz the rise to power of the Grand Coalition coupled with the enacting of emergency laws led to a feeling of unease and disenchantment with the political system among the general public. When the NPD achieved more success than expected in elections, the question of people's susceptibility to fascist ideas came into focus and there was concern not to commit mistakes made in the past.³²¹

At this time there was increased awareness of the importance of people's perceptions of society and their views on the political system. Questions arose such as what makes people susceptible to fascist ideas or, equally, what leads people to act in an aggressive fashion towards minorities. The importance in a democratic system of the viewpoint and mind-set

³²⁰ Sagarra, E., Skrine, P., *A Companion to German Literature From 1500 to the present*, Blackwell, Oxford: 1997, p. 232.

³²¹ Schmitz, T., *Das Volksstück*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1990, p. 18.

of the ordinary person was appreciated more and this gave the *Volksstück* a new relevance in contemporary German-speaking countries. Sagarra and Skrine commented as follows on the new naturalism which was a feature of *Volksstücke* by playwrights such as Kroetz who aimed to reveal the real-life situations of ‘ordinary’ Germans at the time:

The new naturalism of Kroetz’s so-called *Volksstücke* was crude, but it had something to say about the affluent modern society in which such goings-on as the undetected killing of a woman’s unwanted child by her husband or the pathetic efforts of a retarded girl to survive in her deprived surroundings could be recognized as authentic and realistic. Moreover, Kroetz’s dramas also marked a return to a style and subject matter rooted in the Naturalism of Gerhart Hauptmann and going back at least as far as the *Sturm und Drang*.³²²

This new naturalism in *Volkstheater* productions of the era is also described by Brigitte Bausinger who comments that it is ‘[e]veryday life performed in front of a historical backdrop, with realistic speech and an understandable social milieu’.³²³ Gillian Pye remarks on Kroetz’s work:

Critical reactions to Kroetz’ dramas have tended to focus on several issues: the importance in the plays of language as a reflection of suffering and deprivation, the question of ‘realism’, political engagement, and the role of the dramas as representative of the contemporary critical *Volksstück* (literally: folk play).³²⁴

Kroetz’ approach to his *Volksstücke* is in line with Theater Lindenhof’s productions. Pye describes Kroetz’ ‘[...]’ commitment to a realistic approach to his subject – his portrayal of

³²² Sagarra, E., Skrine, P., *A Companion to German Literature From 1500 to the present*, Blackwell, Oxford: 1997, p. 232.

³²³ Bausinger, B., (cited in Kusz, 40, Note 7) in: Phipps, A., *Breaking Frames and Burning Witches: From Local German Women to Intercultural Theatre*. In: Lengel, L., Warren, T. J., (ed.): *Casting Gender: Women and Performance in Intercultural Contexts*, Peter Lang, New York: 2005, p. 99.

³²⁴ Pye, G., *Approaches to Comedy in Contemporary German Drama*, Edward Mellen Press, New York: 2002, p. 235.

the trivial and everyday – with his desire to reveal the social structures and systems which oppress and psychologically deform his figures’.³²⁵ This description is in line with the themes, subject matter, dramatis personae, style and staging of Lindenhof productions³²⁶.

Although Hein identifies an example of a socially critical, political *Volksstück* as early as 1848³²⁷ a political or socially critical agenda is far more characteristic of the *Volksstück* written from the 1960’s onwards. These are the plays which inspired the founders of the Lindenhof and which still inspire them today. This type of *Volksstück* provides the author with a platform for his/her political message. Phipps comments that ‘[s]ince Brecht’s radical moves in both theory and practice the left-wing political character of the *Volksstück* has emerged this century to oppose the right-wing *Volksstück* eventually leading to the academic accolade of “critical” prefixing those plays deemed left-wing (and therefore suitable for academic research)’³²⁸. *Volksstücke* composed during and after the genre’s so-called renaissance from the 1960’s on, by authors such as Kroetz, Sperr, Faßbinder and others often raised awareness about people who were voiceless or marginalised in society, but entertainment is very much downplayed in their plays. Issues surrounding power structures and group mentality were broached in their plays. They presented workers’ lives, examined social structures and tried through their work to come to terms with the new power which the media had in controlling people’s thought processes and the danger this posed:

³²⁵ Pye, G., *Approaches to Comedy in Contemporary German Drama*, Edward Mellen Press, New York: 2002, p. 235.

³²⁶ The staging of Ariane Mnouchkine and the Theater Priesenthal in Mehring, Bavaria have also influenced the theatre, as well as the styles and writings of Franz Xaver Kroetz, Bertolt Brecht, Peter Härtling, Friedrich Hölderlin, Ödön von Horváth, Seán O’Casey, Molière, Heinrich von Kleist, Martin Schlegel, William Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen, Georg Büchner, Heinrich von Kleist, Brian Friel and Felix Huby, among others.

³²⁷ Hein, J. (Hrsg.), *Theater und Gesellschaft: Das Volksstück im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag GmbH, 1973, p. 13.

³²⁸ Phipps, A., *Breaking Frames and Burning Witches: From Local German Women to Intercultural Theatre*. In: Lengel, L., Warren, T. J., (ed.): *CASTING GENDER: Women and Performance in Intercultural Contexts*, Peter Lang, New York: 2005, p. 99.

Martin Sperr belongs to a group of authors, among them Wolfgang Bauer, Rainer Werner Faßbinder and Franz Xaver Kroetz, who in the late 1960s sought to revitalize German theater by breaking with traditional models and reviving the *Volksstück* (folk play). Drawing on the works of Ödön Horváth and Marieluise Fleißer from the 1920s and 1930s, they injected a new social realism into this form. This realism paralleled the growing politicization of the West German theater and society in the late 1960s, which culminated in the student protest movement of 1968 and APO (extra-parliamentary opposition), and which reflected the widening popularity of the political philosophy of the Frankfurt School.³²⁹

These types of plays were aimed at ‘common’, ‘ordinary’ people, discussed aspects of ‘common’, ‘ordinary’ peoples’ lives, and tried to encourage reflection and new ways of thinking among ‘ordinary’ people. In doing so, though, they faced the same dilemma that has always plagued the *Volksstück* and its authors, that of identifying a *Volk* whilst neither idealising nor patronising it. Consequently, the topics, styles and political aims of the new *Volksstück* are many and varied. This is reflected in the very numerous and different definitions of the term. Hein describes the two most important types of *Volksstück* and the difference between them,

Volksstück ist einmal das regional begrenzte, dialektgebundene, anspruchslose, „bloß“ unterhaltende, „triviale“ Lokalstück auf der “Schaubühne ohne ideale Ansprüche” (Goedeke); zum andern sieht man in ihm – dies gilt besonders für seine Wiederentdeckung und Erneuerung im 20. Jahrhundert – eine Form der kritischrealistischen, nicht minder mit Mitteln der Unterhaltung arbeitenden (Selbst-) Darstellung des Volkes.³³⁰

³²⁹ Konzett, M., (ed.), *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, Routledge, London: 2000, p. 900.

³³⁰ Hein, J. (Hrsg.), *Theater und Gesellschaft: Das Volksstück im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag GmbH, 1973, p. 10.

The mid-twentieth century therefore marked a turning point for the *Volksstück*. This born-again *Volksstück* was exciting and critical and it awakened new interest in this type of play and production among discriminating theatregoers and scholars alike. Midgley comments as follows: 'Horváth's best-known plays established a model of theater that resembles Epic Theater in Brecht's sense but shows a stronger emphasis on psychological factors. This model of theater enjoyed a powerful surge of interest during the period of renewed social and political questioning in West Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s.'³³¹

New research in the area came about and the genre began to emancipate itself somewhat from the stereotypical trivial *Volksstücke* that had marred its reputation. However, given that the constant development and changing nature of the *Volksstück* genre make it difficult to define, is it then possible, even in the contemporary context, to write a general definition of the *Volksstück*? In the following citation Phipps describes two forms of *Volkstheater*. The latter echoes very closely the role of Theater Lindenhof:

It is perhaps most helpful to differentiate between the different forms of *Volkstheater* by dividing those deriving their being from patterns of late capitalist consumption, in other words professional popular theatre, and those which, although dependent on consumers, are concerned with expressing an identity of the people incorporating local perceptions of everyday life from both the past and the present day, in other words the folk theatre or community theatre.³³²

Drawing together the information from the chapters which preceded this one, it is clear that Theater Lindenhof falls quite precisely into this category of *Volkstheater* which is 'concerned with expressing an identity of the people incorporating local perceptions of

³³¹ Konzett, M., (ed.), *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, Routledge, London: 2000, p. 502.

³³² Phipps, A., *Volkstheater*. In: Sandford, J., (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*, Routledge, London: 1999, p. 631.

everyday life from both the past and the present day, in other words the folk theatre or community theatre'.³³³ This reasserts the importance of documenting Theater Lindenhof, for it is a contemporary, regional *Volkstheater* which falls into a category which is of interest to scholars.

7.5 Who are the *Volk* in Theater Lindenhof's form of *Volkstheater*?

Günter Minnerup remarks on the four distinct meanings and usages of *Volk* within contemporary German culture:

First, the colloquial one of 'the common people' as distinct from the privileged, educated or wealthy. Second, the democratic usage of 'Volk' as a collective of citizens as in 'popular sovereignty' or 'the power of the people'. Third, the romantic-nationalist notion of the 'Volk' as a community of fate, linked by a common history, culture, mentality and consciousness. Fourth, the racist concept of a common biological origin, the 'blood and soil' (Blut und Boden) ideology uniquely identified with the adjective *Völkisch* (which relates to 'Volk' roughly as 'racist' relates to 'race') as used by the Nazis and their immediate predecessors.³³⁴

In this section I will engage with the German notion of *Volk* and seek to unravel what it means in the context of Theater Lindenhof. As Minnerup explained, *Volk* has been employed as an emotive term by various movements spanning German history. It is a term which has a positive connotation of a strong nation and a highly negative association with National Socialism. To translate the term *Volk* into English as 'folk' or 'ordinary people' is convenient and relatively accurate. However, as Phipps points out '[...] it carries a legacy of

³³³ Phipps, A., *Volkstheater*. In: Sandford, J., (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*, Routledge, London: 1999, p. 631.

³³⁴ Minnerup, G., *Volk*. In: Sandford, J., (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*, Routledge, London: 1999, p. 629.

meaning, of constituent historical elements, modified with time, that do not conform to the semantic meanings of 'folk'.³³⁵

Relying on the assumption that every play must surely be for some kind of audience, whether it be a readership of one, or generations of theatregoers, could the *Volk* in the case of Lindenhof simply mean audience? If the term is to be understood as audience, is it the group of people the play was originally intended for by the playwright, or is it the people reached by any particular performance of the work? Whether it is the former or the latter, the meaning of the term *Volk* in this context is one which is constantly in flux, for surely each director, producer or actor's interpretation will vary. Surely each performance will differ slightly from the last. If the *Volk* in Theater Lindenhof's *Volkstheater* is viewed as meaning audience, how can that audience be defined?

In this section I will seek to define the Lindenhof's *Volk* in 2010/11 when I carried out my ethnographic field research. During this period, I had the opportunity to attend a great number of productions both at Theater Lindenhof in Melchingen and also in the towns and cities to which the Lindenhof troupe travels to perform. I noted a wide demographic spectrum present at productions. Unlike the early days of the theatre when plays were not performed frequently and when the audience was younger and more politically active, the contemporary Lindenhof audience changes with the subject matter of plays and with the venue for specific performances. The changes in the make-up of the audience since its foundation were examined in Chapter Two. The theatre started out in the early eighties with a narrower audience made up mostly of students from the surrounding urban hubs. With professionalisation in the early 1990's the theatre began to see marked expansion of its

³³⁵ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, pp. 12-13.

audience base, in particular an increase in the number of locals from the rural Swabian Alps. The Lindenhof's political mission or 'gesamtgesellschaftliche Ziele' were coming to fruition.

For instance, the auditoria for a play such as *Kohlhaas*, which I saw performed both in the Melchingen 'Scheune', and at The Globe in Schwäbisch Hall, were both populated to a great extent with young people and their parents. Of course, other types of people were present, but the former were in the majority. The obvious reason for this was that *Kohlhaas* was on the Abitur syllabus that year and seeing the Lindenhof's production – their treatment of the text was modern – was considered to be a useful study aid.

In the early days of the theatre, when plays were not performed on as regular a basis as they are at Lindenhof today and when subject matters were extreme and tended to alienate some local audience members, the Lindenhöfler were set apart from the majority of their local community. Nowadays they claim that one of their aims is to create and perform plays that are relevant to the entire community and not solely one particular section of society. This is reflected in the theatre's constitution and the point was reiterated to me in formal and informal ethnographic interviews. The question is, does that mean that the Lindenhof refers to all strands of society in its use of the term *Volk*? Is the Lindenhof's *Volk* its audience or its desired audience? In my view Lindenhof does strive to make productions accessible to all members of its local community. Examples of such are numerous but I will name only a few here that, in my view, exemplify the manner in which Lindenhof seek to include as many people as possible in their productions.

The theatre's relationship with the term *Volk* has naturally developed as the years have passed since its foundation in 1981. The term *Volk* in this context however is not confined

to meaning solely audience. It could also describe the type of people who are represented onstage. Who are the people the Lindenhöfler champion, criticise and expose in their productions? Are they the Lindenhof's *Volk*? A relevant question in the quest for a definition of what the Lindenhöfler mean by their use of the term *Volk* is, to what extent the people onstage are a stylised creation of the playwright's imagination. On the one hand, it is true that any character (fictional or not) who is represented onstage is a reflection in some respects of the views and aims of the director and actor. To what degree is the *Volk* represented onstage by the Lindenhof a stylised and fictitious one? If a common translation of the term *Volk* is the English word 'folk' then is, as Phipps comments, the existence of fakelore in the place of folklore a common occurrence on the contemporary Swabian stage? She remarks that '[i]n the context of Swabian identity the function of fakelore, as an expression of perceptions of naturalness, is perhaps linked both to the construction of a regional identity and to the crisis created by the onset of modernity [...]'.³³⁶ Is the *Volk* in the Lindenhof's productions truly representative of the people of the community in the Schwäbisch-Alb or is it more fake than folk? The substitution of fake for folk, to whatever degree, is an indication of the changeable nature of the term *Volk*. The representation of *Volk* onstage is created to suit the needs of the director or the audience. The *Volk* in the *Volksstück* become a version of local people, which, depending on the playwright and director, might cast them in a critical or trivial light. *Volk* becomes a kind of metaphorical empty vessel which can be filled and tweaked to fit the needs of the director. This can be argued about the notion of *Volk* in general. In the past the image of *Das Volk* has been moulded to suit the ruling classes. The fact that the word can be constantly redefined has meant that it has survived and has been rejuvenated by many generations. In fact, a term such as this, whose use spans decades and which has been transformed in meaning to

³³⁶ Phipps, A., *Acting Identities: An Investigation into South West German Naturtheater*, Peter Lang GmbH, Frankfurt am Main: 2000, p. 122.

conform to each era, is a valuable source of knowledge on the changing sociological and historical characteristics and conditions in Germany throughout its history.

If the *Volk* is the group of people whose lives are most closely represented in the play, then surely the onstage representation must be measured, for each text or production, against an era-specific definition of those members of the empirical society of the time. Those members of society who are depicted in Kroetz's plays for instance are inhabiting quite a different reality onstage to that in which the cast of a contemporary Lindenhof production might find themselves. If the *Volk* are the people represented onstage, then at Lindenhof this is a broad range of members of the community. Lindenhof productions throughout the years have represented all kinds of people onstage. The characters portrayed in the 'Scheune' in Melchingen were not all Swabians, let alone Germans, and they certainly did not all come from the same or even a similar social milieu.

If *Volk* is to be understood as audience, it must arguably be redefined with every performance in order to remain accurate. A general definition of the Lindenhof's type of audience would be an easier solution and to this end an overview of the kind of people who populate its auditorium was provided earlier. However, the Lindenhof's *Volk* is less likely to be its actual audience or the people it represents onstage than the mythical body of people it wishes to attract into its theatre, that is those it wishes to reach with its socially critical *Volkstheater*. Theater Lindenhof's *Volk* is not simply those who have attended productions at the 'Scheune' on numerous occasions or the kind of characters they put onstage, it is rather the people the theatre aspires to having in their auditorium, that is all members of society. This definition of Lindenhof's *Volk* does not accord with most scholars' understanding of the term. Hein remarks, '[...] selten ist mit Volk wirklich die "breite

Masse" gemeint'.³³⁷ But the *Volk* of the Lindenhöfler is, they hope, the whole population of their region. Berthold Biesinger summed this up in his description of who the Lindenhof wishes to reach with its socially critical *Volkstheater*: 'Also, wie soll ich sagen, der Professor genauso angucken kann wie ein Handwerker'.³³⁸ Theater Lindenhof's *Volk* includes not only the onstage *dramatis personae* and the empirical audience but also an aspiration for an all-embracing community bonded by common ideals. This could be a highly problematic concept, of course.

7.6 Analysing ethnographic interview responses on the subject of Volk and Volkstheater

In conducting ethnographic interviews with members of the theatre and members of the local community, I employed a semi-structured interview style. This style is advocated by Nigel King and examined in Chapter Two. This style of ethnographic interview allowed me to conduct sessions in as natural and conversational a manner as possible. Asking the same questions of a wide range of interviewees allowed me to collect a valuable pool of ethnographic data for comparison, while the semi-structured nature of the interviews meant that I could also digress from the usual line of questioning to ask questions more relevant to the interviewees' specific roles in relation to the theatre. For instance, a question I asked of all interview partners was, 'what is *Volkstheater*?'. In discussing the term *Volkstheater* in this chapter it would be remiss of me not to draw from responses I received during the ethnographic interviews.

³³⁷ Hein, J. (Hrsg.), *Theater und Gesellschaft: Das Volksstück im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag GmbH, 1973, p. 10.

³³⁸ Interview with Berthold Biesinger on 16 December 2010.

Franz Xaver Ott remarked in interview on the definition of *Volkstheater* and its broad and confusing nature. He recalled the many productions which are part of the classical literary canon which could be described as *Volkstheater*:

Volkstheater ist ein sehr weiter Begriff. Es hat natürlich viel mit Lustspiel, mit Komödie zu tun, aber ich finde eben auch die ernsthafteren, dramatischeren Stoffe sind durchaus auch Volkstheater. *Peer Gynt* zum Beispiel von Ibsen ist eigentlich auch Volkstheaterstoff oder *Woyzeck* von Büchner ist ein ganz, ganz großes Volkstheaterstück und insofern gibt es diese Tradition auch in den klassischen Theaterstoffen doch schon sehr lange.³³⁹

Gillian Pye remarks upon the employment of comedy in German language drama: '[...] the comic can play a particularly important role in both the exploration of the breakdown of systems of signification and the expression of the potential of the theatre itself to signify.'³⁴⁰

Comedy within Theater Lindenhof *Volkstheater* productions does not immediately relegate them to outside the pale of the *Kritisches Volkstheater* genre, rather it can elevate the performance and draw critical attention to the director and/or playwright's socially critical commentary or political agenda. Pye comments on the role of the comic as:

[...] a 'liminal zone between art and life', providing an interface between social behaviours, psychological dynamics and the aesthetic. In particular, this has provided important insights into the way in which the recurring sites of comedy may be perceived to interact with sites of social anxiety.³⁴¹

A further avenue of study is warranted here into the manner in which comedy is used both consciously and not at Theater Lindenhof. Comedy in some form is brought into every

³³⁹ Interview with Franz-Xaver Ott, 4 November 2010.

³⁴⁰ Pye, G., *Approaches to Comedy in Contemporary German Drama*, Edward Mellen Press, New York: 2002, p. 355.

³⁴¹ Pye, G., *Approaches to Comedy in Contemporary German Drama*, pp. 355-356.

contemporary Lindenhof drama and serves as an important tool in productions. Taking local themes and stories and creating productions which are provocative, critical and comedic is a trademark of the Lindenhof since its inception. *Georg Elser* and *Schwabenblues*, which I analysed in the previous chapter, are examples of this kind of production at Theater Lindenhof. Ott commented as follows: '[...], dass man Themen aus'm volkstheatralen Umfeld nimmt oder auch aus'm regionalen Umfeld und die dann immer bearbeitet – teilweise auch ein bißchen kontrovers oder auch ein bißchen unbequem für manche Zuschauer.'³⁴²

That themes of Lindenhof productions are drawn from the regional canon of tales of local heroes is in alignment with scholarly designation of *Volkstheater* as being '[...] of the people, for the people, by the people'.³⁴³ During ethnographic interviews at the Lindenhof it quickly became clear to me that *Volkstheater* was seen as an elevated and sophisticated genre. This is contrary to the view of the *Volkstheater* in the academic milieu, where it is undervalued and under-researched. I cannot exhaustively define what *Volkstheater* is but I will attempt to define the Lindenhof's form of it. A distinct challenge associated with defining the kind of *Volkstheater* which the Lindenhöfler have created is that they are unsure themselves as to what *Volkstheater* is. I will illustrate this uncertainty by including extracts from interviews in the pages to follow. Despite this apparent confusion among the members of the theatre, with the legalisation of the theatre's constitution and mission statement in 2011, a formal statement with regard to its type of *Volkstheater* was set out. I will also draw from this source to make my case for a definition of Theater Lindenhof's form of *Volkstheater*.

³⁴² Interview with Franz-Xaver Ott, 4 November 2010.

³⁴³ Phipps, A., *Volkstheater*. In: Sandford, J., (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*, Routledge, London: 1999, p. 631.

At the theatre there is a separation (whether they are aware of it or not) between those who believe that the theatre performs only *Volkstheater* and those for whom the theatre's productions can also be completely removed from the *Volkstheater* genre. Moumouris remarked in interview:

Ich würde nicht sagen, dass wir nur Volkstheater machen. Ich denke zum Beispiel, dass das Stauffenberg Projekt, das Philipp gemacht hat, überhaupt kein Volkstheater war. Also, dass man es nicht als Volkstheater per se deklarieren könnte, das wäre glaube ich falsch. Obwohl es in Zusammenhang mit der Sprachaktivität sinnvoll ist. Er ist auch ein schwäbischer Mann gewesen, der Stauffenberg. Der ist aus der Region und da ist es auch im Rahmen dieses Volkstheaters möglich sowas zu machen. [...] *Leonce und Lena* haben wir auch zum Beispiel gemacht. Es ist auch nicht wirklich Volkstheater gewesen aber irgendwie auch, weil die Leute drin waren aus dem Volk.³⁴⁴

Volkstheater is a broad term whose definition often encompasses many elements.

Moumouris acknowledges that his opinion that *Stauffenbergs Schwur* and *Leonce und Lena* are not *Volkstheater* is problematic, given that both contain characteristics which he associates with *Volkstheater*: the local language and the inclusion of local people as performers. This claim that *Volkstheater* is the socially critical kind of theatre and not a more trivial kind of production is contrary to the belief many academics hold that *Volkstheater* is largely a trivial genre. In line with Moumouris, Linda Schlepps remarked, 'da machen wir auch andere Sachen – das ist sehr gemischt'. However, she asks, at what point can a production be considered as being *Volkstheater*: 'Ab wann ist 'was Volkstheater? Wir haben auch Sachen wie Peer Gynt jetzt gespielt zum Beispiel von Ibsen und, das wird dann irgendwo zum Volkstheater, wenn wir das spielen auf unsere Weise.'³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

³⁴⁵ Interview with Linda Schlepps, 7 December 2010.

Berthold Biesinger also viewed the Lindenhof's artistic output in a similar manner, maintaining that not all of the theatre's productions are part of the *Volkstheater* genre. His association of *Volkstheater* in the context of Theater Lindenhof with socially critical content and creative productions meant that he made a strong distinction between the more trivial plays and the Lindenhof's socially critical *Volkstheater*: 'Unsere grösseren Stücke mit politischem Hintergrund, die sehe ich als Volkstheater. [...] Aber die kleineren, die Komödien wurde ich nicht so als Volkstheater bezeichnen.'³⁴⁶ This reversal of the common treatment of *Volkstheater* as an inherently lesser form reflects the TL's aspiration to reinstate *Volkstheater* as an aesthetically and politically significant form.

In Franz Xaver Ott's view, however, all Lindenhof productions are *Volkstheater*: 'Ich glaube, dass wir eigentlich nur Volkstheater machen.' This is a confusing discrepancy between members of the Lindenhof relating to the theatre's artistic output. It is another symptom of the difficulty of defining what exactly *Volkstheater* is. This difficulty is grappled with by members of the Lindenhof and academics alike. In interview, the descriptions of *Volkstheater* which I received were varied but commonalities are to be found. Bernhard Hurm commented as follows on his understanding of the term, in particular Theater Lindenhof's *Volkstheater*:

[Volkstheater] soll keine elitären Veranstaltungen sein. Volkstheater heisst eigentlich nur, dass es für möglichst viel Volk sein soll. [...] Volkstheater ist Theater für alle. Also ohne Ghettos. Nicht für diese Schicht oder so, sondern für alle. Alle einladen daran teilzunehmen. [...] Nicht von Parteien abhängig oder was man wählt oder sonst [...] [D]ieses Theater zu besuchen soll für alle sein.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ Interview with Berthold Biesinger on 16 December 2010.

³⁴⁷ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

This understanding of *Volkstheater* on the part of the Lindenhof's director is in line with the theatre's political aims and aspirations as set out in its mission statement which was given legal status in 2011. The statement outlines the theatre's aim to create theatre for all members of society, not simply for one section or another. Hurm continued by commenting on the importance at the Lindenhof of telling stories from the local region, which is also outlined in the theatre's mission statement: 'Volkstheater hat auch noch einen anderen Grund, dass es auch Stoffe sind, die aus dem Volk kommen. [...] Es versucht Theater und Herkunft zusammenzudenken.'³⁴⁸ A typical play at Theater Lindenhof takes a local story and gives it local, regional, national and international relevance. Stefan Hallmayer remarked on the ever-changing nature of the term *Volkstheater* which is a characteristic often associated with the genre:

Ich glaube, dass es in der Zwischenzeit sehr viele Möglichkeiten oder Ansätze gibt, Volkstheater zu definieren, weil einfach die Ausformulierung von sogenanntem Volkstheater auch im Laufe der Zeit über unterschiedliche Interpreten, unterschiedliche Gruppen, unterschiedliche Autoren [geht]. Auch dann eben jene Ausformulierung auch sehr facettenreich und unterschiedlich geworden ist.³⁴⁹

He continued by remarking that in its early forms *Volkstheater* was a type of theatre for low-income members of society. This, according to Hallmayer is still an element of *Volkstheater* at Theater Lindenhof, where they seek to attract people to their productions who otherwise would not attend: 'Theater fürs Volk oder auch das Theater, das allein schon wegen den Eintrittspreisen günstiger war, und so, wo man versucht hat, Theater zu machen, das den Einkommenschwachen auch gefällt, [...] das ist immer noch eine Komponente.'³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ Interview with Bernhard Hurm, 2 March 2011.

³⁴⁹ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

According to Mournouris who has also written plays and directed productions at Lindenhof, *Volkstheater* is a term with such a wide range of meanings that he is generally

[...] gegen diesen Begriff Volkstheater, weil ich nicht wirklich weiss was es ist. Ich finde zum Beispiel, dass Shakespeare Volkstheater ist. Also im Globe Theatre, wenn man da Theater sieht, ist es Volkstheater [...], weil es Erhabene und Niedere angesprochen hat. [J]eder kann irgendwie daraus was lesen: Wenn er nicht alles versteht, ist es egal. Die Sinnlichkeit nimmt jeder mit.³⁵¹

The ability to reach all members of society, which Mournouris views as a characteristic of performances of Shakespeare plays at The Globe, is also one of the aspirations of the Lindenhof who wish to bring their socially critical theatre to as many members of the local community as possible. Mournouris is operating with a concept of the *Volkstück* defined by whom it speaks to. A tradition to which Theater Lindenhof belong is that of *Kritisches Volkstheater*, according to Hallmayer: '[D]er Begriff des kritischen Volkstheaters, das dann sich mit gesellschaftlichen Phänomenen, mit Arbeitslosigkeit, mit Ausgrenzung und mit Ausbeutung durch die Arbeitgeber, durch die Kapitalisten auseinandersetzt.'³⁵²

Looking back on the development of *Volkstheater* at the theatre since the early eighties, Hallmayer remarks on the changes that have occurred. Changes in the ensemble, changing aesthetic principles and a greater budget for props, stage lighting and other staging devices have contributed to some modernisation of Lindenhof *Volkstheater* productions. Although modernisation is primarily a matter of aesthetics, at Lindenhof where budgets are modest or

³⁵¹ Interview with Oliver Mournouris, 15 December 2010.

³⁵² Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

restricted, the improvement in relation to resources and personnel is also included. For Hallmayer there is no doubt that the theatre performs *Kritisches Volkstheater*:

Und wenn ich – jetzt Lindenhof gibt's 30 Jahre – wenn ich mir das anschau, ist natürlich auch das Theater in diesen 30 Jahren gewandelt. Also wie eines der ersten [...] Volksstücke war *Der Polenweher*, von Strittmatter, [...] und wie wir heute dann ein Stück wie Die Elser machen, da gibt es ja Entwicklungen in der Ästhetik. Trotzdem würde ich diese Linie eindeutig als Volksstücke oder Kritisches Volkstheater bezeichnen. Da habe ich keine Definitionsschwierigkeit.³⁵³

The confusion at Theater Lindenhof between whether or not they perform solely *Volkstheater* or a mixture of genres was evident in the ethnographic data I collected at the theatre. What was striking was that largely the younger generation, that is anyone who was not there from the early eighties, believed that the theatre did not perform *Volkstheater* alone. This lack of consensus between young and old marks a strong difference in ideology between the management and its team. The young are more interested in experimenting with new types of performance and are more hesitant to state concretely what type that they focus solely on a particular style.

7.7 *Volkstheater* or simply *Theater*?

The management style at the Lindenhof however is one that prefers not to dictate to its members. The question arises then as to whether the Lindenhof members are performing *Volkstheater* without realising it. Members of the Lindenhof ensemble, as mentioned earlier, tend to remain at the theatre for long periods. Some, such as Linda Schleppe or Berthold Biesinger have spent their entire career to date at the theatre. For them Theater Lindenhof's

³⁵³ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011.

form of theatre is simply the kind of theatre they have always performed: 'Ich bin am Lindenhof aufgewachsen [...] [Wir] machen Theater, wie ich es auch von Anfang an kennengelernt habe. Also wie eine Heimat, ein Zuhause.'³⁵⁴ Schleppe suggested that *Volkstheater* contained themes which would resonate with the local community in the language of their native region:

Der Volkstheatre für mich daran, also wenn ich es jetzt so im Unterschied sehe zu Stadttheater oder Landestheater, wo ich selber auch gucke, ist glaube ich natürlich die Sprache, die immer dazugehört von allen, weil die Leute die mitbringen, also diese Verwurzelung dadurch, die Stoffe, die Stücke, die man macht, zum grössten Teil [...]³⁵⁵

Franz Xaver Ott also remarked on the definition of *Volkstheater*:

Ich würde sagen, das sind Themen, die aus dem Volk kommen und das Volk meinen. Es sind Themen, die zum Teil traditionelle Wurzeln haben aber zum Teil auch, und so würde ich das modern definieren: Themengebiete umfassen und beinhalten, die mit der heutigen oder mit der konkreten Lebenswelt der Leute zu tun haben – also des Volkes. Es hat in der Regel immer etwas eine unterhaltende Note und eine erbauende Note, wobei ein grosser Volkstheatermacher Ödön von Horváth geschrieben hat: Erbauung ist eigentlich ein Fall, dass der Zuschauer im Theater sitzt und auf die Bühne guckt und das kürriöse abgründige Leben der Figuren auf der Bühne betrachtet und letztendlich für diese anderthalb zwei, drei Stunden in seiner eigenen Abgründigkeit eintaucht und mit dem Schlussapplaus wieder auftaucht und in seinem Leben zurückgeht.³⁵⁶

Ott's definition of *Volkstheater* could be used to describe many Lindenhof productions, including those analysed in this thesis, such as *Georg Elser*, *Schwabenblues* and indeed

³⁵⁴ Interview with Linda Schleppe, 7 December 2010.

³⁵⁵ Interview with Linda Schleppe, 7 December 2010.

³⁵⁶ Interview with Franz Xaver Ott, 4 November 2010.

Älles Onser!, which he co-wrote. Ott remarked that entertainment was a part of his definition of *Volkstheater*. There is a consensus among Lindenhöfler that *Volkstheater* should not be bereft of entertainment but should also not be purely entertaining in nature. Moumouris comments, 'Also nur sagen, "Ich möchte nur Unterhaltung haben". Das ist, finde ich, kein gutes Volkstheater. Das wäre dann volkstümliches Volkstheater'.³⁵⁷ Here he picks up the term 'volkstümlich' which was deployed by Brecht in his essay 'Volkstümlichkeit und Realismus' (1938) to describe the uncritical, condescending style of theatre which talked down to its audience rather than seeking to educate their critical consciousness whilst and through entertaining them.

7.8 Defining Lindenhof's *Volkstheater*, *Volk* and *Volksstück*

Since the theatre's foundation, the notion of *Volkstheater* has evolved. The theatre's relationship with the terms *Volk*, *Volkstheater* and *Volksstück* is a manifestation of its own identity and its evolution throughout the theatre's history. The founders chose the designation *Volkstheater* and since then it has been linked to the theatre by audience members, locals, critics and academics. If, as remarked earlier, historical and societal conditions during a specific period might be deduced from the meaning of the term *Volk* at that time, then in the same vein, would not Lindenhof's relationship with *Volk* reveal its identity and how it has evolved over the course of the years since its earliest beginnings? The changing but ever-present relationship of the Lindenhöfler with the terms *Volk*, *Volkstheater* and *Volksstück* has provided them with a framework within which to express their artistic, poetic, socially critical and political aspirations and develop their identity within the German theatre scene. The commentary in this thesis on how the Lindenhof has

³⁵⁷ Interview with Oliver Moumouris, 15 December 2010.

repurposed and re-imagined the terms to its own political and artistic ends begin to unravel further the identity of the theatre.

Volkstheater at the Lindenhof is a type of performance which is accessible on a variety of levels, from sophisticated to basic. Take for instance the theatre's repurposing of *Don Quijote* so that the production would be accessible on many levels. Complex language from a sophisticated translation of *Don Quijote* remained. Parts of the text however were translated into Swabian to render the production accessible to audience members with varying levels of literacy. Sancho Panza, Don Quijote's loyal steed, for instance, speaks thick Swabian dialect and has a comedic role in the play.

The content of the chapters preceding this and the analysis offered in this chapter are intended here to combine in defining that which is at Theater Lindenhof's core, that is its plays and productions and the socially critical and political undertones which are native to them.

In my view Theater Lindenhof's forms of *Volkstheater*, *Volk* and *Volksstück* are best described as follows. These definitions are exemplary of that which the Lindenhof strives to be and which it achieves in greater or lesser measure depending on the performance in question:

Volkstheater

An **accessible**, **inclusive** or **reachable** form of contemporary German theatre which is aimed at the broadest section of society possible within the theatre's region.³⁵⁸ It could and almost always does have a political, socially critical message, or indeed a literary or poetic

³⁵⁸ Map of region in appendix II.

undertone, but entertains a wide range of audience members with its storylines and language which are both straightforward and complex, and local and global.

Volk

Every member of local society from the highest echelons of local governance and academia to those marginalized by society such as individuals with special needs, homeless members of society or individuals with a history of drug addiction or criminal activity.

Volksstück

An **accessible, inclusive** or **reachable** play written with the widest section of the audience in mind. Storylines and staging are both simple and complicated, an apparent contradiction. There is almost always a socially critical or political undertone. Poetic and literary elements are typical. Language is both local and global. The production aims to entertain as many members of the regional community as possible.

Finally, Theater Lindenhof has labelled its form of socially critical, regional *Volkstheater* as *Regionaltheater*. This designation is a new one and unique to the Lindenhof on the contemporary German theatre scene. I included discussion of *Regionaltheater* in Chapter Four and in the following concluding chapter, I will offer my definition of *Regionaltheater* alongside other conclusions resulting from my project.

Chapter Eight

8.1 Introduction

The principal outcome of this thesis, the first full-length academic study of Theater Lindenhof, is a comprehensive assessment and account of the history, development and work of the theatre based on the use of methodologies across a variety of disciplines. In this final chapter the main findings will be presented and the manner in which the conclusions were reached will be outlined. It has been asserted that the form of contemporary German regional *Volkstheater* produced and performed by Theater Lindenhof, a unique institution on the contemporary German theatre scene, is worthy of academic study within the German Studies discipline. This will be reinforced in this chapter.

The conclusions drawn in this thesis will be set out under the following headings:

- the history and development of Theater Lindenhof
- the interdisciplinary methodological framework employed in this project
- the employment of ethnographic methodology in a German Studies thesis
- dealing with authorial bias in favour of Theater Lindenhof
- the theatre's political aims
- the influence of the politics and ideals of the 1968 generation on the Lindenhof
- the textual analysis of select Lindenhof productions
- defining *Volk*, *Volkstheater* and *Volksstück*
- *Regionaltheater*: a definition
- from *Verein* to *Stiftung*: the ethical and practical repercussions
- the theatre's relationship with the notion of *Heimat*

- the challenges associated with the broad scope of the project
- avenues for further research
- what the future holds for the theatre

8.2 A precursor of this study

Other than the article written by Alison Phipps in 2005 on Theater Lindenhof's production of *Hexenfeuer* there is no academic writing on Theater Lindenhof and no stand alone study of the subject. The article contains valuable insights from an expert voice in the field on the work of Theater Lindenhof. Comments such as the following on the theatre's performance of *Hexenfeuer* give an indication of the high esteem in which Phipps holds the theatre:

[...] here a piece of original theatre which is expressive of the people, the folklore of the Schwäbische Alb and of the avant-garde, the artist, and the work of genius of the two dramatists working in *Theater Lindenhof*, Uwe Zellmer and Bernard Hurm – into mechanized, reproducible state transmitted on mass media.³⁵⁹

Numerous positive reviews of various productions, in regional and national newspapers, also underline the importance of the theatre's contribution to German-language theatre. Considering this, the theatre's acknowledged role in innovating within the German theatre scene with its form of contemporary regional *Volkstheater* and the fact that its productions have achieved critical acclaim and won numerous awards,³⁶⁰ it is difficult to believe that it has not yet been the subject of at least one detailed and comprehensive study.

³⁵⁹ Phipps, *Breaking Frames*, 104.

³⁶⁰ Examples of press comment on Lindenhof productions can be found in Appendix I.

In the absence of such a work this first extended study of Theater Lindenhof has benefitted greatly from Phipps's article and also from her ground-breaking research on the *Naturtheater* phenomenon in South West Germany.³⁶¹ She highlights her exposition of the latter of the advantages of adhering to ethnographic methodology within a German Studies theoretical framework. Her work provided an indispensable model for the present work and demonstrated that adopting a similar interdisciplinary theoretical approach in relation to the study of Theater Lindenhof would yield positive results. After all, *Naturtheater* and *Freilichttheater* are closely related to Lindenhof's form of *Volkstheater*.

8.3 A history of Theater Lindenhof

In Chapters Three and Four (pp. 48-108) a history of the development of the Lindenhof in the thirty-five years since its inception in 1981 is presented. These chapters show that from the theatre's early days, when the young founders were guided by the aims and philosophies of the student movement, to 2011, when the theatre became a foundation, its development has coincided with that of Germany and runs parallel with a period when, for example, the country was reflecting on its National Socialist past, engaging in the process of reunification in the 1990s, or becoming a leading member of the European Union. We have seen how the theatre remains strongly committed to its region in the Swabian Alps. Although the themes dealt with in its productions are frequently of national and global relevance, local stories, language and culture have retained their primacy and continue to outweigh in importance external elements. While this may be true, and while the theatre may be likened by some members of both the ensemble and the audience to a living museum that promotes in its productions Swabian culture, language, and heroes, we have nonetheless seen that

³⁶¹ Phipps, *Acting identities*.

engagement with the wider world and subjects such as the dangerous influences on local society exerted by phenomena such as closedmindedness, and xenophobia have been constant concerns.

The founding members of Theater Lindenhof have developed their ideas and goals into the Lindenhof brand which is recognized throughout South West Germany and throughout the German theatre scene.³⁶² My thesis has shown how the Lindenhöfler have gained popularity due to the fact that they are producing socially critical and creative *Volkstheater* in unusual venues with limited financial means, and that, for example, in select productions they include members of the local community as actors and stage crew. The participation of locals ensures a high level of engagement with the theatre from the community. As a viable business and a prominent entity in the village of Melchingen, the theatre has become a powerful influence within the region. In its new statute, which underpins its new status as a foundation, its aims and ideals are legally enshrined, ensuring among other things that the founding members' vision for the theatre remains the guiding political undertone for the remainder of the theatre's existence. The board of directors of the theatre, whose make-up is given in Chapter Five, includes leading figures from the worlds of art, politics and academia, and thus also reflects the theatre's stature and influential role in the region. The plan to place environmentally friendly wind turbines in the fields around the theatre, also discussed in Chapter Five, is an example of how it exerts influence and wields its voice in conversations about how the local area should adapt and respond to the need for environmentally friendly structures as part of its landscape.

³⁶² An image of the Theater Lindenhof logo, which is recognisable on the German theatre scene, can be found in Appendix III, Photograph 1.

8.4 The theatre's political aims

The theatre's political aims and ideals, which are set out in section 3.6, are a key part of its *raison d'être*. The manner in which they have evolved from the early days when the founding members were young and radical in their beliefs to the present day and the milder, more moderate left-leaning political agenda espoused by the theatre is tracked in Chapters Six and Seven. A description of the early days of the theatre represents the young founding members' aspiration to create a new reality in which, for instance, closedmindedness, xenophobia and the shunning of marginalised members of society would be combatted. Their decision to bring their theatre to a rural village in the Swabian Alps rather than an urban and cultural hub gives a sense of the motivation they felt to promote critical thinking within the more challenging environment of the rural community in which they had grown up: more challenging for the fulfilment of this particular aspiration, that is. The process of professionalisation in the 1990s (see section 3.5) was an important factor in bringing about a shift in the theatre's leftwing position and led to greater moderation, the desire to reach as many members of the local community as possible, with socially critical and political messages now becoming a stronger driving force at the theatre.

The manner in which the young founding members of the theatre were at first treated with disdain by Melchingen residents has been described (see p. 119): free-thinking young people were not welcome in the village, nor were their stage productions exploring serious topics such as suicide and mental health seen in a positive light. The discussion of Lindenhof's audience in this thesis shows that this all changed, albeit gradually, and that the theatre came to have a loyal and enthusiastic following. The gradually diminishing degree of radicalness in the theatre's politics led to some change in the composition of the audience. In the early days young people and students travelling from local cultural and

educational hubs such as Tübingen and Reutlingen made up a large proportion of the audience (see section 3.3). This thesis shows that the theatre's present-day audience is made up of a wider demographic sample, including the local community. However, in terms of representation of particular age-groups, the core audience at the Lindenhof remains the generation of the founding members, whose political ideas have also become a moderate version of left-wing thinking. It was shown in this thesis that one of the political aims of the Lindenhöfler is to reach as many members of the regional community as possible with their socially critical *Volkstheater*.

8.5 The influence of the 1968 generation's political aspirations on the Lindenhof

The theatre's very early history can be said to have unfolded against the backdrop of the political agitation of the 1968 student movement which posed important moral and social questions regarding democracy and society (see section 1.3). It has been shown in this thesis that insofar as the Lindenhof has remained true to the aims of the group of young founding members, it has also been faithful to the ideology of the student movement of the sixties and seventies, to which the founders belonged and/or with which they agreed, and whose ideals are still cherished as part of the political heritage of the left by cultural organisations such as Theater Lindenhof. The parallel between members of that student movement becoming prominent figures in establishment institutions of government, education and finance (see section 1.3) and Lindenhof gradually becoming more moderate in its political position is adverted to. The group of politically radical, free-thinking young people who shared a vision of staging theatre productions to pursue goals similar to those of the 1968 movement and bring about reform and change thinking in the community evolved to become an acclaimed theatre and one of the most celebrated cultural symbols of the region in which it is based.

8.6 The ethical and practical repercussions of the theatre's legal conversion to a foundation

The occasion of the theatre's thirtieth anniversary, on which the founding members acted to safeguard what they saw as the values of the theatre, is a milestone in the recent history of Lindenhof (pp. 105-128). The debates on how the new statute and mission statement should be worded were heated and emotionally charged, but a consensus was eventually reached and the statute was agreed upon and made legally-binding (see section 5.1). This legal document was designed to preserve the central position of the political aspirations of the founding members. The risk exists that enshrining those aims in the newly established *Stiftung's* statute might leave future generations without sufficient freedom to develop the theatre artistically in their own right. This thesis has described the manner in which the theatre's legal conversion from *Verein* to *Stiftung* may thus be at odds with the philosophies of the student movement of 1968, which valued freedom and self-determination, and which favoured a culture of free-thinking and personal autonomy. However, the thesis has also highlighted the relatively broad nature of the parameters within which future generations of Lindenhöfler must operate (see section 5.4).³⁶³

8.7 An evaluation of the theatre's relationship with the notion of *Heimat*

I have argued that the theatre's location is a factor in its survival (see section 3.2). The story goes that the founding members came across the pub in Melchingen in which their theatre later came to be housed purely by chance. Nevertheless, the theatre's identity is now inextricably intertwined with the history of one small village. As the theatre continues to

³⁶³ The theatre's statute can be found in Appendix VII.

expand, Melchingen remains the focal point for its staff and audience members, so much so that the Lindenhöfler are frequently referred to as 'Melchinger'. Lindenhof is simply synonymous with Melchingen, which the theatre has 'put on the map'. But since the years of professionalisation and expansion in the 1990s and the dawn of the new millennium the theatre has been looking increasingly towards the region as a whole as the space within which it operates artistically. Ideologically, the reasoning behind this might be seen as to pursue the theatre's aspiration of reaching as many members of the community as possible with its socially critical *Volkstheater*. However practical realities such as requiring ticket sales in order to make a profit and to remain in existence are also a relevant factor in the theatre's ever-widening catchment area and its decision to embrace the concept of a *Regionaltheater*.

The village of Melchingen met the young founding members' need to produce and perform theatre in a distinctive, attractive and above all fixed location. It also allowed them to be part of the movement out of towns and cities which became a popular offshoot of the student movement. The proximity of the theatre to educational and financial hubs such as Tübingen and Reutlingen allowed it to receive audience members from such larger population centres (see section 3.2). As the theatre moves towards its fortieth and fiftieth anniversary members of the theatre are keen to increase the number of productions in both mainstream and unorthodox theatre venues throughout the Swabian Alps. In this regard there seems to be a difference of opinion between the younger theatre members and the older generation who are still in management positions. Both generations view Melchingen as a focal point and they both profess to believe that Lindenhof should stage more productions throughout the region, but the younger generation are doubtful about whether the founding generation are so committed to this policy. This misalignment between the

views of the Lindenhof members, particularly those of the younger and older generations became evident during the ethnographic interviews which are cited in the body of the thesis.

The question as to the extent to which Melchingen and the Schwäbisch-Alb are a *Heimat* for the Lindenhöfler has been discussed in this thesis. The notion of *Heimat* is frequently broached in Theater Lindenhof productions. In fact, the topic is engaged with to varying degrees in virtually every production (see section 5.5). That the Lindenhof views the region to which it belongs as *Heimat* is certain. The concept is grappled with in productions in which the positive and negative elements of local society are analysed. As described above the term *Heimat* is a multi-faceted one with many meanings. The theatre itself has become a sort of *Heimat* for the Lindenhöfler who in numerous cases have spent almost their entire career at the theatre. Others who manage to gain meaningful access to the theatre develop a strong sense of attachment to it (see section 5.5). When members of the theatre join other theatres their association with the Lindenhof usually travels and stays with them.

8.8 Textual analysis of select Lindenhof productions

The thesis explores a representative sample of the Lindenhof's texts and productions.

Further analysis of texts and matters such as staging is an important desideratum for research on the Lindenhof. The three productions chosen for analysis are exemplary of the theatre's artistic output (and have not been examined before, and, to my knowledge, they have not been available before to scholars for the purpose of literary and textual analysis).

In analysing the productions, I drew on German Studies and Theatre Studies. The tools from these disciplines allowed me to examine the scripts, staging, politically-charged undertones, socially critical messages, the use of comedy, the role of language and dialect, the dramatis personae, the thematic content and the lighting and special effects. Textual analysis of

Lindenhof productions would in itself make a viable and valuable research topic in German Studies.

8.9 *Volk, Volkstheater, Volksstück and Regionaltheater*

In Chapter Seven the signification of the terms *Volk*, *Volkstheater* and *Volksstück* as they may apply to Theater Lindenhof is addressed and, following detailed discussion of each, definitions are offered (pp. 212-21). The term *Regionaltheater*, which is known only to apply to Lindenhof, is also discussed (see section 4.3). The Lindenhöfler set out to actively create their own destiny when they set up their theatre in the early 1980s. By setting up ‘Schwabens höchste Bühne’³⁶⁴ and Germany’s only *Regionaltheater* the theatre achieved a unique position for itself. I ask whether Lindenhof created a new kind of theatre in setting up Germany’s first *Regionaltheater* and conclude that the theatre has added a significant original element to the contemporary German theatre scene and regained considerable new credibility for *Volkstheater*, and that its adoption of the concept of a *Regionaltheater* is further testimony to its role as an innovating force in German theatre. In coining this term and arrogating it to itself, the theatre distinguishes itself from other local theatres as serving the wider region. The term may also allow the inference to be drawn that Lindenhof is ‘Schwabens höchste Bühne’ in a qualitative sense, a theatre which seeks out audiences more widely and performs socially critical, thought-provoking theatre as distinct from uncritical *Volkstheater*.

The term reflects the theatre’s ambition to have its own distinctive place in the theatre landscape and its desire to serve not simply one town or village but to perform socially critical productions with political messages which have the potential to reach the entire

³⁶⁴ The theatre has been afforded this title.

region. The notion of its being the only *Regionaltheater* meets, as mentioned above, the theatre's desire to stand out and to make a change on the contemporary German theatre landscape. It probably represents a wish to be recognised as part of the established, official theatre movement, while at the same time being apart from it and, in a sense, being in opposition to the status quo.

8.10 The interdisciplinary methodological framework employed in this study

Methodologically, this thesis is based on a combination of disciplinary approaches (see section 2.8). It is an example of how such an approach can be applied in a project which addresses a variety of topics that lend themselves primarily to exploration under distinct disciplinary rubrics, such as German Studies itself, Theatre Studies, and Ethnography. This method was useful because it allowed me to present the Lindenhof from multiple perspectives. This in turn allowed me to complete a study which is more comprehensive than would have been possible had I applied a theoretical framework encompassing tools from only one discipline. Had I not gained access to the theatre for the purpose of writing this thesis I would have had to examine the subject in other ways. This would however, in my view, not have been as valuable a study, for having recourse to first-hand primary data in the field has been incalculably valuable to this research project, especially in view of the fact that I did not have many other sources relating to the theatre at my disposal.

Ethnography on its own would not have been sufficient to complete the research. This topic belongs fundamentally to German Studies, for knowledge of the German language and literature and German culture was indispensable to work in the field and provided the tools required to carry out the textual analysis of select Lindenhof productions.

As has been seen in Chapter Two, working alongside members of the theatre afforded me the opportunity to gain insights into the everyday life and day-to-day workings of the theatre (see sections 2.2 and 2.4). The formal and informal ethnographic interviews which I conducted with members of the theatre allowed me to gain first-hand accounts and explanations of the political aspirations, administrative workings and artistic mission of the theatre. Being present during rehearsals, staff meetings, informal conversations in the kitchen, or debates in the car while giving members of the theatre a lift, allowed me to observe and take notes on a broad range of topics which would have been extremely difficult or impossible to access by employing traditional German Studies tools alone.

The title of my thesis suggests a wide breadth of subjects which could be explored within its parameters: 'Theater Lindenhof as a contemporary form of German regional Volkstheater'. Given the multi-faceted nature of Theater Lindenhof, this title allowed me to present a comprehensive study of the theatre. Given that this is the first full-length project on the Lindenhof, presenting a rounded study of the theatre provides a suitable starting-point or point of reference for future research on the subject. On the one hand, the broad scope of the research enriched my study, but on the other, it complicated the research and writing processes by making it necessary for me to conduct research on and write about a broad range of topics, theories and methodologies in this thesis, including German Studies, Ethnography, Theatre Studies and Cultural Studies.

Although I emphasised how important the tools from German Studies and Theatre Studies were in writing this thesis, the new information relating to the Lindenhof which I gathered in Swabia during the academic year 2010/11 is the primary source from which I have drawn my findings. This data is the product from which this thesis was created. In the absence of numerous studies on the topic of Theater Lindenhof, I could not have written about the

history and development of the theatre without going into the field to retrieve the information. Similarly, the day-to-day workings of the theatre would have been impossible to describe without going into the field to conduct ethnographic research in Germany. Ethnographic field research helped in all aspects of the project. Having access to first-hand information relating to the theatre has added value to the project and has created a type of time capsule or collection of opinions relating to the theatre.

8.11 My bias towards the theatre

The materials making up this study has of course been collated by an outsider. I, the ethnographer or outsider, led the interviews and decided what was relevant or not. The thesis addresses the question of ethics and questions such as how the researcher should represent the Lindenhof. How biased is he/she? (Section 2.7). I came to the conclusion that it would be more useful for me to go into the field to actively observe and ask questions. This required much effort and activity, and indeed I was in the field for a year. Loss of objectivity in such a context is offset to a considerable degree by the rewards garnered from rolling up one's sleeves in the field. As an ethnographer I was present and visible, whether leading an interview or attending a production. One is in close contact with informants for long hours each day. This was certainly the case when I was working as assistant to the director for the Lindenhof's production of *Álles Onser!*, when my presence even influenced the script, allowing the language in a song sung during the production to be changed from Icelandic to Irish. But did I truly become a fly on the wall? I believe I did. By working at the theatre as a member of the Lindenhof team I became a woman of all trades, working on maintenance of the stage lights into the small hours of the morning, updating the script, memorising choreography or making coffee for the Lindenhof team. The difficulty of the ethnographer's role in the field cannot be underestimated, performing real and exhausting

tasks alongside the subjects of the research throughout the day, operating in their language, and trying to remain mindful at all stages of the research task in hand, taking notes and recording meticulously observations, which is mentally and physically taxing.

But collecting ethnographic data in the field is an essential part of the research process. First-hand responses collected in recorded formal ethnographic interviews are a primary source on which one draws for information relating to the subject. Various questions arise such as whether to include interviews verbatim in the main text of the study or simply paraphrase them. Paraphrasing was useful in this study as a means of noting information heard during unrecorded casual ethnographic interviews. However, the value of quotations from interview is more difficult to assess when they are paraphrased. Difficulties arose in relation to the exact transcription of quotations from interviews, for example due to the mixture of High German and *Schwäbisch* spoken and the numerous false starts and instances of redirection of topic throughout the interview. In a bid to allow the reader to understand the true meaning intended by interview partners I concluded that it was best to cite them in a comprehensible manner.³⁶⁵

I was biased from the outset by virtue of the fact that I enjoyed the theatre's productions and political ideals. As a participant observer at the theatre I was allowed to become an insider to a certain degree. However, my main purpose of gathering ethnographic data on the theatre as part of a research project was known to all from the outset and marked me out as a transitory figure who would soon leave to return to her desk at the library.

³⁶⁵ I have included with this thesis a CD-ROM with recordings of ethnographic interviews.

8.12 Avenues for future research on the Lindenhof with this thesis as a point of departure

A range of research subjects which might be addressed in further research on Theater Lindenhof present themselves. The purpose of this study was not to attempt to present a comprehensive study of the *Volkstheater* genre but of Theater Lindenhof and the contemporary form of German regional *Volkstheater* that it exemplifies. The theatre can only be studied retrospectively. The subjects which I analysed and presented in this study are the ones I viewed as being most relevant to understanding Theater Lindenhof. The present study marks what I hope will be the beginning of formal research on the subject Lindenhof.

Other research areas which could be worked on and which it was not possible to embark on in this project include a detailed comparison between Theater Lindenhof and other theatres in Germany and abroad. Although I included a brief comparison in the previous chapter, a more detailed contextualisation of the theatre within the broader context of the German and international theatre scene would be valuable. A comparison with international theatres such as the Citizens' Theatre which is based in the Gorbals area of Glasgow in Scotland or the politically radical Bread and Puppet theatre based in Glover, Vermont on the East Coast of the United States, would yield valuable insights and would facilitate international contextualisation of theatres such as the Lindenhof. The porous nature of the theatre would also be an illuminating subject to explore in a future study. As discussed in previous chapters Lindenhof actors and directors have worked throughout the Swabian Alps region and further afield in Berlin and Hamburg. The theatre's influence on the wider theatre community and its sources of influence by virtue of its connectedness in the network of theatre would become evident from such a research project.

In Chapter Six I offered a textual analysis of three Theater Lindenhof productions which exemplify the theatre's artistic output. I have included the theatre's full repertoire since its inception in Appendix VI, however an in-depth analysis of more Lindenhof productions is a desideratum and would if carried out give further insight into the development of its political voice, for example, and staging techniques, and the themes the theatre has explored since it was founded. Closer investigation of the values of the 1968 student protest movement, with which the founding generation of the theatre were imbued, would provide a valuable basis on which to examine the theatre's contribution to German society and regional history in the Swabian Alps. A closer examination of the aims and ideals of the founding members is warranted in order to uncover all the facts about the manner in which the theatre was founded and how it developed into the Theater Lindenhof Foundation. As the theatre approaches its fortieth anniversary in 2021, the ramifications of its legal conversion from *Verein* to *Stiftung* will become evident. A future research project analysing the effect of these changes will be desirable, in which more emphasis on legal and business theory will be required than was possible in this study. Research will also be required on how the theatre changes, as it probably will, when and if the younger generation of Lindenhöfler assume management of the theatre.

8.13 The future of the theatre and concluding remarks

Theater Lindenhof is an evolving living object. The theatre is ongoing. The founding members' determination to stay in the area they grew up in, yet to lead lives so different from the local norm, was a rebellious act. They had a vision and they realised that vision by founding their theatre. Asked if the theatre had any political aims Stefan Hallmayer responded:

Ich finde schon, dass es letztlich politische Ziele gibt, obwohl das Formulieren nicht so ganz direkt in parolenhaften oder politischen Statements stattfindet, sondern innerhalb der Stücke. Aber ich glaube schon, [...] nach wie vor war [...], dass es um eine lebenswerte Umwelt, um Humanität in dem weitesten Sinne, um Gerechtigkeit, um ein würdiges Leben auf der Erde überhaupt und, dass jeder Mensch die Chance bekommen sollte, Identität oder Heimat zu finden – und zeigt sich schon jetzt in der Entwicklung der 30 Jahre heute, und auch stärker für uns, global – nicht nur lokal – nicht nur im Kleinen sondern auch im Grossen. Also das sind schon politische Ziele oder Werte, [...] die sozusagen in der Satzung den Niederschlag finden.³⁶⁶

Theater Lindenhof is modernising and developing the *Volkstheater* genre and providing effective, independent competition for the state-run theatres in the towns and cities of Germany. It offers theatre to a new audience. The Lindenhof stages productions which attract as wide a cross-section of the local community as possible and which are accessible on as many levels as possible. Müller comments in *Die Zeit*:

Ist es zu weit gegriffen, wenn man behauptet, ‘Schwabens höchste Bühne’ (736 Meter überm Meer) habe das zeitgenössische Volkstheater revolutioniert? Gewiss ist, dass man an der unverwechselbaren Melchinger Ästhetik längst auch in den Metropolen Gefallen findet.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ Interview with Stefan Hallmayer, 23 February 2011

³⁶⁷ Müller, Roland, ‘Die Alb sie schwebt’, *Die Zeit*, 18 April 2008, http://www.zeit.de/2008/18/Die_Al_b_sie_schwebt. Accessed on 15 June 2016.

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Zukunft: Theater Lindenhof: Umbau und Erweiterung, Flier, April 2011.

Television interview, *DW-TV Kultur*, 21, June 2008.

Appendix I

Press comment (selection)

Melchingen - In steilen Serpentinien und durch dichten Wald schrauben sich die Besucher hinauf auf die Hochebene der Schwäbischen Alb. Irgendwo hinter dem Ortsschild von Melchingen verlieren die Mobiltelefone ihren Empfang. Dort, im schwäbisch-dörflichen Idyll, liegt etwas, das der Leiter des ZDF-Theaterkanals Wolfgang Bergmann als ein 'kleines Wunder' bezeichnet: das Theater Lindenhof. Es ist das einzige Regionaltheater Deutschlands und inzwischen weit über die Landesgrenzen hinaus bekannt.

From: Hemminger, L., 'Theater Lindenhof feiert Jubiläum: Bodenständig, heimatverbunden, weltoffen', *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 18 May 2011, <http://www.stuttgarter-zeitung.de/inhalt.theater%20lindenhof-feiert-jubilaem-bodenstaendig-heimatverbunden-weltoffen.8e11a2cc-1037-4d0a-8480-efbab726044a.html>. Accessed on 14 June 2016.

Deutschlands verwegenste freie Theatertruppe

From: Hübel, Wolfgang, 'Nicht ganz dichter Dichter', 20 July 1998, *Der Spiegel*, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-7938917.html>. Accessed on 15 June 2016.

Unter der Regie von Philipp Becker spielt es *Ein Dorf im Widerstand*. Das Stück wird aber nicht im Lindenhof gegeben, auf der kleinen Bühne des großen Regionaltheaters in Melchingen. Die Theatermacher sind herabgestiegen von ihrem Dorf auf der Schwäbischen Alb und haben die Spielstätte um ein paar Kilometer verlegt, hinein nach Mössingen. Genauer gesagt in die denkmalgeschützte Bogenhalle der Pausa.

Aus: Schweikle, Johannes, 'Schaut auf Mössingen!', *Die Zeit*, 13 July 2013,

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Heimattheater, wie es nirgendwo sonst existiert: Heimat wird nicht verklärt, sondern erforscht, im Geiste verlassen, auf die Reise mitgenommen.

Die Spieler brechen auf ins Vergangene (zu den ‚Hexenverfolgungen‘, zu Hölderlin, ins ‚Dritte Reich‘), ins Mögliche (zu den Erfindern, Rebellen, Verlorenen der Alb), in die Natur: Sie spielen zu Wasser und zu Lande, in Bäumen und dahinrasenden Zügen. Ihr Verzauberungswille ist so umfassend, dass ein wenig Zauber immer hängen bleibt an den Landschaften, durch die sie reisen.

Aus: Kuemmel, Peter, 'Schillerscheune', *Die Zeit*, 30 March 2000,

<http://www.zeit.de/2000/14/Schillerscheune>. Accessed on 15 June 2016.

Appendix II

Maps

Except where otherwise stated all of the maps in this appendix were made using Google Maps.

Map 1

Description: Schwäbische-Alb.

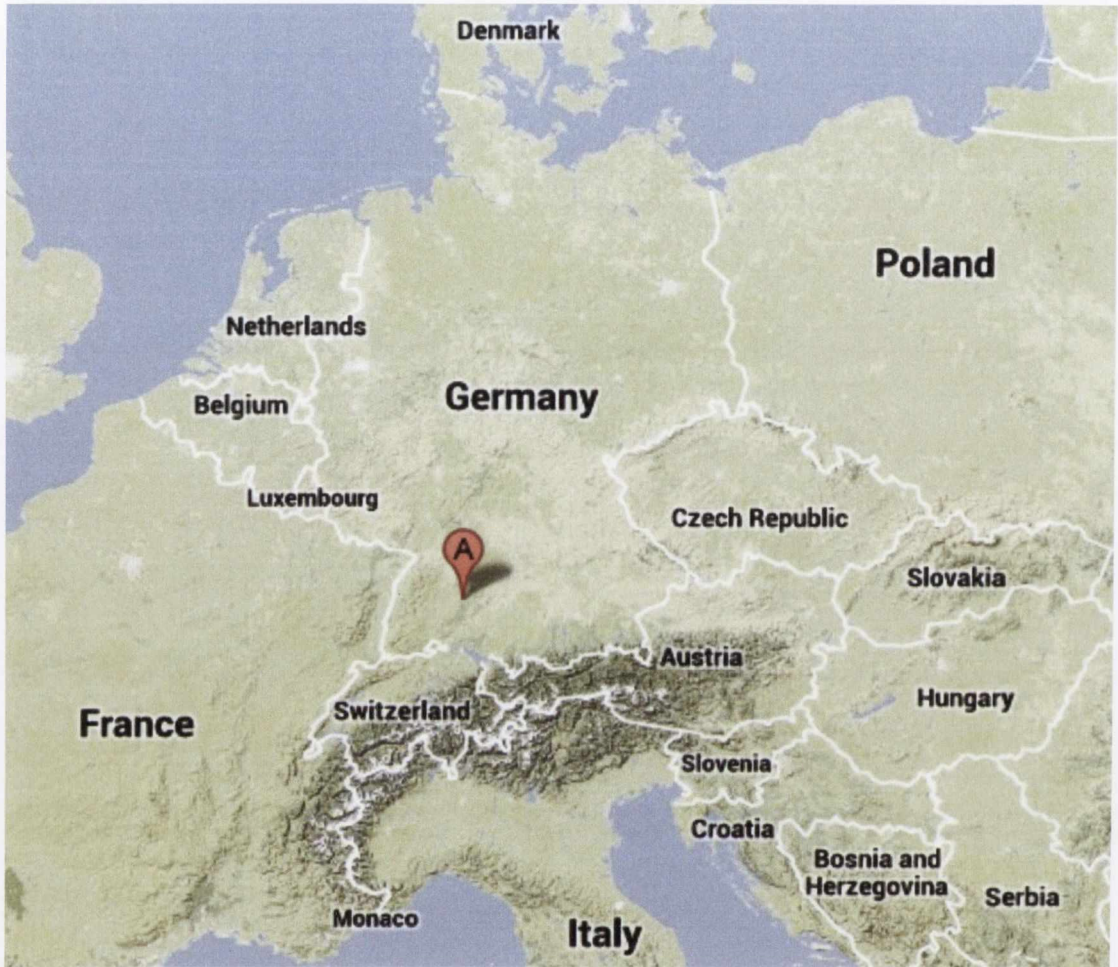
Source: http://static.traum-ferienwohnungen.de/karte/370/schwaebische_alb.png.

Accessed 23 September 2011.



Map 2

A = Theater Lindenhof, Melchingen



Map 3

A = Theater Lindenhof, Melchingen

B = Tübingen

C = Hechingen

D = Stuttgart

E = Reutlingen



Map 4

A = Französisches Viertel, Tübingen

B = Neckarinsel, Tübingen



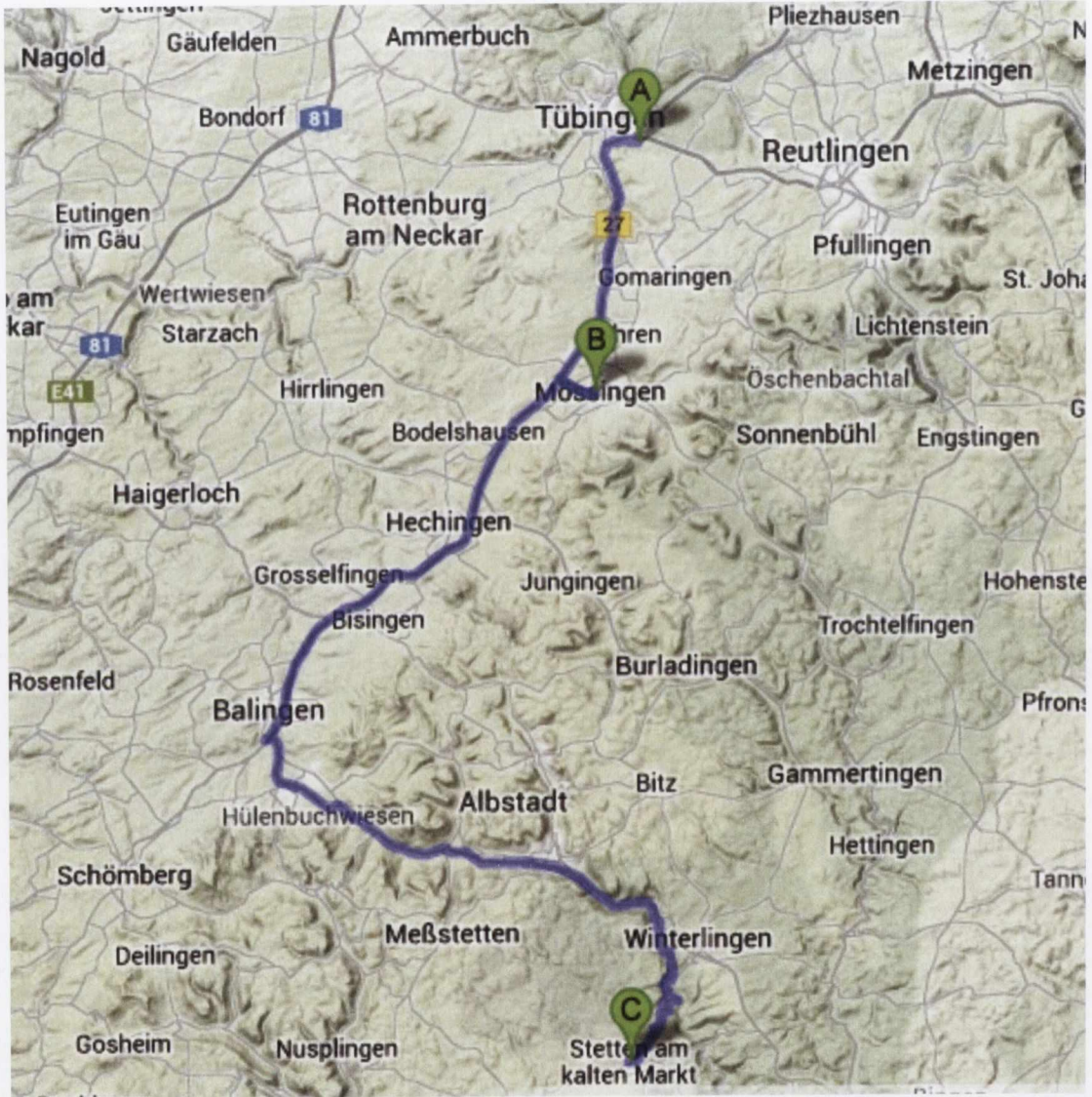
Map 5

Aerial view of the Französisches Viertel in Tübingen



Map 8

- A = Tübingen
- B = Mössingen
- C = Stetten am kalten Markt



Map 9

A = Melchingen



Appendix III

Photographs

Photograph 1

Description: the Theater Lindenhof logo.

Source: received from Christine Heinz, February 2011.



Photograph 2

Description: 'Die Scheune', Theater Lindenhof's main stage.

Source: <http://sonnenalb.com/Lindenhof.html>.

Accessed on 28 October 2011.



Photograph 3

Description: the Theater Lindenhof in Melchingen.

Source: taken by the author in July 2011.



Photograph 4

Description: Unter den Linden 18, Melchingen. The *Rathaus* (on the left) and Theater Lindenhof (on the right).

Source: taken by the author in July 2011.



Photograph 5

Description: Theater Lindenhof, Unter den Linden, Melchingen. The entrance to the theatre is pictured to the left of centre. The box office is on the lefthandside on the ground floor. The restaurant is on the righthandside on the ground floor. The administrative offices, the kitchen and the *Saal* are on the first floor.

Source: taken by the author in July 2011.



Photograph 6

Description: The fields surrounding the village of Melchingen. The Himmelberg is the hilly area to the back of the photograph with the wind turbines on it. This is where the short movie for the opening of *Älles Onser!* was filmed. Naturally, as it was December at the time the ground was blanketed in deep white snow.

Source: Taken by the author in July 2011.



Photograph 7

Description: The fields surrounding the village of Melchingen. The neighbouring village of Salmendingen can be seen on the right.

Source: Taken by the author in July 2011.



Photograph 8

Description: *Älles Onser!* The Swabian explorers 'travelling through space' in the opening scene of the production.

Source: <http://www.theater-lindenhof.de/cgi-sub/fetch.php?id=558>.

Accessed on 28 October 2011.



Photograph 9

Description: The actors (from left to right) Berthold Biesinger, Gerd Plankenhorn, Linda Schlepps and Franz-Xaver Ott, being lowered to the stage on an open-sided lift during rehearsal for *Älles Onser!* in December 2010.

Source: Taken by the author in December 2010.



Photograph 10

Description: A scene from *Älles Onser!* In which the actors have landed on their 'Swabian paradise island'.

Source: Source: <http://www.theater-lindenhof.de/cgi-sub/fetch.php?id=559>.

Accessed on 28 October 2011.



Photograph 11

Description: A scene from the production of *Don Quixote* at Theater Lindenhof.

Source: <http://www.theater-lindenhof.de/index.php?docid=477>.

Accessed on 15 June 2016.



Photograph 12

Description: A promotional photograph for *Die Drei vom Dohlengässle*.
Source: <http://www.ostern-international.de/2008/albstadt-thalia-theater.html>.
Accessed on 15 June 2016.



Photograph 13

Description: *Die Schutzsuchenden* at the *Pausa* in Mössingen:
Source: <http://www.theater-lindenhof.de/index.php?docid=371>.
Accessed on 15 June 2016.



Photographs 14 and 15

Description: Scenes from *Georg Elser – Allein Gegen Hitler*
Source: <http://www.theater-lindenhof.de/index.php?docid=451>.
Accessed on 25 June 2016.



Photograph 16

Description: A scene from *Schwabenblues - Mei Feld ischt d'Welt*
Source: <http://www.theater-lindenhof.de/index.php?docid=471>.
Accessed on 14 June 2016.



Photograph 17

Description: *Das Silcher-Denkmal* in Tübingen.

Source: <http://www.tuepedia.de/index.php/Datei:Silcher-Denkmal.jpg>.

Accessed on 13 June 2016.



Photograph 18

Description: A scene from *Kohlhaas*.

Source: <http://www.theater-lindenhof.de/cgi-sub/fetch.php?id=477>.

Accessed on 23 September 2011.



Photographs 19 and 20

Description: Scenes from *AUSSEM PARADIES: Eine Stadtgeschichte*.

Source: <http://www.flickr.com/search/show/?q=Tübingen+Sommertheater>.

Accessed on 1 September 2013.



Appendix IV

Theater Lindenhof, Repertoire (1981-2013)*

2016

Hans im Glück von Bertolt Brecht. Regie: Christof Küster. Premiere: 4. März 2016

2015

Die Ausreisserinnen. Komödie von Pierre Palmade und Christophe Duthuron. Regie: Siegfried Bühr. Premiere: 20. November 2015.

Emmas Glück. Nach dem Roman von Claudia Schreiber. Bühnenfassung Musik
Regie: Heiner Kondschnik. Premiere: 22. Oktober 2015.

Arche Konrad. Theatersommer auf dem Himmelberg. Regie: Siegfried Bühr. Premiere: 12. Juli 2015.

Weit vom Schuss – und mittendrin! Ein Bürgerprojekt von Franz Xaver Ott in Kooperation mit Stetten a.k.M. Regie: Stefan Hallmayer. Premiere: 17. Juli 2015.

Wieder Dahoim: Poliakoffs Eventkapelle 2. Regie: Dietlinde Ellsäcker. Premiere: 24. Juni 2015.

Ihr. Sollt. Büßen. Spielprojekt der 'Hechinger Freiheit'. Premiere: 20. Juni 2015.

Das Spiel von Liebe und Zufall. Komödie von Marivaux. Regie: Christof Küster. Premiere: 27. Mai.

Der Kerl vom Land, Eine komödiantische Liebesgeschichte von Alain Ganas/Katarina Mazetti. Regie: Philipp Becker. Premiere: 14. März 2015.

ES SIND NUR REGELN DIE WIR BRECHEN. Von Marc von Henning. Regie: Marc von Henning. Premiere: 18. Februar 2015

Spätzle mit Soß! Eine heitere Schwabenkunde. Szenische Einrichtung: Gerd Plankenhorn. Premiere: 22. Januar 2015.

2014

D'r nackte Wahnsinn. Komödie von Michael Frayn. Regie: Siegfried Bühr. Premiere: 23. Oktober.

Ein Dorf im Widerstand. Konzertierte Spiel zum Mössinger Generalstreik 1933. Von Franz Xaver Ott. Regie: Philipp Becker. Wiederaufnahme. Premiere: 18. September 2014.

Das Ende vom Anfang. Komödie von Sean O'Casey. Wiederaufnahme. Regie: Christoph Biermeier. Premiere: 17. April 2014.

Der arme Konrad. Schauspiel aus den Bauernkriegen 1514 von Friedrich Wolf. Regie: Klaus Hemmerle. Premiere: 16. Mai 2014.

Molly Sweeney von Brian Friel. Koproduktion des Theaters Lindenhof Melchingen und Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen. Regie: Philipp Becker. Premiere: 28. Mai 2014.

Schwäbische Schöpfung samt Sündenfall. Ein Ein-Mann-Revuele zum 300sten Geburtstag von Sebastian Sailer. Szenische Einrichtung: Dietlinde Ellsäßer. Premiere: 12. Februar 2014

HOMO FABER. Nach dem Roman von Max Frisch in einer Fassung von Christof Küster. Regie: Christof Küster. Premiere: 30. Januar 2014

2013

Ein Dorf im Widerstand. Konzertiertes Spiel zum Mössinger Generalstreik 1933. Von Franz Xaver Ott. Regie Philipp Becker. Premiere Mai 2013

Ich sprach nachts: Es werde Licht! Aber heller wurd' es nicht. Ein musikalischer Robert-Gernhardt-Abend. Regie und Musik Heiner Kondschat. Premiere Februar 2013

Würden Sie meine Schmerzen mit mir teilen? Ein hypochondrischer Angstmonolog von Joachim Zelter. Regie Petra Afonin. Premiere Februar 2013

2012

Der Brandner Kaspar und das ewig' Leben Komödie von Kurt Wilhelm. Regie Christoph Biermeier. Premiere November 2012

Rennfahrer Bieberle Schwaben im Crashtest. Schwäbisches Kabarett von und mit Gerd Plankenhorn. Regie Susanne Hinkelbein. Premiere Oktober 2012

Empfänger unbekannt. Von Kressman Taylor. Deutsch von Heidi Zerning Leitung. Katja Büchtemann, Oliver Moumouris. Premiere September 2012

Arche Konrad. Ein Seefahrerstück über die Alb. Von Susanne Hinkelbein. Regie und Musik Susanne Hinkelbein. Premiere September 2012

Hoinwärts nach Amerika. Westernkomödie von Ingrid Lausund. Regie: Olga Wildgruber. Premiere Mai 2012.

Schwabenkinder - in fremden Händen. Von Franz Xaver Ott. Regie Oliver Moumouris. Premiere Februar 2012

Sturm Nach William Shakespeare. In einer Fassung von hirche/krumbein. Regie, Bühne und Kostüme Albrecht Hirche. Premiere Februar 2012

2011

Kommen und Gehen. Ein Theaterspektakel zum Stadtjubiläum von Friedrichshafen. Von Franz Xaver Ott. Regie Klaus Hemmerle. Premiere Oktober 2011

Hochzeitslose. Nach dem Roman von Maria Beig. Regie und Bühne Dietlinde Ellsäßer. Premiere Oktober 2011

Tübinger Sommertheater: 2011 SCHILLER ... weil es die Freiheit ist, durch welche man zur Schönheit wandert! Regie Philipp Becker. Premiere Juli 2011

Mai 2011 30. Jahre Theater Lindenhof, Jubiläum!

Don Quijote. Viel Theater und Musik um den Ritter von der traurigen Gestalt. Von Heiner Kondschnik nach Miguel de Cervantes. Regie und Musik Heiner Kondschnik. Premiere März 2011

1. Januar 2011. Das Theater Lindenhof wird Stiftung!

2010

Älles onser! Die Legende vom schwäbischen Paradies. Von Franz Xaver Ott. Regie Philipp Becker. Premiere Dezember 2010

Kohlhaas Schauspiel nach Kleist. Regie Antú Romero Nunes. Premiere September 2010

KULTUR IN DER PAUSA 2010. Die Schutzsuchenden nach Aischylos von Oliver Moumouris. Regie Philipp Becker. Premiere am 9. Juli 2010. Spielzeit: 09. bis 25. Juli und 17. bis 25. September

Theatertreffen. Ein Singspiel aus den Alpen. Inszenierung Erik Gedeon. Premiere der Uraufführung anlässlich der Ruhrfestspiele in Recklinghausen im Mai 2010

Hösch Zeit, göhsch mit! Karl Valentin-Abend. Regie Susanne Hinkelbein. Premiere April 2010

2009

Der Weibsteufel. Volksstück von Karl Schönherr. Regie Philipp Becker. Premiere am 25. November

Volpone oder Der schlaue Herr Fuchs. Lustspiel von Hartwin Gromes und Felix Huby. Frei und schwäbisch nach Ben Jonson. Regie, Bühne und Kostüme Albrecht Hirche. Premiere am 25. Juni anlässlich des Gomaringer Theatersommer 2009. Koproduktion mit der Gemeinde Gomaringen und den Freilichtspielen Schwäbisch Hall

Onkel Wanja. Szenen aus dem Landleben von Anton Tschechow. In einer Fassung von Franz Xaver Ott. Regie Franz Xaver Ott. Premiere am 18. Februar 2009

2008

Tübinger Sommertheater 2008: AUSSEM PARADIES - Eine Stadtgeschichte. Aufgeschrieben von Siegfried Bühler und Oliver Moumouris. 16. Juli bis 24. August 2008. Theater Lindenhof und Bewohner des Französischen Viertels. Konzeption und Buch Siegfried Bühler, Oliver Moumouris. Poliakoffs Eventkapelle. Tuschuur on Tour. Dialoge u. Musik Susanne Hinkelbein

Georg Elser - Allein gegen Hitler. Volksstück von Dieter de Lazzer und Felix Huby Uraufführung: Regie Christoph Biermeier

Stauffenbergs Schwur. Melchinger Premiere am 23. Januar 2008

2007

Stauffenbergs Schwur. Eine theatralische Annäherung. Nach dem Dokumentarischen Stück von Andreas Vogt. Uraufführung am 14. November 2007. Thalia-Theater Albstadt. Inszenierung: Philipp Becker

Die Geierwally. Eine Art Volksmusical von Heiner Kondschnik. Nach dem Roman von Wilhelmine von Hillern. Uraufführung: Regie und Musik Heiner Kondschnik.

Der Luftikus. Sommertheater auf dem Rathausplatz in Stetten am kalten Markt in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Theater Lindenhof. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

Indien. Eine Tragikomödie. Von Josef Hader und Alfred Dorfer. Lindenhof Kooperation

Leonce und Lena. Integratives Schauspielprojekt nach dem Lustspiel von Georg Büchner. In Zusammenarbeit mit Marienberg. Regie Oliver Moumouris

2006

Der Aufschwung kommt!. Ein musikalisches Konjunkturtraining. Regie Franz Xaver Ott

Die Drei vom Dohlengässle. Südseezauber. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

Eintagsfliegen. Von Susanne Hinkelbein. Uraufführung: Regie Philipp Becker

Volkstheater fürs Volkstheater. Melchingen feiert 25 Jahre Theater Lindenhof. Gemeinsame Veranstaltung von Theater Lindenhof und den Melchinger Vereinen. So. 02. April 2006 in der Festhalle Melchingen.

Jottwehdee. Vom Heimweh und Hinausweh. Mit Berthold Biesinger und Susanne Hinkelbein

2005

Der schwäbische Tartüff. Komödie nach Molière von Johann Martin Enderle. Regie Franz Xaver Ott

Abschlussfahrt und letzte zwei Aufführungen von Meine Welt ist das Leben, dem Theaterprojekt von Marienberg/ Theater Lindenhof, in Berlin im Theater RambaZamba. Zweimal ausverkauft.

Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre. Schauspielprojekt nach Friedrich Schillers Erzählung. Theater Lindenhof Melchingen in Zusammenarbeit mit Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V. Reutlingen, Sozialtherapeutisches Wohnen. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

Susanne Hinkelbein erhält den zweiten Preis beim baden-württembergischen Landespreis für Volkstheaterstücke für die kleine Farce WAIDMANNSSHEIL! Preisverleihung im Staatstheater Stuttgart

Schiller. Freiheit der Jugend. Kooperation Theater Lindenhof mit der Theater-AG der Geschwister-Scholl-Schule-Tübingen. Leitung Detlev Reeg, Paul Siemt, Uwe Zellmer

Schwabenblues. Von Felix Huby und Jürgen Popig. Musik und Songtexte von Erik Gedeon. Regie Erik Gedeon. Uraufführung im Wilhelma Theater Stuttgart beim Festival Theater der Welt 2005. Danach bei den Freilichspielen Schwäbisch Hall im Globe Theater.

Nikodemus Frischlin. Feuerkopf. Der rätselhafte Fall des Dichters aus großer Höhe. Von Uwe Zellmer. Sommertheater 2005 in Balingen. Uraufführung: Regie und Musik Heiner Kondschak

Peer Gynt. Schauspiel von Henrik Ibsen. In einer Fassung von Siegfried Bühn. Regie Siegfried Bühn

Mit vergnügten Sinnen. Schiller spielen. Literarischer Spaziergang durch Nürtingen mit Schülern der Waldorf-Schule-Nürtingen und Peter Härtling. Leitung: Kooperation Rudolf-Steiner Schule und Theater Lindenhof: Ingrid Dolde, Angela Weylkirchner und Uwe Zellmer

2004

Mörike! Er ist's! Szenischer Abend mit Musik. Szenische Einrichtung Franz Xaver Ott Musik Wolfram Karrer

Spedition Butz. Abgefahrene Geschichten mit Berthold Biesinger und Dietlinde Ellsäßer. Stück: Dietlinde Ellsäßer. Regie und Musik Heiner Kondschak

Festakt zu 10 Jahre und 100.000 Zuschauer von Der Entaklemmer am Theater Lindenhof Melchingen

Verleihung der Verdienstmedaille des Landes Baden-Württemberg an Bernhard Hurm und Uwe Zellmer durch Ministerpräsident Erwin Teufel

Sommertheater vom 04.06 - 18.08.2004 in Schwäbisch Hall, Globe Theater: Viel Lärm um Nichts Komödie von William Shakespeare. In Kooperation mit den Freilichtspielen Schwäbisch Hall. Regie Christoph Biermeier

Sommertheater vom 06.07. - 08.08.2004 auf der Ruine Hohen-Melchingen. Ritter, Tod & Teufel Geschichten aus dem Schattenreich. Wiederaufnahmepremiere. Regie Philipp Becker

14.07. - 17.07. Platanenalle Tübingen. Was ihr wollt - Mit Shakespeare spielen. Kooperation Theater Lindenhof mit der Theater-AG der Geschwister-Scholl-Schule-Tübingen. Leitung: Detlev Reeg, Paul Siemt, Uwe Zellmer

WAIDMANNSSHEIL! (Uraufführung) Eine kleine Farce von Susanne Hinkelbein. Regie Heike Beutel

2003

Der zerbrochne Krug. Lustspiel von Heinrich von Kleist. Regie Franz Xaver Ott

Sommertheater vom 24.06 - 03.08.2003 auf der Ruine HohenMelchingen. Ritter, Tod & Teufel. Geschichten aus dem Schattenreich. Regie Philipp Becker

Sommertheater auf dem Rathausplatz in Stetten am kalten Markt in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Theater Lindenhof vom 11. bis 20. Juli 2003. Maientanz komödiantische Ganovengeschichte. Nach Adventsfieber von H. Engisch und A. Hermer. Bearbeitet von F.X. Ott. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

Das Ende vom Anfang. Komödie von Sean O'Casey. Deutsch von Johanna und Martin Walser. Regie: Christoph Biermeier

1001te Vorstellung von Kenner trinken Württemberger. Jubiläumsvorstellung mit Gästen im Theater Lindenhof Melchingen. Festrede Staatsminister Dr. Christoph Palmer

Empfang der Landesregierung: Ministerpräsident Erwin Teufel lädt das konsularische Korps ein zur Landpartie nach Melchingen ins Theater Lindenhof.

Feier zum 70. Geburtstag von Peter Härtling mit Der zerbrochne Krug

Männer und ich. Ein kabarettistischer Damenabend. Mit Dietlinde Ellsäßer, Heiner Kondsckak, Bernhard Mohl, Jonathan Gray

Aufzeichnung von Der zerbrochne Krug durch SÜDWESTFERNSEHEN, Regie Isolde Rinker

Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti. Volksstück von Bertolt Brecht. Musik: Paul Dessau. Regie Siegfried Bühler

2002

Die Drei vom Dohlengässle. Höhenrausch. Von Dietlinde Ellsäßer, Ida Ott und Isolde Neu. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

Das Sparschwein. Komödie mit Musik. Von Labiche / Strauß. Schwäbische Fassung Jörg Ehni. Regie: Siegfried Bühler

Aufzeichnung von Das Sparschwein durch SÜDWESTFERNSEHEN; Regie Isolde Rinker

Meine Welt ist das Leben. Ein Theaterprojekt von Mariaberg/ Theater Lindenhof. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

Kammerpiloten (Uraufführung). Schauspiel von Johann Jakob Wurster. Regie Johann Jakob Wurster

Susanne Hinkelbein erhält für Berta und Marta beim Landespreis für Volkstheaterstücke des Landes Baden-Württemberg einen ersten Preis

Hölderlin, Heimkunft. O Stimme der Stadt, der Mutter. Nürtinger TheaterSpaziergang. Regie Siegfried Bühler / Stefan Hallmayer
Schwäbische Schöpfung. Singspiel von Sebastian Sailer. Musik von Michael Kessler. Regie Siegfried Bühler

Die Präsidentinnen. Von Werner Schwab. Regie Christoph Biermeier

2001

Die letzten Sautage (Uraufführung). Von Franz Xaver Ott. Regie Hartmut Wickert

Schwebende Schwaben. Ein Theater-Varieté zum 20sten Geburtstag. Regie: Stefan Hallmayer

Aufzeichnung von Schwebende Schwaben durch SÜDWESTFERNSEHEN,. Regie Isolde Rinker

20 Jahre Theater Lindenhof. Ein Theater feiert Geburtstag. Details

Sommertheater in Gomaringen, Bietigheim-Bissingen, Calw und Balingen: Viel Lärm um Nichts. Komödie von William Shakespeare. Regie Christoph Biermeier

Melchinger Scheunenfassung von Viel Lärm um Nichts. Komödie von William Shakespeare. Regie Christoph Biermeier

Tuten und Blasen (Uraufführung). Bubenstückle von Susanne Hinkelbein. Regie Michael Heinsohn

Aufzeichnung von Berta und Marta durch SÜDWESTFERNSEHEN. Regie Isolde Rinker

2000

Schillers RÄUBER. In einer Fassung von Manfred Karge. Regie Manfred Karge

Überwintern. Jugenderinnerungen eines schwäbischen Zigeuners. Lesung mit Musik. Einrichtung Stefan Hallmayer

Wiederaufnahme. Tübinger Sommertheater. Eine Bahnfahrt ... und der Raum entschwindet. Regie Siegfried Bühn

Wiederaufnahme. Stetten dem Himmel so nah. Ein Dorf spielt Theater. Von Franz Xaver Ott. Sommertheater in Stetten a.k.M. zur 1200 Jahrfeier. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

In einem schönen fernen Reiche. Musikalische Hauff-Märchenlesung. Mit Berthold Biesinger und Susanne Hinkelbein

HERZATTACKEN. Shakespeare spielen. Fassung von Kistner, Biermeier, Lenk. Regie Christoph Biermeier

1999

Dehoam sei' ond doch Jomer hao'. Lieder und Gedichte von Sebastian Blau Bernhard Hurm, Gina Maas

Berta und Marta (Uraufführung), oder Die Schwierigkeiten mit dem hohen g. Von Susanne Hinkelbein. Regie Christoph Biermeier

Franz Xaver Ott erhält den Volkstheaterpreis des Landes Baden-Württemberg für sein Stück Die letzten Sautage

Tübinger Sommertheater. Eine Bahnfahrt ...und der Raum entschwindet. Regie Siegfried Bühn

Stetten dem Himmel so nah. Ein Dorf spielt Theater von Franz Xaver Ott. Sommertheater in Stetten a.k.M. zur 1200 Jahrfeier. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

Melchinger Winterreise beim Festival "Politik im Freien Theater" in Stuttgart
Melchinger Winterreise. Stationen für die Erinnerung. Von Peter Härtling. Regie Christoph Biermeier (Wiederaufnahme)

1998

Die Kleinbürgerhochzeit. Von Bertolt Brecht. Regie Siegfried Bühn

Mörrike! Schelmenstück. Schauspiel von Bernhard Hurm, Uwe Zellmer und dem Ensemble.
Regie: Hartmut Wickert

Er hatte ein fliegend Herz. Gustav Mesmer - Ikarus vom Lautertal genannt. Lesung mit
Musik. Franz Xaver Ott, Susanne Hinkelbein (Musik)

Melchinger Winterreise. Stationen für die Erinnerung. Von Peter Härtling. Regie Christoph
Biermeier (Wiederaufnahme)

1997

Witziger, Wohin. Clownsgeschichten. Regie Michel Joly. Theater Lindenhof/ Theater
Ätschagäbele

Glocken der Heimat. Ein schwäbisches Himmelfahrtskommando. Von Peter Höfermeyer,
Bernd Kohlhepp, Gerd Plankenhorn. Regie Bernd Kohlhepp

Feurio! Lustspiel von Bernhard Blume. Regie Heike Beutel

Die Friedensfrau. Von Walter Jens Schultheater, mit der Geschwister-Scholl-Schule
Tübingen. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

Sense. Dramatischer Monolog von Werner Fritsch. Regie Bernhard Hurm

Die Drei vom Dohlengässle. Uffs's Leba. Von Dietlinde Ellsäßer, Isolde Neu, Ida
Ott. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

Melchinger Winterreise. Stationen für die Erinnerung. Von Peter Härtling. Regie Christoph
Biermeier

Franz Xaver Ott erhält den Volkstheaterpreis des Landes Baden-Württemberg für sein
Stück Hoimetaberau

1996

TITANIC. Ein SINKspiel in drei Atemzügen. Schultheaterwerkstatt "Wilde Linden". Regie
Laura Conte, Eberhard Schillinger

Die Reise nach Wart (wo es dann schon wieder dunkel ist). Regie Christoph Biermeier
Tübinger Sommertheater. Und die Liebe höret nimmer auf. Ein Abend auf der Festwiese.
Nach Ödon von Horváth. Regie Siegfried Bühn

Nacht oder Tag oder Jetzt beim Festival. "Politik im Freien Theater" in Bremen

Dancing at Lughnasa (Leben ein Tanz). Von Brian Friel. Regie Andreas Missler-Morell

1995

Küsse fliegende Bälle. Ein bunter Abend

Neuinszenierung von Nacht oder Tag oder Jetzt Eine Hexengeschichte von der Schwäbischen Alb. Regie Bernhard Hurm

Geschichten von dr'hoim. Schwäbische Dorfgeschichten. Von Andrea Noll

Dreharbeiten zu dem Fernsehfilm Hexenfeuer, nach dem Theaterstück Nacht oder Tag oder Jetzt. Eine Koproduktion von 3sat und dem Süddeutschen Rundfunk Stuttgart. Regie Andreas Missler-Morell

Tübinger Sommertheater: Wiederaufnahme von "... wenn mit dem Neckar herab" (Hölderlin). Ein Abendspaziergang. Regie Siegfried Bühn

Kindertheaterfestival. 10 Jahre "Ätschagäbele". 10 Jahre Kinder- und Schultheater am Theater Lindenhof

Winterzauber. Ein Varieté. Regie Bernhard Hurm

1994

Primadonne. Regie Hildegard Plattner

Hoimetaberau. Eine schwäbische Tüftlersonate. Von Franz Xaver Ott. Regie und Musik Susanne Hinkelbein

Der Entaklemmer. Luststück von Thaddäus Troll. Nach "Der Geizige" von Molière. Regie Siegfried Bühn

Theater als Lebensmittel. Baden-Württembergische Kleintheatertage in Melchingen. Ein Sommernachtstraum. Sommertheater auf der Ruine HohenMelchingen. Mit Schülern der Geschwister-Scholl-Schule Tübingen. Regie: Stefan Hallmayer

Sommerzauber. Ein Varieté mit Menue. (In Zusammenarbeit mit dem Restaurant "Hirsch", Sonnenbühl-Erpfingen.)

Im Chaos und mittendrin wir. Schultheaterwerkstatt "Wilde Linden". Regie Dietlinde Ellsäßer

Aufzeichnung von Der Entaklemmer in der Lindenhof-Scheune durch 3sat. Regie Andreas Missler-Morell

AWA. Kleine Sprengsätze und andere Gedichte von Gerd Plankenhorn. Regie Stefan Hallmayer und Franz Xaver Ott

8. Dezember 1994: Hoimetaberau wird als Hörspiel gesendet (Produktion: SWF Landesstudio Tübingen)

1993

Im Frühjahr wird das Theater Lindenhof das erste Regionaltheater in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland

Tübinger Sommertheater "... wenn mit dem Neckar herab" (Hölderlin). Ein Abendspaziergang. Von Siegfried Bühr, Bernhard Hurm, Uwe Zellmer. Regie Siegfried Bühr

Uwe Zellmer und Bernhard Hurm erhalten für Nacht oder Tag oder Jetzt den Landespreis für Volkstheaterstücke

Einmal kommt die Liebe. Regie Linde Muscheidt Burri

Polenweiher beim Theaterfestival "Politik im Freien Theater" in Dresden. Dietlinde Ellsäßer erhält für ihre Rolle als Hungerbühlerin einen Preis für herausragende schauspielerische Leistung

1992

Nachspiel. Regie. Marianne Jensen, Arno Hermer
Aufzeichnung von Bauern sterben in der Scheune des Theaters Lindenhof durch den Süddeutschen Rundfunk. Regie Isolde Müller-Rinker

Bauern sterben erhält den 1. Preis bei den Kleintheatertagen des Landes Baden-Württemberg in Tübingen

Tübinger Sommertheater. Bühnenfassung von Jerg Ratgeb, Maler Tübingen, Hindenburgkaserne

Woyzeck, Winter '92. Nach Georg Büchner. Regie Stefan Viering (Ko-Produktion mit dem Theaterhaus Stuttgart). Rund 100 Aufführungen bis Februar 1996

Theaterpreis der Stuttgarter Zeitung für Woyzeck, Winter '92

1991

Theaterpreis beim Theater der Jugend / Berlin Festspiele für Irgendwie oder.

Schultheaterwerkstatt "Wilde Linden". Regie Uwe Zellmer

Bauern sterben. Ein dramatisches Fragment. Von Franz Xaver Kroetz. In der umgebauten Theaterscheune. Regie Bernhard Hurm, Stefan Viering

Tübinger Sommertheater. Bauern sterben. Von Franz Xaver Kroetz. Unterjesingen, Kelter

Saalfassung von Jerg Ratgeb, Maler. Theaterhaus Stuttgart-Wangen. Regie Stefan Viering (Ko-produktion mit dem Theaterhaus)

Vorsicht! Volkstheater! Lindenhof-Werkschau bei den Volkstheatertagen des Landes Baden-Württemberg an den Städtischen Bühnen in Freiburg (Inszenierung: Zimmermann/Schirmer)

Zwei Fahrende Frauenzimmer. Musikalisches Vagabundieren für ein Akkordeon. Und zwei Frauenstimmen

Theaterpreis der Stuttgarter Zeitung für Bauern sterben

8. Dezember 1991: Jerg Ratgeb, Maler wird als Hörspiel gesendet (Produktion SWF Landesstudio Tübingen)

1990

Mamas Liebling. Eine literarisch-szenische Collage über Mütter und Söhne. Regie Arno Hermer, Marianne Jensen

Eine gebrochene Frau. Nach Simone de Beauvoir. Regie Yaron Goldstein

Tübinger Sommertheater: Jerg Ratgeb, Maler. Ein Künstlerdrama von Uwe Zellmer. Auf dem Ammerhof bei Tübingen. Regie Stefan Viering 45 Aufführungen, 23.300 Zuschauer

Fernsehaufzeichnung durch den Süddeutschen Rundfunk Stuttgart
Uwe Zellmer erhält für Jerg Ratgeb, Maler den Landespreis für Volkstheaterstücke.

Kleinkunstpreis des Landes Baden-Württemberg für Niemando. Kindertheater
"Ätschagäbele" Ein unbehäb' Maul Nikodemus Frischlin 1547 – 1580. Regie Bernhard Hurm (Auftragsproduktion für die Stadt Balingen zur Eröffnung der Zehntscheuer und der Frischlin-Ausstellung)

Schnick-Schnack. Ein Varieté. Regie Marianne Jensen, Arno Hermer

1989

Dr Viereckig oder die amerikanische Kiste. Nach einer Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichte von Berthold Auerbach. Regie Bernhard Hurm.

Hölderlin-Preis der Stadt und Universität Tübingen

1988

Commedia à la carta oder Was übrig bleibt, kommt in den Eimer. Regie Heinz Müller.

Vergnügungen. Ein Brecht-Abend. Regie Holger Franke

Nacht oder Tag oder Jetzt. Gastspiele in Parma, Moskau, Duschambe

Polenweiher. Schauspielprojekt nach einem Volksstück von Thomas Strittmatter. Regie Bernhard Hurm. 180 Aufführungen bis Februar 1996

Die Tiere vom Strunzwald oder die Verwandlung des Prinzen Poppo. Regie Stefan Hallmayer

1987

Tübinger Sommertheater Johannis. Nacht. Traum. Eine Shakespeare-Bearbeitung Auf Schloß Hohentübingen (Ko-Produktion mit dem Tübinger Zimmertheater) Regie: Hartmut Wickert

1986

Tübinger Sommertheater: Hölderlin. Tübingen. Turm. Von Bernhard Hurm und Uwe Zellmer (Ko-Produktion mit dem Tübinger Zimmertheater). Regie Hartmut Wickert. 42 Aufführungen, 12 500 Zuschauer

Aufzeichnung der Inszenierung durch den Süddeutschen Rundfunk Stuttgart. Regie Werner Schretzmeier, Stefan Paul

1985

Die Rashna Shiba-Fakir Show

Solo für zwei. Ein musikalisches Intermezzo zwischen einer reifen Dame und einem jungen Herrn

Gastspielreise mit Nacht oder Tag oder Jetzt nach Berlin

1984

Nacht oder Tag oder Jetzt. Eine Hexengeschichte von der Schwäbischen Alb. Von Bernhard Hurm und Uwe Zellmer. Regie Christiane Richers, Stefan Viering. Bis 1988 250 Aufführungen

1983

Kenner trinken Württemberger. Ein Thaddäus Troll-Abend. Bis heute über 1000 Aufführungen

1982

's herbestelet Schwäbischer Abend

1981

Gründung, Eröffnung und "erste" Premiere": Semmer Kerle oder koine. Ein Heimatabend. Von Uwe Zellmer. Regie: Viele, und dann schon Stefan Viering

*This repertoire is based on: <http://www.theater-lindenhof.de/index.php?docid=16>. Last accessed 25 June 2016.

Appendix V

Scanned documents

Scan 1

Description: Promotional literature for *Älles Onser!*

Source: Theater Lindenhof archival material, December 2010.



Scan 2

Description: Promotional literature for *Älles Onser!* Author's name listed third from the bottom for *Regieassistenz* (Sorcha Fitzgerald).

Source: Theater Lindenhof archival material, December 2010.

Älles onser!
Die Legende vom schwäbischen Perseus

Premiere: 15. Dezember 2010 im Theater Lindenhof Mechingen

Es spielen: Linda Schlops, Berthold Besinger,
Thomas Maos, Franz Xaver Ott,
Gerd Plankenhorn

Stück: Oliver Moumouris, Franz Xaver Ott
Regie: Philipp Becker
Musik: Thomas Maos
Bühne: Uwe Hund
Kostüme: Maria Altz
Regieassistenz: Sorcha Fitzgerald
Hospitalanz: Luca Zehn
Foto: Christine Wawro

Theater Lindenhof · Unser aus Linden 18 · 72093 Burschingen/Mechingen · www.theater-lindenhof.de · Tel. 07135 95290

**Theater
Lindenhof**

Scan 3

Description and source: '30 Jahre Theater Lindenhof Melchingen', *Schwäbisches Tagblatt*, 16 May 2011.

30 Jahre Theater Lindenhof Melchingen

Die schwebenden Schwaben vom Himmelberg



HERAUFSPAZIERT UND MITGEFEIERT!

Sie machen Theater „mit Hochgefühl“! An einem der ungewöhnlichsten Bühnenorte Deutschlands – im Lindenhof Melchingen, in einer Schaukule auf der Sommeralb, 736 Meter überm Meer. Aus wilden, bewegten Anfängen 1981 hat sich dort ein anerkanntes, bundesweit wohl einmaliges „Regionaltheater“ entwickelt, das in ganz Baden-Württemberg unterwegs ist – und manchmal sogar in Berlin und beim Festival „Theater der Welt“ gastiert. Mütterweise reicht das Lindenhof-Land von Friedrichshafen bis Bietigheim-Bissingen, von Laupheim bis Pforzheim. Bestehend sind die Lindenhöfer für ihre Freiluftspitzel, ihre Theaterspaziergänge, mit denen sie Landschaften, Wälder und Gassen verzaubern und spielend zu neuem Leben erwecken: prall, unverfälscht, zersenslich. Neben dem Lindenhof-Gründern mischt längst schon eine neue Generation prägend mit. Die Grundidee war und ist poetisch-kritisches Volkstheater mit „Kernstück“ zur Schwäbischen Alb. Um dies festzuhalten und weiterzugeben, hat das Theater dieses Jahr eine Stiftung gegründet. Die jungen Wilden von einst sind angekommen – am 18. Mai 2011 feiert das Theater-Wunder von der Alb seinen 30. Geburtstag. Neben Freunden, Mitstreitern und Weggefährten, die in dieser Sonderbeilage zu Wort kommen, ziehen sich auch die Partnerinlage der SÜDWEST PRESSE unter die Gucklöhler* und wünschen dem Lindenhof für die Zukunft viel Publikum und gutes Theater!

VERLAGSGESAMTVERANTWORTLICHUNG
der SÜDWEST PRESSE
Partner in der
Region Neckar-Alb

Schwäbisches Tagblatt
SÜDWEST PRESSE
NECKAR-ALB

ALB ROTZ
METZINGER DRUCKER HEIKELHART
Anwältiger/Sachverständiger

BOHEMZOLLERSCHE ZEITUNG
ZOLLERN-ALB
KUPFER

Appendix VI

Islander's song in *Älles Onser!*

Extract from the islander's song in Theater Lindenhof's December 2010 production of *Älles Onser!*

Note

Line 1: German

Line 2: Irish

Line 3: Pronunciation of Irish for German speaker

Stürmischer Wind, frischt auf, aus Steuerbord voraus
Tá gaoth fhuar ag séideadh ar a gualainn deis
[Tah gui uer egg schehde er a gulin djesch]

Alle Mann Schoten auffieren
Scaoilígí na seolta, gach duine,
[Skuiligi nah schohlte, gach dineh]

Schiff leegierig, Abdrift, Abdrift! Rahsegel abbrassen!
Tá an bád ag dul le sruth! Scaoil amach an seol mór!
[Tah un baud egg gul le schruh! Skuil amoch un schohl mohr!]

Anluven, Anluven!
Seol leis an ngaoth! Seol leis an ngaoth!
[Schohl lesch un ngui! Schohl lesch un ngui!]

Alle Mann, Leinen dicht holen!
Gach duine, beirígí ar na rópaí.
[Gach dineh, berigi er na rohpi.]

Achtung, wir halsen!
Seachnaigí, tá muid ag casadh!
[Schachnagi, tah mid egg casseh!]

Bootsmann, alle Mann an die Leinen!
A mhairnéalaí, gach duine ar na rópaí!
[Ah warnähli, gach dineh er ba rohpi.]

Schoten auffieren, Schoten auffieren!
Scaoilígí na seolta, Scaoilígí na seolta!
[Skuiligi nah schohlte, Skuiligi nah schohlte]

Dichtholen, alle Segel raffen!
Beirígí ar na ropái, bailígí na seolta!
[Berigi er na rohpi, balligi na schohlta!]

Achtung, auflandiger Wind!

Seachnaigí, tá gaoth ag teacht ón gcladach!
[Schachnagi, tah gui egg tjacht ohn gladach!]

Abdrift, wir haben Abdrift!
Tá muid ag dul le sruth! Tá muid ag dul le sruth!
[Tah mid ag gul le schruh! Tah mid ag gul le schruh!]

Ihr Saecke! Segel trimmen, anluven!
A loicimeiri! Athraígí na seolta! Seol leis an ngaoth!
[Ah luckemeri! Ahrigi na schohlta! Schohl les un ngui!]

Wir laufen auf, wir laufen”
Tá muid ag tabhairt rith cladaigh don bhád
[Tah mid egg tüerrt rih cladi dun wahd]

Alle Mann von Bord!
Gach duine amach!
[Gach dineh, amoch!]

Rette sich wer kann!
Sábháil tú féin, más féidir leat!
[Sahwaal tü hehn, maß fehder let!]

Wir sind die Gestrandeten
Is muide atá ar an trá fholamh
[Is mid attah er un trah ulow]

Wir befinden uns in einer fremden Welt
Tá muid in áit iasachta
[Tah mid in áit isachte]

Wir liegen dar nieder, mit einer Frage
Tá muid in ár luí anseo, agus gan againn ach ceist amháin
[Tah mid in arr lui unscho, agus gan an ach kescht awaain]

Wir denken nach, ueber unsere Zukunft
Tá muid ag smaoineamh faoina bhfuil i ndán dúinn
[Tah mid egg smünuw füineh will i naan düin]

Appendix VII

Stiftungssatzung des Theater Lindenhofs
Received from Christine Heinz on 24 February 2011

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Präambel

„Komm! ins Offene, Freund! zwar glänzt ein Weniges heute
Nur herunter und eng schließet der Himmel uns ein.
Weder die Berge sind noch aufgegangen des Waldes
Gipfel nach Wunsch und leer ruht von Gesange die Luft.
Trüb ists heut, es schlummern die Gäng und die Gassen und fast will
Mir es scheinen, es sei, als in der bleiernn Zeit.
Dennoch gelinget der Wunsch, Rechtgläubige zweifeln an Einer
Stunde nicht und der Lust bleibe geweiht der Tag.“
Friedrich Hölderlin, DER GANG AUFS LAND

Ein Theatertraum ist auf der Schwäbischen Alb, in Melchingen, Unter den Linden, Wirklichkeit und Lebenswerk geworden. Aus der „Spinnerei“ von ein paar jungen Leuten entsteht seit 1981 eine Theaterbewegung, ein „freies Theater“ mit festem Ensemble und einer eigenwilligen und eigenständigen volkstheatralen Handschrift; dann seit Anfang der 90er Jahre ein Unternehmen, ein Betrieb, eine Institution, ein Regionaltheater, das sich in der Region, im Land und darüber hinaus großer Beachtung erfreut und sich einen einzigartigen Ruf schafft:

Die Melchinger! Die Lindenhöfler!

Die Begeisterung fürs Theaterspielen, die Lust am „Theater machen“, am Geschichten erzählen, der Mut sich künstlerisch auszuprobieren, der Wunsch nach gesellschaftlichem und politischem Engagement, nach Veränderung der gesellschaftlichen Realität. Das ist es, was uns angetrieben hat und auch heute noch antreibt. „Theater kann Sehnsucht erwecken nach einem anderen Zustand der Welt“ (Jean Genet).

Wo wir herkommen und wo wir hinwollen. Das sind wir, das erzählen wir. In Burladingen und im Zollernalbkreis daheim, über Schwaben und Württemberg hinaus, weit in der Welt zuhause. Provinz ist Welt. Welt ist Provinz.

„Komm! ins Offene, Freund!“ Dazu fordern wir die zukünftigen Theatermacher herzlich auf. „Das Theater ist eine Schule des Weinens und des Lachens und eine freie Tribüne, auf der die Menschen alte oder irrige Morallehren deutlich zeigen und durch lebendige Beispiele ewige Regeln des menschlichen Herzens oder Gefühls ausdrücken können.

Ein Volk, das seinem Theater nicht hilft und es nicht fördert, ist, wenn nicht tot doch todkrank; so auch das Theater, das nicht den sozialen Pulsschlag der Geschichte aufnimmt, das Drama ihrer Menschen, die unverfälschte Eigenart ihrer Landschaft und ihres Geistes, ihr Lachen und ihr weinen.“

Federico Garcia Lorca, THEATER DER SOZIALEN AKTION

Die Melchinger Bühne ist die Stiftung, „wo sich Vergnügen mit Unterricht, Ruhe mit Anstrengung, Kurzweil mit Bildung gattet...“, so lesen wir in Friedrich Schillers DIE SCHAUBÜHNE ALS MORALISCHE ANSTALT BETRACHTET. Es umschreibt gut, was wir gerne das „Melchinger Humanum“ nennen.

Kultur schafft Wandel, Kultur schafft Heimat und Identität. So wünschen die Stifter, die Melchinger Bühne möge den zukünftigen Theaterschaffenden, wie George Tabori formulierte, eine „gesegnete Bleibe“ bleiben.

I. Name, Sitz und Gegenstand der Stiftung

§ 1 Name, Rechtsform und Sitz

(1) Der Name der Stiftung lautet:

Stiftung Theater Lindenhof

(2) Sie ist eine rechtsfähige Stiftung des bürgerlichen Rechts mit dem Sitz in Burladingen-Melchingen.

§ 2 Zweck der Stiftung

(1) Zweck der Stiftung ist die Förderung von Kunst und Kultur. Dieser wird verwirklicht durch den Betrieb eines Theaters und durch die Gewährleistung der Finanzierung dieses Theaters unter Einbeziehung von öffentlichen und privaten Drittmittelgebern.

(2) Bei der Verfolgung des Stiftungszwecks ist stets zu beachten:

- Das besondere Selbstverständnis der Stifter von Theater (nachfolgend a)
- Die Bedeutung bestimmter künstlerischer Kernthemen für die Theaterproduktionen (nachfolgend b)
- Die Bedeutung der künstlerischen Vielfalt (nachfolgend c)

a) Das Wirken des Theaters Lindenhof basiert auf folgendem Selbstverständnis der Stifter:

- Das Theater versteht sich als poetisch-kritisches Volkstheater.
- Das Theater hat einen Kernbezug zur Region Schwäbische Alb.

b) Das Wirken des Theaters Lindenhof wird von folgenden künstlerischen Kernthemen bestimmt:

- Gesellschaftsrelevante und –kritische wie auch unterhaltende Themen und Stoffe, die aus der Region kommen oder zur Region und den Themen der Zeit passen
- Untersuchung des Dialektes und seiner Relevanz als wesentliches poetisches Mittel bei der Umsetzung von Stücken
- Erforschung des „Theaters im öffentlichen Raum“ (bspw. Sommer- und Wintertheater, Unterwegs-Theater)

- c) Das Wirken und die Unverwechselbarkeit des Theaters Lindenhof werden von der Vielfalt der Erzählkunst bestimmt. Dazu zählen auch neue Formen. Der Spielplan soll dies wiedergeben.

Sämtliche in Führungsverantwortung stehenden Theaterschaffenden und insbesondere die Intendanz sind dem in Abs. 2 genannten Grundverständnis verpflichtet und haben dieses stets bei der Spielplangestaltung und der inhaltlichen Ausformung der einzelnen Produktionen zu berücksichtigen. Diese Personen sind bei ihrer Einstellung durch die Stiftung darauf zu verpflichten.

- (3) Der Stiftungszweck wird vorrangig umgesetzt durch die Produktion eigener Theater- und Kleinkunstaufführungen. Darüber hinaus erfolgt eine Förderung kreativen Arbeitens, insbesondere im Bereich des Schul- und Amateurtheaters bzw. durch Kooperation mit anderen Theatern oder Einrichtungen.
- (4) Hauptproduktionsort und -aufführungsstätte für die Theaterinszenierungen ist Melchingen und die im Vermögen der Stiftung stehende Theaterimmobilie. Daneben ist die Stiftung zur Errichtung und Eröffnung von Zweigniederlassungen bzw. Nebenspiel- und -produktionsstätten an anderen Orten in der Region befugt. Darüber hinaus soll das Theater mit seinen Aufführungen regional und überregional gastieren.
- (5) Das Theater Lindenhof hat für seine Produktionen ein eigenes Ensemble zu beschäftigen.
- (6) Es können Gastspiel-Aufführungen anderer Theater und Künstler in das Programm aufgenommen werden.
- (7) Die Stiftung ist unter Beachtung der Vorschriften der Abgabenordnung für steuerbegünstigte Körperschaften zu allen Geschäften und Maßnahmen berechtigt, die der Erreichung oder Förderung des vorgenannten Stiftungszwecks dienen.

§ 3 Gemeinnützigkeit

- (1) Die Stiftung verfolgt ausschließlich und unmittelbar gemeinnützige **Zwecke im Sinne des Abschnitts "Steuerbegünstigte Zwecke" der Abgabenordnung.**
- (2) Zweck der Körperschaft ist die Förderung von Kunst und Kultur i.S. des § 52 Abs. 2 Nr. 5 AO.
- (3) Die Stiftung ist selbstlos tätig; sie verfolgt nicht in erster Linie eigenwirtschaftliche Zwecke.
- (4) **Die Mittel der Stiftung dürfen nur für die satzungsgemäßen Zwecke verwendet werden.**
- (5) Die Stiftung erfüllt ihre Aufgaben selbst oder durch eine Hilfsperson im Sinne des § 57 Abs. 1 S. 2 AO, sofern sie nicht im Wege der Mittelbeschaffung gemäß § 58 Nr. 1 AO tätig **wird. Die Stiftung kann zur Verwirklichung des Stiftungszwecks Zweckbetriebe unterhalten.**
- (6) Es darf keine Person durch Ausgaben, die dem Zweck der Stiftung fremd sind, oder durch

unverhältnismäßig hohe Vergütungen begünstigt werden.

§ 4 Geschäftsjahr

Das Geschäftsjahr beginnt jeweils am 01. Januar und endet am 31. Dezember des Jahres.

II. Stiftungsvermögen

§ 5 Stiftungsvermögen

- (1) Das Grundstockvermögen der Stiftung besteht zum Zeitpunkt ihrer Errichtung aus
- a) dem vom Verein Theater Lindenhof e.V. als Stifter übertragenen Vermögen einschließlich Theaterbetrieb mit allen Aktiva und Passiva und
 - b) den Immobilien, eingetragen im Grundbuch Melchingen 259,
 - Unter den Linden 18, Gebäude- und Freifläche, FlSt. 43, 11a 52qm;
 - Unter den Linden, Gebäude- und Freifläche, FlSt. 40/6, 51 qm;
 - Mittelhofenstraße, Landwirtschaftsfläche, FlSt. 1141, 11a 86 qmdie von den einzelnen Gesellschaftern der Lindenhof GbR, bestehend aus
 - Herrn Bernhard Hurm,
 - Herrn Uwe Zellmer,
 - Frau Dietlinde Ellsäcker und
 - Herrn Jürgen Buchegger,nach den Maßgaben und Auflagen des Stiftungsgeschäfts auf die Stiftung übertragen werden.
- (2) Das Grundstockvermögen der Stiftung ist in seinem Bestand ungeschmälert zu erhalten **und sicher und ertragreich anzulegen.**
- (3) Umschichtungen des Vermögens der Stiftung sind grundsätzlich zulässig. Abweichend davon gilt:
- a) Die Theaterimmobilie in Melchingen ist stets als zentrale Produktions- und Aufführungsstätte für Theaterinszenierungen zu nutzen, in ihrer Substanz zu erhalten bzw. zu erneuern.
 - b) Die im Vermögen der Stiftung stehende Theaterimmobilie darf nur veräußert werden, wenn die Durchführung dringender notwendiger Erhaltungsmaßnahmen die wirtschaftliche Situation der Stiftung nachhaltig gefährden würden. Der Stiftungsrat entscheidet darüber mit der Mehrheit von $\frac{3}{4}$ sämtlicher Mitglieder.
 - c) Im Falle der Veräußerung der Theaterimmobilie ist der Erlös wiederum für den Erwerb oder die langfristige Nutzung einer Theaterimmobilie zu verwenden. Bei der Auswahl der Räumlichkeiten ist dem Ort Melchingen bei vergleichbaren Möglichkeiten der Vorzug

einzuräumen. Ansonsten ist für die Theaterimmobilie ein Ort in der Region Schwäbische Alb auszuwählen, der dem Theater sein lokales Alleinstellungsmerkmal bewahrt.

Aus Vermögensumschichtungen erzielte Gewinne können ganz oder teilweise für den Stiftungszweck verwendet werden, in eine Rücklage eingestellt werden oder dauerhaft dem Grundstockvermögen der Stiftung zugeführt werden.

- (4) Das Grundstockvermögen kann bei dringendem Bedarf in Höhe eines Anteils von bis zu zwanzig vom Hundert innerhalb von fünf Geschäftsjahren in Anspruch genommen werden. Der Stiftungsrat muss einer solchen Inanspruchnahme mit einer Mehrheit von zwei Dritteln aller seiner Mitglieder zustimmen.
- (5) Zustiftungen sind stets zulässig. Zuwendungen sind (als Zustiftungen) dem Grundstockvermögen zuzuführen, soweit dies von dem Zuwendenden so bestimmt wurde. Zuwendungen aufgrund einer Verfügung von Todes wegen sowie Zuwendungen von Grundbesitz sind in der Regel dem Grundstockvermögen zuzuführen, wenn keine abweichende Bestimmung getroffen ist. Die Stiftung ist zur Annahme von Zuwendungen nicht verpflichtet.

§ 6 Verwendung der Vermögenserträge und Zuwendungen

- (1) Die Stiftung erfüllt ihre Aufgaben aus den Erträgen des Stiftungsvermögens sowie aus Zuwendungen, die nicht ausdrücklich zur Stärkung des Stiftungsvermögens bestimmt sind.
- (2) Vom unmittelbaren Mitteleinsatz ausgenommen sind die Rücklagenbildung oder Zuführung zum Stiftungsvermögen gemäß § 58 Nr. 7a AO.
- (3) Die Stiftung kann ihre Mittel ganz oder teilweise einer Rücklage zuführen, soweit dies erforderlich ist, um ihre steuerbegünstigten Zwecke nachhaltig erfüllen zu können und soweit für die Verwendung der Rücklage konkrete Ziel- und Zeitvorstellungen bestehen.
- (4) Zur Werterhaltung können im Rahmen des steuerrechtlich Zulässigen Teile der jährlichen Erträge zur Substanzerhaltung und als Inflationausgleich einer freien Rücklage oder dem Stiftungsvermögen zugeführt werden.

III. Organe der Stiftung

§ 7 Stiftungsorgane

Die Organe der Stiftung sind:

- der Vorstand,
- der Stiftungsrat und sein Verwaltungsrat,
- der künstlerische Beirat.

§ 8 Zusammensetzung des Vorstands

- (1) Der Vorstand der Stiftung (§§ 86, 26 BGB) besteht aus bis zu fünf natürlichen Personen. Der/die Intendant/in sowie der/die kaufmännische Leiter/in sind ständige Mitglieder des Vorstands. Der/die Intendant/in hat den Vorsitz inne. Die übrigen Mitglieder werden vom Stiftungsrat auf die Dauer von fünf Jahren gewählt. Wiederwahl ist zulässig.
- (2) Die Tätigkeit der Intendanz und der kaufmännischen Leitung erfolgt hauptamtlich gegen eine angemessene Tätigkeitsvergütung. Nach Bedarf und wirtschaftlicher Möglichkeit der Stiftung können vom Stiftungsrat auch weitere hauptamtliche, bezahlte Vorstände eingesetzt werden. Ansonsten sind die weiteren Mitglieder des Vorstands unentgeltlich für die Stiftung tätig. Ihnen können ihre notwendigen Auslagen, die durch ihre Tätigkeit für die Stiftung entstanden sind, ersetzt werden.
- (3) Nach Ablauf seiner Amtszeit führt der amtierende Vorstand die Geschäfte bis zur Wahl des neuen Vorstands fort. Mitglieder des Vorstands scheiden in jedem Falle mit Vollendung ihres fünfundsiebzigsten Lebensjahres aus dem Vorstand aus. Der Stiftungsrat kann im Einzelfall mit einer Mehrheit von 2/3 seiner Mitglieder eine Ausnahmeregelung zu S. 2 treffen.
- (4) Die Mitglieder des Vorstands können vor Ablauf ihrer Amtszeit vom Stiftungsrat nur aus wichtigem Grund mit mind. 2/3 der Stimmen aller Stiftungsratsmitglieder abberufen werden. Die Rechte der Stiftungsaufsicht bleiben unberührt.
- (5) Scheidet ein Mitglied des Vorstands vor Ablauf der Amtszeit aus seinem Amt aus, wählt der Stiftungsrat für den Rest der Amtszeit ein Ersatzmitglied. Bis zur Ergänzung verringert sich die Anzahl der Mitglieder des Vorstands um die Anzahl der ausgeschiedenen Personen.
- (6) Der erste Vorstand wird durch die Stifter bestellt.

§ 9 Aufgaben des Vorstands

- (1) Der Vorstand hat für die dauernde und nachhaltige Erfüllung des Stiftungszwecks zu sorgen. Er trägt die Gesamtverantwortung für den Theaterbetrieb. Innerhalb des Vorstands ist der Intendant/die Intendantin für die Erfüllung des künstlerischen Auftrags alleine verantwortlich.
- (2) Der Vorstand berät sich regelmäßig in Sitzungen.
- (3) Der Vorstand führt nach Maßgabe dieser Satzung und den Beschlüssen des Stiftungsrats bzw. des Verwaltungsrates die laufenden Geschäfte der Stiftung einschließlich des Theaterbetriebs selbständig und eigenverantwortlich.
- (4) Zu Beginn eines jeden Geschäftsjahres hat der Vorstand einen Wirtschaftsplan (einschließlich

Stellenplan) für das neue Geschäftsjahr aufzustellen, den der Stiftungsrat beschließt. Der Vorstand hat dem Verwaltungsrat quartalsweise über die Entwicklung der Erträge und Aufwendungen zu berichten. Zudem hat er den Verwaltungsrat über alle wichtigen Angelegenheiten des Theaterbetriebes rechtzeitig zu unterrichten.

- (5) Der Vorstand hat bis zum Ablauf von sechs Monaten nach Ende eines jeden Geschäftsjahres einen Jahresabschluss und einen Bericht über die Erfüllung des Stiftungszwecks zu erstellen.
- (6) Der Vorstand gibt sich eine Geschäftsordnung. Dabei kann er einzelnen Vorstandsmitgliedern besondere Geschäftsbereiche zuweisen.
- (7) Eine Haftung des Vorstands und seiner Erfüllungsgehilfen bei einfacher Fahrlässigkeit ist ausgeschlossen.

§ 10 Vertretungsbefugnis des Vorstands

- (1) Der Intendant/die Intendantin und der/die kaufmännische Leiter/in vertreten die Stiftung gerichtlich und außergerichtlich jeweils alleine. Ansonsten kann die Stiftung immer nur durch zwei seiner Vorstandsmitglieder gemeinsam vertreten werden. Im Innenverhältnis bedarf eine Maßnahme des Vorstands der vorherigen Zustimmung des Verwaltungsrates, wenn die Maßnahme zu einer wesentlichen Überschreitung des Wirtschaftsplans führen wird.
- (2) Der Intendant/die Intendantin und der/die kaufmännische Leiter/in können für bestimmte Angelegenheiten allgemein oder im Einzelfall Mitarbeiter zur Vertretung der Stiftung bevollmächtigen. Die Bevollmächtigung hat ausschließlich schriftlich zu erfolgen.

§ 11 Zusammensetzung des Stiftungsrats

- (1) Der Stiftungsrat besteht aus bis zu 25 stimmberechtigten ständigen Mitgliedern und aus gewählten Mitgliedern. Jedes ständige Mitglied hat das Recht, einen Vertreter in den Stiftungsrat zu entsenden, der dem/der Stiftungsratsvorsitzenden anzuzeigen ist.
- (2) Ständige Mitglieder des Stiftungsrats sind:
 - a.) das Land Baden-Württemberg,
 - b.) die Stadt Burladingen,
 - c.) der Zollernalbkreis,
 - d.) der Landkreis Reutlingen,
 - e.) der Landkreis Tübingen,
 - f.) der Förderverein Theater Lindenhof,
 - g.) der Theaterbetriebsrat bzw. der von den Stiftungsmitarbeiterinnen und –mitarbeitern

bestimmte Sprecher,

h.) die Gründungsstifter, soweit diese keine andere Organfunktion innerhalb der Stiftung ausüben.

- (3) Die übrigen Mitglieder, die nicht zugleich Mitglieder des Vorstands der Stiftung sein dürfen, werden vom Stiftungsrat jeweils für fünf Jahre zugewählt. Wiederwahl ist zulässig. Die ersten gewählten Stiftungsratsmitglieder werden durch die Stifter bestellt und bestimmt.
- (4) Scheidet aus dem Kreis der ständigen Stiftungsratsmitglieder eine entsandte Person aus, so ist unverzüglich eine Ersatzperson zu entsenden.
- (5) Scheidet aus dem Kreis der übrigen Stiftungsratsmitglieder eine Person aus, so ergänzt sich der Stiftungsrat durch Zuwahl. Bis zur Ergänzung verringert sich die Anzahl der Mitglieder des Stiftungsrates um die Anzahl der ausgeschiedenen Personen.
- (6) Der Stiftungsrat wählt aus seiner Mitte eine/n Vorsitzende/n und eine/n Stellvertretende/n Vorsitzende/n, und zwar für eine Amtszeit von fünf Jahren. Wiederwahl ist zulässig. Der/die Vorsitzende und der/die Stellvertretende Vorsitzende bleiben auch nach Ablauf ihrer Amtszeit bis zur Neubesetzung ihrer Positionen im Amt.
- (7) Die Mitglieder des Stiftungsrates sind unentgeltlich für die Stiftung tätig. Ihnen können jedoch ihre notwendigen Auslagen, die durch ihre Tätigkeit für die Stiftung entstanden sind, ersetzt werden.
- (8) Der Stiftungsrat gibt sich mit einer Mehrheit von 2/3 der Stimmen seiner Mitglieder eine Geschäftsordnung. Die Geschäftsordnung kann auch die Vertretung des Stiftungsrates gegenüber dem Vorstand regeln.

§ 12 Aufgaben des Stiftungsrats

- (1) Der Stiftungsrat hat die Geschäftsführung des Vorstands zu überwachen und insbesondere darauf zu achten, dass der Vorstand für die dauernde und nachhaltige Erfüllung des Stiftungszwecks sorgt. Der Vorstand ist an die Beschlüsse des Stiftungsrats gebunden.
- (2) Der Stiftungsrat ist ferner zuständig für
 - a) die Wahl und Bestellung der Mitglieder des Vorstands,
 - b) die Entlastung des Vorstands,
 - c) den Abschluss der Anstellungs- bzw. Dienstverträge mit der Intendanz und der kaufmännischen Leitung,
 - d) die Genehmigung des Wirtschaftsplans,
 - e) die Kontrolle der Haushalts- und Wirtschaftsführung,
 - f) die Feststellung des Jahresabschlusses und die Verwendung der Stiftungserträge,

- g) die Zustimmung zur Aufnahme von Darlehen über 20.000,00 Euro,
 - h) die Wahl und Beauftragung des Abschlussprüfers,
 - i) Erlass einer Zuständigkeit- und Geschäftsordnung für den Verwaltungsrat.
- (3) Für die vorgenannten Aufgaben soll der Stiftungsrat die Funktion eines unabhängigen Kontrollorgans i.S. des § 8 Abs. 2 StiftG-BW wahrnehmen und die Stiftungsverwaltung überwachen.
 - (4) Soweit die Stelle der Intendanz oder der kaufmännischen Leitung neu zu besetzen ist, schreibt der Verwaltungsrat diese Positionen aus. Er hat nach Empfehlung durch den Vorstand dem Stiftungsrat mindestens zwei geeignete Kandidaten/innen vorzustellen. Bei der Besetzung der Intendanz hat der Stiftungsrat zu prüfen, ob der Bewerber bzw. die Bewerberin geeignet ist, die Vorgaben nach § 2 Abs. 2 stets zu erfüllen. Der Anstellungsvertrag des Intendanten bzw. der Intendantin ist auf höchstens fünf Jahre zu befristen. Eine Verlängerung des Vertrags ist möglich. Beim Abschluss der Verträge wird die Stiftung durch den/die Stiftungsratsvorsitzende/n vertreten.
 - (5) Der Stiftungsrat ist ermächtigt, dem Vorstand insgesamt oder einzelnen seiner Mitglieder generell oder im Einzelfall Befreiung von den Beschränkungen des § 181 BGB zu erteilen bzw. die Erteilung zu widerrufen.
 - (6) Der Stiftungsrat kann zur Ehrung von Zustiftern einen sog. Stiftertag einrichten. Er legt die Bedingungen für Erlangung einer Zugehörigkeit im Stiftertag fest.
 - (7) Weitere Rechte des Stiftungsrates nach anderen Bestimmungen dieser Satzung bleiben unberührt.

§ 13 Einberufung, Beschlussfähigkeit und Beschlussfassung des Stiftungsrates

- (1) Der Stiftungsrat wird von seinem/seiner Vorsitzenden – bei seiner/ihrer Verhinderung von seinem/seiner Stellvertretenden Vorsitzenden – schriftlich unter Bezeichnung der einzelnen Punkte der Tagesordnung und des Sitzungsortes mindestens einmal im Kalenderjahr einberufen. Die Ladungsfrist beträgt mindestens zwei Wochen. Der Stiftungsrat ist auch einzuberufen, wenn zwei Mitglieder des Stiftungsrates oder der Vorstand dieses verlangen; das Verlangen hat den Beratungspunkt anzugeben. In dringenden Fällen kann eine andere Form der Einberufung und eine kürzere Frist gewählt werden. Auf die abgekürzte Ladungsfrist ist in diesem Falle hinzuweisen.
- (2) Der Vorstand nimmt an den Stiftungsratssitzungen beratend teil.
- (3) Der Stiftungsrat ist beschlussfähig, wenn mehr als die Hälfte seiner Mitglieder anwesend sind.
- (4) Der Stiftungsrat beschließt – soweit in dieser Satzung nichts anderes bestimmt ist – mit der

Mehrheit seiner anwesenden Mitglieder. Die Erteilung einer schriftlichen Stimmrechtsvollmacht an ein anderes Stiftungsratsmitglied ist zulässig. Bei Stimmgleichheit entscheidet die Stimme des Vorsitzenden.

- (5) Der Stiftungsrat kann einen Beschluss auch schriftlich fassen, wenn alle Mitglieder dieser Form der Beschlussfassung schriftlich ihre Zustimmung erteilt haben (Umlaufverfahren).
- (6) Über die in den Sitzungen des Stiftungsrates gefassten Beschlüsse ist eine Niederschrift zu fertigen. Sie ist von dem/der Vorsitzenden bzw. seinem/seiner Stellvertreter/in sowie einem weiteren Mitglied zu unterschreiben. Alle Beschlüsse des Stiftungsrates sind zu sammeln und während des Bestehens der Stiftung aufzubewahren.

§ 14 Verwaltungsrat

- (1) Der Stiftungsrat bildet aus dem Kreis seiner Mitglieder einen ständigen Verwaltungsrat mit mindestens drei Mitgliedern, der unter Leitung des/der Stiftungsratsvorsitzenden mindestens einmal im Jahresquartal tagt.
- (2) Der Verwaltungsrat ist zuständig für:
 - a.) Regelmäßige Beratungen mit dem Vorstand,
 - b.) Beschlussfassung über zwingende und wesentliche außerplanmäßige Anschaffungen und Ausgaben,
 - c.) Entscheidung, wenn zwischen Intendant/in und dem/der kaufmännischen Leiter/in aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen in Einzelfragen keine Einigkeit erzielt werden kann,
 - d.) Festlegung von zusätzlichen Arten von Geschäften oder Maßnahmen des Vorstands, die der vorherigen Zustimmung des Verwaltungsrates bedürfen,
 - e.) Sämtliche weiteren Aufgaben, die der Stiftungsrat in einer gesonderten Zuständigkeits- und Geschäftsordnung für den Verwaltungsrat festlegt.

§ 15 Zusammensetzung und Funktion des künstlerischen Beirats

- (1) Der künstlerische Beirat besteht aus bis zu zehn Mitgliedern. Sie müssen natürliche Personen sein. Seine Mitglieder werden jeweils für fünf Jahre gewählt. Wiederwahl ist möglich. Bei Ausscheiden eines Mitglieds findet eine Zuwahl durch die verbleibenden Mitglieder statt (Kooptation). Im Beirat soll mindestens ein Vertreter aus dem Kreis der nicht zum ständigen Ensemble gehörenden, aber wiederholt in Produktionen eingebundenen Künstler/innen vertreten sein. Sollte sich der Beirat nicht bzw. nicht mehr konstituieren, steht dem Stiftungsrat ein Initiativrecht zu.

- (2) Der erste künstlerische Beirat wird durch die Stifter bestellt. Der Beirat wählt aus seiner Mitte eine/n Vorsitzende/n und eine/n Stellvertreter/in.
- (3) Der künstlerische Beirat berät den Vorstand im Bereich der personellen und inhaltlichen Gestaltung des Spielplans und diskutiert mit ihm den Einklang des Spielplans mit den Grundsätzen aus § 2 Abs. 2.
- (4) Der Beirat bereitet in eigenen Sitzungen eine im Zeitraum Mai bis Juli des laufenden Jahres stattfindende und von dem/der Beiratsvorsitzenden einzuberufende Sitzung vor, an welcher die Intendanz und die weiteren künstlerisch Verantwortlichen des Theaters teilnehmen. Diese Sitzung hat folgende Tagesordnungspunkte:
 - a.) Nachbetrachtung der vergangenen Spielzeit,
 - b.) Bewertung der laufenden Spielzeit,
 - c.) Vorschau des/der Intendanten/in auf die geplante Spielzeit und Beratung darüber,
 - d.) Vorschläge des Beirats für die zu planende Spielzeit.
- (5) Der/die Intendantin hat jährlich in seinem/ihrem Tätigkeitsbericht gegenüber dem Stiftungsrat auf die Zusammenarbeit mit dem künstlerischen Beirat einzugehen.

IV. Schlussvorschriften

§ 16 Satzungsänderungen, Zweckänderungen, Auflösung

- (1) Satzungsänderungen, die den Stiftungszweck nicht berühren, sind zulässig, wenn sie im Interesse der nachhaltigen Erfüllung des Stiftungszwecks nach dem Stifterwillen erforderlich sind. Sie bedürfen eines mit einer Mehrheit von 2 / 3 aller Mitglieder gefassten Beschlusses des Vorstands und des Stiftungsrates. Das Erfordernis staatlicher Genehmigung bleibt unberührt.
- (2) Änderungen des Zwecks, die Auflösung der Stiftung oder die Zusammen- oder Zulegung der Stiftung mit oder zu einer anderen Stiftung sind nur zulässig, wenn die Erfüllung des Stiftungszwecks unmöglich geworden oder angesichts wesentlicher Veränderungen der Verhältnisse nicht mehr sinnvoll ist. Sie bedürfen der Zustimmung von $\frac{3}{4}$ der Mitglieder des Vorstands und des Stiftungsrates. Das Erfordernis staatlicher Genehmigung bleibt unberührt.

§ 17 Vermögensanfall

Bei Auflösung oder Aufhebung der Körperschaft oder bei Wegfall steuerbegünstigter Zwecke fällt das Vermögen der Körperschaft an eine juristische Person des öffentlichen Rechts oder an eine andere steuerbegünstigte Körperschaft zwecks Verwendung für die in § 2 Abs. 1 genannten Zwecke.

§ 18 Stiftungsaufsicht

- (1) Die Stiftung untersteht der Stiftungsaufsicht nach Maßgabe des Stiftungsgesetzes von Baden-Württemberg.
- (2) Stiftungsaufsichtsbehörde ist das Regierungspräsidium in Tübingen.
- (3) Die Stiftungsaufsichtsbehörde ist auf Wunsch jederzeit über die Angelegenheiten der Stiftung zu unterrichten. Mitteilungen über Änderungen in der Zusammensetzung des Vorstands sowie Haushaltsplan, Jahresrechnung und Tätigkeitsbericht sind **unaufgefordert vorzulegen**.
- (4) Rechtsgeschäfte der Stiftung mit Mitgliedern des Vorstands (etwa die Erteilung von Mandaten oder der Abschluss von Beratungsverträgen) und sonstige in § 13 StiftG-BW genannten Rechtshandlungen sind der Stiftungsbehörde im Voraus anzuzeigen. Solche anzeigepflichtigen Maßnahmen dürfen erst durchgeführt werden, wenn die Stiftungsbehörde ihre Rechtmäßigkeit bestätigt oder die Maßnahme nicht innerhalb von zwei Wochen beanstandet hat.

§ 19 Inkrafttreten

Die Stiftung tritt am Tage ihrer Anerkennung in Kraft.

Melchingen, den ____ . ____ . 2010

VOELKER/Kra/Rel17 – 08.12.2010

Ende des Dokuments