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Authors	Schewe, Manfred;Even, Susanne
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Foreword

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to announce that the second edition of SCENARIO continues to include contributions to the professional discourse around theatre and drama pedagogy from different countries and cultures, this time from Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, and Canada.

This edition starts off with comprehensive descriptions of and commentaries on two teaching and learning projects, both of which culminated in a theatre performance. The authors convincingly demonstrate how students can engage with literary texts from past centuries through the process of preparing them for the stage.

Mercedes Ariza, Maria Giovanna Biscu und Maria Isabel Fernandez García (Università di Bologna at Forlí) discuss their three-year research project (2005-2008) *Language mediator training and intercultural competence acquisition: theatre in the teaching of foreign languages, translation and interpreting*. Their main focus is the analysis, adaptation and staging of *El Nuevo Mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*, a play by the Spanish dramatist Lope de Vegas (1562-1635), written around 1600. From the perspective of translation theory, it is of special interest how beginning classes of Spanish can already lay the foundations for a deeper understanding of foreign culture.

Alexandra Zimmermann (Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo) takes her students on a journey into the 19th century. During the E.T.A. Hoffmann festival at her university, commemorating the German playwright, she organizes and stages a special performance that introduces Hoffmann's person and work to a broader audience. A scenic collage skillfully integrates literary, cultural and musicological studies, and derives its particular energy from the conscious use of productive tension between the art forms theatre and opera. Keeping in mind the debate about falling student numbers for many foreign languages worldwide, it is noteworthy that the author argues for product-oriented teaching and thus effectively advertises the study of foreign languages, literatures, and cultures.

With his article *Playback Theatre – A Method for Intercultural Dialogue*, Daniel Feldhendler (Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität Frankfurt) presents an overview of the various possible applications of playback theatre. He describes the enormous potential of this form of theatre to purposefully foster intercultural dialogue. For SCENARIO readers the applications of playback theatre in foreign language instruction and teacher training at universities might be of special interest, particularly pertaining to specific transcultural training programs. We expect Feldhendler will expand upon this theoretical

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sketch in the next SCENARIO edition with detailed examples from practical work with playback theatre.

The three following contributions feature historical and contemporary approaches to German theatre from diverse perspectives.

First, Stefan Hajduk (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick) provides an overview over the historical development and systemic structure of German theatre since the Baroque era. A critical reflection of the particular situtation of present-day cultural theatre leads over to an urgent plea for theatre and its central role for German society now and in the future.

In their article *No Laughing Matter? – A Short History of German Comedy*, Chris Ritchie (Southampton Solent University) und James Harris (Berlin) outline the development of German comedy since the Renaissance era, with specific focus on the 20th century. The intercultural (British-German) perspective, exemplified through the well-known sketch *Dinner for One* as well as selected *Monty Python* episodes, might be of particular interest for SCENARIO readers.

The second edition of SCENARIO is rounded off by an interview that was conducted by Bärbel Jogschies (Maxim Gorki Theater, Berlin) and Manfred Schewe (University College Cork) with the director at the Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin, Armin Petras. SCENARIO readers thus gain an insight into theoretical and practical considerations that are the basis of the creative endeavours of a theatre that currently enjoys high popularity in Germany. In line with this journal, a specific focus lies on aspects of theatre pedagogy.

A few announcements about SCENARIO itself:

This edition features a new rubric, *Texts around Theatre*, in which we would like to present various perspectives on theatre – historical and contemporary, intercultural and culture-specific, unexpectedly weird, unusually suspenseful, disturbedly gripping, fascinatingly enigmatic etc. We begin with an excerpt from Christoph Ransmayr's *A Stage by the Sea*. The contemporary Austrian author takes us to a place on the South Irish coast where, amidst beautiful nature, there is music and dance under the sky, and staging is accomplished with the simplest means. There, active participation in performing arts is experienced as a natural and integral component of everyday existence; it lightens personal loads and supports the coastal inhabitants' courage to face life.

We would like to encourage our readers to point out short texts and/or excerpts from longer (literary) texts that similarly focus on theatre in special ways. In the long run, we are thinking of publishing a collection of the manifold perspectives around theatre in a book.

We would like to thank Maria Sinnecker for her work on our stylesheet and her support with the final layout. Peter Flynn, who works at the Computer Centre at University College Cork, has been indispensable in solving the various problems of online publishing as well as making sure that SCENARIO articles can now be downloaded in PDF format.

The Editors

Susanne Even / Manfred Schewe

October 25th, 2007