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GDR Bulletin

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35. Geburtstag der Akademie der Künste der DDR:

Mit einer festlichen Plenartagung am 24. März zelebrierte die Akademie der Künste der DDR den 35. Jahrestag ihrer Gründung. Die Akademie versteht sich zunächst als Fortsetzung der 1669 etablierten Preußischen Akademie der Künste, die bis nach 1918 Teil der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften war. Die neuere Akademie wurde von weltberühmten Literaten ins Leben gerufen -- darunter: Heinrich Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Arnold Zweig, Johannes R. Becher und Hanns Eisler. Aus vier Abteilungen -- Bildender Kunst, Darstellender Kunst, Literatur sowie Musik -- besteht die Akademie heutzutage. Seit 1950 veröffentlicht sie die Zeitschrift Sinn und Form und sorgt für die über siebzig Archive und Nachlässe wichtiger Künstler und Schriftsteller. Der Regisseur, Theaterkritiker, Brecht-Schüler und Leiter der "Berliner Ensemble" Manfred Wekwerth ist seit Juli 1982 ihr Präsident.

Semper Opera House in Dresden Reopened:

On February 13th, 1945, following the combined British and American bombing of Dresden which set the center of that city ablaze and left some 35,000 citizens dead, the Semper Opera House, one of Europe's finest performing arts centers, was also destroyed. Forty years later, the GDR government--after investing some seven years and \$83 million in reconstruction--reopened the Semper with a production of Carl Maria von Weber's "Der Freischütz", the last opera to be performed at the Dresden cultural center prior to its destruction. This performance of Weber's work featured Jana Smilková, Klaus König, and Theo Adam. "Der Freischütz" has as its setting the Thirty Years War of the 17th century. According to James M. Markham in The New York Times:

"The production drew strong parallels between the 17th and 20th centuries, de-emphasizing Weber's original religious impulses and discovering revolutionary, antifeudal, antiwar elements in the opera's final scenes." The first evening was attended by many dignitaries from both the SED, including its leader Erich Honecker, and the foreign diplomatic corps. The Semper was designed by the Hamburg architect Gottfried Semper in the style of the Italian Renaissance with figures from Goethe's Faust and Lessing's Nathan der Weise decorating its exterior; the construction, directed by Semper's son Manfred, was begun in 1869 and completed in 1878. Both Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss recognized the superb acoustic quality of the house, the former referring to it as "a wonder harp," the latter calling it the "El Dorado of world premieres." The GDR government takes special pride in its reconstruction efforts and the Semper in Dresden is, indeed, a showcase of the GDR's achievements in this direction.

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Herr Weiße ist 27 Jahre alt, arbeitet in einer Möbelfabrik und wohnt im Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt. Er interessiert sich für amerikanische Kultur und möchte seine englischen Sprachkenntnisse verbessern.

INTERNATIONALER SOMMERKURS, Rostock 1984

The course in Rostock was attended by 140 participants from approximately 23 different countries.

Tendencies in GDR literature, theory and criticism, and language and linguistics, within the social context of the GDR, were the main focus of the course. Introductory lectures on these topics served as a basis for further discussion in smaller working groups (Arbeitsgruppen). The groups I attended were concerned with Marxist-Leninist literary theory and contemporary literature in the GDR. I found that faculty members were very receptive to the questions and needs of the course participants and were able to communicate material and ideas in a way which made them easily accessible to students coming from very different academic and sociopolitical environments.

The discussion surrounding contemporary theory and criticism indicated an increasing interest in the GDR in reception theory, sociology of literature, and text-intrinsic interpretation, i.e. towards the consideration of all aspects of the production, distribution, and