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“Promise Me Nothing on Heroes’ Square: Marianne Hoppe’s Twentieth Century"

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On the occasion of Marianne Hoppe=s death in Siegsdorf, Bavaria on October 23, 2002, obituaries in several German newspapers recalled her as one of the great stars of the Third Reich. Most recalled her rise under the Nazis, and some inferred that she attained stardom largely for the wrong reasons. Her work with directors as chronologically disparate as Max Reinhardt and Robert Wilson was certainly a credit to her longevity on the stage, and her film work, beginning in 1930 and continuing for the next seventy years (her last film was Werner Schroeter=s The Queen, premiering in September of 2000) was a testimony to her talent=s astonishing stamina.¹ But her marriage to Hermann Goering=s favorite actor and director, Gustaf Gründgens (1899-1963), was a political cloud that hovered over her until her death. Her frank admission that she was aware of the regime=s persecution, terror, and concentration camps did little to dispel persistent misgivings about her, even as she continued to act on stage, screen and television for decades after her divorce from Gründgens in 1946. Her candor extended to discussions of the ways she and her colleagues socialized with Hitler, lending some support to arguments that she allowed herself, as did many other German actresses, to be used for the sake of career advancement. Klaus and Erika Mann described actresses who remained in the Third Reich as Apower-obsessed,@ but Annette Meyhöfer has described them rather as Avictimised by the powerful men around them.@² Marika Rökk, for example, found Hitler Ashy.@ Żarah Leander found Joseph Goebbels Ahighly intelligent@ and Hermann Goering was Anot so bad.@ Hoppe had little good to say about any of them, describing Goebbels in particular as Aa cold, strategic thinker. Everything people said about him was true: cynical, shrewd, brutal, intellectual, obsessive, hate-filled, and above all vain.@³ Hoppe realized, however, that the Nazi preoccupation with AGerman culture@ and German theatre in particular was in many instances a
case of emotional attachment to celebrity. Commentators in the postwar period often accused her of cynicism as a result, because she refused to accept the idea that performers in the Third Reich were simply, and naively, engaged in artistic endeavors far removed from the tyranny that surrounded them and from which they profited so substantially. In that regard she differed markedly from her husband Gründgens, who claimed the German actor is in the main politically uninterested. There have been very few active politically engaged actors... For actors, art has always stood in the foreground or better stated, good roles. This lack of political education the German actor shares with the German population in general. @

The general public in postwar Germany tended to prefer Gründgens' version of history. Performers prominent in the Third Reich often gained credibility and rebuilt careers on the basis of claims that they had been naïve, unpolitical, and exploited. Following the 1986 premiere of Elfriede Jellinek's comedy *Burgtheater* about Paula Wessely (1907-2000), on whom Hitler had bestowed the title *State Actress*, there was a public outcry that great artists were being subjected to ridicule for things over which they essentially had no control. *v* Such an exculpatory aura also surrounded Zarah Leander (1907-1981), arguably the biggest star in the Nazi pantheon, and certainly the highest paid. At the height of her career, the Swedish-born Leander earned about RM 800,000 per year, half of which she arranged to have paid her in Swedish currency so perhaps her naiveté did not extend to matters financial. Swedes like Leander and Austrians like Wessely were by no means the only female stage performers whom the Führer singled out for adulation. Their number included Kristina Söderbaum, who like Leander was Swedish, but far more *Nordic* looking; Marika Rökk and Käthe von Nagy were
Hungarian; Lillian Harvey was English, Olga Tschechowa was Russian, the ill-fated Lida Baarova (and Goebbels paramour) was Czech, Kirsten Heiberg was Norwegian, and both Ilse Werner and Lil Dagover were Dutch, having grown up in the Dutch East Indies. Marianne Hoppe, however, was born in Mecklenburg and had grown up in East Prussia.

There can be no denial in historical retrospect that these actresses, Marianne Hoppe included, profited from the Nazi regime=s idealization of women. Women voters, after all, had been among Hitler=s early and most enthusiastic supporters, voting in large majorities for Nazi candidates. They continued to be among his most ardent partisans as Nazi Party members long after elections no longer took place in Germany. As a result, official Nazi protocols celebrated female attractiveness and made the maternal impulse a matter of state policy. The Nazis hated anything resembling Arights for women, and Hitler himself described women=s rights as Aa depravity on a par with parliamentary democracy and jazz opera.@vi The regime=s Minister for Agriculture Walter Darre said that the desire for women=s rights were a result of Afrustration set up by malfunctioning sex glands.@vii Goebbels echoed those agronomical sentiments when he stated that Awomen have the task of being beautiful and bringing children into the world, and this is by no means as coarse and old fashioned as one might think. The female bird, for example, preens herself for her mate and hatches her eggs for him.@viii Hermann Goering was perhaps most succinct in his description of the regime=s official stance towards women: they were Aeither brood mares or work horses,@ he said.ix
The Nazi leadership recognized the necessity of training young women for the theatre. Hitler personally provided fifty scholarships for budding actresses at Munich’s newly reconstructed, and grandiloquently titled AKünstlerhaus zur Förderung des Nachwuchses (Institution for the Promotion of the Next Artistic Generation); Goering was instrumental in founding the Emmy-Goering-Stift für Bühnenveteranen (Emmy Goering Foundation for Stage Veterans, named for his actress wife, who had retired upon her marriage to him) in 1937 to assist elderly performers. The same year, Goering and his wife refurbished the the Marie Seebach House in Weimar as an institution for aging actresses. A year later, Goebbels started a foundation he named after himself, the Goebbels-Stiftung für Bühnenschaffende, or AFoundation for Theatre Artists, and promulgated legislation that provided special tax deductions and allowances to augment pension plans and medical benefits.

Marianne Hoppe was a curious beneficiary of such official attitudes. Recalling one evening when she and other actresses were invited to dinner at Berlin’s Hotel Kaiserhof in Hitler’s suite of rooms, she noticed that Hitler was shy and reserved around the women. Shy, that is, until he began to expatiate over dessert about politics. His oration lasted about an hour, after which Hoppe asked to see his bedroom. He gladly showed it to her, which she found Aspare in the extreme. A single bed with an iron frame, a lamp, and a chair. Nothing else. Doesn’t look too cozy, I said, and departed, claiming to have left the other women in the entourage to entertain their biggest fan. She nevertheless continued to receive invitations to Amovie evenings in the more formal surroundings of the Reich Chancellery. On one such evening the
bill of fare was *Der Rebell* (The Rebel) with Luis Trenker. The movie portrayed the 1809 Tyrolean revolt against the Napoleonic occupiers of German-speaking northern Italy. In one scene the rebels had set up rocks and boulders to fall on Napoleon=s soldiers as they come through a narrow pass. As the rocks began to fall, Hitler became excited. As the French soldiers were struck by boulders and killed, he began a kind of orgasmic groaning. Hitler allowed himself such unguarded moments in the presence of people whom he considered fellow artists. Goebbels told them, as he told others on numerous occasions, You live today in a great and fortunate time. You see above you a man as Führer of People and State who at the same time is your most powerful and most understanding protector. He loves artists because he is himself an artist. Under his blessed hand is today a new Renaissance age descendent upon Germany.

Hoppe had begun her acting career in 1930, but it entered an upward trajectory when she inaugurated her association with Gründgens. His homosexuality was well known in theatre circles even in the 1920s, but just as that condemnatory fact did not deter Goering from appointing Gründgens as his director of the Berlin State Theater in 1934, neither did it impede Hoppe=s marriage to him on June 20, 1936. We slept together, in case you were wondering, she once said. Her most illustrious work under Gründgens=aegis usually featured her in highly publicized premieres of new comedies or in lavish Shakespeare productions. What gives those productions, and her work in them, a degree of magnitude in the light of history is not the extent to which they found official favor but rather in how much they accorded with popular taste and how lucrative they were at the box office. Comedies by Fritz
Peter Buch, Jochen Huth, and Paul Helwig were among the most frequently performed of all contemporary plays in the Third Reich, and Hoppe's star turns in each of them reflected her appeal among people who actually had a choice in how to spend disposable income for entertainment. The Nazi dictatorship did not have the power to force ticket sales on anyone, as Goebbels ruefully noted. Nor was Nazi Germany, as Detlev Peukert has observed, a totalitarian state. The regime routinely attacked what it termed AJudaized@ or ANiggerized@ jazz, yet jazz records could be purchased anywhere in Germany and were actually produced in large quantities there.xvii It is true that the Propaganda Ministry held power to censor or ban any play on the German stage; but Goebbels could not and did not have total control over every German theatre.

Nazi propaganda, however, exaggerated its own effect. Rhetoric used subsequently to excuse and to condemn it has also exaggerated its effectiveness. Most theatre audiences, according to Hans Daiber, Acame to the theatre without expectations; they simply wanted diversion. If they were not bored while they were there, so much the better. And even if they were, Ait was a kind of sublime boredom.@xviii One thing they did not have to worry about, says Daiber, was Agetting hit over the head with theatre policy; that was not the regime=s way. For example, there was no censorship as such. AThat was too primitive. The regime was most concerned about Abalance@ in the repertoires of theatres. That meant no plays by Jews, but more plays by previously unproduced playwrights. As a result there was an average 200 new plays premiered each season. In the 1936-37 season alone, there were 257 new plays premiered.xix
There were thus a number of what might be termed in postmodernist phraseology Atransgressive@ productions in the Third Reich, and Marianne Hoppe appeared in several of them. Among the most significant of the plays in which Hoppe appeared was the premiere production was Charlotte Rissmann=s *Promise Me Nothing* It was Hoppe=s first premiere subsequent to her marriage, opening November 12, 1936. It proved be a major hit of that season in Berlin, and it continued in the repertoires of over fifty other German theatres for the next eight years. It was the only hit comedy during the Hitler years written by a woman. The Atransgressive@ nature of this play centers around the Hoppe=s character Monika, who is married to Martin. Martin Pratt is a gifted painter, but his reluctance to sell any of his paintings results in a severe impecuniousness that threatens his marriage to Monika. By the second act, Monika has decided to take action. She begins to market paintings Martin had intended to destroy, and since she offered the paintings to dealers under the name AM. Pratt,@ most assumed she was their creator. The paintings sell briskly, and the couple=s money worries seem to be at an end; but when Monika wins the State Prize for Painting, Martin discovers his wife=s subterfuge and leaves their apartment, even accusing her of infidelity. In the third and final act, however, Monika=s true identity has been revealed to the art world and authorities have withdrawn the State Prize for Painting. Meantime Martin has returned to their apartment with a painting he says is ready for the art market; he also promises Monika that he has grown up and will see to it that their living standards improve. AAll right,@ she saysCbut warns him, APromise me nothing!@
While the play’s ostensible subject was painting, *Promise Me Nothing* was really about a superficial domestic dilemma, a longtime staple of German comedy. As Monika, Hoppe attempted to counter the Astar quality of Viktor de Kowa (as Martin) by making no attempt, according to critic Max Geysenheyner, to glamorize the role. Geysenheyner’s favorite part in the play, indeed, was the moment when Hoppe landed a punch on de Kowa’s jaw that seemed to have real force behind it. Her performance in *Promise Me Nothing* allowed her to distance herself somewhat from the attributes for which she had been earlier praised; for example, in the film version of August Hinrichs’ enormously popular comedy *Trouble with Iolanthe*, one observer said that Hoppe, of all our actresses, [embodies] the purest of North German types in her racial uniqueness: blonde, candid, and Nordic, with their dry sense of humor, caustic and genuine. But the role of Monika did not mean Hoppe abandoned ethnic emphases altogether. It was directly in her professional interests to maintain an identity that accorded with the ideal of womanhood so prized in Nazi ideology. She was a radiant example of what the *Bund deutscher Mädel* (League of German Girls) had in mind when it declared in its mission statement that a girl’s beaming health reveals an inner harmony that is the fulfillment of our striving for beauty. She projected an energetic, girlish aura in much of her work in the Third Reich.

In some Shakespeare productions, however, she was also required to project a boyish quality especially when Gründgens was the director. Gründgens’ production of *Twelfth Night*
in 1937, for example, featured an all-star cast and a musical ensemble consisting of harp, oboes and celli which accompanied the action nearly throughout the play. Hoppe as Viola was so delightful that one was constantly falling in love with her, said one critic. He particularly praised her tight-fitting trousers as Orsino=s page Cesario, looking as if she had stepped out of a portrait by Watteau. When she reappeared in a pale yellow silk dress at the play=s conclusion, she approached Aryan apotheosis, as spectators became keenly aware of her stunning blue eyes and blonde hair. In a production of The Taming of Shrew, Hoppe played Katherine in a Karl-Heinz Stroux production that departed substantially from traditional expectations of the play. Designer Traugott Müller created a main tent over the entire performance area, with actors entering through three upstage flaps onto a bare stage. Costumes were colorful and distinctive, somewhere between Baroque and Biedermeier, according to one critic. Gustav Knuth as Petruchio wore a wide-brimmed sombrero and carried a whip. The Nazi Party organ Völkischer Beobachter noted the rather unusual setting, costumes, entrances signaled by trumpeter clowns, and Petruchio=s servant Grumio (Albert Florath) Acostumed like Sancho Panza, but it did not fault the production for what it termed Aan obvious lack of Germanness. Hoppe matched Knuth and Florath in their bouncing, acrobatic, whip-cracking movements, said Paul Fechter. She at times Aressembled a panther with claws extended. But as the play proceeded she seemed gradually to retract her claws and lose her instinct for self-preservation. By the time Petruchio announced, AKate, you are my wife! she had been reduced merely to Aassuming belligerent poses, making abundant facial grimaces, and in comparison to the others seemed essentially stationary.
In 1939 Gründgens created a production for Hoppe of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing *Minna von Barnhelm*. The play had been a standard in the repertoires of German theatres for approximately 170 previous seasons, and new productions of it at the Berlin State Theater were virtually obligatory. *Minna von Barnhelm* was the most frequently produced comedy during the Third Reich, and Nazi aesthetic doctrine sought to occupy and claim it as Germanic cultural property—claims which the playwright himself would have rejected. Lessing finished *Minna von Barnhelm* in 1763 at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, but the war merely provided a context for the action, since Lessing wanted in the comedy to stress the ideal of German unity, signified in the historically adversarial relationship between the German kingdoms of Prussia and Saxony. They are metaphorically personified in the play by the Saxon Countess Minna and the Prussian military officer Major von Tellheim. Nazi ideology found much to like in this comedy nevertheless, especially its oblique references to Frederick the Great, whose policies accorded with Hitler's notion of the *Führerprinzip*, or *leadership* principle. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had asserted that the new Germany must be an authoritarian state, much as Prussia had been under Frederick in the eighteenth century.

In 1934 Gründgens had staged a production of *Minna* in Goering's honor with another well known actress. His reputation for dashing, highly energized performances as an actor was widely established, and he brought those qualities to productions he directed. His expertise in 1934 extended to political savviness, manifested not only in his dedication of the production to Goering but also in his casting of Goering's fiancée, Emmy Sonnemann (1893-1973), in the title role.
role. She was too old in 1934 to play the part of Lessing’s youthful and impulsive countess, but Sonnemann remained in the production until her Afarewell performance on the eve of her marriage to Goering on April 10, 1935. Emmy Sonnemann was not in the traditional AMinna mold to which audiences were accustomed. Agnes Sorma (1865-1927), the AGerman Sarah Bernhardt, had created that mold, playing Minna as a young woman Abrimming over with sensitivity with an air of Acockiness and winsome frolic. Most actresses since Sorma had played Minna according to the Sorma precedent. Emmy Sonnemann, however, was forty years old and weighed about 170 pounds in 1934. She could not, or would not, fit the Minna mold. Instead she played Minna with distinctive Alady-like attributes in a quiet Acultivated soberness and an almost too reserved carriage. Her costume, a white starched dress with a wide billowed skirt in the provincial style of the mid-eighteenth century, emphasized constrained, delicate qualities. Critics were predictably impressed, and the production was instrumental in the commencement of a series of Prussian-Germanic costume dramas which built to a peak in 1938, exalting the Prussian-Germanic military past. By the time Gründgens re-staged Minna von Barnhelm with Hoppe, he was using an actress similar to Sorma but was taking a dangerous risk. Hoppe would doubtless be compared to Sonnemann; if the public favored Hoppe, Gründgens could arouse the ire of his boss. If they favored Sonnemann, he could stand accused of casting his wife for the sake of his career.

Gründgens staged the play in the Studio Theater of the State Theater complex in an effort to deflect direct comparisons, but then seemed to invite them by casting Paul Hartmann as Tellheim, Minna’s love interest. Hartman was the same actor who had played opposite Emmy
Sonnemann in 1934, so Gründgens was in effect playing both political ends against the aesthetic middle with such machinations. As it turned out, Hoppe was the direct beneficiary. He realized that no one dared criticize Goering’s wife in the role; yet he also understood that any negative appraisal of Hoppe would reflect on Goering as well, since Goering had ceremoniously named Gründgens his privy counselor. After the *Minna* opening, Hoppe was hailed as Sonnemann’s successor as role model for Third Reich womanhood. She had won over Tellheim with the weapons of charm and reason, said Franz Köppen, matching him step by step in the march out of self-absorption and into action by admitting his love for her. Max Geisenheyner corroborated Köppen’s view, adding winsomeness, youth, warmth, and cheerfulness to her arsenal, concluding with praise for Hoppe’s ability to play a wide variety of different parts in both classics and contemporary pieces of the German repertoire.

Similar triumphs followed, but wartime exigencies had an understandably deleterious effect on theatre performances in Berlin. As bombing raids on the city intensified after 1943, performances were often interrupted by air-raid alerts; audiences and performers then proceeded to well-marked shelters, and performances resumed when the bombing raid was over. Sometimes performances were simply terminated and audiences stumbled their various ways back home in the dark. After 1942, the Berlin State Theater did only three or four performances per week, and then only in the afternoons. Goebbels ordered all theatres in the Reich closed after August 1, 1944. During this period Hoppe did several films, including two based on novels by Theodor Fontane. Her performance of the title role in *Effi Briest* had the most impact on
audiences, and especially on the playwright Rolf Hochhuth, who saw the movie as a child. In 1996 he dedicated his one-woman play *Effi=s Night* to her. The character of Effi Briest had a lasting effect on Hoppe as well, as she later claimed it had been her favorite film part. A

When I look at myself in that movie, I think, >What a beautiful girl I was!@xxxiv

The Soviet Red Army arrived in Berlin in April of 1945, and soon thereafter victorious military authorities arrested Gründgens. While her husband was in prison, Hoppe became pregnant by the Englishman Ralph Izzard, who was a journalist for a London newspaper at the time. Her pregnancy was difficult, due to physical deprivations everyone in Berlin was suffering, but also because she knew the pregnancy meant an end to her marriage with Gründgens. During her pregnancy she received medical and psychological care from nuns, as a result of which she converted to Roman Catholicism. In July of 1946 Hoppe gave birth to a son whom she named Benedikt, though shortly afterwards she experienced a complete physical and emotional breakdown.@xxxv She later credited her midwife, Alina Scherzer, with saving the child=s life, because she left him in her charge while she departed for a clinic in Wiesbaden and remained there for the next year. In the fall of 1947 she made her first postwar stage appearance in a Düsseldorf production of Sartre=s *The Flies*. In the ensuing spring she made a movie called *Das verlorene Gesicht* (The Lost Face) with Gustav Fröhlich, Hermine Körner, and other colleagues from the State Theater days; in the film she played the leading female role, a woman who suffered from severe emotional and psychological trauma. Playing women with such difficulties became one of her specialities in the late 1940s and through the 1950s; her Blanche Dubois in Berlin=s first German-language productions of Williams=  *A Streetcar Named Desire*
is a good example. The production in which she played Blanche took place at the Schlosspark Theater in Berlin, and she reprised the role several times in numerous German theatres through the 1950s.

Reaction to *Streetcar* among German critics was usually mixed. Leftists critics condemned it as an exercise in "hardcore realism" that was an insult to human dignity. Such fare was common in American theatres, said one critic in a Communist Party newspaper, because such psychological studies embrace destructive behavior in place of a healthy feeling for life. The more conservative, bourgeois-oriented critics were not much kinder: The play offered audiences a mudbath, without offering any possibility of washing off the mud to see what might lie underneath the characters. Liberal critics were perhaps the most understanding, saying the play was a kind of Americanized Strindberg, sent back to the Old World for further consideration. Regardless of critical disfavor, audiences liked the play and attended it in large numbers, especially when Hoppe played Blanche. The plays of Tennessee Williams were popular fare throughout Germany in the 1950s, and Hoppe’s 1959 performance as film diva Alexandra del Lago in *Sweet Bird of Youth* was as popular as *Streetcar* had been nine years earlier.

Hoppe did not always play neurotics in American plays. In Clifford Odets’ *The Country Girl*, she played Georgie Elgin, the supportive and inwardly strong wife of a drunken, irresponsible actor (played by Ernst Deutsch in the Berlin production directed, as was *Streetcar*
by Boleslaw Barlog). In Neil’s *A Touch of the Poet* she played Deborah Harford and in Albee’s *A Delicate Balance* she played Agnes. Her popularity with audiences helped to broaden the popularity of American plays after World War II in general. In late 1962 she played Gertrude in *Hamlet*, with Maximilian Schell in the title role. The director was Gustaf Gründgens, with whom Hoppe had reconciled. The *Hamlet* production was the last one Gründgens directed, for he died early the following spring in a Manila hotel during a world tour.

Hoppe’s repertoire, meanwhile, expanded during the 1960s and 1970s to roles in police drama on German television, usually playing grandmothers or eccentric neighbors. She received the Federal Distinguished Service Cross in 1976, Germany’s highest civilian honor. At the time, many observers noted that she had never had to undergo Adenazification, nor had her relationship with the Nazi hierarchy ever tarnished her reputation among the general public. In the 1970s and 1980s she worked extensively in new plays by younger authors, among them Edward Bond, Tankred Dorst, Heiner Müller, and most particularly Thomas Bernhard. She appeared in three of Bernhard’s world premieres, including *Jagdgesellschaft* (The Hunting Party) and the much acclaimed *Heldenplatz* (Heroes’ Square), usually under the direction of Claus Peymann.

When she turned eighty one, the American director-designer-impresario Robert Wilson asked her to play the title role in his Frankfurt production of Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. When Bob Wilson first contacted me about doing it, she said, I thought the idea absurd. The production premiered on May 26, 1990 to generally unfavorable reviews One Frankfurt critic
called her Ath the Queen Mother of the Night, perhaps her performance was one of the most
Aunsentimental he had ever seen. She gave Wilson Aexactly the the Lear he wanted, he said, Amechanical, formulaic, and choreographed. Hoppe herself claimed to be delighted
with the work she and Wilson had done. AI wasn=t acting, she said. AIIt was like my early
days. I never had the feeling of putting forth any effort at all. In the 1990s, she began her
collaboration with director Peymann when he was named director of the Berliner Ensemble in
the newly reunified city of Berlin. Her goal there, she said, was to help Peymann continue
attempts to develop an identity separate and distanced from the company=s founder, Bertolt
Brecht. Her film work continued in the 1990s as well, including the aforementioned Die
Königin directed by Werner Schroeter. At the very end of her life, as she entered a nursing home
in Berlin, she admitted that having remained in Germany during the Nazi period Awas probably a
mistake. At the same, she said, put those twelve dark years into the perspective of a ninety-
three year lifetime and a seven-decade-long career. Looking at the highs and lows, the peaks
and the valleys, it was exciting and beautiful. That description could most appropriately
apply to Marianne Hoppe herself.

Endnotes
One obituary referred to her as APrussian Eleanora Duse, but in terms of lifetime service, Hoppe=’s longevity has perhaps its closest analogue with Lillian Gish (1893-1993), whose theatre career began in 1902 and whose film work continued until 1987 in *The Whales of August*, directed by Lindsay Anderson.


xi. Nazi electoral campaign platforms had frequently asserted that German actresses had for too long been at the mercy of Jewish directors. The way to fame or to a good role led through the Jew=’s bed, Goebbels once stated. See Alfred Berndt, *Gebt mir vier jahre Zeit!* Munich: Eher, 1937), 191. Erich Ebermeyer, however, in his *Gefährtin des Teufels* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1952) 268, noted that while Goebbels had stated in a thousand speeches, an actress, in order to have a career in Germany, had to go to bed with film Jews, he became the greatest film Jew of them all by virtue of his numerous attempts to seduce actresses.


xiii. Kohse 128.

xiv. Joseph Wulf, *Theatre und Film im Dritten Reich* (Gutersloh: Mohn, 1964) 49.

xv. Male homosexuality had been criminalized under Paragraph 175 of the German penal code, enacted during the Wilhelminian era. Female homosexuality remained uncriminalized because the law stipulated as illegal those activities which resembled sexual intercourse. One of the major problems that Nazis confronted when dealing with homosexuality was the well-known homosexuality of its Storm Trooper chief and Hitler=’s close confidante Ernst Röhm. After Hitler personally ordered Röhm=’s murder on July 2, 1934, Nazi policy changed dramatically. On November 1 of that year a special unit of the Berlin Gestapo was created to begin the systematic investigation of prosecution of homosexual offenses. In 1935, the Nuremberg Racial Laws provided a revision of Paragraph 175. It now encompassed any aspect of male-to-male sexual contact. Proof of such contact in court also became easier; witnesses testifying to the purely optical arousing function@ became permissible in court. On October 10, 1936, a secret Reich Central Office for Combating Homosexuality and Abortion was created. By Heinrich Himmler had made homosexuality a capital offense in all cases falling within the purview of his SS and the police.
xxvii. Max Geysenheyner, ABerliner Theater: Uraufführung im Kleinen Haus des Staatstheater, @ Frankfurter Zeitung, November 24, 1936, n. pag.

xxvi. Paul Fechter, ADer Widerspenstigen Zähmung im Staatstheater, @ Das Reich, October 1942, 9.

xxv. Bernhard Eck, AEin komödiantisches Spiel, @ Völkischer Beobachter October 1942, 5.

xxiv. Felix Dargel, AManege frei für . . . @ Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, October 16, 1942, 16.

xxiii. Bruno E. Werner, AGründgens inszeniert: Was ihr wollt, @ Berliner 12-Uhr Blatt, June 10, 1937, 35.


xxi. F. O., Rev. of Krach um Iolanthe film, Berliner Börsen-Zeitung, 20 September 1934, n. pag.

xx. Max Geysenheyner, ABerliner Theater: Uraufführung im Kleinen Haus des Staatstheater, @ Frankfurter Zeitung, November 24, 1936, n. pag.

xix. Daiber 134.

xviii. Daiber 129.


xvi. Kohse 100.

xl. A Eine Jahrhundert-Schauspielerin - Marianne Hoppe ist tot, @ Hamburger Morgenpost, October 25, 2002, 3.

xli. A Lebende Legende Marianne Hoppe is tot, @ Deutsche Presse-Agentur, October 25, 2002, n. pag.