

Superfluities Redux

On culture and theatre, by George Hunka

Sunday, 25 November 2007

Openings

Christmas will arrive early for [Bertolt Brecht](#) enthusiasts this year; perhaps with the Disneyfied post-capitalist labor relations problems uptown, his time has come again.

The Elephant Brigade is presenting a new production of Brecht's 1926 *Man Is Man* at HERE Arts Center, 145 6th Avenue, starting on Thursday, 6 December. Paul Binnerts directs, with a cast almost entirely drawn from Tisch/NYU, where the production originally opened this past spring. According to the [HERE Web site](#), "*Man Is Man* is played as 'real-time' theater, with the actors always present on the stage as themselves, staging themselves in the roles and scenes they play. They tell the story of the play by employing theatrical devices they handle themselves: small objects, miniature set pieces, exposed on tables, which they manipulate and film with a video camera." The production runs through 22 December; more information at the [Elephant Brigade's Web site](#).



About a week later, on 13 December, [David Gordon](#) will present *Uncivil Wars*, a further adaptation of Brecht's *Measure for Measure* adaptation *The Roundheads and the Pointheads* (1932/34), at [The Kitchen](#). The production features the Michael Feingold translation and the original songs by Hanns Eisler; the cast includes the inimitable Estelle Parsons. Says the Kitchen Web site: "*Uncivil Wars* is a new dance-theater work developed with material borrowed from Brecht's treatises on playwriting and from his play *The Roundheads and the Pointheads*, as well as Eisler's thoughts on composing for the theater. Gordon explores implications of readdressing historical works in the context of our present moment and considers racial, religious, linguistic and geographical divisions resulting in war." An inviting idea and revisioning of Brecht, indeed. The production (which will not be open for review) runs through 22 December. Tickets now available through [TicketWeb](#).

If you find it a little cold this December, though, you needn't step out into the winter night to get your Brecht fix; the PBS series *Great Performances* will broadcast the Los Angeles Opera production of the Brecht/Kurt Weill opera of 1927/29, [Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny](#), on 10 December (but, as always with PBS shows, check your local listings). Patti LuPone stars; John Doyle, who recently staged the Broadway revival of *Sweeney Todd*, directs. A rare treat.

Looking for something to do tomorrow (that is, Monday) night, 26 November? You might head up to [Paragraph](#) at 6.30pm, where Chris Shinn will be [speaking](#) at the PEN American Center's Writers' Roundtable (admission is free; the event is open to the public). After that, head down to Joe's Pub at the Public Theater, where Annie Dorsen and friends host the launch party for the Foundry Theatre's *Democracy in America* spring production at PS122. The doors there open at 9.30. Andy Horwitz has the [full run-down](#) at [Culturebot](#).



A Theatre Surrounds a City
Vienna's Burgtheater, via a real time Web cam. Full size image is [here](#).

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