

In conversation 2

Presenting English language work in Mainland Europe

Dr Manfred Bielharz & Beate Kronsbiel, 2010 New Plays from Europe Theaterbiennale, Wiesbaden, Germany and **Jukka-Pekka Pajunen** from the Tampere Festival, Finland in conversation with **Gina Moxley**, playwright & actor.

Siobhan Bourke (Co-Director, Irish Theatre Institute): Good morning. Delighted that so many of you could stay for the second session. In the Irish Theatre Institute this is a topic we talk about a lot: presenting English language work in mainland Europe. We've got two strands of activity. One is of course having as many European presenters come and see work here, and we're also working with Ireland Literature Exchange on plans to translate more of our plays into mainland European languages.

I'm thrilled and delighted that Gina Moxley agreed to chair the session this morning. We're sitting on the set for Gina's show *The Crumb Trail*. As you know, it's been a big hit in the festival and garnered lots of praise abroad. All of you should go and see it.

Our other guests this morning are, from the Tampere Festival we have Jukka-Pekka Pajunen, and from the Wiesbaden Festival we have Beate Kronsbiel and Manfred Bielharz.

I'll hand it over to Gina.

Gina Moxley: Thanks Siobhan. I feel like the cross English teacher after the break. So no skipping or nothing now.

I would like to start by asking Manfred to tell us about his New Play Festival. The next one is on in 2010, and what the criteria are for choosing the work, your affinity with the English language, how much you love it or hate it. If you could just outline for us what kind of festival it is?

Manfred Bielharz: Of course I try to speak English, which everybody does. But to be honest, I founded the festival New Plays from Europe not especially to spread out more of the English language. It has already been done. But on the contrary, to give those a voice who don't have one.

Perhaps I should say something about the structure. Wiesbaden Festival is joined to the State Theatre of Hesse, which is a region of Germany, and the capital of this region is Wiesbaden. It is a rather huge theatre, and I am the Artistic Director. We do 32 new plays and operas and dance by our own company every year, every season. That means about 13 big theatre shows. Big means not only one man or one woman. At least two. But very often, plays with 18 on stage. We have an opera with an orchestra and a chorus which does another seven new productions a year. We have a dance company with 24 dancers, and they do three new creations every year. We have a youth, a children's company, a small one, but they also do five new productions every year. And we have a small experimental opera company, which encourages young composers to make composition for the stage. But only small forms, chamber operas.

So where we have our theatre is in the middle of the city, a baroque, Italian-looking big house and we have about 530 permanent collaborators who have an annual contract to work there, and some who are invited to work there on part time contracts.

Gina Moxley: Is this state funded?

Manfred Bielharz: It is half and half. While we are a state theatre, my boss is the Cultural Minister of the Hesse, of the region, but nearly half of it is funded by the city of Wiesbaden, being the capital of this region.

I don't speak about my theatre work. Just a little bit I will mention. I'm Artistic Director, I'm Managing Director and I do one or two directing myself every season. But the main thing is that I founded a festival twenty years ago in Bonn where I was the Artistic and Managing Director, and it was only, and especially dedicated to new writing. That means we – I say we because I was not the only director. I had the idea and was the founding director but I had the opportunity to convince a playwright, a German playwright, Tankred Dorst – perhaps you might have known or heard his name – to make a playwrights' festival. You have a lot of festivals all over the world and perhaps it is in opera, the best singer or you have the best director, but you very rarely – at that time when we founded it in 1992, it's a biennial festival – you find somebody who brings all his energy to support the new writing. It was the year of Europe, so we thought it would make no big sense to do it only for German speaking young playwrights, but for the European ones. We took Europe not as a political unity, at that that time the European Union, but we took it as geographical. We also invited Turkish playwrights and Icelandic playwrights and so on. And a lot of those who now belong to the European Union, but at that time were far away.

Gina Moxley: And were these shows in translation or in the original language?

Manfred Bielharz: We invite the original production, and we show it in the original language. For example, from Ireland, we showed for the first time *Disco Pigs* by Enda Walsh, which was for the first time that they came to the continent, in my knowledge. Or we showed from Frank McGuinness *Cathaginians* of Galway, it was Gary Hines production. We showed *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*.

But we also present in our own company in German language, which has nothing to do with the festival. We make a lot of foreign productions, we made the very first night of Hilary Fannin's *Mackerel Sky*. It was the worldwide creation. As we did also from England, for example Sarah Kane's *Phaedra's Love* was played in its world premiere in German in my company. We also had, at the time when she lived, a double bill of Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis*, and the other one was *Crave*, which was made by the Royal Court, but Vicky Featherstone and James McDonald as director.

So just to have an idea. The festival itself, as I said before, was founded to give those playwrights also a voice who are writing in a minority language, so we also have playwrights from Moldavia and Iceland. The population of Iceland is as big as ...

Gina Moxley: Your theatre.

Manfred Bielharz: No, but as big a Wiesbaden. We have 280,000 inhabitants. That's a small city. Iceland is a very big and important country.

Beate Kronsbiel: The structure is comparable to our theatre because there are so many singers and actors. Nearly everyone is working in the arts.

Manfred Bielharz: Very often you hear the sentence, you are lucky in Germany. You have the most State sponsorship supporting the theatre, and I say no that's not true. Iceland, where you have 280,000 inhabitants you have 11 fully subsidised theatres and another 20 half or partly subsidised. Finland is a land much over Germany when you compare the public support.

Gina Moxley: That's ridiculous altogether, isn't it? We'll give Jukka a chance to tell us poor people what they have now. You tell us a little bit about the structure of your theatre in Finland.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Ok, hi everybody. It's nice to be here as a continental European because I don't regard myself as continental. We are still the ones who are driving Europe, so Europe is somewhere there. But we are in the EU and we have the same currency as you have.

So I heard yesterday many times, I don't know anything about Finland, and Finland is a mystery for me. It's also a mystery for me. I sometimes have difficulties to understand where I'm living, because changes in Finland are so rapid. It's really difficult to follow what is happening in Finland nowadays, because everything is changing and we are living right in this time. Finland doesn't have a great past. We can't say that we have a great past. We were never Vikings. So what do we have? We have the sauna, ok, but we are not sitting all the time in the sauna drinking vodka. We have the darkness, but it's not all the time dark in Finland. We have the rally drivers and Formula One drivers, but no we are not all drivers. I don't even have a driver's licence. And yes, we have Nokia. Nokia is a Finnish company, in Japan. And we have Santa Claus.

But all these clichés, they exist in Finland. And we do speak the most difficult language in the world, although for me it's very easy. For most people in the world it's not understandable, almost impossible to understand us. We also have problems with ourselves.

Gina Moxley: Luckily they don't say much.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: That is also true. We don't speak at all. You have seen Aki Kaurismäki movies where they just dance the tango and are silent. That's how we are.

No. Back to theatre so. The theatre system is actually a little bit like Germany because our theatres are subsidised. I think Finland is one of the few countries in the world where there is a theatre law. The law says, there are now 53 theatres which belong to the law, so they get a certain amount of money every year, depending on how many people are working in the theatre. The subsidy comes from the State and from the City, so the cities are actually paying more than the State. In every city with 30,000 inhabitants in Finland we have a city theatre. And the city theatre is regarded as a way of serving people, so it's like our libraries or hospitals or schools. It belongs to every city. That's why the Finnish theatres are serving really a large amount of people. The whole city actually. So there are musicals, there are farces, there are comedies, but there are also difficult dramas or whatever drama.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: I'm a translator from German to Finnish so that's why I say, I've a good play for you and everybody says, oh, it must be very difficult because it's German.

But we also are doing a lot of Anglo-American drama. I think 90% of foreign drama in Finland is Anglo-American. For Finnish audiences it's very difficult to say if the drama is coming from Scotland or from Ireland. For example now in the theatre where I'm a member of the artistic team in Turku on the south-western coast, we are playing Zinny Harris' *Further Than The Furthest Thing* but nobody actually knows from where she comes. From Ireland or Scotland, but not from England. That's for sure. Everybody can recognise that difference.

Anyhow, when I'm talking about what is Irish drama in Finland, McDonagh is played in every city theatre. Almost every city theatre is doing it. The National Theatre even did a double evening with *The Pillowman* and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*. That was a double evening. It took seven hours. But the audience went, and we had it also in our festival, and it was a big success. It was marvellous to see that those plays function even in a Finnish context. Although they are very Irish. Especially *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*.

Gina Moxley: It's the savagery.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Yes but people have interest for all that material. As I said yesterday, it's for us very difficult to bring, for example, Irish theatre to Finland in the original language, because we translate almost everything into Finnish. We are very eager to translate everything that is new. You have to remember that we are only 5.3 million people living in Finland, and 300,000 of us speak Swedish as a mother tongue. We are a bilingual

country and we play also in Swedish. The Swedish speaking population in Finland is as big as Iceland. And they are exactly like Icelandic, everybody is doing something with the arts.

Gina Moxley: We toured to Finland with Pan Pan's *Oedipus Loves You* and toured an awful lot to Germany. The most recent production, *The Crumb Trail* is a co-production with our German cousins there from the FFT in Düsseldorf. From my perspective, I'm just astonished at the openness towards English language theatre in these countries. I can't imagine, outside of seeing classic shows here, that there would be the same kind of openness and audience to see stuff in their original language. I don't know if there is a huge loss in translation?

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: English speaking productions we never translate. In Tampere Festival every year we have something from English speaking countries. We've never had any production from Ireland. Now this year we had our 41st edition of the Tampere Festival. Never, ever any Irish productions.

Gina Moxley: Why?

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: I was in the Gate Theatre yesterday and saw *The Birds*. The reason is because it was very conservative theatre that I saw there.

Gina Moxley: But that's just one show.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Yes, but then I understood that the text-based drama that we have in Finland is a step ahead. How we are doing it. So we don't want to show, of course, what we already had. What we are looking for from abroad is productions that differ from that which we are having already. Although, I must say that, like I said, Finnish society is changing rapidly, so I can't say that Finnish theatre is like this or that, because there is everything. You can find whatever in Finland. You also can find an audience for everything.

So in the National Theatre there is now on the big stage *Mental Finland*, a big play collaboration with Kristian Smeds, who is now the most interesting name in Finnish theatre, and also abroad. This cooperation between the Flemish National Theatre in Brussels and the Cultural Capital of Europe, Linz, and Vilnius, and the Finnish National Theatre. They are playing it on the big stage in the National Theatre. It was sold out immediately. When they announced that the tickets were out, I think in two hours all the ten performances were sold out. If you see the performance, it's not traditional at all. They are like spitting at the audience. They don't really tell the beautiful stories of Finnish landscapes with lakes and saunas and people who are just relaxing. It's absolutely the opposite. Last weekend we had Russian theatre critics from Moscow and St. Petersburg who were seeing the performance and afterwards we had a discussion. They said, how can you, as an audience look at that, and after that you are screaming and shouting and saying, oh it's fantastic, when they are just spitting on you?

Gina Moxley: Theatre masochism.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: But that's typical in Finnish theatre nowadays. The Finnish drama is dealing with problems in the society. It's not showing how nice the life is, or personal mysteries, or something like that. It's more showing how we are living in this society which is changing so rapidly. We have a boom in Finnish drama right now. Last year I think there were 80 premieres of new Finnish plays. If you can imagine 5 million people and 80 new dramas which a played, not only on the smallest corner stages, but also on the big stages. In the city theatre in Turku we just commissioned two writers to write new dramas for the big stage. 800 seats in the venue.

Manfred Bielharz: So you see not only the German plays are difficult. Also Finnish. I saw this production in Brussels, *Mental Finland*, of Kristian Smeds, which he mentioned. I'm convinced that we shall show it in our festival.

Beate Kronsblom: Yes.

Manfred Bielharz: But when I read our 'Presenting English language theatre in mainland Europe' I think, why do they invite me? I would be very interested to invite an Irish production in the Irish language to present it in the festival, because English language theatre, wherever it comes is shown everywhere. Those who use this language are in power. In former times we said who has the microphone has the power, when I was a student against somebody. They survived and me too, luckily. Of course that is not aggressive against, it's like I use it and I'm proud you understand me. When I begin to speak German or Swabian, which is a German dialect, you would never understand me and so it is very useful that it exists. We had, for example, a play from Wales by the company ...

Beate Kronsbiem: Y Cwmni

Manfred Bielharz: And that was a bilingual production. It was made in English and it was made in Welsh. We took the choice to not do it in the English version because it was for us more typical for the place where it was created. Of course it is for those who have not the big platform for their work, it is very important to come to such a festival and not very few playwrights had their knowledge by passing this festival. For example, we had a marvellous Turkish play, *Eurydice's Cry* from a Turkish director. It was the best Greek chorus I ever saw, but spoken in the Turkish language.

But of course we do a lot of English speaking work. We did *Phaedra's Love* as a creation, as I mentioned before. We did *Absence of War* by David Hare. We did Simon McBurney's plays in the festival.

Gina Moxley: That's a great system.

Manfred Bielharz: We have no journalists or theatre scientist to give advice. But we are an artist's festival, and the artists have to recommend their colleagues. In my opinion that is very important. So we had last year from Fishamble *The Pride of Parnell Street*. We saw it here, but it was a recommendation by Vincent Woods, who is for the moment our good father. Our spy. And so we have in every country, because it is not possible to have an overlook over Europe locally in some places we don't know. But we go there, and we see it, and we don't invite anything we haven't seen before. So for three months it was 80,000 kilometres for Tankred Dorst and me and.

Gina Moxley: Your footprint. Big footprint.

Beate Kronsbiem: I think everyone in the room after Jukka-Pekka's description about Finnish theatre would be curious to see Finnish theatre, and how does it work. Especially in our festival we also have a special presentation. We do it in the original language, but of course always with a translation. And not with surtitles. We spend a lot of money and work on getting very good simultaneous translations. This is one of the important facts of the festival, otherwise it would be much more difficult to present Finnish theatre, Albanian theatre, Turkish theatre. This makes it more lively and more easy. So there is no longer any, let's say, gap between the audience and what's happening on stage if you have this translation by translators who prepare it carefully. [to Jukka-Pekka] You know it very well, and you have done it in our festival several times.

Gina Moxley: Can I ask you if the translators work directly with the authors?

Beate Kronsbiem: Perhaps Jukka-Pekka can answer from his experience?

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: In my experience the translations for Finnish plays were made into German, so were made by professional translators who translate literature. Then I was just the one who was reading the translation during the performance. So the translations in Wiesbaden, you have excellent translators and it's marvellous to have a proper text as when you are listening you can hear the whole text.

Gina Moxley: Yes, in my experience of having things translated, sometimes mortifying things with the translator ringing you up and saying, Ms. Moxley what does 'in like Flynn' mean or 'now you're sucking diesel'.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: In Wiesbaden to start it already, one you have been very careful with the translation because you are text-based.

Gina Moxley: And sometimes humour is very difficult.

Manfred Bielharz: For example we succeeded to make a German translation of *Disco Pigs*, which played all over Germany that was made especially for the festival. There were two or three translators who went crazy and said, we're not doing this because we don't understand it really. But we got two others and they made it, they got it. And it was so beautiful. It is played all over Germany. The translation of course, for a festival which is text-based internationally is a very important thing. In two steps. Tankred Dorst, we don't speak all the languages which we invite the plays. So of course, where to go? Our good father says we have to see this, and when we have English written text we can read it, but if it's in other languages we don't know, we have a synopsis, a fairly good description of what happens and we need at least two scenes that are literally translated, not artistically translated, so we have the smell of the atmosphere of the quality. Then when we read this translated in German, English, French or Turkish, the languages we know, or Italian. We write it and we decided after this lecture whether we go or not. We are not mainly interested in the production, in the directing, but in the play itself. So that is the first step.

When we decide that we invite it, we give them the whole play once more to a very careful and experienced literal manager who knows also the theatre. Sometimes the original translator speaks the text himself or herself, or sometimes there is a split. There is the text written and they have to know the show. It's not enough to read the play and to know it. We send them to the original play, or we first produce it to give us a video that they can learn it. They have to know when the actors are breathing. When there is a stop, when there is a movement that takes time, that they don't destroy it by reading. That is something which needs a lot of work, and a lot of money.

Gina Moxley: Sensitivity.

Manfred Bielharz: Yes. And often we have multicultural companies. Sometimes we find one of our actors company who was born in Croatia, or we had a dramaturg who is Finnish, and was my dramaturg in Bonn in former times. They are able to speak it or to make the translation, but sometimes we need also the translator we find or we look for.

In the festival there is never a prize. There is no Best Production, or second best, or whatever, because we have no comparison between Ireland and Moldavia and Turkey and Iceland. There is no common criteria to compare. But we give a prize for the best translation. Of course that's very subjective. That has the idea that those who work in the shadow, in the dark, the translators, they are never known. We know the actors, we know the directors, we know the playwright, but we never know those who did the work to the transfer. And so, they can get a prize which is from the newspapers.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: May I say something here? Wiesbaden is really exceptional because it is text-based and also the translations you make simultaneously. But you can notice that I am working for Tampere Festival, so you can notice what is the difference. The money. We could never afford a catalogue like that so we do it like this.

But in our festival, like most festivals in Europe which are functioning at an international level that have translations, we do not have simultaneous translation because Finns are used to reading subtitles. We have in television only subtitles. So when programmes come they only speak Irish English there. I don't know if you know the television series from Ireland. It's a hospital series.

But everything is with subtitles and we are used to it, so we are used to reading. When we have our festival we have subtitles. We never have any voice disturbing there. I feel it is disturbing, this idea of different language in my ears and different language on stage. For us, because we are very traumatised to speak our language. To speak a language nobody understands, it's really a trauma.

Manfred Bielharz: A drama or trauma?

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: It's a drama and trauma, both.

But with English speaking productions we don't have any problems because we are well-educated in Finland, so we never use any ...

Sorry. I think you have read about the PISA studies. Finns were the ones who were best in school, and the Germans were shocked because they were not. The point is that we copied the system from East Germany. That is the trauma in Germany.

Anyhow, for English speaking drama we don't use any surtitles because the most of the Finnish audience can understand what is spoken on the stage. Nowadays we even have stand up comedians coming from the United States. They are very popular now in Finland. Of course stand up is based in language. If you go to see that there are 1000 people laughing in the smallest cities in Finland when a stand up comedian from New York is telling the brutal stories of everyday life in New York, you can understand that we don't need a translation in those productions. All the other productions we are translating, except Finland Swedish. Finland is bilingual although the minority is only 6%, so we expect everybody speaks Swedish, but I know about 70% of Finns don't understand Swedish anymore, which is a pity.

Gina Moxley: We'll just talk a little bit about rights. We were talking before we started, Beate, about the availability of rights. When the English language version of the play is still up and running, that it's very difficult.

Beate Kronsbiem: This is also one question of course in Germany, that we have a different structure of publishers and the rights of publishers. Though we have the experience we talked about before with Neil Murray because we were so interested in getting *Blackwatch* the play to Germany for a production in our theatre. Not for the festival. A German version for our repertoire.

Beate Kronsbiem: It's just an example, a prime example for different activities that we have. We read English speaking plays, Irish plays also, and it was so difficult. For us it's even difficult to understand why we do not get the right.

Gina Moxley: So there's no competition audience-wise. I don't understand.

Manfred Bielharz: Sometimes if you want to make a tour of the original production, people who don't know really the German system – because we play the same plays in 25 or 30 different theatres in Germany, and there is no competition at all. It's normal. It is no harm for the theatre who did the worldwide creation when next evening it can be played in Munich or Berlin or wherever, or in Potsdam, in a small city. And there is no real competition. But we very often have, with a special English speaking theatre system, the problem. The Americans are sometimes terrible when they bring a musical which is 50 years old. They say in 2020 there will be perhaps the intention to come to Europe, to the continent with this play and so there is no possibility any more to play *West Side Story*. And you say, why? It was always played everywhere, twenty times in the same season. Why this?

This protection makes no sense in Germany, because when they go there in 2020 everybody will go there anyway, apart from the fact that it was seen before. There are other countries, for example France, where when you have the first night of a play no other French theatre touches the same play. Coltes was at the same time only one time in one production, and that was it. That is not the case in our system, which is an advantage for the authors and for the theatres. But that is a short problem.

I have to add that the quality of the performance is, of course, of great importance. When you show for the first time a playwright, man or woman, who is shown in Germany for the first time, it is of no use if you have a bad or horrific production. It would have no sense,

because we want to support the playwright. We want to make he or she known in the world of theatre.

Gina Moxley: Jukka, you said earlier about trying to find English language plays rights for them. You have a very streamlined system in fabulous Finland where everything is in the one place.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: It's not a paradise.

Gina Moxley: But if you could tell us how your rights system works.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Our rights system is actually very organised. It's actually the same system as in Germany. Finland takes very many things directly from Germany, like this theatre system I think. And all these agency systems are exactly the same in Scandinavia as in Finland. All the north countries it is functioning through a central agency that is located in Helsinki, Stockholm or Copenhagen. Normally these agencies buy rights for the whole Nordic area, or only for a couple of countries.

Finnish is not a Scandinavian language, so they don't have dramaturgs who can read Finnish drama, so in many cases they say you take only the rights for Finland, because we can't read the translation anyhow. Then we have the Information Centre for Finnish Theatre, so if somebody is interested in Finnish drama it's better to make contact with this information centre because they know everything about translations of Finnish drama. They have a list in the internet so you can even check on the internet in which languages which plays are.

But on the opposite side, how to promote Irish drama. I have a couple of problems there because it's sometimes very difficult to find out who has the rights for Irish dramas. Normally I think it's the writer who owns the rights.

Gina Moxley: Or the agent.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: There you could do the work a little bit easier for us because sometimes we have to really look, to start calling people and to find out who has the rights for this play, because we are very strict about this law. We always pay. We are not like in Eastern Europe where they translate something and they just disappear. Sorry to say it, but that is a fact.

Manfred Bielharz: They have the possibility to have all the plays from all over the world without paying. Until 1990.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Yes, still Russia doesn't have a law for rights.

Gina Moxley: Serbia doesn't either.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: That's another thing. And then promoting Irish theatre there would be ... The British Council is really working, or was working really hard to promote British theatre. For example in our festival in Tampere we had one year a showcase, a British showcase, where we had two productions by Tim Crouch, we had Ravenhill. We had one really excellent street theatre group which was not only fire and balls. And we had a discussion about British drama and a showcase of new writing in Great Britain. That was partly sponsored by The British Council and they were really active. Now the situation is a little bit different because they don't have so much money any more. But I'm really happy I can be here now so that I can meet people, because that is the way it should function all the time. To invite people and to tell. So I would be really happy to have somebody from Ireland also to our festival next year. Finnish drama doesn't exist in Ireland. There was only production of *Olga* by Rough Magic in 2003 that was the only one.

Gina Moxley: We're going to take any questions now, if anyone would like to?

Audience 1 [Gavin Kostick – Fishamble]: Just a practical one in terms of your funding. What is your ticket pricing strategy? Especially in Finland it seems such a popular medium. Is there a ticket pricing strategy that's part of that?

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: In our festival the prices are exactly like here in the Dublin Theatre Festival. So the ticket prices are quite high. Normal theatres in the countryside, in small cities and province – we call it province, I don't know why, they are cities – the prices vary from €12 to €20 for a performance. In Helsinki the prices are much higher, until, if you go to see a musical it can be even €50. But normal prices are €20-25 in Helsinki.

Manfred Bielharz: In Germany, the prices in the subsidised, publicly supported theatres are, for the theatre, not for the opera, not for the big musicals or ballet, are for adults between €10 and €20 for the ticket, but all students, soldiers, people over 65 years old and young people they have half price, so they can go for €5 or €6 in every performance. That is one of the reasons that we have, for example in that city with 280,000 inhabitants, we have during the whole year, altogether, opera, dance and drama, 340,000 spectators. More than the city has inhabitants, which is not even normal for Germany. We do a lot for young audiences. That is only the spectators who pay, because they are included in our statistics. There are others who are invitations. For the festival it is a unique price of €12, part of the fact that we only do 2 or 3 big productions in the opera house. Then they are more expensive. But €12 or €14 is the normal price for the festival, for normal theatregoers.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: I wanted to say that theatres in Finland are not fully subsidised, so every theatre has to earn money also. It's normally about 30% that the theatres have to earn themselves. It depends. That's those theatres that belong to the theatre world, then the free groups they normally have to earn up to 60% or 70%. They have to earn money, so that means the tickets can't be for free. Although we also have, like you said, the older people and students and whatever, they get discount tickets.

Another thing; Germany is obviously a big country, but Finland is as big as Germany and we are only 5.3 million and you are 85 million. So that means that in our country the distances are very long. In metropolitan area of Helsinki there lives 1 million people, but then the next cities are always about 100km away. So people from the other cities don't come always every evening to Helsinki to see the theatre, or if you go to Rovaniemi you have to travel for 12 hours by train to get to the city. If you fly it's one and a half hours. So I'm quicker in Berlin than in Rovaniemi. So you have to remember also that in Finland this distance makes us different. If you go to see theatre in the eastern or northern part of Finland it is different because theatre in Finland is very local. The themes are very local. I noticed also in Ireland, Irish texts are also very local, like the Finnish texts. We are telling the stories so the people in the audience can recognise themselves. It's not only that, but that is a very essential part of Finnish theatre. And we have a huge audience. I said yesterday, everybody in Finland goes to see at least one performance every year. It's a completely different idea of theatre than in Germany. Ok, in Wiesbaden when you say 220,000 or however many inhabitants, but if you look in the area, you sit in the train you are actually all in the time in the city, compared to what we have in Finland. We have forest.

Manfred Bielharz: And the next city is twelve minutes by tube to go there.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Yes, and we always have to travel at least two hours to the next city. In the forest.

Gina Moxley: Anybody else have any questions?

Audience 2: I would like to make a comment about translation. In Wiesbaden the situation is absolutely exceptional. We performed a play some years ago there from a Flemish playwright who is writing a totally dialectal language. I thought when we were talking together about it that it's impossible to translate it in German. Especially to have them as simultaneous translation. Of course, yes, the translator did a fantastic work, and she also came to Belgium to work during the rehearsals. I can see that if this situation could be the same in international festivals in Europe, it would be a completely different idea of what is

theatre. I always regret that in even very important international festivals like Avignon - and I am French so I can say it - the translations are very bad most of the time. You don't get the full text. You don't get neither the rhythm of the language or the musicality of the language or the purity of the material. This is something which is very important when you talk about theatre.

Of course there are some countries and festivals where the audience is more educated to hear and to listen to foreign languages and other languages, but we have to take care of other translations first of all. I think it would be really important to - I don't know, maybe it exists in some countries - to have specific funds for translating, and accompany the festivals and the venues in this work of taking care of translations.

Gina Moxley: Everybody wants to say something about that.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Can I just make a short comment? Of course the languages are not equal. I speak Finnish as a mother tongue, which is really a minor language within Europe. We have difficulties to find translators who can translate from Finnish into other languages. It's really a problem, because Finnish is not a language which is studied everywhere. In the opposite way, I myself am a translator. I have translated over 50 German dramas which all have been staged, so I know it is an occupation. It's not something that students can do just like a hobby or something to earn a little money. In Finland we have an Information Centre for Finnish Literature. They give scholarships for translators who translate from Finnish and Swedish and Sami languages. We are subsidising translations into other languages. So for example, in Wiesbaden I think, the Finnish Information Centre has always paid part of the translation.

Manfred Bielharz: Yes. Just one remark there. I'm the President of the German ITI, that's the International Theatre Institute. Unfortunately the Irish are not so active in that field, and it would help a lot being in the International Theatre Institute. Not only to say that as an answer, the English do in the UK, because you have a special situation and you have a special interest. They are not your good fathers who will bring you all over the world. You have to fight for yourself. The German ITI has - that is subsidised from the European Union - a platform for European drama. There is the possibility that every two years, six countries can take a choice for two or three of their, in their opinion, best plays. They make a proposition and it will be, for example, Ireland, Italy, Turkey, Greece etc., six countries, three times, so that makes 18 different plays. It is the idea of this platform to be translated in each of the other languages and at least one of the plays must be played in the language and in the country, must be staged in the country that takes part. That is a very good thing. The European Union gives quite a lot of money to do this. To be translated. That international productions are not only multimedia or whatever, or ballet.

Audience 3 [Thomas Conway - Druid]: Can I ask about publication of the translations? Do you assist in getting them published? Are they available as publications in your festival?

Manfred Bielharz: Yes. We translate all the plays into German.

Audience 3 [Thomas Conway - Druid]: And that is available as a programme during the festival?

Manfred Bielharz: Yes. You can have it for free, or for €3.

Audience 3 [Thomas Conway - Druid]: From your festival then, the work starts to percolate into other German theatres?

Manfred Bielharz: Yes, very often. For example, when we brought Enda Walsh's *Disco Pigs* a long time ago, it went on. We did *Bedbound* afterwards and Enda Walsh was played in 20 different theatres in Germany, and even the play ...

Beate Kronsblen: *The New Electric Ballroom* was previewed in Germany.

Manfred Bielharz: Yes, the first night was in Munich, and my colleague from Munich, he's stopped working there, but he knew Enda Walsh through the festival. Of course it is also the purpose to make careers for playwrights. Jon Fosse passed by our festival, the Norwegian playwright.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Biljana Srbljanović, Dejan Dukowski, a lot of them. It's not only in Germany. We travel to Wiesbaden to see the performances and to hear the texts, to read the texts, and I must say, in Finland, for example Enda Walsh I saw for the first time in Bonn that time. Dejan Dukowski and Biljana Srbljanović also in Bonn, and through that they were staged also in Finland, and not only in Finland, everywhere in Europe. So Wiesbaden is like a window for new drama from all Europe.

Gina Moxley: I think we'll take one more question and then we'll have to scoot off to the Pan Pan *Playing the Dane*.

Audience 4: Just in terms of English translations in Finland, you say a great number of people in Finland speak English so you don't translate English language plays. I was just wondering are you concerned at all with alienating a potential audience of people who don't speak English?

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Of course we are translating the plays which are staged in Finland. Of course all the plays are translated into Finnish. But if there is a performance which is visiting from Ireland we don't have any translation. Of course there are older people then, perhaps, who are not so – for example, my mother would never go to see a performance without surtitles. But it's very minor, for a number of ... yes, it's true what you say. We are a little bit alienating if I think about it. But on the other hand the festival audience is also a little bit different. When you were performing in Espoo City Theatre, which is one of the few city theatres in Finland where they have their own crew and they make their own productions but normally they have performances from abroad.

Gina Moxley: We had surtitles.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: I think they always have surtitles, even for the English speaking ones.

Gina Moxley: Right. But they were minimal surtitles, I think. Just essential.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Earlier in the Tampere Festival we didn't have any translations because it's expensive to translate and the audience came and they had only a synopsis. That has changed. Because I am a translator myself I said we have to have translations because the text is a really important part of the performance. But like when Tim Crouch was in Finland and he improvised for the time in *My Arm* and also in *An Oak Tree*, but we didn't have any problems to sell the tickets. The people were queuing. Or *Ravenhill*. It's not a problem for us to find the audience. But it's true what you say, so it's not everybody who will be able to follow the performance.

Gina Moxley: Manfred has one final thing.

Manfred Bielharz: Just very general, and without the translation at all. When we are here saying what can we do to spread our Irish work, theatre work, playwrights on the continent or elsewhere, for me one of the criteria – and I'm an admirer of Irish playwrights from the very beginning of the plays that were made in the Abbey and so on, up to nowadays. But I see a certain tendency that very often Irish plays got smaller and smaller, in terms of the figures on stage, and very often they are very, very Irish, and very often they are without visible – the last ones – without this big ... [*talks to Jukka-Pekka Pajunen in German*]

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: What's lacking is the social fields around the people.

Manfred Bielharz: This was something very important for the Irish playwrights some days ago. I don't say it is not existing anymore, but it is less visible. That makes it sometimes not for the festival, because we are interested in how they are living and what is going on there.

Gina Moxley: But parochial.

Manfred Bielharz: But for the big repertory, sometimes you are sitting and you say, that's Irish? Now we know more?

Gina Moxley: Did we need to?

Manfred Bielharz: Of course we need to because we are in Europe. And we should not be always cooked in our own juice. That is a little problem which we see sometimes elsewhere too. Of course to have small ensembles and small companies has something to do with economics.

Gina Moxley: They're going to get smaller.

Manfred Bielharz: But we must find a possibility to enlarge this.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen: Three person plays with a mystery inside of one's woman's head. It sounds really Irish nowadays, so please make the mystery a bit bigger.