

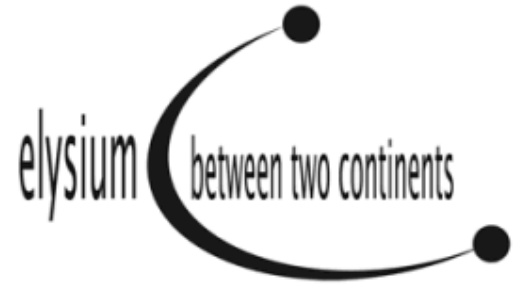
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## THE 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ERWIN PISCATOR AWARDS CEREMONY TO BE HELD IN MUNICH ON AUGUST 27, 2021

*Writer, philanthropists, and stage director among those to be honored*

**MUNICH, GERMANY, August 1, 2021** – The 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Erwin Piscator Awards Ceremony will be held in Munich on August 27, 2021. The Erwin Piscator Award Society was founded in 1985 by Gregorij von Leitis, in order to honor and commemorate Erwin Piscator, a theater pioneer with a lasting legacy both in the United States and in countries across Europe. The Erwin Piscator Award is presented in association with Elysium Between Two Continents, a nonprofit organization that fosters mutual understanding between the United States in Europe through theatrical, musical, and literary-based educational programs.

The Erwin Piscator Award has, for its entire history, been presented in New York City. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be unprecedentedly presented in Munich, Germany.

Three awards will be presented at the ceremony to be held in Munich on August 27, 2021. The Erwin Piscator Award of 2021 will go to Alhierd Bacharevič, a Belarusian writer and translator, considered the leading Belarusian-language author of novels, including *Magpie on the Gallows*, *Šabany: The Story of One Disappearance*, *Alindarka's Children*, and *White Fly, Murderer of Men*. A 900-page novel entitled *Dogs of Europe* was published in 2017 and received the Belarus Book of the Year Award. In April 2021, the new edition of *Dogs of Europe* came under scrutiny by the Belarusian government as they tightened laws around protesting and “extremism.” He currently holds the “Writer-in-Exile” fellowship at the Internationalen Haus der Autorinnen und Autoren Graz. The presentation of the Erwin Piscator Award to Bacharevič is particularly fitting in that Piscator also found himself exiled from his home country because of his artistic and political ideas.

“It is highly topical that Alhierd Bacharevič, the recipient of the Piscator Award 2021, and Erwin Piscator share the same fate: both had to flee their respective homelands because they opposed the repressive regimes in Lukashenko’s Belarus and Nazi Germany, and were persecuted by the country’s rulers,” says Michael Lahr, Program Director and Associate Artistic Director of Elysium Between Two Continents.

The Erwin Piscator Honorary Award of 2021, presented in memoriam of Maria Ley Piscator, will go to Dr. h.c. Irène and Prof. Dr. phil. h.c. mult. Erich Lejeune. They will be honored for their lifelong philanthropic efforts, including their foundation and support of “Heart for Heart – Foundation for Life,” which enables heart operations and other diagnostic procedures for impoverished children in countries such as Vietnam and South Africa. Dr. phil. h.c. mult. Erich Lejeune also founded and sponsored the *Erich Lejeune Chair for Philosophy and Motivation* at the Munich School of Philosophy.

The Erwin Piscator Life Achievement Award will go to Hansjörg Utzerath, a theater director with a storied career in theaters across Germany. He was the co-founder of the Düsseldorfer Kammerspiele, which he headed as director from 1959 to 1966. From 1966/67 to 1973, Utzerath served as director of the Freie Volksbühne Berlin, succeeding Erwin Piscator himself. He was also director of the Schauspielhaus Nuremberg, and has worked at a number of other German theaters as a freelance director, including the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus and the Schauspielhaus Zürichs.

Each award grantee is chosen for their embodiment of the legacy of Erwin Piscator, who said, “Art only achieves its purpose when it contributes to the improvement of man.”

“Throughout his life, Piscator used the platform of the theater to speak out against the destructive forces of fascism. In recent years we have seen a rise in authoritarian rule in Europe and around the world. In this current political climate it is more important than ever to remember Piscator and the lasting legacy of his political theater,” says Gregorij von Leitis.

The Erwin Piscator Awards Committee includes singers, theater makers, philanthropists, and other luminaries of the arts, including actress Ellen Burstyn, singer Thomas Hampson, Unter den Linden opera house Director Matthias Schulz, theater director Bartlett Sher, Salzburg Music Festival President Dr. Helga Rabl-Stadler, and many more.

Elysium Between Two Continents is a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to fostering artistic and academic dialogue, creative and educational exchange, and mutual friendship between the USA and Europe, especially the German speaking countries. Through arts and educational programs, Elysium fights against discrimination, racism, hate, anti-semitism, and Holocaust denial and distortion. It was founded in New York City in 1983 by Gregorij von Leitis, who serves as Artistic Director alongside Executive and Program Director Michael Lahr.

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