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THE RIDE ACROSS LAKE CONSTANCE

By Peter Handke
Translator—Michael Roloff

 THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY April 1978

THE RIDE



THE QUESTORS THEATRE COMPANY

First performance Saturday 8th April 1978

He was looking for a village beside Lake Constance, and knew he must find a boatman to ferry him across the Lake. It was a winter's day and he had been riding some time, when fog and darkness merged, leaving him uncertain. He no longer knew the direction from which he had come — still less the direction in which he should go. He urged the horse forward, hoping for some sign, some help, some human being to guide him. And the darkness swept around him, freezing him further into the folds of his cloak. Snow fell, distorting the shape of the land, muffling the sound of his horse's hoofs. He rode on.

Then, in the distance, he discerned a light and turned his horse towards it. The snow was thick and the air frozen, but he rode swiftly and the light grew. Houses! A village! At length he rode into the narrow streets and stopped a group of people. He asked them how he might cross the lake to find the village he sought.

"But you are here!" they replied.

"How can that be?" he asked. "I set out from a place on the other side of the lake."

They looked at each other and the way that he had come from.

"You must have ridden across the lake," they said. "How did you do it? The ice is no more than an inch thick!"

And as they congratulated him on his feat and his safe arrival, the horseman turned his head and looked slowly over his shoulder at the way he had come; his eyes widened with horror; he clutched his heart and slid from his saddle, dead. He lay in the snow, among the gathering crowd, who were still talking excitedly.

Thus arises the proverbial expression in Southern Germany — a person who has been in danger, and unaware of it until afterwards, is said to have 'taken a ride across Lake Constance'.

The play takes place in a large room.

ACROSS LAKE

by Peter Handke

translated by Michael Roloff

Cast in order of speaking

PETER HEALY
JOHN ROBB
FFRANGCON WHELAN
JILLYANN HEALY
MICHAEL DAVIS
JUDY EMMET
SUE SOTHERAN

<i>Directed by</i>	John Davey
<i>Designed by</i>	Geoff Moore
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Alan Hale
<i>Deputy Stage Manager</i>	Carina Choy-Warry
<i>Lighting</i>	Alan Smith
<i>assisted by</i>	Philippa Forster
	Malcolm Robertson
<i>Sound</i>	Peter Kendrick
<i>assisted by</i>	Chris Lejeune
	Patrice Bacon
	Howard Gornall
<i>Wardrobe</i>	Maud Culhane
<i>assisted by</i>	Hilda Collins
	Hilary Evans
	Edith Ricket
	Jay Tokarchyck
<i>Construction</i>	Mike Garcia
<i>Properties Adviser</i>	Iris Phelps
<i>Assistant Stage Managers</i>	Amanda Aaron
	Marjorie Edwins
	Alan Greenberg
	Jackie Todd

Cigars by Messrs. Gallaher Ltd.



THERE WILL BE NO INTERVAL



CONSTANCE

About the author:

PETER HANDKE was born in Griffen, Austria in 1942. From 1961-65 he studied law at Graz University.

In 1966 his first novel *The Hornets* was published, and his play *Offending the Audience* was presented in Frankfurt. Novels, plays, essays and semi-autobiographical works have followed and his reputation is firmly established on the Continent as one of the most significant figures in the modern European theatre. His novel, *The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty*, has been made into an award-winning film, directed by Wim Wenders.

His plays are not governed by accepted theatrical conventions. *My Foot My Tutor* is an hour-long wordless play for two actors (and a cat!) who appear in a number of poses and perform a number of actions.

Kaspar (1968), based on the story of the 18-year-old autistic Kaspar Hauser, explores the relationship between words, reality and thought – and the implications of the relationships. Theatrical ideas and themes presented in both these plays are also apparent in *The Ride across Lake Constance*.

Several of Handke's plays have been staged in England:

<i>Offending the Audience</i>	Oval House 1971
<i>My Foot My Tutor</i>	Open Space 1971
<i>Self Accusation</i>	Almost Free 1972
<i>Prophecy</i>	Almost Free 1972
<i>Calling for Help</i>	Almost Free 1973
<i>Kaspar</i>	Almost Free 1973

They Are Dying Out, first staged in Zurich in 1974, was presented at the Young Vic in 1976.

The Ride across Lake Constance was staged in Berlin in 1971. It was first produced in this country at Hampstead Theatre Club in 1973 and later transferred to the Mayfair Theatre. It is the first of Handke's plays to be presented by The Questors, although *Self Accusation* was seen in 1975 as a successful director's 'shop-window'.



WHAT DID YOU MAKE OF THE PLAY?

On Wednesday 19th April, Michael Rudman, Artistic Director of Hampstead Theatre, who first directed the play in English at the Hampstead Theatre and later at the Mayfair Theatre, will be coming to talk about Handke and his work, and about his own production of the play and his approach to it. He will then go on to lead a critical discussion on this production.

**ALL ARE INVITED – WHETHER TO LISTEN OR TO JOIN IN
WED., 19th APRIL at 7.45p.m. in THE BERNARD SHAW ROOM**

'ARE YOU DREAMING OR ARE YOU SPEAKING?'

From the play.....

Peter: That's not what I meant to say with that. It only seemed to me that you had noticed something on my hand.

Ffrangcon: On the streets the insurmountable filth, the frost, the snow-storms, the immense distances.....

Ffrangcon: Are you more powerful than he is?

Peter: Why? I mean, why do you ask?

Ffrangcon: Because you speak for him.

John: It's terribly painful to be alive and alone at one and the same time.

Michael: Did you dream it?

Jillyann: Someone mentioned it in the dream.

Peter: What are you thinking of just now? You can say it? Then you're not thinking of anything.

Jillyann: Once when it rained I walked with an open umbrella across a wide, heavily travelled street. When I finally reached the other side, I caught myself closing the umbrella.

Peter: An order resulted; and for people to continue to socialise with one another, this order was made explicit; it was formulated. And, once it had been formulated, people had to stick to it because, after all, they had formulated it. That's natural, isn't it? Say something! No, don't say anything, I am speaking now.

Peter: You have nothing to say?

John: I feel no need to say anything.

Peter: It's enough that I feel the need to hear something from you.

John: But what if I feel the need to remain silent?

Michael: Have I told you the story about the lake?

Next in the Theatre:

HAY FEVER

by

Noel Coward

Hay Fever is one of the earliest of Noel Coward's comedies. It appeared in 1925, and it links him firmly to a line of comedy, from Congreve to Wilde, which is peculiarly English.

Since the revival of several of his earlier comedies in the sixties, Coward's wit — although adjudged 'airy nothingness' and 'easy persiflage' by one sour critic — has continued to amuse and delight English audiences. The Bliss family, at the centre of *Hay Fever*, have taken their place in the affections of English playgoers, and they can be seen, with their luckless guests, next month.

Performance dates: May 6th — 13th



And in the Studio:

A MAD WORLD, MY MASTERS

by Barrie Keefe

Performance dates: May 25th — 28th



And at The Questors Film Society:

CITIZEN KANE

Joseph Cotten and Agnes Moorhead in Orson Welles' dazzling film classic.

Friday, 14th April at 11.00 p.m.

Film Society Members: 50p Guests: 75p