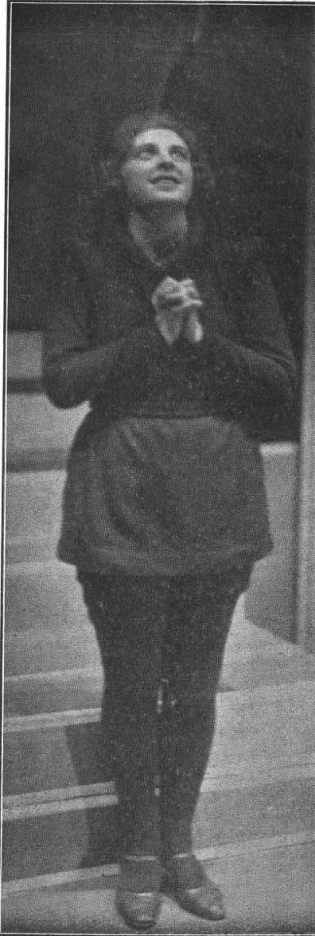


Hildegard's Wander Theatre

This is a play about the life and times of Hildegard Zucker Barglow, who was an actress on the German stage before emigrating to the United States. Two staged readings of this play were held in the synagogue in Dresden Germany in 2006. These are the program notes that we handed out to the audience:



“HILDEGARD’S WANDER THEATER” READING IN DRESDEN, OCTOBER 2006

by Raymond Barglow

Born in 1908, Hildegard Barglow grew up in a Jewish family in Dresden Germany. In the late 20s and early 30s, she was an actress in a theater company that traveled from town to town in the Rhineland.

In 1938, fleeing the German Third Reich, Hildegard emigrated to the United States, where she raised a family and became a German language teacher. After her husband died, Hilde taught college for several years and then moved to Berkeley California, to be near her sons Michael and Raymond. Her oldest son, Peter, was living in Chicago.

The setting for this play is Hilde’s house in Berkeley in 1986. When she begins to lose her memory, a college student, Melissa, moves in with her to help out, in exchange for rent. Hilde has three other housemates as well, and befriends Herr Vadim, who was born in Romania and lived in Germany before coming to America.

Hilde and her housemates search intensely—and often at cross purposes—to find meaning and direction in their lives, past and present. It is Hilde’s quest, however, that stands at the center of this drama.

The play draws on three sources of information about Hildegard’s life: the memories of those who knew her, the documents about her German family that are currently archived in Dresden, and five decades of diaries and photo albums.

Raymond Barglow, one of Hilde's three sons, teamed up with JoAnne Brasil, who was one of Hilde's housemates in the 1980s, to write this play. Many people contributed to its development and preparation for tonight's reading, including Jayne Wenger, Pam Montanaro, Margret Schaefer, Richard Kalman, and (for the Dresden reading) Marisa Giannini and Elisabeth Orrison.

Actors:

Elisabeth Orrison	Hildegard
Jochen Kretschmer	Herr Vadim
Ria Strehle	Melissa
Mirjam Frotscher	Kate and Young Hilde
Leo Tornow	Roger and Ralph

Marion Fiedler	Music
Marisa Giannini	Director
Raymond Barglow	Author
Joanne Brasil	Author

Ralph Zucker,
Hildegard's brother



Germany in the first two decades of the twentieth century became a world center of theater, and works by foreign dramatists as well as German ones were popular. Hilde performed with a small theater company that traveled from town to town in the Rhineland. The troupe presented folk tales for children such as Grimm's "The Brave Little Tailor," but also

performed more serious pieces. Plays in which Hilde played a major role include:



Bernhard, "Leap of the Heart"
 Goldoni, "The Servant of Two Masters"
 Grillparzer, "The Waves of the Sea and of Love"
 Hauptmann, "Pippa Dances" and "The Beaver Coat"
 Hofmannsthal, "Everyman"
 Maugham, "The Constant Wife"
 Rehfisch and Herzog, "The Dreyfus Affair"
 Schiller, "William Tell"
 Shakespeare, "Hamlet"
 Shaw, "Saint Joan"
 Vellier, "The Trial of Mary Dugan"
 Wilde, "The Importance of Being Earnest"
 Zuckmayer, "Katharina Knie"

The plays of Shaw and other non-German dramatists were performed in German translation.

The Heine poem that Hilde quotes is “Germany: A Winter’s Tale”:

Es wächst hienieden Brot
genug Für alle
Menschenkinder.
Auch Rosen und Myrten,
Schönheit und Lust,
Und Zuckererbsen nicht minder.

The earth grows food
enough to feed all of
the children with ease.
As well as roses and myrtle,
beauty and joy,
Even sugar peas!

The poem is both visionary and witty, mocking even itself. It targets nationalism, militarism, and religion, while championing European Enlightenment ideals of freedom and reason:

Die Jungfer Europa ist verlobt
Mit dem schönen Geniusse
Der Freiheit, sie liegen einander im
Arm,
Sie schwelgen im ersten Kusse.
Und fehlt der Pfaffensegen dabei,
Die Ehe wird gültig nicht minder -
Es lebe Bräutigam und Braut,
Und ihre zukünftigen Kinder!

Maiden Europe is betrothed
to the beautiful spirit of freedom.
They lie in one another’s arms,
They delight in their first kiss.

And if the clergy’s blessing is
missing,
Their matrimony remains valid.
Long live the bride and bridegroom,
And their future children.

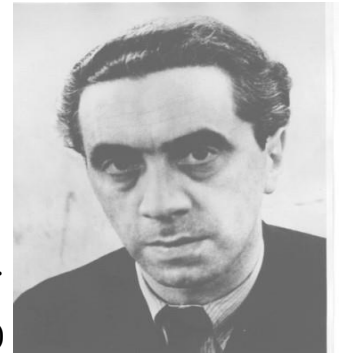


Max Schwimmer, who was a few years older than Hilde and lived in Leipzig and Dresden, drew illustrations for the poem, including this one of the betrothal of Europe and the Spirit of Freedom.

“Der deutsche Hinkemann,” the play by Ernst Toller that Hilde refers to, was shouted down by fascists on opening night in Dresden, January 17, 1924, and there were no more performances in Dresden.

Such disruptions of theater were commonplace in the Weimar Republic, and the perpetrators were treated very leniently by the courts.

Ernst Toller (1893-1939)



Sioux Indians in Dresden

Children of Hilde’s age read adventure stories about American Indians written by Dresdener Karl May, referred to in the play. A tribe of Sioux Indians was invited to Dresden in 1912 to join the Sarrasani Circus.

During the First World War, they went hungry, like most people living in Dresden.



Hilde was interested in Germany poetry and wrote her Master’s thesis on Gertrud Kolmar.

Below is an English translation of the Rilke poem that Hilde recites, about the sculpted Sundial Angel at Chartres Cathedral.

Rainer Maria Rilke, "Sundial Angel"

Im Sturm, der um die starke Kathedrale
wie ein Verneiner stürzt der denkt und denkt,
fühlt man sich zärtlicher mit einem Male
von deinem Lächeln zu dir hingelenkt:

lächelnder Engel, fühlende Figur,
mit einem Mund, gemacht aus hundert Munden:
gewahrst du gar nicht, wie dir unsre Stunden,
abgleiten von der vollen Sonnenuhr,

auf der des Tages ganze Zahl zugleich,
gleich wirklich, steht in tiefem Gleichgewichte,
als wären alle Stunden reif und reich.

Was weißt du, Steinerner, von unserm Sein?
Und hältst du mit noch seligerm Gesichte
vielleicht die Tafel in die Nacht hinein?

In the storm that swirls around the mighty Cathedral
Like a non-believer who thinks and thinks,
one suddenly feels gently drawn
to you by your smile:

Beguiling angel, feeling figure,
Your mouth made of a thousand mouths:
Are you aware of how the hours
Slide off your full sundial,

Which displays the numbers of the day
In deep equilibrium,
As if all moments were ripe and rich.

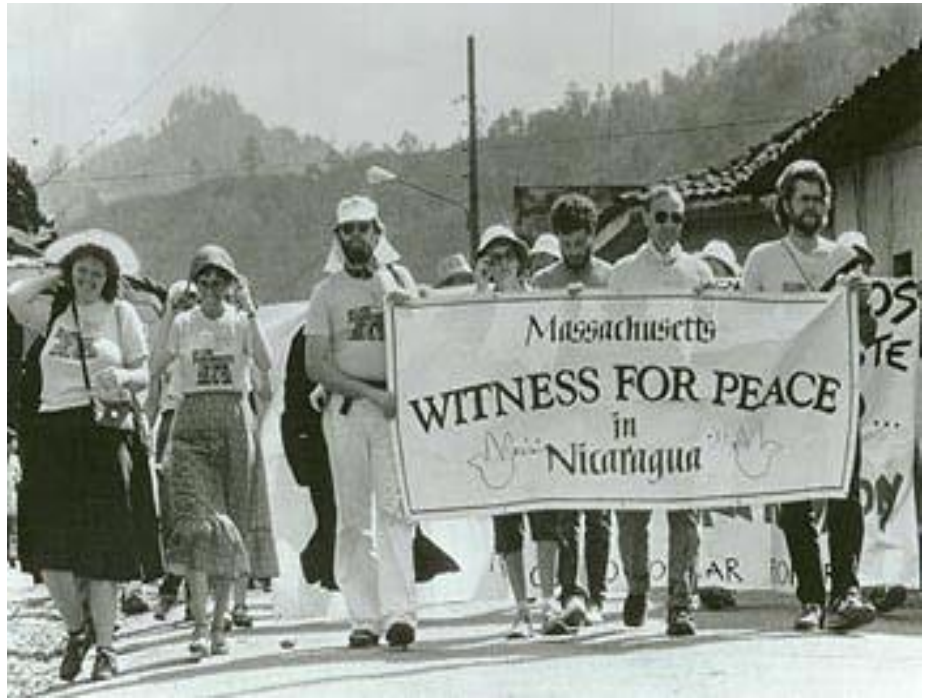
What do you know, O stone one, of our life?
And is your smile even more blessed and blissful
When you hold your slate out into the night?



The passage from Walter Benjamin that is recited in the play refers to Paul Klee's drawing of an angel done in 1921. Benjamin purchased the drawing for the equivalent of about thirty dollars, and it remained a prized possession until he fled to Spain in 1940. Benjamin observed:

"This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe that keeps piling ruin upon ruin and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress."

Solidarity with the Sandinistas was very much in keeping with Berkeley's radical tradition, and Hilde shared that sympathy. Following the Sandinista revolution in 1979, many peasant communities in Nicaragua came under devastating attack by the U.S.-sponsored Contra army. "Witness for Peace," the faith-based group referred to in the



Volunteers in Jalapa, northern Nicaragua

play, began bringing delegations to Nicaragua in 1983, with the aim of documenting Contra atrocities and deterring future attacks. In Jalapa, for instance, a town of about 9000 people located near the Honduran border, volunteers held vigils in the main plaza twice daily, at dawn and at dusk, joining townspeople in song, prayer and discussion. They marched and vigiled also in the surrounding villages. Contra attacks ceased in the Jalapa area during this period, probably because of the presence of the "witnesses" from abroad.

Hilde's household was attuned to its surroundings. Already in the late 1950s, the Bay Area had provided safe harbor for a rebellious "Beat Generation." This was followed by the Civil Rights Movement, the free speech student movement in Berkeley (Hilde lived only a few blocks from the university campus), protest against the War in Vietnam, formation of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, and the movement to unionize California farm workers, referred to by Herr Vadim in the play.

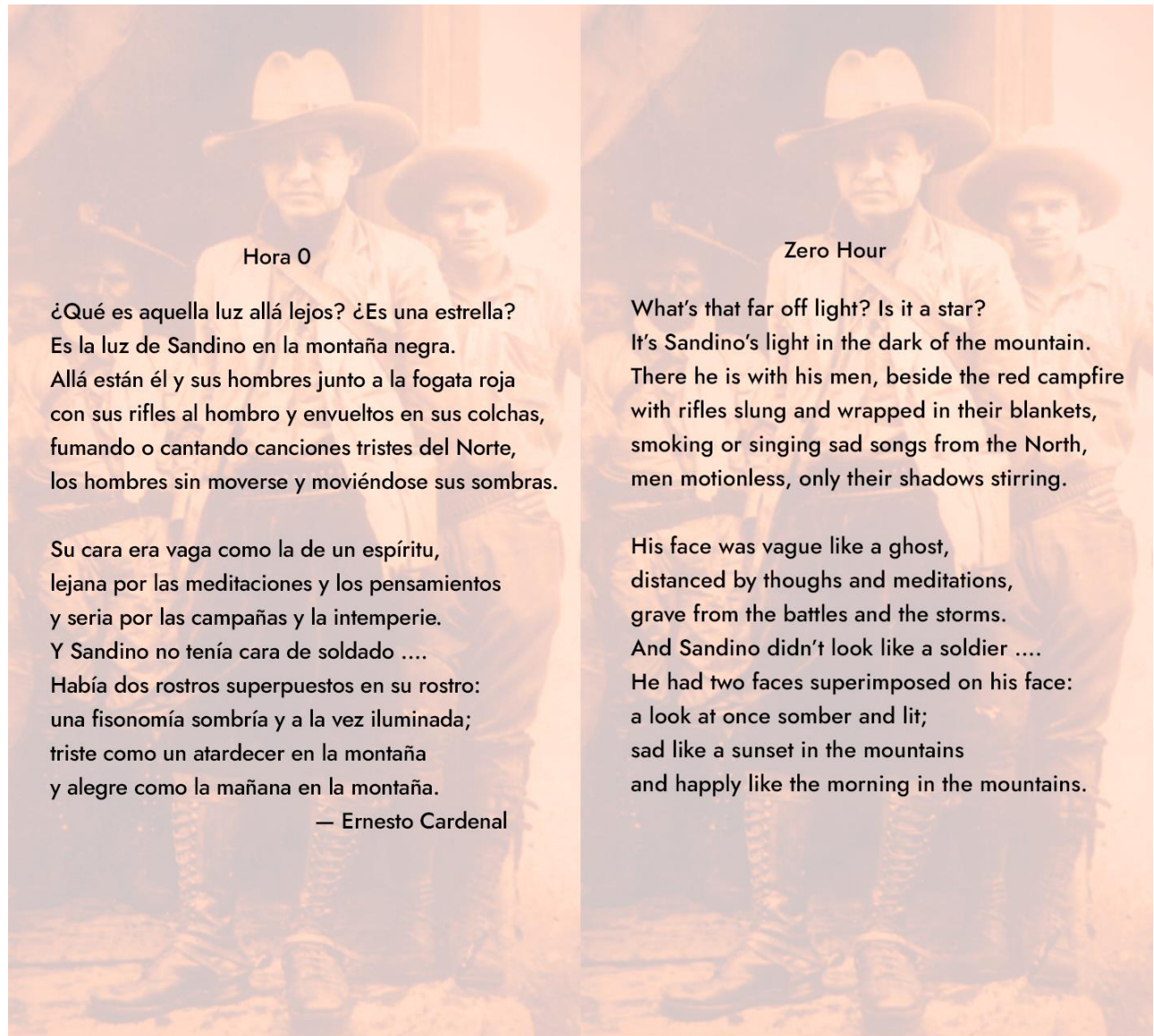
Berkeley's history during these tumultuous years is charted on a wall mural, still visible just up the street from where Hilde lived. Among the painters of this mural is Osha Neumann, son of Franz Neumann, German historian and author in 1942 of *Behemoth - Struktur und Praxis des Nationalsozialismus*.



This small portion of the mural portrays the struggle to build “Peoples Park” on university property. Water from the fire hydrant was used to diminish the effect of the tear-gas used by the police. Architectural features of the wall are integrated into the mural.

To see the entire mural, come to Berkeley and we’ll visit it together!

The inspiration for the Nicaraguan revolution was Augusto Sandino, who led a peasant rebellion between 1927 and 1933. In February 1934, immediately following a dinner in the presidential palace – to which Sandino had been invited to negotiate terms of peace -- he was arrested and murdered by soldiers under the command of General Somoza.



Hora 0

¿Qué es aquella luz allá lejos? ¿Es una estrella?
Es la luz de Sandino en la montaña negra.
Allá están él y sus hombres junto a la fogata roja
con sus rifles al hombro y envueltos en sus colchas,
fumando o cantando canciones tristes del Norte,
los hombres sin moverse y moviéndose sus sombras.

Su cara era vaga como la de un espíritu,
lejana por las meditaciones y los pensamientos
y seria por las campañas y la intemperie.
Y Sandino no tenía cara de soldado
Había dos rostros superpuestos en su rostro:
una fisonomía sombría y a la vez iluminada;
triste como un atardecer en la montaña
y alegre como la mañana en la montaña.

— Ernesto Cardenal

Zero Hour

What's that far off light? Is it a star?
It's Sandino's light in the dark of the mountain.
There he is with his men, beside the red campfire
with rifles slung and wrapped in their blankets,
smoking or singing sad songs from the North,
men motionless, only their shadows stirring.

His face was vague like a ghost,
distanced by thoughts and meditations,
grave from the battles and the storms.
And Sandino didn't look like a soldier
He had two faces superimposed on his face:
a look at once somber and lit;
sad like a sunset in the mountains
and happy like the morning in the mountains.

Carlos Mejia Godoy's song, "Nicaragua, Nicaraguita"

Ay Nicaragua, Nicaraguita
La flor mas linda de mi querer
Abonada con la bendita, Nicaraguita,
Sangre de Diriangen.*

Ay Nicaragua sos mas dulcita
Que la mielita de Tamagas.
Pero ahora que ya sos libre,
Nicaraguita,
Yo te quiero mucho mas.

Ay Nicaragua, little Nicaragua
Prettiest flower of my desire
Nourished with the blessed
Blood of Diriangen.*

Ay Nicaragua you are sweeter
Than the honey from Tamagas.
But now that you are free, little
Nicaragua
I love you all the more.

*Diriangen was a warrior of the Chorotega tribe who fought the Spanish invaders early in the 16th century.

Faust

Murnau, 1925-26

In the play, Hilde quotes Goethe:

Verweile doch! Du bist so schön!
Stay a while! You are so beautiful!

These lines are from *Faust*. The bargain that Faust strikes with the Devil permits him, the disenchanted scholar, to do anything he wants – travel round the world, teleport himself into the past or the future. Money, sex, power, wine, magic are his for the asking. Faust agrees, in return, to remain perpetually restless and hungry for new experiences. Should he ever find a moment so wonderful that he surrenders to it and says, “Verweile doch! Du bist so schön!” then he is doomed to perdition.



Berkeley Photos



Hilde with Raymond, Peter, and Michael



Melissa and Hilde

[The program notes conclude with bios of the actors, and musicians.]