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Ulrich Plenzdorf Collection

1970-1979

1 box (0.25 linear feet)

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An East German screenwriter and playwright, Ulrich Plenzdorf was born into a Communist family in the working-class Kreuzberg district of Berlin in 1934, settling in East Germany after the war. Abandoning his undergraduate studies in philosophy at the University of Leipzig, Plenzdorf worked as a stagehand at the DEFA film studio while studying at the film academy in Babelsberg. His breakthrough as a writer came with the play *Die neuen Leiden des jungen W* (1972), which enjoyed enormous success internationally, selling more than four million copies in 30 languages. A year later, he followed up with the popular film, *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* (1973), and his popularity as a writer continued through unification. Plenzdorf died in Berlin on Aug. 9, 2007, at the age of 72.

This small collection includes research files on the screenwriter Ulrich Plenzdorf assembled by Albert R. Schmitt, a professor of

German at Brown University. In addition to an early edition of *Die neuen Leiden* and a mimeograph copy of an English translation by Herbert Lederer, the collection includes a handful of letters and a few pieces of ephemera from early productions of *Die neuen Leiden*, along with reviews and scholarly articles of Plenzdorf's work.

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Background on Ulrich Plenzdorf

An East German screenwriter and playwright, Ulrich Plenzdorf was born the son of Communist mechanical engineer in the working-class Kreuzberg district of Berlin on Oct. 26, 1934, and settled with his family in East Berlin after the war. Beginning as a student of Marxism and Leninism at the Franz-Mehring-Institut in Leipzig in 1954, Plenzdorf soon abandoned his academic pursuits to become a stagehand at the DEFA film studio while training in screenwriting at the Filmhochschule in Babelsberg from 1959 to 1963. Working as a script-writer for DEFA for several years, and seeing several works produced, he moved to Berlin and built his career as an independent author, writing fiction, films, and plays for stage, radio, and television, as well as rock music.

Plenzdorf's breakthrough as a writer came with the play *Die neuen Leiden des jungen W* (1972), which enjoyed enormous international success, selling more than four million copies in 30 languages. He followed up with the popular film, *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* (1973), cementing his celebrity. Both works drew upon the youthful rebelliousness of the times in which they were written, and had an impact in both the east and west. With wit and intelligence, Plenzdorf managed to question authorities while mostly evading heavy censorship. After the fall of East Germany and reunification, Plenzdorf retained his wit and insubordinate, antiauthoritarian brand of social criticism.

Widely recognized in the German-speaking world, Plenzdorf was recipient of the Austrian Ingeborg Bachman Prize in 1978 for one of his short stories. Plenzdorf died in Berlin on Aug. 9, 2007, at the age of 72.

Scope of collection

The Goodwin scrapbook is a typical production of the period in which the pages in a bound volume (in this case containing work records from 1841) are pasted over with newsclippings, mostly from the early 1870s. Goodwin favored poetry, aphorisms, and brief tales -- sometimes humorous, but other times including curious facts -- which, as far as can be discerned, were clipped from the *Boston Courier*, *Newburyport Herald*. Goodwin also pasted in three colorful fashion plates, a small series of illustrations of buildings at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, and an original poem, "A short sermon." The volume itself is bound in an attractive marbled paper boards with leather spine.

Inventory

Miscellaneous

1974-1979

Folder 1

Newspaper reviews of Die neuen Leiden and Die Legenede von Paul und Paula

1972-1973

Folder 2

Plenzdorf, Ulrich: Correspondence

1972-1977

Folder 3

Plenzdorf, Ulrich: Die neuen Leiden: ephemera

1972

Folder 4

Plenzdorf, Ulrich: Die neuen Leiden des jungen W. [play]

1972

Folder 5

Plenzdorf Die neuen Leiden des jungen W. Suhrkamp Literatur Zeitung

1975

Folder 6

Plenzdorf, Ulrich: The new sufferings of young Werther [play], translation by Hebert Lederer

1976

Folder 7

Ploish bibliography of writings on Ulrich Plenzdorf

1975

Folder 8

Scholarly writing on Ulrich Plenzdorf

1970-1974

Folder 9

Ulrich Plenzdorf: Die neuen Leiden des jungen W. [poster]

1972

Folder 10

Vorteile und gefahren des spielerischen ermittelns von moeglichkeiten auf der Buehne: Dialog: W. Bachman und U. Griebel

[Erich-Engel Seminar, Halle]

1972

Folder 11

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Barton Byg, June 2017.

Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Junew 2017.

Languages:

English, German

Copyright and Use (More information)

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Search terms

Subjects

Dramatists--Germany (East)

Plenzdorf, Ulrich, 1934-2007. Neuen Leiden des jungen W.

Schmitt, Albert R.

Screenwriters--Germany (East)

Contributors

Plenzdorf, Ulrich, 1934-2007 [\[main entry\]](#)

Genres and formats

Ephemera

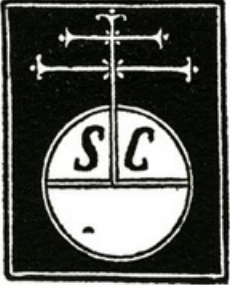
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