



**“We are the Last, question us, we are relevant”**

Gregorij H. von Leitis reads from the vast oeuvre of the exiled writer Hans Sahl

Introductory Lecture: Michael Lahr

The reading recaptures some of the most creative moments of Hans Sahl's life, a life between two continents. Sahl's observations illustrate in detail the destiny of the émigrés and the tragic events that led to the intellectual exodus of German Jews.

Premiered at the  
Elysium Festival Bernried / Germany

The German critique and journalist Fritz J. Raddatz called him “a literary burning mirror-cutter.” Under the burning mirror of writer, dramatist and lyricist Hans Sahl the historic events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century take on new meaning. Sensitive observations of all too human sides of his contemporaries alternate with amusing and ironic character studies and metaphysical meditations on the state of the world.

Born on May 20, 1902 in Dresden (Germany), Hans Sahl worked as a journalist in Berlin until 1933, where he invented the genre of film critique with Siegfried Kracauer, escaped along with Max Reinhardt via Prague and Zürich to Paris, helped Varian Fry in Marseille to rescue many victims of the Nazis and finally left on one of the last boats to New York.

Hans Sahl's book “The Many and the Few” was highly acclaimed by critiques in Europe and the United States as one of the best novels dealing with the experience of Nazi-suppression and exile. In the 1950s and 1960s, Sahl also translated numerous plays by Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller into German. In 1981, Hans Sahl's theatre play “House Music” received its world premiere in New York. In the 1980s, he joined the board of advisors of Elysium. On December 6, 1990 Sahl was awarded the International Exile Prize of the Bavarian Academy of the Arts in Munich; on March 21, 1991 the city of Frankfurt presented the Goethe Medal to him. Hans Sahl died on April 27, 1993 in Tübingen.

The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wrote: “Von Leitis portrayed the literary flight of his unjustly near-forgotten exile author through a literary homage in the Baroque hall of the Bernried convent. [...] Leitis recited Hans Sahl's texts with a great deal of respect – he had been a close friend. And actually the author and feature writer – that's where undoubtedly his strength lay – turned out to be a sensitive intellectual, a sharp-tongued analyst, and an observant and descriptive witness, who focused his times as if through a literary burning glass. Sahl, who said of himself that he was ‘an extraterritorial man, born in no-man's land,’ is a brilliant and many-sided author, who captures the grotesque and the horror of his century in language.”

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