



THE RESISTIBLE RISE OF ARTURO UI

BY BERTOLT BRECHT

DIRECTED BY CHRISTOPHE RAUCK

WITH

Micha Lescot

Eric Challier

Maxime Dambrin

Guillaume Lévêque

Annie Mercier

François Nadin

(cast to be announced)

NEW TRANSLATION BY Alexandre Pateau, L'Arche Éditions

ADAPTED BY Irina Szodruch

ARTISTIC COLLABORATION Marianne Ségol

OPENING in MARCH 2028 at the Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers

ON TOUR IN April, May and June 2028 (Théâtre de Carouge (Switzerland), Théâtre de Caen... in Progress).

PRODUCTION Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, Bertolt Brecht, *Der Aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui*, translated into French by Alexandre Pateau. Éditions de l'Arche. With excerpts from *Alone in Berlin* by Hans Fallada, translated into French by Laurence Courtois, published by Éditions Denoël)

AVAILABLE ON TOUR FROM APRIL TO JUNE 2028 AND FROM JANUARY TO APRIL/ MAY 2029

CONTACTS

Julia Lenze +33 (0)6 64 20 19 34 - j.lenze@amandiers.com

Marie Andrieux +33 (0)6 15 19 53 84 - m.andrieux@amandiers.com

ABOUT THE PLAY

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui

(Der Aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui)

Fascism is not an inevitability but a political choice. As Johann Chapoutot recounts, the rise to power of the far right within a democracy is *a well-known story*. Whilst in exile in 1941, Bertolt Brecht relocated the plot of his political satire about Hitler and his gang from Berlin to Chicago. Organised gangs of gangsters run rampant near the docks, whilst small grocers catch the rancid whiff of financial corruption. From arson attacks to brutal intimidation, the gang seizes control of the Cauliflower Trust to consolidate its empire. When the brown vultures circle around Cauliflow, democracy is on the brink of collapse. Who could have predicted it? Who can resist it?

Source: L'Arche Éditions, 2026

ABOUT

For 2028, Christophe Rauck is embarking on a new exploration of Bertolt Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, with Micha Lescot in the title role. In collaboration with Irina Szodruch, a German dramaturg, he is undertaking an adaptation based on the new translation by Alexandre Pateau (L'Arche).

Still a work in progress, the adaptation forms part of a broader reflection: juxtaposing the play with other texts in order to make Brecht's fable resonate with our present day and reveal its burning relevance, at a time of rising authoritarianism and democratic crises.

Thus, Irina Szodruch and Christophe Rauck are currently working on incorporating extracts from **Hans Fallada's *Alone in Berlin*** into Brecht's text, focusing on the central couple, the Quangels, who, in their own small way, rebel and take action – acting as a mirror held up to Brecht's work, where the present confronts history and highlights what persists or repeats itself...

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

20th-century German literature has left us with works in which literature becomes a forum for direct engagement with history.

Bertolt Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* and Hans Fallada's *Alone in Berlin* offer two radically different perspectives on Nazism, yet are united by a shared sense of urgency: to understand how a totalitarian regime takes root and imposes itself on individuals.

In Brecht's work, fiction exaggerates the traits to the point of caricature to reveal the mechanics of fascist power: behind the mask of gangsterism, it is the political logic of domination that is laid bare, made visible and thus open to challenge.

In Fallada's work, by contrast, everything plays out in the banality of everyday life, in the fear, the silence and the tiny gestures of those who are still trying to say no.

Straddling satire and realism, these two works explore the same fundamental question: what remains of freedom when the state encroaches even upon the conscience?

By contrasting the critical distance of Brechtian theatre with the tragic immersion of Fallada's novel, we come to understand that literature does not merely recount history: it reveals its human mechanisms, and reminds us that even within the most oppressive systems, choice—fragile, risky yet real—is never entirely erased.

Pairing Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* with Hans Fallada's *Alone in Berlin* may seem surprising at first glance, as the two works share neither the same genre nor the same aesthetic. Yet this comparison is relevant for several reasons.

Firstly, these two texts shed light on Nazism from two complementary angles. Brecht offers a political and demonstrative interpretation: he transforms Hitler's rise into a mafia-style parable to show that fascist power is a human construct, and therefore something that can be dismantled and 'resisted'. Fallada, by contrast, adopts a realistic and psychological approach, centred on ordinary individuals confronted with the regime's daily terror. One explains the system; the other illustrates its lived effects.

Furthermore, their juxtaposition invites reflection on two very different forms of resistance. In Brecht's work, resistance is primarily intellectual and critical, driven by the audience themselves, who are invited to understand the mechanisms of power. In Fallada's work, it becomes concrete, fragile and individual, embodied in tiny gestures such as the distribution of leaflets. Comparing the two works thus allows us to nuance the very idea of 'resistance' under a totalitarian regime.

Finally, this comparison is of literary interest: it contrasts Brecht's epic and distanced theatre with Fallada's immersive and tragic novel. This helps us understand how form influences the perception of history: satire and caricature on the one hand, sombre realism on the other.

Thus, drawing a parallel between these two works does not mean conflating them, but rather shedding light on the same issue from two different perspectives: how to represent, understand and combat a totalitarian regime.

In *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, Bertolt Brecht chooses to write much of the text in ten-foot verse, echoing the rhythm of the German translation of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. This choice is not merely aesthetic; it carries significant political and theatrical implications. By giving the Chicago gangsters a language akin to that of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, Brecht creates a deliberate contrast between the baseness of the characters and the grandeur of their expression.

Arturo Ui, a mere mafia boss modelled on Hitler, thus speaks with a theatrical eloquence reminiscent of Shakespeare's tyrants. This imitation of *Richard III* emphasises the spectacular nature of the seizure of power:

as in Shakespeare, ambition, manipulation and violence become instruments of political conquest.

But Brecht subverts this classical model to produce a critical effect.

Where Shakespeare portrayed kings and princes, Brecht replaces the noble figures with opportunistic criminals. The heroic language thus becomes artificial, almost grotesque.

This incongruity is an integral part of Brecht's aesthetic of alienation.

The audience must not admire Arturo Ui as a great tragic figure; they must understand that fascist power also rests on a performance, on the fabrication of a heroic image of the leader. By giving 'the language of heroes' to gangsters, Brecht reveals that political greatness can be a theatrical and manipulative construct.

Alexandre Pateau's new translation seeks precisely to recreate this rhythmic and poetic dimension. By adapting these German 10-foot lines into a chanted, regular French verse of 12 feet, he endeavours to preserve this unique blend of tragic grandeur and criminal vulgarity, which is essential to the work's satirical power.

CHRISTOPHE RAUCK, JUNE 2026

