

Erika Mann (1905 - 1969) was the level head and passionate heart of the Munich Pepper-Mill (Pfeffermühle), which opened in January 1933 to become "the most successful and effective theatrical enterprise of the German émigrés" (Klaus Mann) She was the founder, main author, charming emcee, and also a convincing performer, especially in her favorite role as the melancholy clown. This "gracious Amazon" (Ludwig Marcuse) and her ensemble worked against Hitler under the most difficult conditions. "Get involved: your earth is at stake!" was their motto. First moving from one Swiss canton to the next, then touring through Europe in 1935-36, the émigrés increasingly lost their permission to perform thanks to behind-the-scenes intervention from the German authorities and rowdy fights where they performed. Their attempt to settle in New York failed.

Erika Mann

"Even where she had to be bitter, even in her accusations and protests, the charm of her smile, her voice, and her gestures won the day. Her moralistic and political pleas were successful because they came from the heart and were presented with artistic precision." (Klaus Mann)

