

Rainer Otto (1939) is the foremost theoretician of socialist cabaret and a central figure of the East German cabaret scene from the 1970s on. As an author, dramaturge, director and producer, he led the Leipzig Peppermill (Pfeffermühle) from 1965 until its privatization in 1993, and he directed shows on many other cabaret stages. A pragmatic trickster and snazzy manipulator, this “diplomat of coarseness” (as Harald Pfeifer called him) organized the first Cabaret Festival of the GDR in 1969, brought Dieter Hildebrandt and Werner Schneider to Leipzig for a sensational guest appearance in the eighties, and was one of the founders of the Laughter Trade Show (Lachmesse). After the fall of the wall, he continued to place his faith in the power of language and the intelligence of the audience, collaborating with the Leipzig ensemble Tender Rage (Sanftwut) from 1993 to 2006. A profound historical expert, he also writes radio and newspaper reports on historical and contemporary cabaret.

“An argumentative, mild-mannered dictator whose productions set standards, and who relentlessly defends the independence of satire and the cabaret against the power interests of the bureaucrats.” (Jürgen Hart)

