

## Munich Campus, Augsburg Campus, 1985-1992

Michael Denison  
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I was originally hired to teach communication skills and speech classes as those classes were in high demand from students trying to accumulate promotion points. It became obvious at some point, though, that my background in theatre could also be of use in the various camp theatre programs. Many people are surprised to hear that the military hosts a very large international theatre program. Large bases house dependent families and they, as well as the soldiers, have to be kept busy and entertained and theatre programs provide an excellent outlet for that.

The theatre performances were open to all members of the military community, but only the full-time students at the Munich and Augsburg campuses, who were mostly military dependents, could take the classes. One of these students in Munich was the daughter of the then Polish ambassador to Germany. I once asked her a question and she answered that she couldn't talk about politics because of her father's job, then she added, "How would you feel if your country was stuck in between the USSR and Germany?"

I was told that the US military is one of the largest renters from commercial costume houses in the United States. In addition, the US military had its own huge costume house in Aschaffenburg, Germany, and they could provide about 400 Santa Claus or Easter Bunny costumes when needed. The man running the place when I was using their services was a real professional. I was doing some one-acts by Molière at the Munich Campus and needed period costumes, from 1650s France. He told me he could provide 1640's, no problem, or 1660's, but he really couldn't provide any accurate 1650's costumes. No one in the audience would know the difference, so we went with what he had.

The Munich and Augsburg UM campuses were run as much as possible exactly like stateside schools. Students stayed in dorms and were full-time students. They had evening activities which included music and theatre and even a student union to hang out in. While at the Munich campus, we performed *You Can't Take It with You*, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Molière's *The Flying Doctor* and *The Jealous Husband*, Noel Coward's *Private Lives*, Berthold Brecht's *The Three-Penny Opera*, Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado* and several other plays. After the campus moved to Augsburg, we performed the musical *Brigadoon*.

After the Augsburg campus closed down, UM's theatre program did also, although, major bases in Europe still hosted amateur theatre groups with facilities and paid directors.

Production photo: Cast of Molière's *The Flying Doctor*, in slightly wrong periods costumes.

