

Der Zar lässt sich photographieren.

Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Funkhaus
Grosser Sendesaal, Cologne. 3
November 1984.

Der Zar lässt sich photographieren remains one of Weill's lesser known European stage works, the success following its Leipzig premiere (1928) soon dwarfed by that of *Die Dreigroschenoper*. This is an undeserved obscurity, because this one-act gem, lasting less than an hour, demonstrates Weill's sure mastery of comic opera, with apt musical characterization and a combination of pre-19th century techniques and elements of 1920s culture. Weill intended the work as a comic complement to his earlier one-act success *Der Protagonist*, and thus Georg Kaiser again supplied him with the text, a well-crafted libretto worthy of the *opera buffa* label Weill applied to it.

Kaiser's story is simple enough. A Czar of an unspecified country is visiting Paris and wishes to have his photograph taken by the famous Mme. Angèle. Anti-czarist conspirators, however, take over the studio and replace the photographer with a False Angèle who will assassinate the Czar with a revolver hidden in her camera. The Czar foils the scheme, in true *opera buffa* fashion, by falling in love with the False Angèle and attempting to take her picture. At the end of the work, the plot is uncovered, the False Angèle and her confrères escape, and the Czar is finally photographed by the real Angèle. Weill acknowledged that the work had a meaning apart from the obvious comedy. *Der Zar*, as did *Der Protagonist*, explored the modern problem of the public versus private individual: the Czar is trapped by his public identity and unable to indulge his private desires.

A tape of the 3 November 1984 Cologne concert performance of *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*, presented under the aegis of the West German Radio, proved to be a sheer delight. Barry McDaniel, Carla Pohl, and Marita Napier played the lead roles of the Czar, Angèle, and the False Angèle with feeling. Even more exciting, though, was the West German Radio Orchestra under the direction of Jan-Latham König. At the time of the work's premiere, critics commented upon the motor-like quality of the score with its well-honed, lean orchestration. From the crucial first cymbal downbeat, the Cologne radio orchestra virtually glistened in its rhythmic precision. The foxtrot entrance of the Czar was given a suitably spry reading, and the pervasive structural ostinatos were crisply defined and clearly audible. However, the orchestra never steamrolled over the non-rhythmic sensitivities of the score, at the important dramatic moments when Weill's terse ensemble expands and blossoms.

Much of the opera is a duet between the Czar and the False Angèle. McDaniel made the *buffo basso* Czar both seductive and pre-tentious, even maudlin when the role required it. Napier's False Angèle, however, seemed too tentative. Weill, after all, described this would-be assassin as a "modern woman with political tendencies," and one would expect such a politically-committed woman to demonstrate more gumption in her face-off with the Czar. As the real Angèle, Carla Pohl's voice was stronger and her performance more authoritative; I would have preferred her in the "false" role.

The offstage male chorus (which Weill placed in the pit) performs throughout the opera and provides the "distancing" function which Brecht was later credited with having invented. The Cologne radio chorus was superb and made this integral part of Weill's score come to life.

The real innovation in 1928, though, was the "Tango-Angèle," a gramophone recording played onstage. The seductive tango provides the sole accompaniment to the False Angèle's flirtation: pretending to succumb to the Czar's amorous advances, she is really stalling for time to make her escape. Here the record sounded quite old, even scratchy; it may have been the same record provided by Universal Edition since the work's premiere. No score for the tango survives, but Weill (who probably supervised the original recording session) seems to have used an ensemble typical of early European jazz bands: solo violin, prominent brass, saxophone, and a rhythm section of banjo, piano, and drums. Mocking the Czar's frustrated passion and creeping into the vocal lines of the escaping assassins, the "Tango-Angèle" makes for a wonderfully burlesque ending.

All in all, the Cologne performance was a most pleasant surprise. One can only hope such quality performances will inspire fully staged productions—or even a commercially released recording of this performance.

SUSAN COOK

University of Michigan

Any international ambitions the festival may have lost with Henze's departure last year were fully compensated by the regional significances of the 1984 Werkstatt. Typical of these, and important from other points of view, was the much-acclaimed performance of *Der Lindberghflug* that concluded the opening concert 24 October. Apart from two of the three admirable soloists, the singers and players were all drawn from the region: the Singkreis Krieglach (whose director, Hans Held, was also a notably sensitive soloist) and the Orchesterprojekt Kindberg-Mürzzuschlag under its conductor, Ernst Smole, who is in charge of the municipal music school.

The success of the occasion owed much to Smole's understanding of the music and to the enthusiasm he communicated to his mostly young players and singers. Untoward though the style and tone of the work remain today, the performance had a spontaneous vitality that would be hard to capture in purely professional circumstances. (A few minor liberties taken by the players in the two jazz-inflected numbers were reluctantly but wisely accepted by Smole in the interests of *esprit de corps*.)

At the end of the concert, the audience stayed on to hear the work re-recorded for television. With all due respect to Gottfried Rennhofer's "Visuelle Umsetzung," the fact that music and text speak for themselves in their different ways was never more clearly demonstrated. Whether literal illustration or Brechtian distancing is aimed at, the addition of a visual dimension must always introduce formidable problems, musically, formally, and, not least, ideologically. Some day, perhaps, someone's stroke of genius may help solve them. Meanwhile, the purely musical results of the Mürzzuschlag performance were a valuable reminder of the work's potential outside the metropolitan concert circuits.

DAVID DREW

London

Recordare. University of
Manchester. 24 November 1984.

Three years ago Manchester saw a rare and remarkable production of *Der Silbersee* by the Music and Drama Departments of the University, directed by Professor Ian Kemp. Another significant contribution to the reassessment of the "serious Weill" was made last November when the University Chamber Choir under David Fisk performed *Recordare*. Readers of the *Newsletter* may know the background to this setting of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, as set out in Kim Kowalke's notes to the Nonesuch recording [79050], summarized in Thomas Somerville's review (Vol. II, No. 1). But they may be interested to know that the Manchester performance gave an impression of the piece very different from the interpretation of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus under John Oliver.

Der Lindberghflug.

Mürzthaler Werkstatt,
Mürzzuschlag. 24 October 1984.

In the fall of 1982 the Austrian town of Mürzzuschlag—famous as the birthplace a century ago of Brahms' Fourth Symphony—mounted the first Mürzthaler Werkstatt, an annual and predominantly musical festival with a strong twentieth-century accent and an even stronger local one. Hans Werner Henze's experiment in Mountepulciano was clearly one of the precedents for establishing the Werkstatt in the economically precarious Mürz Valley, and indeed Henze himself directed the 1982 and 1983 festivals.

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This had partly to do with interpretative decisions. Although David Fisk favored similar pauses to those regretted by Somerville, he showed that the "Patres nostri peccaverunt" section sounds far better when Weill's own *un poco tenuto* marking is observed rather than with the *staccato* and disastrously retarded tempo which disfigures the recording.

Even more decisive was the use of smaller forces in a more resonant acoustic—reflective passages were more transparent in sound, more shapely and sensitive in response to the harmony, while severe ones were lighter and developed without bluster or hectoring.

Once again the section with children's voices (actually pure-toned sopranos on this occasion) was the most memorable, and when these voices were integrated with the main choir, a more carefully judged balance gave extra point to the joyful outburst. Even if several anomalies of pitch reminded one that this was still a students' choir, no one present could have been in any doubt of the dedication of the performance or of the sincerity of Weill's message.

DAVID FANNING
University of Manchester

An Evening with Ekkehard Schall. Harold Clurman Theatre, New York. 25 February-16 March 1985.

Critical reception to Ekkehard Schall's two one-man shows at New York's Harold Clurman Theater during the first two weeks of March focused on the distaste for being served such a militantly anti-fascist and pro-socialist diet. Theater patrons obliged to fork out \$20 and \$25 a seat had apparently eaten well enough before the performance that they could comfortably talk right and wrong.

These critics had not absorbed the East German actor's remarks to the *New York Times* in a pre-production feature (24 February 1985): "I go nowhere as a missionary. That would be awful." For it's true that Schall's preponderantly political program could have stirred no one to revolt: you had to know German, you had to have a ticket, and you had to have a finely developed affinity for the sardonic, cosmopolitan style of the inter-war years. Now maybe if he'd spoken English and taken himself to a streetcorner in Harlem....

So it was not the social content of the program that for this reviewer seemed to lend new perspective on the famous Alienation Effect. It was the esoteric appeal, the imported specialty item quality of the event that in the end failed to convey a solid impression. As for the politics, bring it on! Change the theater, it needs it!

The program I saw was entitled (in English): "Questions, Laments, Answers." Like Mr. Schall's alternate program, which I did not see, it consisted entirely of poems and songs by Brecht. Dozens of items were new to me,

especially in the musical settings Schall offered. By now, in New York, just about all of Kurt Weill's Brecht settings are known, and quite a few of Eisler's. I was therefore grateful to hear further treatments by such composers as Hans Dieter Hosalla, Paul Dessau, Rudolf Wagner-Régeny, Siegfried Matthus, and by the accompanist of the evening, Karl-Heinz Nehring.

It would be sweet to report on the superb musicianship of the actor, but alas I cannot. Schall fits all too securely into the category of *Misuk*-maker, the kind Brecht preferred, who advances the interests of the text to the disparagement of the composer's contributions. Much of his singing, in numbers from *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Mahagonny*, and in his other repertoire, flattened out into little more than rhythmic speech, louder on the high notes. This must be a conscious part of his technique as an actor, for to be sure there were moments when a melodic line lifted out of the gravelly throat became honest-to-goodness singing. In the West artists are beginning to see music theater and cabaret material of this period as a form of legitimate music, but in Schall's art the notes are still incidental accoutrements to the words. Mr. Nehring at the piano played along obligingly.

If there were infrequent sparks between actor and audience, it had to do with Schall's unconcern about adapting his routine for these theater-goers. In Berlin he can sprint through a by now familiar 80-minute set with all of Brecht's sass and wordplay. But here, if he wanted to let us in on the true genius of the writer, he simply had to slow down, breathe a beat or two between numbers, allow the pianist to vamp for a couple of bars, ad lib a bit, or anything so we could catch up with the (unattributed and not always faithful) translations in

the program booklet, and let Brecht's message register and sink in.

I found the two most memorable items on the program the scenes where he assumed double roles. Both were Eisler tunes. In "Falada, Falada, There Thou Art Hanging," he played both a radio announcer outraged because the hungry people of Berlin have set upon a workhorse fallen in the street but not yet dead, and the horse itself, who wonders what kinds of beasts the people have become. The other song I found so moving was "The Ballad of Paragraph 218," known here also as "Abortion Is Illegal," in which Schall played both the pregnant working-class wife and the cynical war-mongering doctor. In both cases, the added "character" on stage aided the communication process, and of course the issues are close at hand for an American audience today. In Schall's facial expressions one could see the molten hatred of humanity that characterizes the leering moralists and bureaucrats of this and every heartless regime.

In his own terms Ekkehard Schall has a lot going for him: versatility, agility, experience, presence. He just doesn't travel well. It has been rumored that the Schall production is a bellwether for a possible visit to these shores by the entire Berliner Ensemble, which Schall and his wife Barbara, Brecht's daughter, run. Let them come, with their best and most provocative stagings. Let Mr. Schall develop a fully rounded characterization for us. American theater can only benefit from the exchange. After all of the controversy over *The Threepenny Opera* translations, this might be a chance for an intelligent German-language production in New York, which I think it's time for.

ERIC GORDON
New York



Ekkehard Schall

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Recital. Joy Bogen, soprano.
Merkin Concert Hall, New York. 3
March 1985.

The buzzword in music-theater criticism these days is "crossover," the interaction 'twixt opera and so-called musicals. One is not always sure, however, if the distinction refers specifically to a song/aria *per se* or one number juxtaposed to another within a show, or an entire production compared to previous or later works by the same composer. Kurt Weill is, of course, the touchstone of all crossover composers. Not only did he leap from the German opera stage to the world of *Schauspiel*, but, after a side-trip to the music halls of France, he sprang back in reverse from Broadway successes to American operatic triumphs. One of the more curious reversals of the latter-day crossovers was his Broadway musical about blacks, *Lost in the Stars*, written in collaboration with a white playwright, Maxwell Anderson, while his city-opera *Street Scene*, essentially about whites, was written with a black poet, Langston Hughes.

Any singer who attempts to embrace the eclectic world of Weill, rather than penetrate one corner of it, has to make a fundamental decision: to what extent should the song control the voice? *Bel canto* or brassy-sexy? *Sprechstimme* or melodrama? Singing actress or acting singer? Opera diva or low-dive chanteuse?

Celebrating Weill's 85th birthday on 3 March 1985 at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City, Joy Bogen attempted to perform all of these dualistic roles and, as a result, was not always fully convincing. When she allowed an unencumbered vocal sound to emerge, as at the end of the "Cäsar-Ballade" from *Der Silbersee*, the listener sensed an in-tune "bowing," the essential *Bogen*. But in another selection from *Silbersee*, "Ich bin eine arme Verwandte," she turned a waif into a denizen of the underworld; and it was as if she had made a "detour," fulfilling another meaning of the name "Bogen."

The transformation of foundling to floozy was accomplished by putting on the singing makeup of a nasal, unpleasant coloration, a conscious decision, but a miscalculation nevertheless. Other renditions were also overburdened by such artifice. Her pacing and posturing in the "Ballade vom Räuber Esteban" from *Der Kuhhandel* was more distracting than disarming. As the program continued, it became apparent that her sometimes flamboyant stage movement and gestures were intended more for the video cameras in the hall than for the enlightenment of the audience or the illumination of the song.

Also disappointing for a commemorative performance were the numerous errors in the program.

Possibly because "Pirate Jenny" from *Die Dreigroschenoper* was the most familiar song of the evening, Ms. Bogen opted for an unexpectedly breathless, rushed interpretation that robbed the piece of its restrained cynicism.

The French portion, which opened the second half of the program, provided by far the most ingratiating moments. Here, Ms. Bogen seemed more relaxed and comfortable with the material. Perhaps this is because Weill himself is at his most amiable in these bitter-sweet, unforced vignettes: "Youkali," a tango-habañera filled with Jewish yearning that ends with a poignant cadential question-mark (more Jewish-sounding, in fact, than the Schubertian "Miriam's Lied" from *The Eternal Road* heard in the first half); "Je ne t'aime pas," which in part seems to foreshadow Sheldon Harnick's "Boston Beguine;" the spiritual-like "Train du ciel" with its embryonic anticipation of music from *Lost in the Stars*; and "J'attends un navire," a number about a down-and-outer that could well be the signature song of Maugham's Sadie Thompson.

Ms. Bogen and her unassuming accompanist, Thomas Hrynkiw, are to be admired for offering us such a variety of unknown Weilliana. But her overreach diminished her outreach, and suggested that she could best serve the many voices of Kurt Weill by cultivating the intrinsic timbre of the voice that is uniquely her own.

JACK GOTTLIEB
New York

Street Scene. Northeastern
Illinois University, Chicago. 27
February - 2 March 1985.

Street Scene, Kurt Weill's dramatic and tune-ful 1946 opera, had not been performed in Chicago until the UNI Opera Company and director Phyllis Hurt opened their workshop staging late in February. Offering student involvement and educational values when professional polish was lacking, the Opera company surmounted a low budget and a tiny stage to present *Street Scene* just two numbers shy of complete.

The book by Elmer Rice (based on his 1928 play), with touching lyrics by Langston Hughes, records one day in front of a New York tenement. The script highlights ethnic stereotypes and melodramatic love stories, but Rice's social criticism is still relevant. His primary target is domestic violence; his secondary theme is upward mobility, as the protagonists attempt to raise themselves out of poverty (probably easier to do then than now).

Much rehearsal time must have been spent on the ensembles, and several of their well-considered scenes set the tone for the entire opera: the opening blues, "Ain't It Awful, the Heat?" by the gossiping neighbors; and "Wrapped in a Ribbon and Tied in a Bow," which suggests that only through education can one hope to make it in the world. The Act II chorus, "The Woman Who Lived Up There," was also powerful and effective.

Women sing some of the best music in this show, and UNI's production had splendid women's voices to do the honors. Jane Kenas as Anna Maurrant sounded lush and beautiful. Cheryl Kreiman and Rosalie Becker stood out among the neighbors (who were double-cast during the four-night run), but Rose Maurrant, played by a theatrical newcomer, Patrice Gramse, was the evening's star. Tall, willowy, and beautiful, Gramse used her clear voice to give just the right inflection to "What Good Would the Moon Be?" yet displayed all the dramatic power needed in the Act II trio, "There'll Be Trouble."

The principal men's roles were less successful. Terrance McCracken sang perfectly as Frank Maurrant, but his shallow characterization depended on a few, unvaried surface traits (a stooped walk, a sneer) which only hinted at the complexity of Maurrant's personality. His aria, "Let Things Be Like They Always Was," was a baritone tour-de-force, but McCracken's portrayal lacked insight and subtlety. Vincent Lonergan disappointed as Sam Kaplan, singing lightly and sweetly, but lacking the physical stature and vocal weight to communicate Sam's despair (in "Lonely House") and repressed passion (in the love duets).

Because of the limitations of UNI's stage, the orchestra, skillfully conducted by Stephen Blackwelder, was forced to play *behind* the set, along the back wall of the stage. A scrim separated orchestra and singers so that two video cameras and monitors were needed to broadcast the conductor's cues to the cast and the stage action back to the conductor. This ingenious system, although surely a nuisance to the performers, did not detract from the audience's enjoyment of the opera. In fact, it enabled the singers to be heard more clearly because they were in front of the orchestra and did not have to push to be heard over it.

The Act I blues number, "I Got a Marble and a Star," was cut when its singer dropped out of the production and could not be replaced. The other cut, necessitated by the large numbers of extras required, was the crowd scene after Mrs. Maurrant's murder. The murder, by the way, was committed with a starter's pistol which sounded like a toy cap gun and prompted several chuckles from the audience.

Such criticisms aside, however, Phyllis Hurt and the UNI Opera Company should be commended for putting together an enjoyable evening of vintage Weill.

JEFFREY A. KLEPPER
Evanston, Illinois

PERFORMANCES

Berlin to Broadway with Kurt Weill. Zephyr Theatre, Los Angeles. 10 February 1985 for open run.

When *Berlin to Broadway with Kurt Weill* opened at off-Broadway's Theatre de Lys in October 1972, the full-fledged rediscovery of Weill still lay ahead. The Berlin instrumental music hadn't begun to circulate; the first proper American *Mahagonny* (Ian Strasfogel's staging at the Washington Opera) hadn't yet happened; only Yale's *Happy End*, the previous April, had begun to hint at treasures still to be explored. Granted the vitality, not to mention novelty, of most of the music chosen by Gene Lerner for his evening-length Weill medley, it was possible to tolerate, if just barely, Lerner's more blatant contribution: a compilation of the hoariest theatrical clichés into a metaphor of Weill's geographic and artistic journey that underscored the show as a running (ha ha) narration.

Twelve years later, with Weill somewhat more firmly ensconced in our cultural consciousness, but with the music of *Berlin to Broadway* no less vital for its greater familiarity, a Chicago theatrical director named Paul Hough took a new look at *B-to-B*, dropped a couple of minor musical numbers, rearranged the order of events somewhat and, best of all, sent most of Lerner's silly text packing. Now Hough's production, with most of its Chicago cast, has opened in Hollywood's 99-seat Zephyr Theater. Originally booked for two weekends in February, it has at this writing been extended through April and should, with justice, run into the millenium.

Los Angeles is not exactly Weill country. Neither *Threepenny* nor *Mahagonny* has had a major production, although *Happy End* was done not at all badly, in 1981, by the Japanese-American East-West Players directed by

Mako (the star of the original *Pacific Overtures* on Broadway). Yet the happiest news about the *B-to-B* production and its unexpected popularity is the cast itself: an extraordinary sextet of immensely talented, theatrically savvy young people who sing their music brilliantly, interact with one another like the silkiest of chamber-music ensembles, deal with serious music and comical music with taste, imagination, and respect. Here is, or should be, the ideal unit on which to build a permanent small-musical program. I only wonder what these people were doing in Chicago, of all places, all this time!

In freeing himself of the clutter—both verbal and visual, including a shipboard stage set to hammer home the shrill metaphors of the narration—Hough has left room for some marvelous inventions of his own: some adorably winsome almost-dancing, as in an uproarious staging of the "Mandalay Song" from *Happy End*, and a harrowing new ending for Act I, in which the singing of "J'attends un navire" from *Marie galante* is gradually crushed under a crescendo, on tape, of Adolf Hitler's voice and a Nazi marching band. It's a powerful dramatic moment, but one striking aspect in this new version of *B-to-B* is that it has now become a show about Kurt Weill's music, not about someone else's stage gimmickry. It does for that music what *Side by Side* did for Sondheim, and I can't think of higher praise than that.

A few of the original foolishnesses do remain: a spreading among several voices of the "Moritat," that supreme solo song; some fussed-up ensemble harmonies in "Lost in the Stars" (the only version of that song I've heard that didn't immediately move me to tears). On the whole, however, Music Director Jack Elton has done a remarkable job in boiling the original instrumental ensemble down to a solo piano, and the cast, as I was

saying, couldn't be better. To single out their individual excellences would require a recap of the whole two-hours-plus show. Instead, note that their names are Robert Neches, Sarah Tattersall, Karen Kearney, Michelle Callahan, Michael Vodde, and Bill Bowersock, and join me, please, in bestowing blessings upon them all.

ALAN RICH
Los Angeles

SCORES

Ho, Billy O! Madrigal (SATB a capella with divisi) S7071. Words by Alan Jay Lerner. Music by Kurt Weill. [New York]: TRO, 1984. 23 pp.

Those choral conductors who are searching for a different kind of number to add to their next concert program will want to consider this delightful madrigal by Kurt Weill and Alan Jay Lerner. Although in style "Ho, Billy O!" seems more folk song than madrigal, any formal classification is of little consequence. What is important is that the piece contains musical and textual ingredients which will please performers and listeners today as they did when the piece was first heard on Broadway in 1948.

As one would expect of the composer and author, this 20th-century madrigal tells its story with a clever use of word and rhyme in a musical setting which seems quite simple but contains subtle and unexpected riches at several points in the score. Each verse is arranged primarily for four voices singing homophonically and without accompaniment. At times the vocal parts divide, and, in a few instances, solo voices are introduced to add variety and to carry forward the story in the song. The "fa-la" refrains are excitingly rhythmic and increase their movement and embellishment as the piece moves to its climax and conclusion.

Weill saves his composition from becoming obvious and dated in sound by changing harmony and meter, suggesting the use of contrasting tempi, and employing tasteful and dramatic accentuation of key words and syllables. Because "Ho, Billy O!" was taken from a production which was constructed as a series of vaudeville sketches and because the song has its own version of what happens when boy meets girl, there is an excellent opportunity to present the piece for today's audiences as a delightful and lighthearted drama with costumes, scenery, and appropriate action. Whether used in this fashion or in a traditional concert setting, this charming work by a master composer is certain to become a favorite with many conductors and their choruses.

HOWARD SWAN
University of California, Irvine



Anna confronts her family in a scene from Pina Bausch's production of *Die sieben Todsünden* with the Wuppertaler Tanztheater.

Opera on Record 3. Edited by Alan Blyth. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1984. 356 pp.

In his third volume of critical essays collected from a variety of primarily British contributors, Blyth ends with a chapter entitled "The Stage Works of Kurt Weill." It follows discographical discourses on Cherubini's *Medée*, Donizetti's Tudor Queens, Offenbach's lighter stage works, *La Gioconda*, a smattering of Puccini and Verdi, Johann Strauss' and Richard Strauss' works, an examination of English opera in this century, and *Porgy and Bess*, among others. It is the final section of the book and, quite extraordinarily, seems to have been intended as some sort of wind-up or summary of all that has come before.

Rodney Milnes, a deputy editor of *Opera*, opera critic of *The Spectator* and "a regular broadcaster," has written an article on Weill which demonstrates a clear enthusiasm for the material and evidence of a thorough survey of secondary sources. Despite his diligence and obvious good intentions, however, his discussion of the recorded output of Kurt Weill perpetuates some of the very fictions he set out to correct. Like so much of the available literature on Weill, Milnes' essay is sympathetic for many of the wrong reasons.

Milnes gets off on the wrong foot by placing the Kurt Weill Foundation at Yale, the home of the Weill/Lenya Archive only. The Foundation, and its research center, are located squarely in the heart of New York City. He repeats the well-circulated myth that Weill did not speak German once he decided to become an American citizen; in fact, he and Lenya often spoke and wrote in their native tongue to each other before 1939 and with friends and relatives whose English was not good enough to sustain conversation. Milnes mentions the two published biographies of Weill (Sanders and Jarman), but they cannot be truly considered "major" biographies; they are "popular" (and only one—not both—is by an American).

After a preamble which sets forth a discussion of Klemperer's accusation that Weill was ruined when he turned to Broadway, Milnes separates his subject matter by work and takes each one under his musical microscope. A problem which many Americans reading this article may have is the use of specific words which have slightly different meanings on the opposite sides of the Atlantic. For example, Milnes describes *Street Scene* as an "urban folk opera." Although in no way a "folk opera" as is *Down in the Valley*, which relies on five well-known folk songs for thematic and plot material (not three, as Milnes states in his brief essay on that work), *Street Scene* does gather a certain musical strength from the sounds of a city like New York. We can hear the subway racing through Mrs. Maurrant's aria; there is a definite picture of urban-ritual in the "Morning Music" which opens Act

II; the choral and comprimario pieces do have a basic blend of metropolitan and ethnic sources about them to justify Milnes' use of the word *folk* in its broadest sense when describing the opera.

He harps all too often on influences. At one point he suggests that there are "echoes of Britten's *Peter Grimes*" in *Street Scene*, admitting in the same sentence that Weill could not possibly have heard the work! It brings to mind an immediate question: what creative artist has not been influenced by someone somewhere along the way? He is correct when he points out that Weill used popular American idioms in his earlier, German stage works: the tone and quality of them, but not the contents. He is wrong when he suggests that Weill's American oeuvre moves over that thin line between inspiration and copying: Weill never copied anyone except Weill.

Unfortunately, Milnes has not been able to present us with a complete discography of Weill's stage works, and he acknowledges this in his preamble. He does refer to performances on records he has not included in his listings; this is consistent with the other articles in the book. For example, he mentions Hildegard Knef's recording of "Pirate Jenny" from the miserable 1964 film of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, but he doesn't refer us to the recording. His listed item, instead, is the English-language version with Martha Schlamme. Considering Milnes' half-recommendation of Knef's recording, it would be nice to know where he found it.

His comments on the Joseph Papp production of the same work make little sense: "After a ponderous start Stanley Silverman catches all the humor of the score...and this is altogether the funniest recording of the piece and so, to my mind, one of the best." It certainly is a funny, in the "most peculiar" sense, recording, but not one to be presented in so positive a manner. Silverman has completely re-orchestrated and rearranged the score, and there are cuts everywhere. Here Weill's work as a composer is distorted and turned around to suit the musical ego of some lesser talent. If Milnes had not pointed out later in his article (in the section on *Lost in the Stars*) that Weill scored "his own music as a matter of course," unlike most Broadway tunesmiths (including Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers, and Stephen Sondheim), this praise of Silverman might make sense. However, taken in context, it does not.

Our author continues in this vein, pointing out that when "his [Weill's] numbers are given in arrangements, the difference is startling and the results depressing." And yet he praises Philip Chevron's pop arrangements of five songs from *Happy End* (as a demonstration of "Weill's continuing appeal to today's young"). There are so many others he could have mentioned, not the least of which is the recording of "Alabama Song" by the rock group The Doors, whose hurdy-gurdy rock arrangement was famous in its day. The group sings notes around the melody, and the inevitable rock-group instrumentation totally disregards the composer's intentions; I won't begin to attempt a description of the vocal harmonies. Would Milnes have praised this

recording in quite the same way as he does the Chevron? I suppose he might have.

Taken all in all, Milnes' collection of recording references, while not complete, is relatively comprehensive. It is gratifying in particular to find an Englishman who appreciates Weill's Broadway works and places them alongside the German. It is impossible, however, to read the article and come away without feeling that the author felt he was, somehow, slumming. Milnes endeavors to color slightly the reader's opinion of Weill's bright, particular musical style. Comments such as, "The case of Weill—against him as well as for him—remains not proven," and "Weill carefully considered the audiences he was writing for, both in Germany and America," and, "Songs for children are Weill's only Klemperer-style concessions to Broadway taste," leave a funny taste in the mouth.

Milnes praises, analyzes, makes "popular" mistakes supported by "popular" biographies, and leaves true scholarship to other critics and authors. To his credit, he has admitted his personal likes and dislikes among the works he discusses, and he does infer that Weill was, perhaps, "probably the last great composer of tunes, and" he continues, "you can learn more about melody by studying the structure of a Weill tune than one by practically any other composer—and as such his niche among the immortals is secure."

PETER BERGMAN

Association for Recorded Sound Collections

Briefly Noted...

In his headline-making book, *The Abandonment of the Jews* [New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, p.90], David Wyman, professor of history at the University of Massachusetts, mentions Ben Hecht and Kurt Weill as being among the few who attempted to alert the American public to the horror of the ongoing Holocaust. In his books, his television interviews, and his public addresses, Wyman has lauded Hecht and Weill for their initiative in launching the pageant *We Will Never Die* (with music by Weill), dedicated to those murdered by the Nazis. As Wyman reports, Madison Square Garden overflowed for the performance, with thousands braving the cold outside as a sign of their solidarity with the victims of Nazi oppression.

GUY STERN

Wayne State University

RECORDINGS

Knickerbocker Holiday.

Walter Huston, Jeanne Madden, and supporting cast. AEI 1148. (1 disc, mono)

One Touch of Venus. Mary Martin, Kenny Baker; Maurice Abravanel. AEI 1136. (1 disc, mono)

Clearly the gentlemen at AEI Records would have us believe that their recently released album, *Knickerbocker Holiday*, is a reissue of a long-forgotten original cast recording of the 1938 Kurt Weill-Maxwell Anderson musical comedy.

And for a moment or two the illusion holds. The handsome packaging features the appointments of a right and proper original cast album: punchy marquee billing ("The Playwrights Producing Company presents Walter Huston in the new musical comedy") over a lively and colorful logo of Mr. Huston as Pieter Stuyvesant prancing with two maidens of old New Amsterdam; on the reverse, authentic production photos laid out neatly among some rather too enthusiastic liner notes. Yes, it's all in order right down to the promotional sticker proclaiming that the album "Contains great songs from the score including 'Clickety-Clack,' 'September Song,' 'Entrance of the Council,' 'One Touch of Alchemy,' 'It Never Was You,' 'Scars,' 'To War! To War!'"

Therein the illusion collapses. To be sure, these tunes are all there, but with the exception of a stock ballad, tellingly entitled "Nowhere to Go But Up," that's all that's there. Including, indeed! Moreover, only "September Song," "It Never Was You," and "Scars" (an engaging vaudeville specialty for Huston) get anything more than the most perfunctory treatment. If you so much as sneeze, you'll miss "Clickety-Clack" and "To War! To War!" and I am still trying to find "The Entrance of the Council."

In fact, the experience of listening to this album is pretty much a matter of jumping the stylus in an effort to find an elusive tune or two among the long passages of the Anderson libretto which are the sum and substance of this recording. For in truth this is not an original cast album at all, or anything near it. It is instead (as a very small footnote below the liner notes reveals), a reissue of a 1939 Theatre Guild on the Air radio production of the show.

Joey Discs has previously released the Theatre Guild broadcast [7243]—and continues to do so—with no liner notes save a banner proclaiming it to be "the original Walter Huston stage production starring Mr. Huston and a full cast." The AEI footnotes allude to this broadcast as well as to another recording session apparently made in 1945. AEI acknowledges—just barely—two conductors, Maurice Abravanel (who conducted the stage produc-

tion) and Harold Levy. Furthermore, two actresses, Jeanne Madden and Jean Darling, are credited in the role of Tina Tienhoven. The Joey release differs only in Huston's introductory scene and some of the banter of the council, and in the omission of "Clickety-Clack" and "To War! To War!". One might have assumed that the 1945 recording was simply a replay of the 1939 version with a few cuts restored, but the credits for Darling and Levy suggest an entirely new undertaking. But where and why and under whose sponsorship I have been at a loss to uncover.



Mary Martin as Venus.
Drawing: William Madison

The overall effect of each recording is precisely the same; in other words, if you own the Joey album, you need not buy the AEI (unless you simply cannot continue without those eight bars of "Clickety-Clack").

It is impossible to tell if the recording is a truncated pressing of the broadcast or if the radio treatment itself so abridged and rearranged the show that it plays like one of those "tab" musicals that used to tour the lesser stock and vaudeville houses a generation ago. What is clear is that it follows Anderson's libretto and Weill's score in a most haphazard fashion.

As one might expect, this radio stitchery selected only the most conventionally styled "Broadway" aspects of the score (which is not to deny that they represent some of its loveliest moments), so that the selections here, such as they are, present a most lopsided impression of Weill's contributions. In fact, the score to *Knickerbocker Holiday* is full of acid parodies and mocking set pieces that

link the work more closely to *Threepenny Opera* than to *Touch of Venus*. The truth of this score lies not in "September Song" but in the dichotomy between that openly sentimental plaint and such hard-nosed, anti-Roosevelt/New Deal, satirical items as "The One Indispensable Man," "Sitting in Jail," and "Our Ancient Liberties." Even accounting for all its other frustrations, a sense of this dichotomy is what this album most gravely lacks for the serious listener.

Once the limitations are recognized, this album does have its charms. Jeanne Madden (truly of the original cast) and David Brooks serve up a full-throated version of "It Never Was You" that is genuinely stirring. Of course, it is a treat to have a taste of Mr. Huston's altogether witty and vigorous characterization, gathering true integrity with his not-completely guileless delivery of "September Song." His performance emerges as one of those celebrated moments of musical comedy that seems to have been everything that the legend would have us believe. Some of Anderson's New Deal jibes have acquired an appealing quaintness which, along with several outbursts of that wonderfully healthy canned laughter lend a warm glow to the proceedings.

However, these highlights do not really compensate for the promise of a full score that simply isn't there to be heard. Finally then, this album is a tease. In frustration, one surrenders to the dream of a new, definitive recording of the score. Maybe Robert Preston as Pieter Stuyvesant....

If the recent reissue of *One Touch of Venus* (1943) is not precisely an original cast recording either, it is something considerably more substantial than an abbreviated radio broadcast.

First released by Decca on 78's, it reflects the nature of the recording industry's interest in the Broadway musical as a collection of hit tunes touched with a bit of stardust, highlights waxed over studio-style by the star and his or her opposite number. Only in the post-Marc Blitzstein and Rodgers-and-Hammerstein years would we get the simulation of the energy and the presence of an actual—and complete—performance.

So what do we get of *Venus*? The album offers eight songs (the complete score consists of 14 individual numbers), two performers from the Broadway cast (Mary Martin and one of her leading men, Kenny Baker, who—perhaps as recompense for the absence of his big solo, "How Do I Love You?"—takes over "West Wind," the big solo of his co-star, John Boles), a studio chorus (behind "West Wind" and the "Venus in Ozone Heights" ballet), a pick-up quartette to help Mr. Baker lament "The Trouble With Women" (in the show this number features the four male principals). If it is not precisely clear whether the orchestra is the show's own pit band or a studio ensemble, we do get the show's actual conductor, Maurice Abravanel, Weill's long-time associate. With the orchestra, for extra fillip, we get

two cuts featuring the show's two major ballet sequences (albeit considerably abridged). In short, what we get is selections, bits and pieces.

But if bits and pieces were the order of the day, let it be said that these were shrewdly chosen (even in the heyday of the original cast album, the inclusion of *any* dance music was unusual), artfully presented (catching Martin in splendid voice), and given their full *musical* due (Abravanel's firm hand is everywhere apparent). If the recording as a whole tends to smack a bit more of the studio than the theater—and it does—and if the results are somewhat studied—and they are—blame it on the *modus operandi*, not the artistry at hand. After all, in perspective, Decca's *One Touch of Venus* presents the *emergence* of the original cast album.

One must, however, register a further caution. Even with the two ballet selections, the Decca recording does not capture the true character of the score. As with the *Knickerbocker* broadcast, the *Venus* album samples only the score's easier, more accessible aspects when in fact the score contains a good collection of Weill's usual displays of intellectual wit. Lyricist Ogden Nash proved a stimulating companion for this side of Weill's theater style; indeed, such Weill-Nash doodles as "Very, Very, Very," "Dr. Crippen," and "Way Out West in New Jersey" are considerably jazzier—simply more effective theater pieces—than their somewhat strained counterparts in *Knickerbocker Holiday* or, for that matter, *Lady in the Dark*. But all of these were left at the theater.

The album does demonstrate that—even in the midst of a fanciful story—Weill was a master of character writing of a very high order. *Venus'* development from bewildered alien to cosmopolitan woman (and, ultimately, to her own "country cousin," a *coup de théâtre* resolution to her suitor's needs as well as her own) is all illuminated at every step in the score. With Martin sensitive to all of Weill's nuances, *Venus* emerges as a completely musical character who sustains *both* the interior emotions of the show as well as its exterior drive. In the musical comedy lexicon, not a great many other characters accomplish this.

In *One Touch of Venus* Weill put aside the set pieces and parodies of his previous Broadway scores in favor of the richer rewards of writing for character, a path which was to lead four years later to the remarkable theatrical score that is *Street Scene*. If the Decca/AEI *Venus* presents the emergence of the original cast album, it handily presents the emergence of Weill and the musical comedy form, too.

CHARLES A. WILLARD
Carnegie-Mellon University

NEW PUBLICATIONS

ARTICLES

Amzoll, Stefan. "Kritik der Radioproduktion." *Musik und Gesellschaft* X (1983): 601-605.

Collisani, Amalia. "Der Jasager: Musica e 'distacco'." *Rivista Italiana di Musicologia* XVIII,2 (1982): 310-32.

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BOOKS

Oehlmann, Werner. *Oper in vier Jahrhunderten*. Stuttgart: Belser, 1984. [Includes discussion of *Die Bürgschaft*]

Feuchtwanger, Marta. *Nur eine Frau*. München: Langen Müller, 1983.

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Pahlen, Kurt. *Oper der Welt*. Zürich: Schweizer Verlagshaus, 1981.

Roters, Eberhard, et al. *Berlin 1910-1933*. New York: Rizzoli, 1982.

Sternburg, Wilhelm von. *Lion Feuchtwanger: Ein deutsches Schriftstellerleben*. Königstein: Athenäum, 1984.

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DISSERTATIONS

Diel, Gunther. "Das Orchester bei Kurt Weill." Ph.D. dissertation, Frankfurt am Main. [In progress]

Strange, Joachim. "Rundfunk und Neue Musik." Ph.D. dissertation, Freiburg im Breisgau. [In progress]

RECORDINGS

Knickerbocker Holiday. Walter Huston. (AEI 1148, Mono).

Lotte Lenya singt Brecht und Weill. (European reissue of *Die sieben Todsünden* and *Happy End*). Lotte Lenya, Wilhelm Brückner-Rüggeberg, cond. (CBS 88 028, Stereo).

One Touch of Venus. Mary Martin, Kenny Baker. (AEI 1136, Mono).

September Song and Other American Theatre Songs of Kurt Weill. Lotte Lenya (European reissue; CBS MP 39513; remastered).

September Song. Ian McCulloch. (Korova KOW 40 T 249196-0). [Also in video format]

PERFORMANCES

AUSTRIA

- Happy End*, Vienna, Volkstheater, Joseph Milo, dir. Begins February 1985
Die sieben Todsünden, Vienna, Brahms-Saal, Musikverein, 25 February 1985
"Weill Revue", Vienna, Schauspielhaus, Schiller-Theater, Jan. 85

CANADA

- The Threepenny Opera*, Victoria, Univ. of Victoria, 16, 18, 19, January 1985

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

- Die Dreigroschenoper*, East Berlin, Brandenburger Theater, C.M. Winter, dir. Begins 22 Jan 1985
Die Dreigroschenoper, Karl-Marx-Stadt, S. Hoechst, dir., Begins Feb. 1985
"Vom Schiffbauerdamm zum Broadway" (Revue), East Berlin, Berliner Ensemble, with Gisela May; R. Bohm, cond., Opens 2 March 1985
Der Silbersee, Karl-Marx-Stadt, March 1985
"Unterwegs zu Weill" (Revue), Landestheater Dessau, Dessau, Opens 2 March 1985

ENGLAND

- Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Bristol, University of Bristol Opera, 7-9 February 1985
Happy End, Derby, Derby College, Markham May, dir., February 1985
Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Burnley, Macclesfield, Bowdon Stewart Bedford, cond. 19 February 1985
Mahagonny Songspiel (Mahagonny Songs), London, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London Sinfonietta, Simon Rattle, cond., 16-17 April 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Leeds, Grand Theatre, Opera North, 16-19 January 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Berkhamsted, Civic Centre, January-March 1985

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

- Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Frankenthal, Frankenthal Schule, January 1985
Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Bremen, Theater am Goetheplatz, Schauspielensemble, Arno Wüstenhoefer, Begins January 1985
Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Berlin, Theater des Westens, B. Karp, dir., Begins 26 April 1985
Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Hamburg, Kampnagelfabrik, June 1985
Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Recklinghausen, Rheinische Musikfest Kölner Rundfunk-Orchester, Anja Silja, 5 June 1985
Die Dreigroschenoper, Erlangen, Markgrafentheater, Gemeinnütziger Verein January 1985

- Die Dreigroschenoper*, Regensburg, Stadttheater, V. Kamm, dir., Begins 19 January 1985
Die Dreigroschenoper, Minden, Besselymnasium, 23-25 January 1985
Die Dreigroschenoper, Kiel, "Papiertheater," 7 February 1985
Happy End, Wuppertal, Wuppertaler Bühnen, Begins 23 January 1985
Happy End, Cologne, Bühne des Forum, Schauspiel Frankfurt, 20 March 1985
Happy End, Oberhausen, Theater Oberhausen, May 30-June 16 1985
Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Bielefeld, Hochschulorchester, Michael Hoyer, cond. 11 February 1985
Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Stans, Stans Collegium Sanct Fidelis, 3-4 May 1985
Die sieben Todsünden, Düsseldorf, Württemberg-Kammerorchester, Milva, 6 March 1985
Die sieben Todsünden, Munich, Theater am Gärtnerplatz, Günter Pick, chor., Begins 12 March 1985
Der Silbersee, Recklinghausen, Theater im Depot, Ruhrfestspiele, Christiane Bruhn, dir., 15 February 1985
"Weill Revue", West Berlin, Theater des Westens, Begins 10 April, 1985
"Weill Revue", Wiesbaden, Hessisches Staatstheater, Maifestspiele, Begins May 1985
"Weill Revue", Staatstheater Wiesbaden, Theater des Westens, Maifestspiele May 1985
"Weill Revue", Harburg, Rieckhof Center, "Bittersüss" Troupe, 3 February 1985
"Weill Revue", Cologne, Liberales Zentrum, Peter Thomas Heydric, 2 March 1985

HOLLAND

- Frauentanz*, Amsterdam, Concertgebouw, 30 March 1985

INDONESIA

- The Threepenny Opera*, Jakarta, Indonesia, Jakarta International School, 7-9 March, 1985

ISRAEL

- Die sieben Todsünden*, Israeli Sinfonietta, 1-3 June 1985

ITALY

- Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, Milan, Scuola Civica di Milano, Emilio Pomarico, dir, January 1985
"Pantomime I" from *Der Protagonist*, Milan, Scuola Civica di Milano, Emilio Pomarico, dir, January 1985

PORTUGAL

- Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Lisbon, Compania de Opera do Teatro Sao Carlos, John Neshling, cond, 21, 22, 24 Marcy 1985
Songs, Lisbon, Compania de Opera do Teatro Sao Carlos, Joy Bogen, soprano, 23 March 1985

UNITED STATES

Berlin to Broadway, Los Angeles, Zephyr Theater, Begins 10 February 1985
 "Circus Dream" from *Lady in the Dark*, Fredonia, SUNY Fredonia, Opera Theatre, Susan Weinman, dir., 1-3 March 1985
Happy End, Philadelphia, Wilma Theatre, Jiri Zizka, dir., Begins 21 May 1985
Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Chicago, Orchestra Hall, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond., 23-25 May 1985
A Kurt Weill Cabaret, New York, Clurman Theatre, Martha Schlamme and Alvin Epstein, Begins 12 December 1985 for open run prior to national farewell tour
 Songs, Los Angeles, Arnold Schoenberg Institute, Marni Nixon, soprano, 29 March 1985
 Songs, New York, Merkin Concert Hall, Joy Bogen, soprano, 3 March 1985
Street Scene, Chicago, Northeastern Illinois University, Opera Workshop, 27 February-March 2 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Bozeman, Montana, Montana State University, 23 January-2 February 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Pownal/North Adams, North Adams State College, 30 January-2 February 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Univ. of Tennessee, 15-23 February 1985
The Threepenny Opera, New Haven, Hopkins High School, 1-2 February 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Abilene, Hardin-Simmons University, 19-23 February 1985

The Threepenny Opera, Cincinnati, University of Cincinnati, 21-24 February 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Lake Charles, McNeese State University, 7-16 March 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Stony Brook, SUNY at Stony Brook, 20-30 March 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Purchase, Manhattanville College, 22-31 March 1985
The Threepenny Opera, San Francisco, S.F. Conservatory of Music, 22-24 March 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA, Begins April, 1985
The Threepenny Opera Los Angeles, Loyola High School, 1-12 May 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Los Angeles, East West Players, May-July 1985
The Threepenny Opera, Kent, Kent School, 26-28 May 1985
The Threepenny Opera, San Francisco, Eureka Theatre Company, June-August 1985
Whitman Songs, Evanston, Northwestern University, Andrew Parks, baritone, 30 May 1985

WALES

The Threepenny Opera, Welsh National Opera tour to Wrexham, Colwyn Bay, Bangor, Harlech, Aberystwyth, Newtown, Lampeter, Milford Haven, Neath; A. Greenwood, cond., C. Sherloock, dir., January 1985.

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