
Fifteen of the seventeen papers assembled in A New Orpheus were first delivered at an international conference on Kurt Weill held at Yale University in November 1983, organized under the joint sponsorship of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music and the Yale University Library, which—through the efforts of Kim Kowalke, the Foundation’s indefatigable President—had acquired Lotte Lenya’s personal archive of manuscripts, correspondence, and memorabilia pertaining to her own and her husband’s careers. The conference thus signaled, in Kowalke’s words, “the beginning of a new era in Weill scholarship.” This was no hyperbole, and hearty congratulations are indeed in order. The Weill/Lenya Archive, along with the Weill-Lenya Research Center maintained by the Foundation in New York, have created the means to support primary research on Weill and his times on an unprecedented scale. Among the earliest beneficiaries of these newly favorable conditions have been the authors of the pieces included here, many of which, as Kowalke informs us in his Editor’s Preface, “have been revised and substantially expanded from the versions initially presented at Yale and benefit from access to material in the Weill/Lenya Archive.”

This first harvest of the new era impresses first of all by virtue of its seriousness and its scholarly rigor, the latter worn in many cases anything but lightly. The pervading, occasionally annoying, but consistent academic overkill, along with the slightly embattled or defensive tone adopted by some of the contributors, are perhaps understandable in a newly emergent branch of musicological endeavor that is centered around a figure of proverbial ambiguity, and may reflect some lingering insecurities or unsettled ambivalences about Weill’s status vis-à-vis the academy. It strikes me, an outsider to Weill research who has been honored with an invitation to review this collection of Weilliana for the Foundation’s newsletter as something of a designated denizen of the academy, that one of the primary objectives of the “new era” might well be the exorcism of some of the demons, survivors from the old era, that continue—needlessly, in my opinion—to haunt these essays.

One demon, of course, is Brecht. Weill scholars have become inordinately sensitive about what the index to this volume lists as the “Weill-Brecht collaboration, myths on”—the chief one being that Weill was, as Stephen Hinton phrases it (p. 75), merely the “musical executor of Brecht’s ideas and inspiration.” To be sure, Brecht may have unfairly cast Weill in that light when Weill was no longer in a position to retort; and, as Hinton continues, it may be that “Brecht exegeses” have reinforced the invidious notion in “their reams of literature” (though that structure surely does not apply to the Brecht scholars whose work appears here). But no musician will believe it who knows anything of the pre-post-Brecht Weill, and the most persuasive way to combat the myth in a publication for musicians is by implication, as by-product of an intelligent exposition of Weill on his own terms—something the Brecht exegeses have not the wherewithal to do. Explicit denials have a ring of special pleading; nor is it persuasive factually to overturn Weill’s independence of his librettist, as Douglas Jarman seems to do when he concludes a very interesting discussion of Lulu as Epic Opera, partly bracketing the Brecht in Weill/Brecht (“The musical language of Lulu bears little relationship to the musical language of Weill, and yet the ends to which this language is put seem to be totally [!] Weillian... It is unfortunate that Weill... did not live to see the extent to which his own ‘new opera’ was to influence Berg’s second opera” (p. 156). None of the evidence presented in the body of the article justifies the assertion of Weill as single-handed influence on Berg; but Jarman is looking for poetic justice (viz., with respect to Demon no. 2; see below.

Still less persuasive are the attempts one finds scattered here to invert the myth, casting Brecht as Triby and Weill as Swengali. Ronald K. Shull, for example, is eager to parallel the circumstances surrounding the creation of Die sieben Todsünden into a “watershed,” the “historical point at which Weill succeeded in establishing his dominance over his art ego” (pp. 151-156), the proof being the absence of any later collaborations between the two—surely an original employment of the argumentum ex nihilum. Matthew Scott quotes without comment Weill’s sleeve note to the original cast recording of Street Scene, in which the Brecht collaboration is acknowledged as one of the many fruits of Weill’s “decision...to get the leading dramatists of our time interested in the problems of the musical theater” (p. 292). Had this been a comment of Brecht’s on Weill, one feels sure, there would have been comment aplenty. The ultimate turnabout comes in the last essay in the collection, Larry Stempp’s (again on Street Scene), where Weill’s relationship to Brecht is characterized as one in which the composer “virtually dictated the kind of texts he wanted his lyricist to write” (p. 329).

One understands this partisanship, but it does not lower the level of discourse. One sympathizes all the more when one reads John Fuegi’s absorbing essay on the business aspects of the Brecht/Weill partnership, in which the librettist is portrayed as an unmitigated monster, the composer as a sacrificial lamb. And yet, the fact that a leading Brechtian can write so unflinchingly about his man’s darkest traits shows up the still fairly hagiographic work of the Weillians, some of whom are no doubt constrained by bonds of affection to Lenya if not to her husband, and many of whom seem troubled at the prospect, or the potential consequences, of tarnishing an image they should be vanishing. Fuegi’s almost gleeful candor implies utter confidence in Brecht’s unshakeable place in the pantheon; one can find something like it in musicology with respect to Wagner, say, or Stravinsky. The attitude of Weillians seems more akin to the nervousness one used to encounter among apologists for the Soviet Union, or that encountered among apologists of the state of Israel today: if there are faults, let it not be spoken aloud lest it comfort our enemies. A case in point is John Graziano’s clearly embarrassee yet resolutely brave-fronted treatment of the crushingly banal Down in the Valley, which abound in equivocations like “Whatever one thinks of it as a work of art, Down in the Valley is a compositional tour de force” (p. 302); or, “Perhaps one can question the validity of Weill’s complex harmonizations, but his settings are no more idiosyncratic in their way than those of Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson, or Roy Harris” (p. 315—cf. the misfit’s epigraph: “His brother was worse”); or, “While some critics have quibbled about whether or not [sic] Weill’s settings of the folk tunes are too sentimental, too sophisticated, or too ‘Hollywood; Down in the Valley appears to succeed on an artistic level appropriate for its intended audience despite any objections” (p. 315—cf. any network executive’s defense of his prime time programming). One gets the uneasy feeling, reading sentences like these, that Weill scholarship may still be a long way from an authentic Weill criticism.

And this brings us to a second demon: Weill’s bad reputation among many whose reputations, at least in academia today, are unassailable. First and foremost among the latter is Schoenberg (‘‘Weill’s’’) is the only mu-
Bertolt Brecht...begründet worden ist’—see the facsimile in Alexander Ringer’s article, “Schoenberg, Weill and Epic Theater,” in the Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, IV [1980], p. 85). In the other intrusion, he presses an arch and patently ironic reference to Die Dreigroschenoper by Berg, quoted by Hinton elsewhere in the volume, into support to the contention that Berg was not opposed to Weill; indeed the remark is “not unfavorable,” as Kowalke puts it—but only because it is altogether non-evaluative. In his preface to Chapman’s piece Kowalke musters every favorable comment about Schoenberg he can find in the correspondence of Weill’s student and prentice years, notes the fact that Schoenberg had nominated the pre-Dreigroschenoper Weill for membership in the Prussian Academy of Arts in 1927 (recte 2 January 1928; Kowalke neglects to mention that Weill was one of eight nominees), and concludes that “their erstwhile...admiration for each other’s music suggests that, for a time at least, their musical idioms were not altogether antithetical” (p. 106)—a pretty craven litotes, and a non sequitur into the bargain.

I must say I find distasteful this attempt to purchase for Weill a measure of academic respectability on such demeaning and, when all is said and done, irrelevant terms; for Weill and Schoenberg can be musically compared only on levels that leave their respective essences untouched. Meanwhile, misleading analogies from the volume at hand is any attempt to view and characterize him. Editor Kowalke actually does this rather effectively with respect to Schoenberg, in an editorial prefacing to an article by his colleague Alan Chapman, marshalling a number of quotations both from Schoenberg and from Weill to place them within contrasting aesthetic traditions. One, which Kowalke calls “shocking” (p. 103), is especially revealing of the aristocratic backgrounds and pretensions of the modern movement—something literary and fine arts critics have known for centuries, of course, and familiar enough to musicologists who have investigated the Parisian varieties of musical modernism: Schoenberg, in 1924, bewails the passing of the “fairest, alas bygone, days of our great Middle-European tradition in such an article by his colleague Alan Chapman, insisting the Parisian language''—the matters with which Chapman purports to deal—are at least as much artifacts of usage as they are of vocabulary. The latter is only so much inert material; style consists in actual, active deployment in context. To assume otherwise is to hold, say, that Tristan speaks the “harmonic language” of Reinhard Keiser’s Octava, or that Petrushka shares the “idiom” of Strauss’s Elektra or Ravel’s Jeu d’eau. Chapman ends his essay with the fatal admission that he cannot determine as yet whether the similarities he has uncovered between Weill and Schoenberg were not merely elements shared by a whole generation of composers” (p. 129). He hasn’t done his homework. Had he read Van den Toorn he would know that set 3-5 is a fundamental harmonic component of The Rite of Spring. Had he read Antokoletz (or Perle, or Treitler) he would know that it is an equally fundamental component of many number of works by Bartok. And is there any composer in the early generation of modernists who did not use what Perle calls the “interval 5 cycle” (which generates set 3-9)?

As for Adorno, his comment quoted above irritated David Drew—the dean of Weill studies today, and a man who thinks and writes on a level far beyond that of most of his companions here—into producing a pearl of an essay on one of Weill’s obscurer works, Der Kußhandel, that is at once the longest, the widest-ranging, and easily the most provocative in the book. Arguing that this unproduced, unpublished operaetta holds the key to the puzzling metaphorism in Weill’s creative outlook that paralleled his transplantation to these shores, Drew really sinks his teeth into the central Weill problem: viz., Where did the American Weill come from? And yet, even if he must do his share of failing, it seems. He cannot quote Adorno (pp. 238-49) without reflexively offering eulogistic pap from Maxwell Anderson by way of antidote (p. 217—that he puts the antidote ahead of the poison disguises but does not alter the plot). And with reference to Weill-as-Offenbach, the defense seems to be 1) that that was a fine, subversive thing to be (pp. 221f), 2) that Weill’s humanity took him willy-nilly far beyond Offenbach’s heartless frivolity (pp. 232f), and 3) that his Offenbach-affinity was actually a “tribute”
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born of Jewish solidarity in the face of Hitler (p. 245—cf. the schoolboy’s defense on being chaste for damaging a library book: “First of all I never borrowed it; second of all it was damaged when I got it; and third of all I returned it in perfect condition”). In the end, though, content with none of these, Drew unexpectedly invokes Weill’s Inbom Germanic seriousness, which rendered him fundamentally incapable of operetta, after all. The author thus purchases Weill’s exemption from Adorno’s strictures at a desperate price, indeed; for the only way to have Weill “succeed” against his critic is to have Der Kuhhandel fail: “Every musical idea that is dispatched to the playing fields where parody traditiously lays its booby traps finds itself routed toward the front-line trenches and sooner or later it is mown down—whether by a sense of the hostile realities it is consciously confronting, or by an unseen adversary from behind the lines, who is none other than Weill himself, instinctively defending the German heritage he is trying to disavow” (p. 246).

So beautifully sustained is the metaphor that one almost forgets that the Weill therein described is a figure, a strawman—contra-Adorno. And yet note how subtly Drew’s portrait of Weill as parodist mangue prepares the ground for Weill the Broadway sentimental. The essay is a veritable masterpiece, albeit one of casuistry. Its strategies are echoed in Ian Kemp’s almost equally nimble essay on Der Silbersee, where, with what Stravinsky would have called “thickly bespectacled hindsight,” the author points to the way that “in its melodramas, Weill began to disentangle the components of his inner conflict, the ruthlessness and the charm, and in the process to announce [!] the gradual retreat of the former and the growing strength of the latter” (p. 139). This is bad history, if you agree with Hinton, elsewhere in the same volume, that “it cannot be a historian’s task to describe past events using terms defined according to connotations subsequently acquired... rather the task should be to restore to past events the openness in which they occurred” (p.71).

But then, the Broadway Weill—the third demon I mean to discuss—brings out the casuist in practically everyone who writes about him (or even merely admires him), and this seems primarily due to our academic brainwashing in which we are trained to place the highest of all premiums on unity. The unity of Weill’s career, though most writers pay it lip service, has thus far eluded formulation, and most Weill scholars simply duck the issue. Hardy less than did the editor’s own pathbreaking monograph of 1979, the present volume centers on “Kurt Weill in Europe,” with only three contributions out of seventeen devoted to Weill-in-America—and of these only one is devoted to the “pure” Broadway output, the others to his east/west, popular/classical “fusion” pieces (Down in the Valley, Street Scene), the very items that have proved importable back to Europe.

The imbalance may have come about, as the Editor says (p. xiii), “by default, not by design,” since, as he admits, “few musical scholars have been attracted to either analytical or rigorous historical study of the repertoire of the American musical theater.” But the emphasis is misleading: the contributors to this book to are not all musical scholars. Kowalek’s appeal to default implies that it will be eventually remedied. Elsewhere (p. 13) he brands as “another longstanding myth” the notion that the music of the Broadway period (he loads the dice by calling it the “post-Brecht” period) “lapses into sentimentality [or] caters to commercialism.” But, on the evidence of the three pieces in this very volume that treat the period in question, only special pleading can support the charge of myth-making. And the default, I fear, will never be remedied from within a scholarly community that recoils instinctively from notions of sentimentality or commercialism. In other words, as long as Weill scholarship remains committed a priori to uniting Weill’s career under the negis of approved modernist values, he will ever remain an unsolved problem.

If anything, these views seem stronger now than when David Drew wrote his New Grove article on Weill, in which he posited flat out and with seeming equanimity that the two Weills were irreconcilable, the second having decisively renounced and rejected the first. Now, it seems, a pesky modernist superego personified in Adorno has been pressing Drew himself back from this view toward one that locates the seeds of Weill’s American style in the horrors of Nazism and holocaust, which overwhelmed the ironically detached modernism of the Weimar period and fostered a new escapism.

That’s no explanation, though, only an excuse. John Rockwell, happy label-slapper that he is, thinks he’s found a solution to the quandary by dubbing Weill the first “post-modernist” (p. 51). That’s one way of exercising a demon, all right—learn its name, which then becomes your amulet. “Post-modernism” won’t work for Weill, though, because it was a completely domesticated, bourgeois “populism” he embraced in what was still pre-modernist America, adapting himself to a completely established theatrical code without in any way challenging its conventions (I await the revisionist retort). And Rockwell goes completely off the rails at the end of his paper—an undigested lump from his Berkeley dissertation on the political vicissitudes of the Berlin State Opera—with the outrageously pat suggestion that since Hans Conried, the dramaturg of the Kroll Opera in Berlin, confessed to Weill that he “constantly pondered whether the moment had not come to set up an uncompromising musical theater on a private basis” (that is, beyond the reach of bureaucratic interference), then, ergo, “the commercial musicals Weill composed in New York were a direct[,] consequence of the failure of state-mandated operatic reform in Berlin.” This won’t wash. Whatever the “private” theater was that Weill composed for in America, it was not uncompromising, and neither was Weill.

There is no way, in short, that the American Weill can be subsumed under the rubric “A New Orpheus.” The title of the book already proclaims its modernist commitment, like the text of the eponymous 1925 Weill-Goll cantata. That text comes in for a fair amount of analysis in the book, first in a series of strained parallels by the Editor (pp. 2-5), and later by Hinton in a very stimulating discussion of the Berlin Weill in the context of the modernist shibboleths of his day—Neue Sachlichkeit, Gebrauchs- or Opium. And so on. The upshot is that Weill was committed to the rejection of the romantic idea of art as narcissis or hypnosis (or opiate-of-the-masses) in favor of an alert, wide-awake receptivity to, and hardboiled critique of, the dynamics of actual contemporary life (as socially experienced). Perhaps Die neue Sachlichkeit, a famous untranslatable with which Hinton wrestles briefly in a footnote, might best be rendered in English as “the new actuality.” In any case, it was the rendering of social experience that demanded the use of popular genres (e.g., what Weill called “elements of jazz... which superficially produce a more or less strong resemblance to the melodies of ‘light’ music,” and also the Kleinkunst and Künstler from which Alexander Ringer discusses so engagingly and authoritatively in connection with “The Socio-Musical World of Kurt Weill”). And hence, too, the famous tone Weill himself called attention to (“Die Oper—Wohnen”; quoted by Hinton on p. 73 and again by Stempel on p. 331) as appropriate for a truly actual musical theater—“thoroughly serious, bitter, accusing, and, even in the most pleasant context, ironic.”

That is just what Weill’s Broadway pieces are not, as Matthew Scott tells us in no uncertain terms in his piece about “Weill in Amer-
Among the works Weill wrote during this second phase of his career, Street Scene (1947) is perhaps the most telling signature of his work. The setting of the libretto is the back alleys of Greenwich Village, New York, in the 1880s. The Biblical elements in the libretto are compared with the work of Luigi Dallapiccola. The significance of the unification of the three movements is discussed in detail. It is evident that the composer was still aiming high at this time, looking forward to a more developed version of his work. The first movement, the Prelude, is a somber and dramatic orchestral piece, setting the tone for the rest of the work. The second movement, a Rhapsody, is a free and expansive section, while the third movement, the Finale, brings the work to a close with a triumphant and powerful statement. The composer's commitment to this work is evident in every movement, and it is clear that he was looking forward to more developments in his career.
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contains quotations, mostly through harmonic suggestions, from earlier works. The conductor gives the finale a turbulent and stirring performance.

Symphony no. 2, a work of Weill's maturity, is clearly the most interesting of the two compositions in the genre, and the most attractively presented, both in terms of performance and recording. Although one is grateful for this reissue, it is hoped that new interpretations will continue to be recorded. The singular merit of these symphonies as part of the twentieth-century symphonic repertoire justifies this wish.

GÜNTHER DIEHL
Frankfurt-am-Main

Stratas Sings Weill. Teresa Stratas, Y Chamber Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, conductor. None such 79131.

If Lotte Lenya was a unique, irreplaceable interpreter of Kurt Weill's songs, so is Teresa Stratas. That much was clear by Stratas's performances of Jenny in the Metropolitan Opera's 1979 production of Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, by her two recitals of rare Weill songs at New York's Whitney Museum during that run of Mahagonny performances, and by the Nonesuch recording that emerged from the Whitney recitals without quite duplicating their material. Now comes a new Stratas-Nonesuch enterprise, recorded during the winter of 1985-86, and devoted, unlike the first recording, entirely to theater songs, with the composer's own orchestration played by the Y Chamber Symphony under Gerard Schwarz. (True, there were a couple of gaps of several bars each in the orchestral materials, but the extrapolations sound seamless.) The new LP disc contains fifteen numbers that represent four German theater works, four American, and one French. It's Stratas's special talent to find the heart of each song, style, each mood, and to become a different singer, a different person, with every number. Lenya, on the other hand, would transform any given character into the self-created—not Well-created or Brecht-created and certainly not Maxwell Anderson-created—persona of smoke-voiced, tiger-eyed, tentacle-armed Angst that is the legend of Lenya. There was always one Lenya. There seems to be dozens of Stratas, all equally real.

This is not to say that the soprano avoids a consistent approach when a character, be she Venus, Lilian Holiday, or the Jenny of Mahagonny, has more than one song. The two songs from the 1943 musical, One Touch of Venus—‘I'm a Stranger Here Myself,’ which happens to take its title from a book by its lyricist, Ogden Nash, and ‘Foolish Heart’—both boast a post-urban sophistication nicely flavored with a warm intimacy that reminds you of Mary Martin, the show's piquant Venus. I'm not altogether happy with Stratas's zooming to a higher octave for emphasis at certain points, and the two songs are not highlights of the score. I'd much rather have heard Stratas curl her voice around the cool, insinuating tune of ‘Speak Low.’ But unwanted ascensions aside, she recalls some of the quality of an unjustly neglected show.

The ‘Havanna-Lied’ and ‘Denn wie man sich bettet’ from Mahagonny surely raise the spirits of us who sorely miss Stratas's Jenny at the Met. The latter song retains the singer's unforgettable blend of cold calculation, smiling pity, and sad self-recognition. The former seems nastier than ever. When Stratas, on the recording, sings ‘Ach, bedenken Sie, Herr Jakob Schmidt!’ the ‘m’ in ‘Schmidt’ is drawn out as if the blood is being drained from it, and the ‘id’ snaps like a trap.

Fennimore's forlorn Ich bin eine arme Verwundete from Der Silbersee (lyrics by George Kaiser for his great, much abused play) is never allowed to get maudlin, even though the music almost conspires toward such a result. Sentimentality is also neatly avoided in ‘It Never Was You' from Knickerbocher Holiday and ‘Lonely House' from Street Scene. (The former boasts Anderson's most moving, least pretentious poetry, and the latter lyric is Langston Hughes on a rare, soppybummer.) And while I'm in a complaining mood, I must say that Stratas's cheery zest doesn't quite mitigate the empty slickness, in both music and Ira Gershwin's words, of ‘One Life to Live’ from Lady in the Dark.

But the three numbers from Marie galante (1934 text by Jacques Deval) are a delight. ‘Le roi d'Aquitaine’ begins with Stratas invoking the three ducks of the table with the sort of saucy quacks that might have been quacked by Edith Piaf, but a suavely inviting soprano sound soon coats the barbs with sugar. ‘J'attend un navire’ reaches a fascinating midpoint between the anger of ‘Seeräuber Jenny’ in Die Dreigroschenoper and the innocent wonder of ‘My Ship’ from Lady in the Dark, and, oh, to hear Stratas do both of those on yet another record some day. The singer sustains well the long, devious line of ‘One Life to Live’ from Lady in the Dark.

Peachum's ‘Das Lieb von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens’ (more easily printed, I dare say, in Marc Blitzstein's translation as the ‘Useless Song’) from Threepenny is taken over with authority by the present singer, and it's the only time on the record that she sounds like Lenya. I can't imagine that it's anything other than an act of homage, and it surely succeeds.
Supply and Demand.
Dagmar Krause. Hannibal HNBL 1317.

Ooh Wallah Wallah.
King Kurt. Stiff SEEZ 52.

There's Nothing Quite Like Money.
The Happy End. Circus RING L100.

What has Hal Winer's Lost in the Stars wrought? That is not the question. Rock-oriented performers have been listening to and recording Weill compositions long before Hal Winer started his series of tribute albums, but certainly the critical acclaim accorded to his latest project will focus some much needed attention on Weill's role in creating the popular song forms that are the basis of many rock compositions.

Sadly, the burgeoning American independent labels have not been exploring this avenue, but several small British labels have released Weill-related product in the past year. 1985 saw the Happy End, an overtly political 26-piece band feature two songs from the work of the same name, as well as "Kanonensong," and several Brecht-Eisler collaborations on their first record. King Kurt, a more commercially-oriented project whose primary focus is hit-making, issued "Mack the Knife" as their first single, but got no further into the Weill oeuvre than that. Ironically enough, it is the former group's album which is entitled There's Nothing Quite Like Money.

The Happy End is a sincere outfit whose liner notes provide their customers with the proper political background of each of the thirteen songs on their debut. (The significance of Weill & Brecht's Happy End, for instance, is that it offended not only the Nazis, but the German theatergoing public as well). Despite good intentions, exuberance overpowers talent and they simply blare when they should be highlighting the arrangements (chaotic as they are) of Glenn Gordon and Matt Fox, behind singer Sarah-Jane Morris. King Kurt isn't too up on subtlety either. "Mack the Knife" is prefabricated dreck with a beat. They need talent, and need to change their name, which is, in fact, not a homage to Weill. Their album is called Ooh Wallah Wallah.

1986 has brought us Supply and Demand on Hannibal Records, an album of Brecht/Weill/Brecht/Eisler from Dagmar Krause, a soprano featured on the A&M Lost in the Stars compilation, whose talent and astute choice of producers deftly steps through the political rockabilly of the record's title. Joe Boyd, known for his work with the Fairport Convention, and later, for Richard and Linda Thompson, stays true to his folk roots by recording Krause and the twelve-piece ensemble clearly and simply. Richard Thompson's electric guitar fits neatly within the revised, but strongly reminiscent arrangements, and his contributions prove unexpectedly vital. Jason Osborn, musical director and pianist, relishes the gloomy surroundings of Ms. Krause's song selection, including what is, to the best of my knowledge, the only recording of "At Potsdam 'Unter den Eichen" in English, here translated by John Willett. Her rather harsh soprano voice works more on this defined, singable melody than on a justifiably screechy, but still unpleasant "Lily of the Valley."

With better-known material, she recalls Lenya in passing, sure to ruffle the feathers of some listeners, but generally succumbs to the melodrama school of Weill-interpretation, hitting home with her bloodcurdling "Moritat," but missing badly in a drumpy "Benares Song" from Mahagonny. Ms. Krause's record is the first product of the renewed interest in Weill that has been fostered by the efforts of Hal Winer and Paul Young. This reviewer looks forward to other such projects.

JAMES LYNCH
New York

The Threepenny Opera.

Set in Ashland—just north of the California border in the idyllic Rogue Valley—the Oregon Shakespeare Festival has been justly acclaimed (and sometimes decried) for offering abundant, consistently good, sometimes great, theater which stays close to the script, eschewing the revisionist fantasies of self-indulgent directors. Andrew Traister's well-oiled production of Threepenny Opera—furnished with imaginative rollaway sets against a backdrop of tenements by William Bloodgood, and superbly realistic costumes by Jeanie Davidson—ably realized the self-aware conventions of epic theater but was often embarrassed by the work's musical demands.

Several distinguished actors of necessity became singers: one was compelled to admire the valor with which they rose to the occasion even as one suffered a musically undernour-
A confrontation in Peachum's shop during the Oregon Shakespeare's Threepenny Opera.

ished performance. Despite brave talk about the refreshing quality of the untrained voice, it must be obvious by now that not every novice will blossom into a Lenya. For instance, Joe Vincent as Macheath—who is accustomed to acquitting himself in such roles as Jack Tanner in *Man and Superman*, *Ulysses in Trinad and Cressida*, or Kent in *King Lear*—was perhaps the weakest voice of the evening; though routinely applauded, his numbers lacked the punch and authority of his spoken lines—the "Cannon Song" was almost genteel. On the other hand, Linda Alper as Polly—and an enchanting Rosalind in this season's *As You Like It*—exhibited a pleasant, light soprano and the rudiments of vocal training. Although the Blitzstein version gives "Pirate Jenny" to Jenny, this production followed the original script by assigning the song to Polly. Ms. Alper's performance afforded shivers. The remainder of the cast fell between these modest extremes. Helped out with mugging and lame soft-shoe, the virtue born of this necessity was clear diction—saturating melodic lines, now and then, and revealing the occasional awkwardness of the Blitzstein adaptation. Surprisingly, under the circumstances, all of the numbers—including the "Ballad of Sexual Dependency"—were kept, though (as noted) with some shuffling.

The six man band (in an apparently unauthorized arrangement for electronic keyboards, percussion, bass, trumpet, trombone, and reeds), visible through a scrim stage left, produced the bare bones, carrying the show briskly—at times to the point of the perfunctory. The overture, for instance, was lightly hurried, as if to prevent its grating harshness from biting. One missed both the telling detail and the unique timbres of Weill's own instrumentation.

With the score given short shrift, one witnessed a brilliantly staged farce, studded with musical comedy, which blunted the pot boiling while the show he'd come to New York to do with Max Reinhardt—The *Eternal Road*, a huge biblical pageant to a Franz Werfel text—solved its production difficulties; the text by Paul Green, an earnest but hopelessly simplistic anti-war allegory written in the shadow of Hitler's emergence, would be embarrassing on a modern stage; the demands of the play, a cast of 30 and something like 200 costumes, no way justify the merely antiquarian interest in a revival. The fact that a Broadway restaging in 1971 flopped dismally doesn't help its reputation, either.

Thus, the hugely successful production of *Johnny* at Ron Sossi's Odyssey Theatre this past summer in West Los Angeles wasn't merely a matter of another terrific show in town; it came on as an equally terrific surprise—that the piece can, indeed, be made to work not merely well but stunningly. Sossi is no stranger to the Weill-Brecht repertory; he has in years past produced a decent *Threepenny* and a wrecked *Mahagonny* (the mucked-up Berliner Ensemble version). *Johnny Johnson* was done straight and complete, simply and imaginatively, with the datedness of Green's play balanced by Sossi's marvelous pacing. He neither romanticized nor trivialized Johnny's homespun silliness, but expertly molded what remains potent and moving in the piece—the fable of the common peacenik buried under the way of the world—into the more blatant elements—the heavy-handed satire of the bloated generals who run wars for their own glory, or the fake psychiatrist who do the same with lives. The stage was, for the most part bare except for a couple of movable, all-purpose sets; time after time a charming flash of exactly the right color in Gayle Susan Baizer's imaginative costume designs made its compelling point.

So, of course, did Weill's music. What astonishing, fresh stuff it is! It came over clear and strong at the Odyssey even with only a piano to stand in for the composer's own rich, plangent orchestration (plus a few taped interludes here and there). Here is a score like none other by Weill, an honest-to-Pete transitional work reflecting his exuberance at working in an Americanoid medium on its own soil—to speak, but still rooted in the haunting, purplish lyricism of the late European scores. Weill never completely lost this latter quality, of course; later Broadway songs like "Speak Low" and "Stay Well" float unforgettable in the same dark juice. But the mix in *Johnny* is vibrant, unique.

There is, of course—or at least, was—the recording of the full score (originally on MGM, later reissued on Heliodor), with a good cast under Samuel Matlowsky, worth any amount of ferreting through used record stores. Yet it all sounded even better at the Odyssey. Songs I never expected to make sense, genre pieces like the "Rio Grande" song of the Texas soldier, were nicely integrated into the flow of Sossi's unerringly paced pacing. The large cast, sparked by the immensely likeable, goofy Johnny of Ralph Brunen and Michelle Chilton's Minny Belle—a tough touch of Bernadette Peters, not the world's worst notion—worked nicely together. The best of their achievement was to put across the sense that, with all of its obvious faults, all *Johnny Johnson* really needs to parade its true, brilliant colors is a degree of faith and belief in the work as Green and Weill conceived it, a level of honesty and sincerity worthy of Johnny himself.

ADRIAN CORLEONIS
Klamath Falls, Oregon


Conventional wisdom about *Johnny Johnson* runs something like this: Kurt Weill's first Broadway musical was ground out in 1936 to keep the pot boiling while the show he'd come to New York to do with Max Reinhardt—The *Eternal Road*, a huge biblical pageant to a Franz Werfel text—solved its production difficulties; the text by Paul Green, an earnest but hopelessly simplistic anti-war allegory written in the shadow of Hitler's emergence, would be embarrassing on a modern stage; the demands of the play, a cast of 30 and something like 200 costumes, no way justify the merely antiquarian interest in a revival. The fact that a Broadway restaging in 1971 flopped dismally doesn't help its reputation, either.

ALAN RICH
Los Angeles

Lost in the Stars. 92nd Street Y, New York. 31 May 1-3 June 1986.

Partisans of Weill and Anderson's *Lost in the Stars* have recently had not one, but two opportunities to reassess the work in performance (a fully-staged production at the Long Wharf Theatre and a concert production at the 92nd Street Y). While the sudden resurgence of interest may be in part due to our dawning realisation of the treasures in the American musical theater repertoire, it is likely due even more to the relevance of this nearly forty-year-old story. While today's despairing situation in South Africa. But whatever the reason, this is a joy to encounter again this searingly emotional work in the theater, where it belongs.

Any production of *Lost in the Stars* must cope with certain pitfalls. Anderson's rudimentary expository technique makes slow going of a good deal of the first act. His sudden reconciliation of the two fathers at the finale is awkward and unsupported by character (as opposed to the novel, where the senior Jarvis' conversion to his murdered son's racial views is persuasively drawn). The dramatic use of music is inconsistent. While the choral commentary is stunningly effective, taking already potent emotion and, in effect, heightening and exploding it, the use of dramatic character material, at least among the supporting characters, is ill-chosen. By the time Irina sings both 'Trouble Man' and 'Stay Well,' we already know what she is going to say. ('Trouble Man' might more effectively be used as Irina's attempt to convince Absalom not to participate in the robbery). 'Who'll Buy?' is flavorful, but needlessly hails the dramatic action. 'Big Mole,' however charming, is essentially a divertissement (though its use as a duet for the two boys might allow a more visceral accomplishment of the scene that follows). And, the lack of any musical materials for Absalom is mystifying and reductive of character. Nonetheless, the scope and weight of the score, Anderson's ability to write strong individual scenes, and the emotional strength inherent in the subject matter combine to make *Lost in the Stars* a show of considerable power.

Arvin Brown's Long Wharf production tapped that power. His direction was clean and straightforward, eliciting the emotional truth of each scene with force and clarity, drawing from his actors the kind of psychologically solid, multi-layered performances often associated with realistic drama. His choice of integrating the chorus as part of the dramatic action, rather than placing them to the side, or in the pit, as in the original Broad-
countrywide. Their use in transitions was particularly effective. Half open, they cast the ominous shadows of prison bars, while the harsh sound of their abrupt raising or lowering punctuated entrances and exits to good effect. Jennifer Von Mayrhauser's fine costumes neither made pretty nor exaggerated the characters' poverty. Ronald Wallace's lighting was particularly helpful in making the transitions from dialogue to music effortless and natural.

PERFORMANCES

The 92nd Street Y's production marked the premiere of Maurice Levine's concert adaptation. Mr. Levine originated the highly praised Lyrics and Lyricists series at the Y, and also conducted the original production of Lost in the Stars on Broadway. Clearly, his concert version was a labor of love, and made its failure twice as disappointing as it might have been.

Mr. Levine's idea seemed promising. Alex Kumalo (Stephen Kumalo's nephew) has grown up, become a civil rights activist, and their meeting seemed stiff, particularly when searching for a contemporary black character suggest that they take heart in the story of Lost in the Stars seems naivé at best.

The problem was compounded by the flat writing of Alex's monologue. Burdened by a succession of political platitudes, the character was never allowed to come to life. It was difficult to believe that, at a tumultuous moment, Alex would choose to tell such a long and complex story. It was even harder to believe that his following (intrinsically personified by taped voices) would actually request his performance. When recounting the story of Lost in the Stars, the monologue frequently became mired in excessive detail, particularly in its use of quoted dialogue. The dramatization of scene snippets was frustrating, leaving one even more impatient with the lengthy narratives. Most unfortunate of all, the power of the story was diminished. Many of Weill and Anderson's settings are intended to underscore dramatic scenes, much in the manner of a film score. Shorn of all dramatic counterpoint, these sections of the score seemed episodic and oddly truncated.

Musically, Mr. Levine's conducting seemed surprisingly uncertain for someone who had conducted the original production. Evidently he lacked adequate rehearsal time. In the role of Stephen Kumalo, James Tyeska sang beautifully, but acted poorly. He seemed to lack a basic understanding of the character. His heroic version of the title song, imbued with an optimistic fervor more suitable to 'The Impossible Dream' than to a man facing the loss of his faith, was misguided. Marilyn Moore sang Iriana's songs creamily but stolidly. Chi-neluum Ingram did have fun with 'Big Mole,' although at times the proceedings threatened to turn into an audition for The Tap Dance Kid. As the chorus leader, Reinald Pindell provided another wonderful voice. Yet, his bearing seemed stiff, particularly when searching for high notes. Only Priscilla Baskerville, in a sassy rendition of 'Who'll Buy' and an elegant solo reading of 'A Bird of Passage' managed to successfully integrate singing and acting. The stage direction lacked a clear vision and the performers seemed to improve their stage actions. Earl Grandison, as the non-singing adult Alex, was confined behind a lectern at the extreme side of the stage. He made a valiant attempt to compensate for the lack of character development in this role.

Maurice Levine and Arvin Brown brought radically different approaches to the task of improving an imperfect piece of musical theater. Mr. Levine's choice to minimize the book proved a mistake. It may have glossed over some of the problems, but it also destroyed the virtues of the film. Mr. Brown managed to emphasize these virtues through an approach which allowed portrayals of emotional honesty and through rigorous attention to character development. A third approach, as yet undefined, might be to revise the book. True, most musicals cannot be fixed merely by tinkering with dialogue and structure. Lost in the Stars, however, is a piece of such inherent strength that maybe, just maybe, this might prove to be the most satisfactory approach of all.

ERIK HAAGENSEN
New York

LONDON SINFONIETTA
ZAGROSEK, QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL
Few of the many pieces by Kurt Weill encountered by the London Sinfonietta during the past decade can have had quite the chilling impact of that composer's Das Berliner Requiem, written for radio in 1928. During its course it parodies popular marches, waltzes, even a Bach recitative, but not so much for the sake of making biting political comment as for that of uttering a genuine, despairing lament.

For this is grim, deathly music, partly inspired by the political murder of Rosa Luxemburg, partly by the consequences of the First World War; and all those parodies conspire to form a ritualistic, starkly defined procession. It made quite a contrast to the lighter, though in their way equally penetrating, songs of Happy End, also heard here, though both works were sung idiomatically and often powerfully by a team consisting of Maureen Brathwaite, Linda Hirst, Alexander Oliver, Stephen Roberts and Terry Edwards.

Stephen Pettitt
The Times
19 August 1986

AN OPPOSITE POLE

Enthusiastic applause was received by Peter Keuschng and his ensemble Kontrapunkte for their conscious opposition to the usual concert offerings during the weeks of the Vienna Festival. Their evening in the Brahms Hall was dedicated exclusively to the works of Kurt Weill. Such an evening could hardly have begun in a more amusing fashion than with the Threepenny Suite; and hardly have continued in a more moving fashion than with the Concerto for Violin and Winds, which in its architecture reminds one of Gustav Mahler's Seventh Symphony, yet, never denying, in its 'melos', the Busoni pupil Weill. The essential orientation of the work, nonetheless, also documents that Weill was an ardent admirer of Stravinsky.

Happy End, a lively 'comedy with music' ended the concert with more than a final piece of fun, especially because Keuschng and his ensemble realized a performance on the highest level.

Presse
Vienna, 13 June 1986
MAHAGONNY IN LISBON

On March 20 Brecht and Weill's Mahagonny had a belated first performance in Portugal and still managed to shock the conservative faction among the São Carlos public. The opening night was something of a scandal, but the other performances were fervently acclaimed. João Lourenço, a specialist in Brecht, came from the Straight theater and scored a major personal success in his debut as an opera producer. He converted the Narrator (João Perry, one of the best Portuguese actors) into a movie director who is filming Mahagonny. Often interrupting the action to comment or give directions to the performers, Jochen Finke, the designer, recreated the movie set in a highly effective way, greatly helped by the exceptional lighting. The production team achieved several moments of breath-taking beauty: the birth of the town, the anguished waiting for the hurricane (shown on a large screen), the final scene. But the climax was undoubted, the transformation of the bar into an imaginary boat sailing for Alaska—pure magic.

Fatima Medeiros
Opera
London, October 1985

AN AMUSING SHOW

When the Ensemble Modern comes here—and now for the third time to the auditorium in the Wilhelmshöher Allee, thanks to the initiative of the Kassel Academy and the German Youth Orchestra [Der Junge Deutschen Philharmonie]—the musical scene breaks out of the inflexibility of its conventional museum-style in a most exciting manner...Something as traditional as the Suite from Kurt Weill's opera Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny (arranged by Wilhelm Brückner-Rüggeberg) becomes an adventure in listening, taking one's breath away. Jürg Wytenbach conducts the 23 excellent instrumentalists and once more this composition starts one as Weill's music—music often disparaged as 'soft music'—is so intensely sinuous that one is suddenly hard-hitting, and sharplyEndTime
### PERFORMANCES

#### AUSTRIA

**Das Berliner Requiem**, Brahms, Vienna, Heinz Zednik, Peter Weber, Victor von Hagen; Ensemble Kontrapunkte, Peter Keuschnig, cond., 3 June 1986

**Concerto, violin & winds**, Brahms, Vienna, Ensemble Kontrapunkte, Peter Keuschnig, cond., 11 June 1986

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, Burgtheater, Vienna, Christoph Schroth, prod., Fall 1986

**Kleine Dreigroschenmusik**, Brahms, Vienna, Ensemble Kontrapunkte, Peter Keuschnig, cond., 11 June 1986

#### BRAZIL

**Mahagonny Songspiel**, Teatro de Cidade de Porto Allegre, Porto Allegre, Teatro Vivo de Cidade de Porto Allegre, 1-10 April 1986

#### CANADA

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, University of Toronto, Toronto, The Berliner Ensemble, 21-26 October 1986

**Berlin to Broadway**, City Stage Theatre, Vancouver, Summer 1986

**Berlin to Broadway**, Grand Theater Company, London, ONT, To be announced


**Mahagonny Songspiel**, McGill University, Montreal, 2 December 1986

#### DENMARK

**Concerto, violin & winds**, Aarhus, Hans Stenz, violinist; Aarhus Symphony, Stig Westerberg, cond., 3 July 1986

#### ENGLAND

**Das Berliner Requiem**, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, The London Sinfonietta, 8 August 1986

**Concerto, violin & winds**, Southwell Minster, Nottingham, Janet Hall, violin; Nottingham Philharmonic Orchestra, Malcolm Nabo, cond., 5 July 1986

**Concerto, violin & winds**, Southwell Minster, Nottingham, Beth Spendlove, violin; Nottingham Philharmonic Orchestra, Malcolm Nabo, cond., 4-5 July 1986

**Happy End**, Liverpool, University of Liverpool, students, 26 June 1986

**Happy End**, Rutland College, Oakham, Rutland College, students, October 1986

**Happy End Songspiel**, Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, The London Sinfonietta, 8 August 1986


**Kleine Dreigroschenmusik**, Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, College Wind Orchestra, Timothy Reynish, cond., 27 June 1986

**Der Lindberghflug**, Manchester, The University of Manchester, students, Ian Kemp, cond., 4 October 1986


**The Threepenny Opera**, Gulbenkian Theatre, Kent, Playcraft and Christ Church College; Glenville Hancock, cond., 29 April-3 May 1986

**The Threepenny Opera**, Christ Church College, Canterbury, University of Kent, Playcraft, students, 3 April-3 May 1986

**The Threepenny Opera**, Congregational Hall, Nottingham, Stravangani XV, 15 July 1986


#### FRANCE

**L’Opéra de Quat’Sous**, Conservatoire, Sevran, 21 June 1986

**Der Jasager**, Théâtre Musical Populaire, Villeurbanne, 16-17 June 1986

**Der Jasager**, Montbéliard, L’Ensemble Juliana, 11 July 1986

**L’Opéra de Quat’Sous**, Théâtre Musical de Paris, Châtelet, Paris, Milva (Jenny), Barbara Sukowa (Polly), Heinz Bennett (Mr. Peachum); Giorgio Streherl, dir.; Peter Fischer, cond., 31 October 1986-February 1987

**Song Recital**, Fondation Paul Maeght, St. Paul de Vence, Nancy Shade, soprano, July 11, 1986

**Ballet**, Avignon Festival, Benoit-XIII Salle, Avignon, Jean-François Duroyre, Mathilde Monnier, 1-6 August 1986

#### FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

**Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny**, Pfalztheater, Kaiserslautern, Kaiserlautern Pfalztheater; Wolfgang Blum, dir.; Wilfried Emmert, cond., 21, 27 March, 4, 15, 18, 20, 30 April 1986

**Augstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny**, Staatstheater, Hagen, 86-87 Season

**Augstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny**, Musiktheater, Dortmund, 86-87 Season

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, Schauspielhaus, Mannheim, October 1986

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, Frankfurt, 5 June 1986

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, Theater AG, Langenhagen Gymnasium, Langenhagen, students, June 20, 21, 25, 26 1986

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, Theater-im-Pott, Oberhausen, Theater-im-Pott, company; Fritzieter Gerhards, Dir.; Sahl Schechtman, cond., 9 March 1986

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, E.T.A. Hoffmann-Gymnasium, Bamberg, March 1986

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, Solingen, guest performance, ensemble from Wuppertal, 12-14 June, 12 July 1987

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, Theater AG, Alfred-Delp-Schule, Dieburg, students, 28, 30-31 May 1986

**Die Dreigroschenoper**, Hamburg, Friedrich-Ebert Gymnasium, students, 23-24 June 1986

**Happy End**, Oldenburg Caecilienschule, Delmenhorst, Das "Freie Ensemble" (Gymnasium an der Max-Planck-Strasse), students, 20 April 1986

**Happy End**, Gymnasium Theater, Fellbach, students, 30 April 1986


**Der Jasager**, Theater Hamburg, Hamburg, 10, 11 May 1986

**Der Jasager**, Gymnasium Buergen, Kassel, students, 13 June 1986

**Kleine Dreigroschenmusik**, Friedenskirche, Ludwigsburg, Philip Jones Brass Ensemble, 9 June 1986

**Kleine Dreigroschenmusik**, Stadthalle, Winnenden, Georg-Bucher Gymnasium Sinfonieorchester, Lothar Heinisch, cond., 20 March 1986

**Kleine Dreigroschenmusik**, Düsseldorf, Dusseldorf-Ensemble, Wolfgang Trommer, cond., 14 March 1986

**Kleine Dreigroschenmusik**, Rathaus, Bürblingen Musikschule, 7 June 1986

**Lost in the Stars**, Herrenberg, Andrea Gymnasium, students, 21-25 November 1986

**Mahagonny Songspiel**, Werkstattbühne, Solingen, guest performance, Dinslaken Theater-Ensemble, 27 April 1986

**Die sieben Todsünden**, Stadttheater, Wuerzburg, Wuerzburg Stadtheater ballet, 86-87 Season

**Die sieben Todsünden**, Landestheater, Coburg, 23 October 1986

**Sonata, cello & piano**, Kulturhaus, Wiesloch, Walter Michael Vollhardt, cellist; Wolfram Lorenzen, pianist; 26 September 1986

**Sonata, cello & piano**, Kammerniskifestival, Treunstein, Johannes Gortzki, cello; David Levine, piano, 5 August 1986
GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Schwerin, Schweriner Philharmonic, 10 April 1986

GREECE
Die Dreigroschenoper. Deutsche Schule, Athen, students, 5 April 1986

ITALY
Symphony no. 2, Montepulciano, RIAS-Youth Orchestra, M. Fitzgerald, cond., 3 August 1986

NETHERLANDS
Die Bürgschaft, Amsterdam, students, University of Amsterdam, Rietveld Academie, Sweelinck Conservatorium; Margje Scheurwater, dir., March 1987

SCOTLAND
Happy End, Glasgow Academy Theater, Glasgow, March 1986

SPAIN
Concerto, violin & winds, Madrid, 18 March 1986

SWITZERLAND
Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Musikszmag, Karlsruhe, 12 April 1986

UNITED STATES
Berlin to Broadway, Zephyr Theatre, San Francisco, Bill Bowerstock, Michele Callahan, Karen Kearney, Robert Neches, Sarah Taterra, Michael Vodde, cast; Paul Hough, dir.; Jack Elton, cond.; 7 October with an open run

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Musikkademie, Basel, students, 24 March 1986

Kleines Dreigroschenmusik, Musicadeum, Basel, students, 12 March 1986

The Threepenny Opera, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, students; J. Drzewski, dir.; H. Mollkone, cond., November 1986

The Threepenny Opera, The Lyric Theater, Kansas City, Kansas City Opera, 16, 18, 21 April 1986

The Threepenny Opera, Santa Clara, University of Santa Clara, students; J. Drzewski, dir.; H. Mollkone, cond., November 1986

The Threepenny Opera, Denver, CO, Loretto Heights College, students, 14-23 November 1986

The Threepenny Opera, Lafayette College, Easton, Lafayette College students; M. Mochinski, dir.; B. Melin, cond., 5 November 1986

Street Scene, Marin Community College theater, Marin County, Marin Community College, students; Martin, Frick, dir.; Paul Smith, cond., 3, 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19 July 1986

Street Scene, Broyhill Music Center, Boone, NC, Appalachian State University Opera Theatre, students; 4, 5 April 1986

Street Scene, Nicholas Music Center, New Brunswick, Rutgers University, students; Valerie Goodall, cond., 30, 31 October-I, 2 November 1986

Kurt Weill Revue, D.C. Space, Washington, DC, June-August 1986

WALES
Happy End, St Donats Arts Centre, Llanhivet Major, St Donats Music Theatre; Tony Castro, Wyn Davies, co-conds., 22, 23 August 1986, 13-17, 21-24 Jan 87

Popular Songs, Denbigh, Clwyd, Felson Trio, 6 March 1986
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