

KURT WEILL NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Number 1

Spring 1987

Der Silbersee Premieres at Camden Festival

Der Silbersee (*The Silverlake*), the last work of Weill's German career, had its British professional premiere recently at this year's Camden Festival, performed by the Abbey Opera. John Eaton, who staged the Weill operas *The Protagonist* and *The Czar Has His Photograph Taken* at last year's Camden Festival (see review by Alan Rich in volume 4, no. 1), served as both director and translator. Antony Shelley, who provided "vivid, alert musical direction of an almost expert small orchestra" (Rich), returned to conduct the Abbey Opera Orchestra. Mr. Eaton recently completed a residency at the Opera Department of the College-Conservatory of the University of Cincinnati, where he directed a new production of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. The Festival also included a production of *Happy End* by the St. Donat's Arts Centre, Wales.

Foundation Finds New Home

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music has acquired new accommodations at 7 East 20th Street in Manhattan's historic "Ladies Mile" district, located between 34th Street and the newly renovated Union Square. The Weill-Lenya Research Center and the Foundation's offices will occupy the third floor of a twelve-story building consisting of both commercial and residential units, a space more than double the size of its present headquarters. A large portion of the new facility will be devoted to the Research Center, which will feature an enlarged reading room, listening room, and ample processing and storage areas to accommodate its ever-increasing collections.

The expiration of its current lease and the rising prices of the Lincoln Center area compelled the Foundation to seek new quarters in the Flatiron District, an area which has recently attracted a distinctive mix of non-profit organizations, performing arts groups, publishers, designers, and photographers, existing side by side with established law, accounting, and advertising firms. The Foundation's new neighbors include music publishers (The Richmond Organization, Carl Fischer, G. Schirmer), the

Foundation Center, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the American Ballet Theatre. The area enjoys a host of restaurants, theaters, and other night spots which have followed close on the heels of the relocated businesses and renovated residential buildings.

After 1 July, the Foundation's new address will be 7 East 20th Street, New York, NY 10003. (Between Broadway and Fifth Avenue.)

Bette Midler to Portray Lenya

Tri-Star Pictures and Craig Zadan's Storyline Productions have optioned the rights to *Lenya*, a biography now in preparation by Donald Spoto to be published by Little, Brown & Co. Bette Midler will assist in the development of the project and will play the starring role. In addition to the purchase of the rights to the biography, the producers will have access to correspondence and documents in the Weill-Lenya Research Center.

The Tri-Star agreement allows an exemption from Midler's recently announced exclusive arrangement with Disney Productions. Craig Zadan is the producer of the film, with Neil Meron serving as co-producer. Midler and her associates, Bonnie Bruckheimer-Martell and Margaret Jennings South, of All Girl Productions will be executive producers.



Lynnette Perry (Venus) and Michael Piontek (Rodney) rehearse the Ozone Heights ballet for the Goodspeed Opera's production of *One Touch of Venus*. Photo: Diane Sobolewski

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Weill Festival at Merkin

The Merkin Concert Hall at the Hebrew Arts School, north of Lincoln Center in New York, will present a four-concert Weill festival this fall, as well as an exhibition and symposium on *The Eternal Road*, *A Flag is Born*, and *We Will Never Die*.

On 17 September David Atherton conducts the St. Luke's Chamber Orchestra in performances of *Bastille Music*, the *String Quartet No. 1, op. 8* and the *Walt Whitman Songs*, and a concert presentation of the complete score to *Marie Galante*. Julius Rudel leads the same ensemble on 30 September with bass-baritone Franz Mazura of the Metropolitan Opera, as soloist in a performance of *Vom Tod im Wald*. The program also includes *Öl-Musik*, *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, and the *Violin Concerto*.

A symposium, "Kurt Weill's *The Eternal Road* and Jewish Pageants," will take place on 20 September. David Drew will give the keynote address in a program to include papers addressing Jewish influences in Weill's music, Weill's Jewish pageants (*We Will Never Die* and *A Flag is Born*), and a cultural view of Kurt Weill in exile. That evening, Musica Sacra, Richard Westenbergh, conductor, will present a concert of Weill's "Jewish" works including *Recordare*, *Kiddush*, choruses from *The Eternal Road*, and excerpts from Albert Weill's synagogue compositions.

The Festival includes a tribute to Lenya on 28 September featuring appearances by Burgess Meredith, Jo Sullivan, Hal Prince, Kitty Carlisle Hart, Alvin Epstein, and others.

As an added attraction, Merkin has scheduled a Kurt Weill Cabaret Evening featuring German theater star Ute Lemper on 26 September. (See Alan Rich's review of Ms. Lemper's recent recording in this issue.) For more information about the festival, contact the Merkin Concert Hall, 129 West 67th Street, New York, NY 10023, (212) 362-8060.

Dreigroschenoper Returns to West Berlin

The opening of *Die Dreigroschenoper* on 23 May 1987 at the Theatre des Westens ends a 30-year hiatus in performances of the work in West Berlin and coincides with Berlin's 750th birthday celebrations. Günter Krämer will direct a cast including Martin Reinke as MacHeath, Ingrid Caven as Jenny, and Hans Falar as Peachum. Peter Keuschnig is the conductor and Andreas Reinhardt the set designer. The production runs daily until 14 July in the newly renovated theater which presented *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* and the celebrated "Kurt-Weill-Revue" in 1985.

Venus Descends on Goodspeed

One Touch of Venus, Kurt Weill's most successful American musical, will be revived in a major production this spring at the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT. Opening on 22 April, the show will run into July. Several productions, including *Annie* and *Shenandoah*, originated at Goodspeed before moving to Broadway. Ben Levit will direct and Lynnette Perry will appear as Venus. Levit's production team includes Lynn Crigler, music director; Rodney Griffin, choreographer; Craig Miller, lighting designer; and Marje McCowan, costume designer. Joining Perry are cast members Richard Sabellico (Savory), Michael Piontek (Rodney Hatch), Semina DeLaurentis (Molly), Dale O'Brien (Taxi Black), Nick Corley (Stanley), Karen Cantor (Gloria), and Irma Rodgers (Mrs. Kramer). For ticket information, call the Goodspeed Opera House at (203) 873-8668.

French Radio Special a Hit

Fans of Kurt Weill in France have had much to cheer in recent months. Along with Giorgio Strehler's colorful production of *L'Opéra de Quat'Sous*, Radio France-Musique aired a comprehensive week-long Weill festival from 24-28 November 1986, hosted by Alain Jomy. Mr. Jomy, with assistance from the Kurt Weill Foundation, assembled recordings that represented the full range of Weill's career, and introduced many pieces for the first time in France. The radio special has, in turn, prompted a steady correspondence from Mr. Jomy's listeners from throughout France and even Tunisia, in French-speaking northern Africa. As a result, the *Kurt Weill Newsletter* now reaches every continent on the globe — except Antarctica. Any readers down there?

Johnny Johnson Album Reissued

The recording of *Johnny Johnson*, made in 1957 under Lenya's supervision and previously released by MGM Records, will be reissued in April by PolyGram records. It has been digitally re-mastered in stereo and will appear in long-playing record, compact disc, and cassette formats. Handsomely packaged, with a sepia-toned cover photo depicting a soldier gazing at the Statue of Liberty, the album features new liner notes written by producer Larry Lash. Burgess Meredith has the title role, and Lotte Lenya sings "Mon Ami, My Friend" in a cast including Evelyn Lear, Thomas Stewart, Jane Connell, Hiram Sherman, and Scott Merrill.

McDonald's TV Ad: "Mac Tonight"

McDonald's fast-food restaurant has adapted the "Moritat" as an imaginative television commercial entitled "Mac Tonight." The ad has been wildly successful both in the marketplace and within the advertising industry. Doug Jones, a Los Angeles actor, stars as "Mr. McMoon," outfitted as an urban hipster who sings the humorous lyrics in the manner of Bobby Darin. A large, crescent-moon shaped headpiece weighing more than ten pounds is radio controlled and gives the appearance of animation. The commercial was filmed on a lavish soundstage (one of the most expensive ever constructed for a TV commercial) filled with 35-foot high french fries and the world's largest Big Mac (12 feet by 2 stories). The spot first aired in Southern California in January and is being picked up nationwide. The campaign, including two radio ads, and a Spanish adaptation, continues through spring.

WNYC features Weill in American Music Festival

During their annual American Music Festival (7-16 February), New York radio station WNYC (93.9 FM) presented a "sound portrait" of Kurt Weill each weekday from 1:30 until 3:00 pm. Programmer David Carp assembled vocal and instrumental works from the entire spectrum of Weill's recorded legacy, with pieces ranging from "Öl-Musik," to David Bowie's discordant interpretation of "Alabama Song."

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LETTERS

To the Editor:

About David Drew's comments in the Fall 1986 issue: I am by no means glued to opinions I expressed a quarter century ago. And, obviously, in such a stretch of time, discoveries are made. So let me concede the main point: I should have disbelieved Brecht more often than I did.

On the other hand, D.D. is wrong to suppose I ever belonged to a cult of Brecht. The record reveals just the opposite. "Articles of faith?" "Quasi mystical faith?" No, no. It was just that I was present when B.B. did invent music for which credit was later taken by his composer (Dessau). In light of what D.D. now reveals, I'll assume B.B. didn't perform the same service for Weill. But "faith" and "mysticism" never entered in. Anyone who wants to re-read my old essays can verify this.

There was a cult of Brecht. But because I declined to belong to it, I was quite heavily punished. Since this is no secret, I would have thought D.D. knew about it. Anyway, I shall buy his Handbook, and I wish him well.

ERIC BENTLEY
New York City

To the Editor:

I have recently begun receiving the *Kurt Weill Newsletter* and enjoy it very much. As a long time admirer of Weill's music, it is a pleasure to me to read about performances, new publications, and all the sorts of Weilliana that this excellent publication covers.

However, my reason for writing is to express my outrage over a recent NBC program, *The Two Mrs. Grenvilles*. The music for this extravaganza was attributed to Marvin Hamlisch, yet from the very first meeting of the two protagonists in a club, the Kurt Weill song, "Speak Low" was used in the "movie" and on the soundtrack. The song recurs throughout the two-part, melodramatic (and often effective) mini-series as a leit-motif for the love of the young couple in the story. Nowhere did I see any mention of Kurt Weill or any indication that permission was granted for the prominent use of the song.

I would appreciate some reassurance that Kurt Weill's custodians are indeed "minding the store." His music is and always will be very important to me.

BARRY O'NEAL
New York City

Editor's note: The following excerpts are taken from recent press clippings:

Marvin Hamlisch is given credit for another original music score, much as he was given credit for "The Sting," even though almost all that music was by Scott Joplin. He does appear actually to have composed a note or two for the Grenville gals, but mostly what you hear is Kurt Weill's standard "Speak Low" repeated about 10,000 times.

—Tom Shales, *Washington Post*

The credits said, "Music by Marvin Hamlisch," but the theme through much of NBC's "Two Mrs. Grenvilles" was Kurt Weill's "Speak Low" from the 1943 musical "One Touch of Venus." A Lorimar representative said Hamlisch wrote about 90 minutes of background music but there was not enough time to credit Weill and seven other composers who contributed fragments.

—Los Angeles Times

The Foundation wrote letters of protest to NBC and Lorimar-Telepictures. Chapell Music (the publisher of the song's lyrics) reported that Lorimar agreed to purchase a full-page advertisement in a trade publication describing Weill's contribution to the program. No confirmation of this arrangement was received by the Foundation at the time the Newsletter went to press.

From the Editor:

During the past four years, the *Newsletter* has achieved success in reaching a diverse audience in the scholarly, musical, and theatrical communities. This success can be attributed to the many authors who have contributed, without remuneration, articles and reviews for publication. As a result of their efforts, the *Newsletter* has attracted favorable reviews in a number of important journals from the music and library professions. Since it is impossible to share these reviews with all of the authors individually, I will summarize two of them here:

Notes, the journal of the Music Library Association, reported in its vol. 2, no. 2 issue: "[T]he Kurt Weill Newsletter has grown ... to a splendidly produced professional mini-journal. Free to musicians, scholars, and institutions, it is a remarkable and informative enterprise."

Choice, in its June 1986 issue described the *Newsletter* as "[a] devoted but highly professional, specialized newsletter."

I thank all of the contributors who have helped the *Newsletter* gain recognition.

GRANTS

Foundation Accepts Grant Applications

The Kurt Weill Foundation is accepting grant applications for the 1988 funding period in the areas of Research, Dissertation Fellowships, Travel, Performance, and Recordings. The deadline for submission is 1 November 1987. To receive guidelines and applications, please contact: The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, 142 West End Ave. Suite 1R, New York, NY 10023. Telephone: (212) 873-1465.

1987 GRANTS AWARDED

In December 1986 the Board of Trustees of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc. approved the recommendations of the Independent Grants Advisory Panel to award the following grants in the areas of research and performance:

Research

Atay Citron, Rehovot, Israel. To support dissertation expenses. "Pageantry and Theatre in the Service of Jewish Nationalism in the United States (1933-1947)." Ph.D. dissertation, New York University [in progress]

Andreas Hauff, Mainz, West Germany. Dissertation Fellowship and Travel Grant. "Kurt Weills Bühnenwerke (1922-1935)." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Mainz [in progress]

William Thornhill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States. Dissertation Fellowship and Travel Grant in support of research into *Street Scene*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill [in progress]

Professional Performance

Abbey Opera, London, England. *Der Silbersee* in English translation at the Camden Festival, London. April 1987.

Chester Summer Music Festival, Cheshire, United Kingdom. *Der Lindberghflug* in English translation. July 1987.

Merkin Concert Hall, Hebrew Arts School, New York, New York. Kurt Weill Festival — four concerts. September 1987.

College and University Performance

Grant MacEwan Community College, Alberta, Canada. *Happy End*. April or July 1987.

Southern University, Shreveport, Louisiana. *Lost in the Stars*.

Is Anyone Minding the Store?

By Kim H. Kowalke

During the past two years Weill's music has been exploited in highly visible commercial contexts which have nothing to do with the composer's intentions or the music's original setting. "September Song" appears three times in Woody Allen's recently released film *Radio Days*; Christopher Durang and Sigourney Weaver performed a parody of *Mahagonny* on *Saturday Night Live* last October; in February "Speak Low" served as the uncredited theme song and provided much of the musical background for NBC's mini-series, *The Two Mrs. Grenvilles*; and last fall Liza Minnelli sang "My Ship" on Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show*. In 1985 "Lost in the Stars" played an ironic role in the Disney Studio's *One Magic Christmas*, and A&M's *Lost in the Stars* album featured some renditions of Weill's music that rendered it barely recognizable — while winning awards as one of the year's best recordings. "Mack the Knife" continues to be utilized frequently as background music on numerous television programs. But most controversial of all, in December McDonald's supplied the "Moritat vom Mackie Messer" with new lyrics to promote the culinary delights of a "Big Mac Tonight" in a glitzy television and radio advertising campaign that may spill over into five million promotional mugs bearing the incipit of Weill's tune.

During this same period the Foundation has mounted a vigorous campaign, aimed at publishers and producing organizations, to prevent performance of unauthentic and unauthorized arrangements of Weill's theatrical and concert scores. As a result, Weill's principal publishers now stipulate in every license that Weill's music must be performed in the theater or concert hall without reorchestration, rearrangement, interpolations, or additions. Recently the Foundation has forbidden Vera Oelschlegel, a singer from the German Democratic Republic, from continuing to present her one-woman version of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, incorporating additional music by Brecht and some of his other collaborators, and accompanied by a six-member combo. Meanwhile, the Foundation continues to hear reverberations from the prohibition in 1984 of Bochum's "Kleine Mahagonny" — the "theater version" cooked up anonymously in 1962 by Manfred Karge and Matthias Langhoff for the Berliner Ensemble,

which has since been passed off as a "legitimate" alternative to the *Songspiel* or the full-length opera. Just last month Universal Edition's promotional director reported to the Foundation that "some of the prohibitions, especially the one on Bochum, exert a permanent influence on the readiness of producers to contemplate staging Weill operas, for the main reason that they are afraid to be involved in copyright problems...Don't you think that this could be the [time] to discuss a more flexible way of dealing with copyright infringements?"

A number of *Newsletter* readers also have written to inquire about the Foundation's seemingly inconsistent policies regarding such circumstances. How could the Foundation allow "Speak Low" to be used for *The Two Mrs. Grenvilles*, with Marvin Hamlisch taking sole credit for the music? How could the same organization sanction some of the arrangements on the *Lost in the Stars* album while insisting that productions of *Die sieben Todsünden* utilize an orchestra of at least 35 players? How could the Foundation prohibit the Berliner Ensemble's "Kleine Mahagonny" while allowing Sigourney Weaver to "alienate" an audience of millions by showing that "Mahagonny" could be spelled to (almost) the same number of notes as "Oklahoma!"? And most vehemently, readers questioned how we could allow the "Moritat" to lose its identity to a hamburger and take its place beside Ravel's "Bolero" (the theme from *10*) and Pachelbel's "Canon" (the theme from *Ordinary People*) in the perception of the general populace. One reader phrased it very bluntly: "As I sit here for the three hundred and fifty-second time watching a bespectacled moon singing of the virtues of a Big Mac, I can only hope that the Weill Foundation has been paid BIG bucks."

To answer these valid inquiries adequately and comprehensively would require a lengthy survey of copyright laws in each relevant territory and a recital of the terms of contracts with the various publishers involved with Weill's music throughout the world. Because an exhaustive response is not possible here, let me enumerate only the most pertinent licensing procedures. Many of Weill's and Lenya's contracts with publishers do not provide for any approvals of licenses by the Foundation, no matter what the

intended usage or treatment, especially for so-called "small rights." Popular concerts, recordings, background use for films and television, etc., generally are licensed through performing rights societies (such as ASCAP), mechanical rights associations (such as the Harry Fox Agency), or other intermediaries rather than directly by the publishers. Although the U.S. copyright statute reserves to the original creator the right to make "derivative works" (such as arrangements, translations, adaptations), once a song has been recorded, it may be "covered" (recorded again) by any other artist and released by a record company under a compulsory statutory license, provided only that the company pays the music publisher the prevailing statutory royalty rate. Thus, in the United States, nothing can be done to prevent or influence subsequent recordings of single popular songs. Sometimes even first recordings cannot be controlled; Ben Bagley "revisited" his sins upon Kurt Weill despite protests from various publishers and artists.

The 1976 copyright law also protects the right of parody as a corollary to the first amendment to the Constitution. Under this legal extrapolation, to prevent an unauthorized satirical treatment of *Mahagonny* would be to deny freedom of speech and expression. In most countries in Western Europe, the integrity of a composer's music is protected more fully by the "droit moral" — the so-called moral right, which prohibits distortion of the creator's intentions — but there is no similar provision in the U.S. law. Finally, if a publisher does not negotiate credit for a composer when his music is used on television or in a film, there is no recourse available to the composer beyond an appeal for ethical treatment.

The only commercial usage listed in the first paragraph that fell within the Foundation's contractually or legally mandated control was the McDonald's commercial. This license required the approval of both Stefan Brecht and the Foundation. In this instance, as well as in all others where the Foundation had discretionary influence or control — usually where "grand rights" (dramatic rights) are involved — we have followed a consistent policy derived from Weill's and Lenya's own precedents and explicit instructions. They both made clear-cut distinctions between commercial exploi-

tation of single popular songs (outside of the theater) and productions of theatrical or concert works as complete entities. Weill himself allowed, even urged, his publishers on both sides of the Atlantic to promote and exploit individual "popular" songs in the mass market. After the premiere of *Die Dreigroschenoper* in 1928, for example, Weill chided Universal Edition for not capitalizing enough on the commercial potential of "Alabama Song," "Kanonensong," "Tango Balade," "Ballade vom angenehmen Leben," and the "Moritat" — despite a veritable flood of sheet music; dance, military, and jazz band arrangements; and numerous recordings, few of which used Weill's original scoring. He wrote UE in 1929: "The fact that my *Dreigroschenoper* music has been commercialized doesn't speak against it, but for it, and we would be falling back into our old mistakes if we were to deny some music its importance and artistic value simply because it found its way to the masses." By the time *The Threepenny Opera* opened at the Theatre de Lys in 1954, Lenya's permission was unnecessary for Louis Armstrong, Bobby Darin, Ella Fitzgerald, and dozens of other artists to record "Mack the Knife" in their own versions; by the end of the decade the song had sold ten million records, not one of which had utilized Weill's own orchestration.

On the other hand, Weill was absolutely consistent and adamant that only his own orchestrations and arrangements could be used in theatrical productions of his works. Even Brecht and Theodor W. Adorno met a brick wall in 1942 when they suggested to Weill that the band for a proposed all-Black production of *The Threepenny Opera* should be allowed to improvise its own jazz versions of Weill's songs, which would thereby be "sociologically refunctioned." Even though *Die Dreigroschenoper* is, by its nature and history, the most likely candidate for such notions, Weill wrote to Brecht: "I can well imagine how my music would turn out if I were to agree to the theater's desire to make its own instrumentation. I have always, especially here in America, insisted that my music be played in my own orchestrations in the theater, and I must hold to this principle." After World War II, when Brecht unilaterally sanctioned theaters in Munich and Zurich to tamper with the *Dreigroschenoper* score, Weill took immediate legal action to stop the performances.

Lenya was only slightly less vigilant or consistent. Several times she allowed publishers or producers to talk her into compromises that she later regretted. Although she initially granted the right

to premiere *Mahagonny* in America to Carmen Capalbo, one of the producers of *The Threepenny Opera* at the Theatre de Lys, she took action to stop the production when she learned that Weill's score had been altered so that it could be sung by "singing actors" accompanied by a rock band; she won her point in arbitration. (Remember, too, Weill's lawsuit against Nero Films for altering his music in the *Dreigroschenoper* film; he also won his case.) To be sure, Lenya made some inexplicable and unfortunate exceptions, sometimes out of personal allegiance, more often out of sheer fatigue from the continual battle she fought as Weill's executor. (Stanley Silverman's reorchestration of *Threepenny* for Joseph



Stage set for "Mac Tonight," a television commercial produced for the McDonald's Operators' Association of Southern California.

Papp's 1976 production in New York and the Berliner Ensemble's current staging of *Dreigroschenoper* immediately come to mind.) And, of course, as copyright owner, she had the legal prerogative to allow herself some license in this regard in her own stage performances and recordings: the transposition of *Die sieben Todsünden* and *Mahagonny*, for example. But the inviolability of Weill's theatrical scores is supported by an overwhelming preponderance of precedent from both Weill and Lenya. Times and circumstances do change, so the Foundation considers each case on its own merits, but an argument for tampering with Weill's scores must be very compelling indeed for the Foundation to deviate from the central mission stated in its

charter: the protection of Weill's artistic legacy.

In the case of the McDonald's commercial, the Foundation's decision was guided specifically by Lenya's own authorization of a similar use of the song for a television commercial promoting Schlitz beer in 1964. Here again the record shows that Lenya allowed such use of individual songs capable of popular exploitation but consistently denied requests for similar usage of sections from *Die sieben Todsünden* and other large-scale works. Furthermore, it was our opinion that "Mack the Knife" is by now virtually indestructible; its identity as the "Moritat" in the context of *Die Dreigroschenoper* is not jeopardized by such usage; it has survived renditions far less respectful of musical values than the one in the McDonald's commercial. Indeed, the high production and musical values of the commercial may even have reinforced the prestige of the most famous of Weill's tunes. It would, however, be misleading to deny that the Foundation derives significant financial benefits from such usages. Since all of the Foundation's activities are supported solely by royalty income, such licenses allow us to subsidize performances, recordings, editions, scholarly publications, as well as support the grants program and the day-to-day operations and acquisitions of the Weill-Lenya Research Center.

So, in answer to Mr. O'Neal's inquiry in his letter to the editor on p. 3, yes, the Foundation is "minding the store." We think that we are doing so responsibly, rationally, fairly, and consistently, without political or national biases. We hope that scrupulous adherence to our contractual obligations, copyright laws, and our charge from Lenya will not be mistaken for arbitrariness, obstruction, pedantry, or arrogance. We urge anyone who disagrees with our policies to engage us in dialogue; and we welcome creativity in performance and production within the limits of the integrity of Weill's music. We will not interfere with productions, performances, or recordings by attempting to enforce "quality control" beyond adherence to Weill's musical texts; a survey of recent recordings such as Dagmar Krause's or Riki Turofsky's should reassure everyone of that. But in the end, the general policies of the Foundation's Board of Trustees and the specific decisions of the staff must necessarily adhere to Weill's own views, which are amply and consistently documented in both action and word. "Minding the store" implies neither "selling out" nor "restricting fair trade."

Kim H. Kowalke is the President of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music.

I REMEMBER

A Podium with a View: Recollections by Maurice Abravanel

By Mario R. Mercado

In 1922 Maurice Abravanel and Kurt Weill began an association which continued throughout their careers in Germany, France, and, ultimately, the United States. Born in 1903 at Thessaloniki, Greece, Abravanel was raised in Lausanne, where he began piano instruction at the age of nine. The Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet, a neighbor of the Abravanel family, introduced the young Abravanel to a range of contemporary music and to some of the leading figures of the day, including Stravinsky, Poulenc, Milhaud, and Honegger. His family encouraged him to pursue medical studies and Abravanel enrolled at the University of Lausanne. Still, his manifest musical talent and ambition prevailed and, armed with a letter of introduction to Philipp Jarnach, Abravanel went to Berlin in 1922. However, Jarnach did not accept Abravanel as a student but referred him instead to Kurt Weill, a favorite pupil of Ferruccio Busoni. During this period, Abravanel recalls Weill playing the scores of *Royal Palace* and *Zaubernacht*, as well as attending with Weill early performances of *Zaubernacht*, *Sinfonia Sacra*, and *Frauentanz*.

The student-teacher relationship evolved into one of professional association as the young conductor and composer both began to establish careers. After about a year, Abravanel completed his study with Weill and in spring 1923 obtained his first position at Neustrelitz. He assumed the musical directorship of the Altenberg Landestheater in 1927 and held the same post at Kassel beginning in 1929. Abravanel attended performances of *Die Dreigroschenoper* at Berlin in 1928 and of *Die Bürgschaft* at the Berlin Städtische Oper in 1932 and was present at the premiere of *Der Protagonist* at Dresden in 1926. Reviewing the performance for *La Revue musicale*, Abravanel noted enthusiastically that "the music does not illustrate the subject, it is the subject itself. The text expresses the exterior, visible action. On a profound level, the music expresses the psychological action, inaccessible to language." Two years later, in April 1928, at Altenberg, Abravanel conducted *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren* on a double-bill with *Der Protagonist*, the

first such paired performance of both one-act operas.

By 1930, at the age of twenty-seven, Abravanel made his debut at the Berlin Staatsoper. Also in 1930, and only a few days after the riotous premiere at Leipzig on 9 March of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Abravanel led well-received performances of the same work at Kassel. In early 1933, Abravanel recorded two songs from *Der Silbersee*, "Der Bäcker bäckt ums Morgenrot" and "Das Lied vom Schlaraffenland," with Ernst Busch. The recording was made in advance of the play's premiere in February 1933, by which time Abravanel had moved to Paris.

Earlier that winter in December 1932, Abravanel and Weill enjoyed a resounding success with concert performances of the *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *Der Jasager* in Paris. The concert was sponsored by La Sérénade, the noted society devoted to contemporary chamber music of the leading group of composers in Paris, among whom figured Poulenc, Milhaud, and Stravinsky. The Vicomtesse Marie-Laure de Noailles provided essential support for the concert and offered her house for the dress rehearsal. Abravanel recalls that *le tout Paris* was there — Stravinsky, André Gide, Jean Cocteau — and the warm reception of that evening was only superseded by the public performance the following day, on 11 December, at the Salle Gaveau. Abravanel performed the *Songspiel* at least three times in 1933: on 20 June, again at the Salle Gaveau, on 18 July at the Savoy Theatre in London, and in Rome at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia on 29 December.

In March 1933, Weill moved to Paris and the Vicomte and Vicomtesse de Noailles generously offered him an apartment within their residence. It was there that Weill wrote the *Seven Deadly Sins* on a commission from the newly formed dance troupe, Les Ballets 1933, directed by Boris Kochno and the young George Balanchine, the latter having worked with Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes until Diaghilev's death in 1929. Coincidentally, the company had engaged Abravanel as conductor and he led the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris in the premiere of *Seven Deadly Sins* on 7 June

1933 at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées, with Lenya as Anna I and Tilly Losch as Anna II. The program also included *Mozartiana*, music of Mozart arranged by Tchaikovsky, and *Les Songes*, music of Milhaud. The Englishman Edward James funded the commission and moved the production to the Savoy Theatre in London for further performances on 1-15 July, the *Sins* billed as *Anna-Anna*. James, presumably with Lenya, made the English translation.

Abravanel was to conduct Weill's music on one last and noteworthy, if not notorious, occasion in Paris. He led the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris on 26 November 1933 at the Salle Pleyel in a program which included works by J.C. Bach, Beethoven, Roesgen-Champion, Schumann, Richard Strauss and the French premiere of three songs from *Der Silbersee*. The celebrated soprano Madeleine Grey was the soloist for the *Silbersee* songs, which were given in French, the translation made by Madeleine Milhaud, the composer's wife. While the performance was a success and the *Silbersee* songs enthusiastically received — with requests for their encore — a faction led by Florent Schmitt, the French composer and music critic of *Le Temps*, shouted insults after the songs, interjecting the chilling "Vive Hitler." Abravanel and Weill were stunned by this ominous indication of the worsening social and political climate.

Accordingly, Abravanel anticipated the future and, shortly after meeting with Bruno Walter and recommending Weill's Symphony no. 2 (the suggestion led Walter to conduct the symphony's premiere with the Concertgebouw Orchestra on 11 October 1934), left for Australia in the summer of 1934. There, he assumed the responsibilities for the British branch of Covent Garden — the British National Opera Company — and later developed studio orchestras at Melbourne and Sydney as music director of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. He continued to gain experience as an opera conductor, giving the Australian premieres of much of the standard repertoire, and in 1936, upon the recommendations of Walter and Furtwängler, Abravanel was engaged at the Metropolitan Opera. He made his debut in December 1936, conducting *Samson et Dalila*. The youngest conductor signed to the Met's roster, he undertook diverse

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assignments — in contrast to an established house tradition of specialization with particular repertoires — conducting German, French, Italian opera, ranging from *Lohengrin* to *Lakmé*. Weill, having moved to New York the previous fall and in the midst of performances of his first American stage work, *Johnny Johnson*, attended Abravanel's Metropolitan Opera debut. Politics and intrigue at the Met led Abravanel to resign after his second season.

Coincident with Abravanel's decision to leave the Met was the opportunity to resume an association with Weill. Over the next decade, he served as music director for *Knickerbocker Holiday* (1938), *Lady in the Dark* (1941), *One Touch of Venus* (1943), *The Firebrand of Florence* (1945), and *Street Scene* (1947). The alliance proved particularly successful; Weill had in Abravanel a thoroughly trained musician capable of successfully realizing his unique musical conceptions. Abravanel was sympathetic to Weill's sensibility and, moreover, familiar with the breadth of Weill's work and range of expression.

Abravanel took an integral role in the preparations of the stage works; in addition to hearing auditions and leading coachings and rehearsals, he assisted Weill with the preparation of some of the orchestral parts. (In contrast to the established Broadway tradition, Weill or-

chestrated his own scores.) Abravanel supervised the shows from out-of-town tryouts to the New York openings — and post-run tours.

In 1947, Abravanel was appointed music director and conductor of the Utah Symphony, a post he held until his retirement in 1979. The assumption of his responsibilities removed him from New York and prevented Abravanel from conducting Weill's remaining stage works: *Love Life* (1948) and *Lost in the Stars* (1949). However, during Abravanel's second year with the symphony, a drastic cut in state funding precipitated a greatly reduced 1949 season, and both the musicians and the conductor made considerable concessions to enable the orchestra to continue; it was during this period that Abravanel was engaged to conduct Marc Blitzstein's *Regina* which opened on 30 October 1949 on Broadway, one day after *Lost in the Stars*.

In the years that followed, Abravanel was responsible for the development of an exceptional musical institution, the Utah Symphony, which gained critical acclaim for its performances and recordings. In addition, from 1956-1979, Abravanel acted as director of the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California and, since 1983, has served as Artist-in-Residence to the Berkshire Music Center at the Tanglewood Music Festival.

The following excerpts are taken from informal remarks made by Maurice Abravanel during a conference held in connection with performances of Silverlake by the New York City Opera in March 1980. They offer a singular view — insights of a professional and personal nature — of his colleague and friend, Kurt Weill.

I really cannot talk much about Kurt Weill's music, because Kurt Weill is in me. I was 19 when I met him, he was 22. He gave me lessons in harmony and counterpoint. He refused to give composition lessons, and when anybody in a book or wherever said he had given composition lessons, he said, "No. I don't teach composition; composition cannot be taught." We were together a lot, and I remember he would bring me the pages of the string quartet he was writing at the time. I played the piano a little bit better than he did, not much. And so I would play that, and not one note of his had been performed at the time. I'm talking about early March 1922. But I knew somehow in my bones that here was a very great man. Without any question. Why, I did not know, I still don't know. But he is certainly a man who changed music-making in every field, everybody — practically everybody — has been influenced by what Weill did. And it's difficult to put into words: sure, a simplification that he had the courage to pursue at a time when everybody wanted to be original. (And you know, when you write music, some of it comes naturally — but sometimes you just have to decide what the next note will be.) The tendency of the time, without any question, was to avoid, like the plague, anything that people could say, "Ha! It's like this or that, or, it's influenced by this or that." So in other words, to pick always the most unexpected solution. And Weill did the same thing as a young man, as an avant-garde man. Yet, he had the courage, for whatever reasons, to simplify, to throw overboard anything that was in the way of expressing what he wanted to express. And a lot of people, thank God, have profited from that.

Hierauf:
Zum ersten Mal:
Der Zar läßt sich fotografieren

Opera buffa in einem Akt von Georg Kaiser
Musik von Kurt Weill
Inszenierung: Rudolf Otto Hartmann
Musikalische Leitung: Maurice de Abravanel
Bühnenbild und Kostüme: Vera Braun

Personen:

Ein Zar von	Rolf Scharf
Angèle	Bergljot Brandsberg-Dahl
Der Gehilfe	Josef Heckhausen
Der Boy	Maria Stümpel
Die falsche Angèle	Kirstine Bredsten
Der falsche Gehilfe	Alexander Heilmann
Der falsche Boy	Gertraud Wilde
Der Anführer	Walter Hageböcker
Der Begleiter des Zaren	Kurt Jüttner
Erster Kriminalbeamter	Albertus Kinkel
Zweiter Kriminalbeamter	Heinz Wagner

Verschwörer, Offiziere, Polizisten
Bühneninspektion: Theo Leidbach

Einlaß 19 Uhr Anfang 19¹⁵ Uhr Ende ungefähr 22¹⁵ Uhr

Program for the *Der Zar lässt sich fotografieren* at the Landestheater Altenburg, 1928. Photo courtesy of Jürgen Schebera, Leipzig.



Maurice Abravanel, 1933. Photo taken from the souvenir program for "Les Ballets 1933."

THEATRE DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES

M. EDWARD JAMES
présente

LES BALLETS 1933

de

GEORGES BALANCHINE

DIRECTION ARTISTIQUE BORIS KOCHNO

ORCHESTRE
SYMPHONIQUE
DE PARIS

SOUS LA DIRECTION DE MAURICE DE ABRAVANEL
DIRECTION ADMINISTRATIVE WLADIMIR DIMITRIEW

Title page from the souvenir program of "Les Ballets 1933." Photo courtesy of Jane Pritchard, London.

In '22 and '23 Kurt did not have a penny to his name; he was traveling all over Berlin to give lessons simply because he needed the money. I remember him coming to me and saying, "A White Russian girl, sixteen, gives me hell because I am twenty minutes late for her lesson. You know how difficult it is with a streetcar to be on time." That was the day when I decided I would go to him for my lessons. Which, by the way, was practical because it took one hour and I could just do my counterpoint exercises on the streetcar. I was very good at mathematics, and he taught according to Bussler [Ludwig Bussler's *Praktische Harmonielehre in Aufgaben*]. Bussler was the book used at the Berliner Hochschule. He told me I had to buy the Schoenberg *Harmonielehre*, but that's the last time he mentioned it! And so with Bussler it was very simple: you avoid the parallel fifths, you avoid the octaves. If you went according to the rules and the regulations then everything was okay. I was good at mathematics, so he said, "I have forty-five students, but not one has learned it as fast as you have." Which flatters me because Claudio Arrau was his student, so was Nikolaos Skalkottas.

But the basic thing with Kurt was music. Even though he did not have a penny, he said to me, "You know, on Good Friday at the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, they do the *St. Matthew Passion*. And I am taking the train and going there. Would you go, too?" And I didn't have a penny either. But somehow we got the money to take the railroad to Leipzig. And we went to hear the *St. Matthew*. Same thing the next year. So that was the basic thing. It was not because of chorale prelude or this device or that device or anything technical, music was in his whole body, in his whole soul.

He wanted me to conduct everything he wrote, all his life. He wrote to my brother when I was in Australia, "Where is Maurice? He is the only man who really understands *ma musique*." It was probably because he knew that for me, whatever he did was right. I never had any questions; I loved every single note he wrote. He was Tristan, I was Kurvenal.

Now, you talk about Broadway. What is the difference between commercial theater and other music? The only difference I know of is simply the purpose. You see, Mozart could tell the Emperor when he said, "Too many notes," he could answer, "Just as many as needed." And he wouldn't change one note. Because his purpose was to write something that was the best he could do ... the same went for Wagner, the same went for Beethoven and Bach and everybody. The main purpose was that. On Broadway, the only legitimate purpose is that it "goes." Because if it doesn't "go," you won't get people to invest in it the next time, the so-called angels.

I went to the Metropolitan Opera and I said to the manager, "You ought to play Kurt Weill's opera." He looked at me as if I were completely crazy. And then I would say to Kurt, "You must write an opera." And he would say, "You are crazy, there is no opera!" This was in 1936. The Metropolitan Opera had a season of sixteen weeks, San Francisco, I think, had six weeks. Chicago had stock. And then there was the Cincinnati Zoo in the summer. That's it. That's it! Kurt was a practical man. Like Bach, he wrote for a purpose. He had the greatest admiration for Broadway. Once he said to me, "Broadway is something very good. It goes. Who am I to tell them how to do it?" Weill went all-out to do Broadway. But being Weill, what he ended up with had nothing whatsoever to do with Broadway.

Now, let's put things in perspective. 1938, *Knickerbocker Holiday*. I sat at the piano to coach Walter Huston in "September Song," and it was very difficult. But he wanted to learn it. But Kurt was nervous because he was new on Broadway and the press only announced "The play of Maxwell Anderson." There was scarcely any mention made of the music. I was incensed, but they knew what they were doing, I guess. And I remember someone knocking loudly at the rehearsal room door. So I got up, went to the door, and saw Kurt standing there. He made a sign to close the door and said, "Maurice, you are not at the Metropolitan Opera. He has the right to

refuse the song." I said, "But look, he *wants* to learn it." And of course by the time he learned it, he was incredible. It was beautiful, it was poignant. No voice, and yet he sang the pitches. And that was one of the great experiences in the theater of all times.

Lady in the Dark. "My Ship." I was making a recording at the time with Lily Pons. The oboe player was a man called Mitch Miller, who was a terrific player. He said, "What's this show? 'My Ship' is supposed to be a nursery rhyme. With those intervals? That's not a nursery rhyme, no kid could sing that." Today we take "My Ship" or "September Song" for granted. In those days it was madness.

In *One Touch of Venus* there was a little scene with two mannequins and the song, "Vive la différence." Exquisite lyrics of Ogden Nash, exquisite music of Kurt. Everybody agreed it was marvelous ... except me. Kurt was a genius, but I was very down-to-earth with my feet on the ground. I knew the problems and I said to Kurt, "Look, that number can't be in." "Why not?" "Because you have a ballet right away, and you need the whole stage. That means the song has to be sung at the back of the stage. These are minor characters who do only one song for little pay. They won't have big voices and you won't be able to hear them singing." And Kurt said, "You are right, you are right." I used to go to New City where he would give me the pages of orchestration he had made. I would bring them to Chappell and see to it that they were copied properly, and so on. So I went there one day and — what's this? He had orchestrated "Vive la différence." I said, "But Kurt, it's out." He said, "Well, sure, but you never can tell."

I have one more point if there's time. I don't quite agree with you, with the Jewishness and religiousness of Kurt. I am Jewish, too, but we were totally, but totally outside. And Kurt was totally outside too. But, of course, after the anti-Semitism of the Hitler time, we all had the natural, strong sense of solidarity with those who were tortured and killed. And so that's why Kurt wrote *A Flag Is Born* and the *Kiddush*. I believe he wrote the *Kiddush* simply because the cantor had asked Roy Harris, who is not Jewish, and Copland and other composers, so how could he say no? So he wrote a *Kiddush*, and being Kurt, he wrote a good *Kiddush*. And a personal *Kiddush*. And of course he dedicated it to his father, who had been a cantor. But, he never was a Zionist. Just as Darius Milhaud never was a Zionist. Darius Milhaud went much further. He said, "I believe that we Jews contribute much more to mankind dispersed among the nations rather than living in one more state with its army and its government. He wrote that before the Holocaust, but basically that was his attitude. So, I don't think that it really had anything to do with Kurt's Jewishness, because he wrote these works the way Bach wrote the B Minor Mass — he was still a good Lutheran, you know?

And so Gestic Music, you know, the big thing — what does it really mean? I believe that with Weill it meant that every bar he wrote was strictly and totally human music, not just from the heart but from the bones, from the flesh, from the blood. He never wrote one bar of terrible music. He never wrote one bar.

The great thing about Kurt is that he could take any text and by the time it was set to music, the dogma was forgotten, no matter how Marxist Brecht became. It was about human beings. Sure, we know all about *Verfremdung* and alienation, and that it is not like Verdi. Still, it is about human beings. I did *Mahagonny* for Kurt and he loved it. I let Brecht be Brecht, but I had Kurt take over.

Allow me one last anecdote: It was 1933 or '34 in Paris; Kurt was driving, Brecht was next to him, and I was in the back. Giving directions to Kurt, I said, "There you take to the right." Well, we were talking and he took to the left. I said, "Oh, now we have to go around two blocks." And Brecht, in a very low tone, said, "Is a big difference between right and left — except in politics."

AROUND THE WORLD

Brecht in Hong Kong

By Michael Morley

On the inside cover of his most recent book on Brecht (*Brecht in Context*, Methuen 1983), John Willett provides a witty map entitled "The English speaking world according to Bertolt Brecht: Willett's projection; scale: epic." Next to the great cities (Mahagonny, a stone's throw from London) lie the outposts of empire (Cooch Behar, Mandelay (sic)), and at the eastern edge, Hong Kong.

Brecht himself would probably have smiled wryly at the apparent incongruity of the Seventh International Brecht Symposium gathering to discuss his work in one of the foremost (and last) bastions of empire (and capitalism). But he would just as readily have appreciated the aptness of the venue and would certainly have approved of the aim of Antony Tatlow, President of the International Brecht Society, to focus attention on how Eastern cultures and theater traditions approach the staging of Brecht's work and the understanding of his theatrical methods.

Although the "academic" section of the Conference (pithily, if somewhat impenetrably subtitled "Brecht and the Paradigm Change") seemed to have attracted some of the intellectual gammon and spinach generators so caustically satirized by Brecht himself in his *Tui-novel* and the re-working of the *Turandot* legend, the production and performance section was stimulating, lively, and undeniably exotic. The single most notable absentees were, alas, scholars from the Eastern bloc: even Gerhard Seidel, director of the Brecht-Archive, had been refused a visa on the grounds that the only East German citizens welcome in Hong Kong are those who conform to the guidelines — viz. "Those who contribute to the economy, such as businessmen or outstanding athletes."(!)

The performance program was rather like a small-scale and more regionalized equivalent of one of Peter Daubeny's world theater sessions, with theater companies from Tokyo, Beijing, Hong Kong, Calcutta, Shanghai, and Manila — each performing in its own language. In addition, there were two solo performances: one by a remarkable actress from Shanghai who represented one of the most distinctive theatrical forms in China — Ping Tan — and the other a recital by Robyn Archer entitled *Brecht and Co.*, consisting of poems and songs by

Brecht and his various musical collaborators.

As with any such theater festival, the public's response ranged from enthusiasm to cautious puzzlement. Given the range of theatrical styles and varied theater traditions, puzzlement was, to some extent, only to be expected. It is one thing for a Western audience to respond to the obvious and marvelous athletic skills of a Chinese opera company or to the superb vocal and physical control of a Japanese Kabuki or Noh troupe. But the productions on view, though they sometimes made use of these more familiar elements, were primarily concerned with presenting performances of Brecht (or of works in a Brechtian style) which would speak in the first instance to the local audiences for which they were intended.



This particular problem (which might indeed be seen as a variant on the familiar "alienation" effect — the links between the strange and the familiar in a performance situation), was most apparent in the Chinese Youth Arts Theatre production of *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*. This was colorful, swift-moving, knockabout and energetic — and belonging to the *Fame* school of musical theater: lots of teeth and smiles, lots of well-scrubbed performers, plenty of pizzazz and not too much attention to subtleties. The performers playing the two lovers (the soldier, Simon, and the

maid, Grusha, who saves the child from murder) seemed to have escaped from a Forties American musical — not necessarily the same one — and they were endlessly and tirelessly charming. The Grusha in particular was the prettiest, most demure personification of the role I ever have seen: a vision in pink with bright smile and long dangling pigtails: as far removed from Brecht's intended Breugel-derived stolid character as Jane Powell from Ethel Merman.

It is, of course, all too easy for the Western viewer to patronize such productions, and the above comments must be put in that context. Any attempt to put Brecht on stage in China must draw to some extent on the extant and familiar theatrical styles. It was only in 1959 that he was first introduced to Chinese audiences by the scholar and director Huang Zuolin, a remarkable man in his eighties who attended the conference, delivered one of the opening addresses, and turns out to have been a pupil of Harley Granville-Barker! In 1963 Brecht was attacked by Party cultural functionaries, and his work vanished from the stage until 1979, when *Leben des Galilei* was staged by the Chinese Youth Arts Theater. At that time the links between the play's subject — the relationship between the scientist/intellectual and the authorities — and the situation in China after the Cultural Revolution and the demise of the Gang of Four was one of the major justifications for the play's relevance.

Since then, there has been a gradual move towards incorporating Brecht's work and ideas into Chinese theater. And although this production struck many of the Western viewers as unrelievedly well-intentioned, a beginning must be made somewhere. That there are more exciting and adventurous approaches underway in China was demonstrated by a videotape of a production of *Schweyk im Zweiten Weltkrieg* directed by Lin Zhao Hua from the People's Arts Theater. On the face of it, Brecht's comedy about Hasek's little man who accidentally-on-purpose stumbles in and out of scrapes, throwing wrenches in the works of the German war machine, might seem an odd choice for a Chinese audience unfamiliar even with mainstream Brecht. But, as in the case of *Galileo*, the reason for choosing the play

lies in what it has to say to a contemporary Chinese audience: the clash between the little man underneath and the powers-that-be at the top, and the need to survive by silence, internal exile, and a combination of stupidity and, perhaps, cunning. The central performance in this production was quite astonishing: vital, richly comic, and once more emphasizing physical traits — but to better effect than in *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*. In the light of current developments in China, its liberalization and embracing of Western attitudes and practices, it was ironic and perhaps even disturbing to hear a member of the Chinese delegation comment wryly that it would not be possible at present to do a production of Brecht's savagely anti-capitalist play, *Die heilige Johanna der Schlachthöfe*, because "the audience would not understand why money is evil."

While Brecht has only recently taken his place in the repertoire of Chinese theaters, he has long been one of the mainstays of those Japanese companies seeking to emphasize the range of European drama. The Haiyuza Theatre Company from Tokyo, under its director, Senda Korea (who also delivered one of the opening addresses) brought two productions to Hong Kong: *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* and a program of three "Learning Plays" — *Der Jasager/Der Neinsager* and *Die Horatier und die Kuratier*. As with the Chinese productions, the less familiar work proved the revelation. Senda Korea represents an extraordinary link between Eastern and Western theatrical traditions: born in 1904 and still alert and vigorous, he worked and studied in Germany in the twenties and thirties, saw many of the early productions of Brecht's plays, and has been a central figure in Japanese theater for many years.

His production of *Der gute Mensch...*, though clear and responsive to the atmosphere and moral of the play, seemed a little old-fashioned and clearly based, in terms of design, on the Berliner Ensemble's production in the fifties. Not that the work was a slavish copy of the model book or a piece of museum theater: references to contemporary Japanese society were implied by touches in the design, costume, and behavior, though the locale was clearly Brecht's Sezuan rather than Senda's Tokyo.

The one major miscalculation seemed to lie in the decision to play the prostitute, Shen Te, as a too young, too girlish, too enthusiastic Geisha — as if the play were entitled *Cio Cio San Goes to Sezuan*. Again, many of the Western viewers found her lightness and sweetness irritating, but (to reinforce the earlier comments on the need to contextualize a performance and to understand the shared — i.e., non-verbal — theatrical language of audience and per-

formers) one Japanese colleague emphasized how a Japanese audience would find this approach to the role both recognizable and a deliberate parody of a performance cliché.

Any reservations about *Der gute Mensch...* were dispelled by the theatricality and the precision of the production of the "Learning Plays." Staged with austere precision — though, alas, without Weill's music for *Der Jasager* — these nevertheless achieved enormous impact by concentrating on the fable and its crucial moments. In particular, the scene of the "Crossing of the narrow ridge" in *Der Jasager* was gripping and extraordinarily powerful, with the actors staging the crossing as a high wire act: dangerous and with all the daring of a circus act. And the vexing question of how to do the two plays back to back (as Brecht stipulated) without boring the audience (rather like doing Act I of *Godot* twice except that the second time we learn *Godot* is actually waiting around the corner), was here given an elegant solution by having the first play performed by men and the second by women. Fascinating to observe how the first play then looks that much different in the way conventions and, again, the relationship between persona and person are re-examined and made clearer.

The two solo performances were each memorable in their different ways. The Ping Tan performance of a version of the (Chinese) *Chalk Circle* fable by one middle-aged woman seated at a table, clad in a "Western" green velvet dress, with carefully coiffured hair and a string of pearls, could have been incongruously dire, as the bare description might suggest. Instead, it was remarkable. This form of theater, indigenous to Shanghai, is merely storytelling. The performer tells the tale, plays all the roles, takes on all the voices, sings the songs, accompanies herself on an instrument that looks like a three-string banjo, and simply and astonishingly fills the stage with characters. Merely storytelling? I can think of few actors anywhere, who, confronted with the task of telling, say, the saga of Robin Hood or Billy the Kid in an hour or so in English to a Chinese audience, could hold them for five minutes without resorting to mugging and hamming. This performance was controlled, humorous, and had all the dignity and sweep of a folk poet commanding an audience.

Robyn Archer's two recitals were an attempt to offset the most significant lack at the Symposium: the absence of any substantial academic or practical look at the question of Brecht and his musical collaborators. (The rousing and suitably nostalgic rendition of "Stürmisch die Nacht" — otherwise known as "Asleep in the Deep" — by

John Willett, Robyn Archer, Carl Weber, R.G. Davis, and myself might have been considered a rudimentary example of a paradigm change — though not in the academic sense.) Apart from one superficial and elementary paper from Elinor Shaffer from the University of East Anglia (on "Brecht and the Cabaret tradition"), which consisted of Ernst Busch singing Wedekind — splendid but hardly, at this stage, revelatory, assertions that Brecht was part of a cabaret tradition (really?) and a culminating, unsupported assertion that Christian Morgenstern was a major influence, one might have assumed that music was of no importance to Brecht's work.

As the accompanist, I have to declare an interest: but as I have previously in these pages criticized aspects of Ms. Archer's interpretations, I feel it both fair and appropriate to accentuate the positive. The program concentrated on Weill and Eisler, with a small section of Brecht's own settings and two Dessau numbers. The Weill bracket was especially successful, less aggressively insistent than on her first record, with a beautifully sung rendition of "Ballade von der sexuellen Hörigkeit," an ebullient and rousing "Matrosen-Tango," and a splendidly idiomatic and haunting "Lonely House" (deliberately included by both performers to show that there is a world without Brecht).

The most unexpectedly theatrical event of the eight days was, however, a little-touted production by the United Theatre, Calcutta, of *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*. Staged in a tiny studio theater before not many more than fifty audience members, this was "poor theater" at its richest: imaginative, fantastical, ranging from broad comedy and slapstick to subtle humor and social satire, with all the emphasis thrown where it should be — on the performers. It was fascinating to watch Brecht's tale of class distinctions — of the benevolent, drunken despot who turns, when sober, into a ruthless authoritarian, transposed into an Indian setting where the questions of caste and the domination of male over female and master over slave acquire point, relevance, and life. And Sekhar Hatterjee who directs, plays the lead, writes the music, has a hand in the design, and, I shouldn't wonder, holds the material while his wife sews the costumes, was masterly as Puntila. He has a wonderful comic gift, splendid presence, and a voice which can shift from a caressing, ingratiating whisper to a brutalizing and cringe-making roar in the space of the same sentence. He also obviously understands that, as Brecht insisted, "a theater that cannot be laughed in is a theatre to be laughed at."

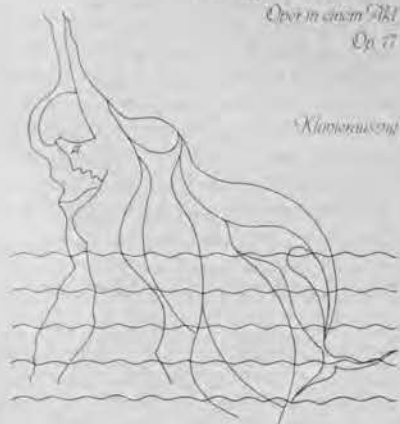
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Schuetz, Erhard and Vogt, Jochen, eds. *Der Scheinwerfer: Ein Forum der Neuen Sachlichkeit: 1927-1933*. Essen: Klartext, 1986. [Includes essays by Adorno, Brecht, Krenek, Stuckenschmidt, Weill, and others]

DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

Short, Bradley Howard. "American Radio Opera: 1928-1971." Master of Arts thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1986.

RECORDINGS

A Collector's "Threepenny Opera." Encore EC-5012. [Canadian cassette reissue includes song selections by Lenya and Brecht and *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* performed by Klemperer and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra]

Johnny Johnson. PolyGram 831 384-1. [Digitally remastered reissue of MGM E-3447. Also available on cassette and compact disc]

Ute Lemper singt Kurt Weill. Bayer Records BR 30 018. [German release including songs in German, French and English]

SCORES

Weill, Kurt. *Royal Palace: Oper in einem Akt: Op. 17. Klavierauszug*. Universal Edition No. 8690. [Reprint edition]

VIDEOTAPES

Art Blakey: Jazz at the Smithsonian. Sony Video LP. [Includes Wynton Marsalis performing an extended version of "My Ship."]

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Discography Update: Part II

Since the publication of his first discography in the Spring 1986 issue (vol. 4, no. 1), Jürgen Schebera has received new information, made corrections, and unearthed additional recordings. The new discoveries include five Czechoslovakian recordings of excerpts from *Žebrack Opera* (*Die Dreigroschenoper*), including an early recording of "Ruf aus der Gruft"; two from the French version of the Pabst film of 1931; and an additional recording of instrumental arrangements of songs from *Happy End*. Schebera extends his thanks to Alan Lareau (Madison, WI), Bernd Meyer-Rahnitz (Dresden) and Otto Simanek (Prague).

Here is the compilation of these findings:

<i>Die Dreigroschenoper</i>			
Artist	Contents	Record No.	Date
Dol Daubers Symphonie-Orchester	Kanonensong, Tangoballade	Gramola AM1603	1929
Jazz-Symphonie-Orchester	Moritat und Choral, Tangoballade und Kanonensong	Adler-Electro 5688	1931
Zdenek Stepanek, Libuše Fresslova, František Kreuzmann, Erno Košťál, conductor	Piratska pisen (Seeräuberjenny), Kanonysrka pisen (Kanonensong)	Homocord 3082	1930
	Milostna pisen (Liebeslied), Tango z nevestince (Tangoballade)	Homocord 3083	1930
	Pisen o moralice (1.Dreigroschenfinale), Zlubin las muj liste (Ruf aus der Gruft)	Homocord 3084	1930
Albert Préjean, Margo Lion, Lewis Ruth Band	Ballade du Tango, Chant d'amour	Ultraphon A 717	1931
Albert Préjean, Jacques Henley, Lewis Ruth Band	Ballade de la vie agréable, Chant des canons	Ultraphon A718	1931
Marie Burešova, R.A. Dvorsky and his Melody-Boys	Pisen Polly Peachumové (Barbarasong)	Ultraphon Z2112	1936*
<i>Happy End</i>			
Red Roberts mit seinem Ultraphon-Jazz-Orchester	Bilbao-Song, Surabaya-Johnny	Ultraphon A 198	1930

Geoffrey Abbott of Augsburg, West Germany reports further discoveries of early *Die Dreigroschenoper* recordings and sheds additional light on the Vintage LP release 7850001 (as reported in the Discography Update in the last issue). Abbott contacted the German representatives of Vintage, who could not ascertain the sources of the recordings. However, Abbott believes that "Tangoballade" and "Ballade vom angenehmen Leben" are from the original November 1928 sessions originally recorded by Odeon. He further postulates that the

Clangor release notated in Schebera's original discography may be a re-issue of one of the 1928 Odeon recordings.

Abbott discovered that his copies of "Barbarasong" and "Seeräuberjenny" by operetta singer Fritzi Massary (Decelith Folie, listed below) are identical with the recordings of these songs on the Vintage release, there attributed to Lenya. Although the Foundation does not have the Massary recording, comparisons of the Vintage release with other early Lenya recordings confirms Abbott's conclusion that the ones on Vintage are indeed those of another singer, presumably Massary.

Abbott provides the following additions to the discography:

Artist	Contents	Record No., Matrix Nos.	Date of Recording, Date of Release
Harald Paulsen with orchestra	Moritat, Kanonensong	Homocord H3747, 62879	August 1930, October 1930
Fritzi Massary, Theo Mackeben & The Lewis Ruth Band	Barbarasong, Seeräuberjenny	Decelith Folie	1930
Lenya, Trenk-Treibtsch, Theo Mackeben & The Lewis Ruth Band	Highlights	Ultraphon A752-5, 15902-9	December 1930, January 1931
Neher, Forster, etc., Theo Mackeben & The Lewis Ruth Band	Film soundtrack		January 1931, February 1931

With the assistance of Horst H. Lange of West Berlin, Abbott has determined the matrix numbers as well as the recording and release dates of many of the recordings listed in the first discography. This information is listed below according to recording company and number. The *Newsletter* will publish a corrected discography of all reported additions and revisions in the near future.

Record No.	Matrix Nos.	Date of Recording	Date of Release
Odeon O 2703	Be 7669, Be 7674	November 1928	January 1929**
Orchestrola 2131	A 8473, A 8474	May 1929	Summer 1929
Orchestrola 2132	A8475, A 8476	May 1929	Summer 1929
Electrola EH 301	CN 472, CN 473	May 1929	July 1929
Homocord H 3748	62881, 62882	August 1930	October 1930
Ultraphon A 717 & A 718***	15902-9	December 1930	January 1931

* From a production at the Burian's theater, "D34," Prague. Re-released on shellac in 1951 on *Národní Diskotéka* 20363.

** Four un-released songs were also recorded at this session.

*** See Schebera updates above.

RECENT RESEARCH

BOOKS IN PROGRESS

David Drew's long-awaited *Kurt Weill: A Handbook* is scheduled for publication in September. (See vol. 4, no. 2, p. 2 for a list of contents.) The volume will be available in the U.K. from Faber & Faber (3 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AU) and in the United States from the University of California Press (50 East 42nd St., Suite 513, New York, NY 10017). Complete order information will be included in the next issue.

Stephen Hinton (West Berlin) and Jürgen Schebera (Leipzig) are collaborating on fully-translated German and English language editions of Kurt Weill's writings. (Hinton is preparing the English edition and Schebera the German.) The new editions will expand upon David Drew's now out-of-print collection, *Kurt Weill: Ausgewählte Schriften* (Suhrkamp, 1975), and will feature a comprehensive collection of essays, as well as selections from Weill's writings as a music critic for *Der deutsche Rundfunk*. Both authors are searching for "undiscovered" writings. If any readers of the *Newsletter* have located writings which are not cited in the standard Weill reference sources, they may assist in this project by forwarding bibliographic citations and a photocopy (if possible) to the Foundation.

Hinton is continuing work on his "Threepenny Opera Handbook," scheduled for publication by Cambridge University Press in 1988 as part of the publisher's Opera Handbook Series. In addition to contributions from David Drew, Kim Kowalke, and Geoff Abbott, Hinton will provide translations of essential documents and utilize new materials gathered from research conducted in Vienna, Berlin, New York, and New Haven. The editor's essay will present a general overview, discuss interpretative difficulties, and offer suggestions regarding performance practice. Further publication information will be announced in the next issue.

DISSERTATIONS

Two recent dissertations explore different aspects of music in the Weimar Republic:

Susan Carol Cook's Ph.D dissertation, "Opera During the Weimar Republic: The *Zeitoper* of Ernst Krenek, Kurt Weill, and Paul Hindemith" (University of Michigan, 1985), is available from University Microfilms International (no. 8520886). Chapters in the study include, "The Crisis of Direction and the Birth of *Zeitoper*," "Artistic, Theatrical and Popular Influences of the *Zeitoper*," "The

Social and Musical Influence of Jazz on the *Zeitoper*," "Ernst Krenek: *Jonny spielt auf*," "Kurt Weill: *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*," "Paul Hindemith: *Neues vom Tage*," and "Works by Schreker, D'Albert, Toch, Brand, Rathaus, Grosz, Antheil, and Schoenberg: Conclusion." Cook is preparing the dissertation for publication by UMI.

Stephen William Hinton's Ph.D dissertation is entitled "The Idea of *Gebrauchsmusik*: A Study of Musical Aesthetics in the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) with Particular Reference to the Works of Paul Hindemith" (University of Birmingham, 1984). A chapter of this paper was published in a slightly abridged version as "Weill: *Neue Sachlichkeit*, Surrealism, and *Gebrauchsmusik*" in *Kurt Weill: A New Orpheus* (Kim Kowalke, editor; Yale University Press, 1986).

Abstract:

Although the idea of *Gebrauchsmusik* is automatically and rightly associated with the composer Paul Hindemith (1895-1963), it is not actually true to maintain, as is often done, that he coined the word. Closer inspection of its etymology is difficult inasmuch as it is a compound noun that any speaker of German could easily concoct. Yet in the Weimar Republic it ceased to be a possible casual conflation, becoming a firmly established catchword around which, on the one hand, musicologists constructed theories of pre-Classical and non-European music and, on the other hand, composers and critics developed a new musical aesthetic. In fact, the two camps colluded in their efforts. The philosopher Martin Heidegger provided the young musicologist Heinrich Bessler with the theoretical framework for this dualistic typology of "*Gebrauchsmusik*" and "autonomous music," and he, in turn, exerted a profound influence on the then current aesthetic thinking. Against this background of a move away from the tradition of autonomy (a tradition embodied in the movement of Expressionism), Hindemith was the foremost composer to put the new ideas into practice, as his contemporaries readily acknowledged. Drawing on historical, biographical and analytical evidence, the thesis demonstrates that Hindemith's development in the Weimar years is well suited to illustrate musical aspects of what became known in all the arts as *Neue Sachlichkeit*, an aesthetic concept intimately connected with the idea of *Gebrauchsmusik*.

W. Jonathan Gresham recently completed a doctoral thesis, "Aspects of Style in Five Works for Winds by Kurt Weill" (College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, 1986). The study features analyses of *Concerto for Violin and*

Winds, Vom Tod im Wald, Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, "Berlin im Licht," and Das Berliner Requiem. Gresham presents a historical overview of each work including a discussion of manuscript sources. In the chapter headed "Stylistic Considerations," the discussion of each work includes sections on instrumentation and orchestration, form, melody and rhythm, and harmony. Musical examples and charts illustrate the text. Included is extensive analysis of the *Violin Concerto* and a comparison of the orchestrations for *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* and *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Gresham notes in the conclusion:

Ultimately, the purpose of a study such as this one is to assist conductors and performers in creating intelligent performances of worthwhile music. Most of Weill's wind music has not rivaled other works in the repertory in frequency of performance. This situation is a consequence not of musical quality, but a lack of awareness by conductors and limited accessibility of the music. The works for winds included in this study, as well as other titles, have much to offer the wind ensemble in terms of variety and quality. Wind ensemble programming that relies solely on straight instrumental selections is severely limited. Weill's wind ensemble pieces offer a variety of texture, style, and instrumental color that is needed to help perpetuate the wind ensemble. At the same time, the wind ensemble is enjoined to fulfill an obligation of its existence and perform Kurt Weill's music.

The dissertation will be available from University Microfilms International.

"Die Bühnenwerke Kurt Weills auf Textvorlagen von Kaiser, Goll und Neher" is the title of a thesis prepared by Andreas Hauff under the supervision of Professor Christoph-Hellmut Mahling at the University of Mainz. The paper investigates the cultural and musicological contexts of Weill's German stage works and devotes individual sections to *Der Protagonist, Royal Palace, Der Zar lässt sich photographieren, Die Bürgschaft, and Der Silbersee*. Hauff is now beginning research for his dissertation, "Kurt Weills Bühnenwerke (1922-1935)."

Brecht and music is the focus of two recent American dissertations, both of which are being prepared for publication:

"Bertolt Brecht and Music: A Comprehensive Study" is the title of Michael John Tyler Gilbert's Ph.D. dissertation (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1985), available through University Microfilms International, no. 850744.

Abstract (excerpt)

...The aim of this dissertation is to close [a] gap in Brecht research by examining Brecht's association with music and musicians in chronological fashion, beginning with (1) his childhood and student years in Augsburg and Munich (1898-1924), and subsequently considering (2) his work in Berlin, his participation in the Baden-Baden music movement (1924-1933); (3) his exile years in France, Scandinavia, and the United States (1933-1947); and (4) his return to Europe and contribution to the cultural development of the GDR (1947-1956). Through extensive investigation and correlation of primary and secondary sources, a complex and differentiated image of Brecht's relationship to music — including his attitudes toward various styles, traditions, and composers — is presented, establishing firmly that music was an essential component of Brecht's creative personality from early on in his life, and therefore a central factor in his overall artistic-intellectual development.

Ronald K. Shull is working with Joachim Lucchesi (Berlin) to compile a version of his monumental study, "Music and the Works of Bertolt Brecht: A Documentation" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1985) for publication. The main body of Shull's dissertation is organized into two sections: "Music for Works by Bertolt Brecht: A Chronological, Annotated Catalogue" and "Chronological, Annotated Collection of Texts by Bertolt Brecht About Music." In the catalog of "Music for Works...", a chronological listing provides German title, English title, first lines of German and English texts, date of text, location of published text, composer, date of composition, instrumentation, location of published music, location of composer's autograph, date and place of first performance, and notes. Each song from a larger work is treated individually and clearly identified with a catalog numbering system. Included is an extensive cross-referencing system which refers the reader to all settings of a particular text. Although a work in progress, Shull explains the study's impetus:

The impulse for this dissertation grew out of practical experience. In the fall of 1971, I wanted to stage Eric Bentley's English version of *Die Massnahme*. Because the play contained several songs and choruses, I wrote to the play's American agent asking for a copy of Hanns Eisler's score. Several weeks later, I received — from a different source — a barely readable photocopy of the music, an unattributed arrangement which had been sketched out by hand. On it, a set of English lyrics — not those of Bentley's translation — had been scrawled in pencil. Supplementing the photocopy with the piano-vocal scores published in Bentley's

Brecht-Eisler Songbook, the cast and I were able to stage the play, but my curiosity about the source of the photocopied arrangement was aroused and engendered a broader interest in the music written for Brecht's plays and its availability to producers and scholars.

What began as an attempt to satisfy a director's irritated curiosity turned into a major research undertaking which has spanned fourteen years of study in the United States and Europe. At each stage, the scope of the project grew ever larger. It became necessary not only to catalog the musical insertions in Brecht's published scripts but, much more, to find a path through [a complex set of] interrelated facts surrounding Brecht's life-long relationship to and uses of music.

Bradley Howard Short includes an entry on *Down in the Valley* in his master's thesis, "American Radio Opera: 1928-1971," (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1986). Included is Weill's "Plan for a series of radio operas," dated 14 July 1937.

Abstract:

Radio Opera represents a small yet important development in American opera from 1928 through 1971. This study provides a working definition of the form as being essentially American chamber opera that was premiered on the radio. The basic characteristics of radio opera are the use of mass communications, the attempt to appeal to audiences by using popular topics sung in English, and the time limitations faced by composers writing for radio performance. Specific examples of these elements are shown through analyses of two radio operas, Marc Blitzstein's *I've Got the Tune* and Vittorio Giannini's *Beauty and the Beast*. In addition, this study provides an annotated listing of the fifty-seven known radio operas giving, if known, the composer, title, librettist, literary source, the network of the premiere, first staged performance, publisher, duration, orchestration, location of materials and any other pertinent information available.

Berlin to Broadway Wins Top Honors

Last year's production of *From Berlin to Broadway* at the Coconut Grove Playhouse in Miami, Florida, recently won six Carbonell Awards. In addition to the best production award, Miami's theater critics honored Jack Allison for best stage direction and choreography of a musical; David Holliday for best actor; Bruce W. Coyle, musical direction; and Fred Kolo, set design. (See the review in the vol. 4, no. 1 issue.)

Stratas Sings Weill nominated for Grammy

Soprano Teresa Stratas earned her second Grammy nomination in the Best Classical Vocal Soloist category for her latest release, *Stratas Sings Weill*, featuring Gerard Schwarz and the Y Chamber Orchestra. Stephen Holden wrote in the *New York Times*, "The chemistry between Kurt Weill and Teresa Stratas ultimately resides in [a] shared adaptability, which is far more than just a matter of style. It is a record filled with the richness of life." The album, released by Nonesuch Records and produced by label president Robert Hurwitz, includes songs from *Threepenny Opera*, *Der Silbersee*, *Marie Galante*, *Street Scene*, *One Touch of Venus*, and other theater works.

Lost in the Stars Wins German Record Prize

Lost in the Stars (A&M Records), produced by Hal Willner and Paul M. Young, has won the Record of the Year award for 1986 in the Federal Republic of Germany. The German Recording Prize is issued to ten albums each year by the Prussian State Institute for Musicology. Other winners this year included the Deutsche Grammophon recording of Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims*, conducted by Claudio Abbado; Offenbach's *La belle Helene*, featuring Jessye Norman, with Michel Plasson leading the choir and orchestra of Toulouse, on EMI; and Tom Waits (who sings "What Keeps Mankind Alive" on *Lost in the Stars*), for his album *Rain Dogs*, on Island Records.

Lady in the Dark in New Performing Edition

New performing materials are in preparation for *Lady in the Dark*. David Loud has compared Weill's full score manuscript, the manuscript vocal score, the rehearsal score, and the published vocal score to compile a new performing edition which will be available for rental in September through the Rodgers & Hammerstein Theatre Library. The new edition restores the materials to reflect the show as it was first performed on Broadway. Cut songs and deleted orchestral material will be included in an appendix. The new edition is being prepared with financial assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Correction:

The article entitled "Hans Heinsheimer" listed in the New Publications section of our last issue (vol. 4, no. 2) was misattributed to Johannes Roth. The actual author is Dietmar Polaczek.