

# NEW PUBLICATIONS



## ARTICLES

Kowalke, Kim H. "Accounting for Success: Misunderstanding *Die Dreigroschenoper*." *Opera Quarterly* VI (Spring 1989): 18-38.

Menuhin, Diana. "Les Ballets 1933." *Dance Research* VI/2 (Autumn 1988): 61-77.

Schebera, Jürgen. "Nachlese zur Ausgabe: 'Charivari'." *notate* IV/88 (October 1988): 14-15.

## BOOKS

Brecht, Bertolt. *Werke*. Edited by Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei, Klaus-Detlef Müller. Stücke 2. Edited by Jürgen Schebera. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988. 474 p. [Includes *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England*, *Mann ist Mann* (1926), *Mann ist Mann* (1938), *Die Dreigroschenoper*, *Mahagonny*, and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*]

Rudnitsky, Konstantin. *Russian and Soviet Theater 1905-1932*. New York: Abrams, 1988. 320p. [Includes production photos and set designs for the 1930 production of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, Kamerny Theatre, Moscow.]

Schrader, Bärbel, and Schebera, Jürgen. *The "Golden" Twenties: Art and Literature in the Weimar Republic*. New Haven: Yale, 1988. 271 p.

Tschulik, Norbert. *Musiktheater in Deutschland: Die Oper im 20. Jahrhundert*. Wien: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1987. 347 p.

Willett, John. *The Theatre of the Weimar Republic*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988.

Zim, Larry; Lerner, Mel; Rolles, Herbert; *The World of Tomorrow: The 1939 New York World's Fair*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988. 240 p. [Contains description and photos of *Railroads on Parade*.]

## DISSERTATIONS

Hennenberg, Fritz. "Neue Funktionsweisen der Musik und des Musiktheaters in den zwanziger Jahren: Studien über die Zusammenarbeit Bertolt Brechts mit Franz S. Bruinier und Kurt Weill." Ph.D. dissertation, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 1987.

## RECORDINGS

*American Musical Theater: Shows, Songs, and Stars*. Volumes 1-4. The Smithsonian Collection of Recordings. RD 036. [Vols. 2 & 3 contain songs by Kurt Weill.]

*Concerto for violin & winds, Op. 12; Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*. Orchestra of St. Luke's; Julius Rudel, conductor; Naoko Tanaka, violin. Musicmasters CD 6-40164, MMC 40164 (cassette)

*Gisela May Sings Weill*. Capriccio CD 10180. [Includes selections from *Happy End*, *Das Berliner Requiem*, *Die Dreigroschenoper*, and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*.]

*Julie Wilson sings the Kurt Weill Songbook*. William Roy, piano. DRG Records CDSL 5207.

*Kleine Dreigroschenoper* in "Die Kroll-Jahre." Otto Klemperer, cond. Symposium 1042. [Recorded in 1930-31; reissue of Polydor 24172/3; includes four of the eight movements]

*The Men in My Life*. Lena Horne. Three Cherries Records TC 64411. [Includes "September Song"]

*Theatre Music of Kurt Weill*. The Sextet of Orchestra USA. Bluebird 6285-2-RB. [Jazz arrangements; compact disc reissue]

*Ute Lemper singt Kurt Weill*. Rias Berlin Kammerensemble; John Mauceri, conductor; Kai Rautenberg, piano. Polydor 820 760-2; Decca NL 425 204-2.

*Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*. Capriccio CD 10147; LP and Cassette 27121.

**Musik bei Brecht** by Joachim Lucchesi and Ronald K. Shull. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1988. 1082 pp.

In the last several years, researchers too have come to realize how decisive the role of music has been in the development and popularization of Brecht's works. With the exception of John Willett, the first impulse for the investigation of this idea has not come from Brecht research but from research dealing with Dessau, Eisler, and Weill. Pioneering work in this area has been written by Fritz Hennenberg, Gerd Rienäcker and David Drew, as well as the Munich publisher Helmut Kindler, who has edited several books dealing with this subject (1977: M. Wyss, *Brecht in der Kritik. Rezensionen aller Brecht-Uraufführungen*, mit verbindenden Texten von H. Kindler; G. Wagner, *Weill und Brecht*; 1980: R. Sanders, *Kurt Weill*; H. Jhering, *Bert Brecht hat das literarische Antlitz Deutschlands verändert. Gesammelte Kritiken*; 1985: A. Dümling, *Lasst euch nicht verführen. Brecht und die Musik*). In 1984, the Brecht Conference in the German Democratic Republic's Brecht Center had as its motto "Brecht and Music."

It is all the more surprising that the musicologist Joachim Lucchesi and the theater specialist Ronald Shull describe the subject "Brecht and Music" as academic *terra incognita*. They claim that, because of limitations in the method and scope of publications prior to May 1986, previous authors had not produced the definitive work – one which would necessarily utilize as many sources as possible. By devaluing their predecessors, the authors raise expectations for their own work. Is their book really the long-awaited comprehensive study?

The introductory essay describes, with extensive reference to sources, Brecht's own musical development and his cooperation with composers. Still, Brecht's personal, as well as pedagogical, cultural, and general political motivations are for the most part left out of the picture. Similarly, a discussion of questions of genre – for example, the progression in the generic structure from Lied to operetta, and, finally, to Agitprop theater and didactic play, or a critical discussion of the works in the context of music history and musical language – is not to be found. Instead, there is speculation. For example, the description of an early text from 1912 which is deemed by the authors to deal with Wagner, in fact, deals not with Wagner himself but with the attitude of the Wagnerians.

The facts in the book do not always reflect the latest research. Brecht learned to play guitar in 1912, as his brother Walter told this reviewer, but not while at the university. The publication of "Hauspostille" failed not because of the objection of a shareholder, as Friedemann Berger has proven. And it is not at all clear whether Eisler really did not write a review of *Die Dreigroschenoper*; possibly, the review in the *Rote Fahne* of 4 September 1928 was written by him. The information about Brecht's knowledge of Stravinsky is also imprecise: in 1939, Brecht compared the logistics of Piscator's stagings to a Stravinsky score. This text is also missing.

In an introductory essay, one can scarcely expect a complete treatment of the subject. Still, it is astonishing that in this comprehensive work there is not one mention of the name Marc Blitzstein. At least Ronald Shull, who received his doctorate on the subject of "Brecht and Music" at an American university in 1985, should have known of this composer. Blitzstein was the most important American composer-dramatist to carry on Brecht's musical-theatrical impulse. His opera *The Cradle Will Rock* was inspired by the playwright and was, in fact, dedicated to him. Blitzstein's adaptation of *Die Dreigroschenoper* enabled its success in New York. All of this can be found in my 1985 book about Brecht, which Lucchesi and Shull have entirely ignored. Because other important books that were published before 1986 – such as the lyrics volume to Jan Knopf's *Brecht-Handbuch*, the Argument-Sonderband *Hanns Eisler*, Reinhold Brinkmann's Eisler essays, the "Lukullus" essay by Hans Mayer, Dietrich Stern's studies of Kurt Weill, or the memoirs of Paula Banholzer – have not been worked into this work, one can hardly call it a "comprehensive study."

Despite these serious omissions, the factual material in the introductory essay is for the most part carefully researched. In advance of its publication, David Drew put the typescript of his Weill handbook at the disposal of the authors. Interviews with contemporaries of Brecht have not brought any significant new insights. Unfortunately, the presentation of the material is not complemented by considerations arising from recent research on Brecht; on the contrary, one senses a certain intellectual distance from such research. We learn that aesthetically diverse types of music are found in the playwright's works but not why. To answer this question, one would have had to considered in a more profound way his path-breaking ideas about the social, pedagogical, and political functions of music than the authors have done. Instead they have worked with a

traditional aesthetic of the individual work rather than an operative philosophy of the arts. Brecht himself had a complex and differentiated way to observe and judge the effect of music. This cannot be overlooked in his commentary to "Lied vom achten Elefanten" (Mus 283.31) or the satirical song of the Bishop Cauchon (Text 253). (That one text is in the music section and the other in the text section without any cross-references illuminates a problem in the construction of this volume.)

The authors' comprehension of the details of Brecht's musical practice is wanting. For example, the collection of "Lieder zur Klampfe" is explained by the growing number of songs, but not by the growing number of collaborators, working in collectivity. If Brecht had continued to sing his songs alone and not in a group, he would not have put together a booklet and could have continued to make do with mere musical sketches on loose leaves. Also, in order to understand his attitude toward music (for example, the polemic against musical entertainment or opposition to musical pleasure), the authors would have had to deal more thoroughly with his writings. Seldom has a Brecht book been published in which politics and history plays such a secondary role.

The value of the book is in the chronological catalogue. The collection of the 269 *Äusserungen zur Musik*, which range in size from a single line to several pages, is hoped to be complete. A few unfamiliar texts from the Brecht Archive, for example the notes on the "Mahagonny" opera (No. 84ff) or No. 99 ("Über die gesellschaftliche Funktion der Musik"), are quite interesting. One asks oneself, however, how "Jetzt spiele ich noch Gitarre mit Hartmann" was included, while Brecht's essential thoughts about the use of Wagner in German fascism are omitted; instead, they are hidden in a footnote (p. 76).

The chronological ordering of the texts is particularly helpful because it highlights the development of Brecht's process-oriented thinking. Unfortunately, the discussion lacks a thorough system of cross-references. Only occasionally do the authors supply a brief commentary to previous observations and never to subsequent remarks. A subject index is also lacking. Therefore, for example, the only way to locate Brecht's thoughts about jazz is to scan the entire text; the related texts 161, 173, and 175 do not even refer to each other through cross-references. A mention of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in No. 180 seems to have been forgotten.

The *Musikverzeichnis* (music catalogue) takes up the largest portion of the book and is limited to Brecht's often sketch-like musi-



cal ideas and his collaborations with composers. Musical settings which are not by the "classical" Brecht composers Weill, Eisler, and Dessau and those developed without contact with the playwright were excluded. This is understandable considering the impressive scope and volume of the material. The combination of chronological and alphabetical order, however, makes much less sense and is rather confusing; it obscures the process by which the work was produced without facilitating the search for specific titles. For example, the *Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis* is placed before *Der Lindberghflug*, although the latter was composed before the former. Groups of works such as "Ruhrepos" or the "Hollywood-Elegien" have been separated because of this questionable alphabetizing. The purely philological ordering frustrates the reconstruction of practical contexts and pushes Brecht's reactions to contemporary events into the background.

The commentary is for the most part limited to short enumerations of the date of composition, composer, instrumentation, editions, location of manuscript, and the premiere performance. Information about the character of the text, the music, or the practical context in which it originated is more scarce. Although this book does not presume to replace Hennenberg's Brecht songbook or Knopf's Brecht handbook, I would have hoped for explicit reference to the hymn "Nearer my God!" in No. 70 ("Tahiti"), the quotation of Eisler-Weinerts "Heimlicher Aufmarsch" in the fourth *Wiegenlied für Arbeitermütter* (No. 176), or reference to the composer Roger Sessions. The "Liturgie vom Hauch" was not inspired by Goethe, but by the petit-bourgeois element in the workers' movement. Under the heading "Pläne und Projekte," one finds such finished works as "Berlin im Licht," *Happy End*, *Dreigroschenroman*, and the play *Die Gewehre der Frau Carrar*.

This voluminous book, with its bewildering profusion of information, is not suited for a broad readership. Specialists and researchers, however, will, despite all criticism, profit from this work. The discography is relatively comprehensive and several chronological and alphabetical indexes make the abundance of information more manageable. If a new edition were prepared, the music section should be put entirely in chronological order and the latest research should be worked in. In addition, the "Lied von der Stange" composed in 1942 by Theodor W. Adorno and the German Peasant War opera project with Rudolph Wagner-Regeny should be included.

The topic "Brecht and Music" is so diverse and multi-faceted, that it cannot be surveyed in one book. Obviously the result of an immense effort, Luchesi and Shull have produced a useful reference book, but not the definitive work which was promised.

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*Translated by Michael Hoexter*

**The Theatre of the Weimar Republic.** By John Willett. New York: Holmes & Meier. 1988. 350 p.

John Willett's prolific output on the theater and culture of the Weimar Republic makes him an appropriate authority for the daunting task of presenting an overview of this topic in a single readable volume. His unique career, combining extensive self-motivated scholarship, creative work in the theater, and cultural journalism enables him to bridge the arcane tendencies of German aesthetic theory and the pragmatic approach of Anglo-American theatergoers and artists. Willett moves familiarly between social and political events, institutional structures, artistic problems, and personality cults – admittedly, the elements of any period in theater history, but an especially complex and controversial approach for the Weimar period. He has a good command of this subject. One aspect of the task, however, of particular theatrical significance appears to have escaped both the author and the publishers: who is the potential audience for such a survey – the specialist, the student, the general reader? This question points up both the book's strengths and weaknesses.

Willett follows a cultural-historical format, presenting chronologically the major personalities and influences within their socio-political context. The wealth of dramaturgical theory from this period, or the relations between economic and political crises and the theater during the Republic, are always anchored to their effects on theatrical practices, giving the book a clear and appropriate focus.

Part I presents two seminal achievements of the pre-1914 German theater. Max Reinhardt's innovations in "total theater" – truly, a *director's* theater – established a synthetic approach to the aesthetic elements of the theater, developing and integrating voice, gesture, lighting, scene, music, and even

the audience into a unified experience. His unusual attention to design and stage technology became hallmarks of the Weimar directors. Meanwhile the Social Democratic *Volksbühne* (People's Theater) Movement created an institutional basis for socially engaged and workers' theater. Willett finds in these two exemplars that uncanny union of the Republic's theater – a dual synthesis and expansion of, on the one hand, the aesthetic media of the theater, and, on the other, the theater's relationship to its social and political context – that made the explosive work of Brecht, Piscator, and their circle possible.

In the Second Part, Willett organizes his discussions of the major theatrical movements of the Republic in relation to four socio-political periods: Expressionism – the revolutionary upheaval (1918-1922); *Neue Sachlichkeit* and popular realism – disillusionment and stabilization (1922-1924); big budget experiments in entertainment, opera, and technological theater – late 20's prosperity (1925-1929); and revolutionary collectives and agit-prop – economic crisis and political polarization (1929-1933). The compartmentalization is not used in a reductionist or heavy-handed way; although this format may give the impression of a series of distinct periods, Willett breaks the chronology in Part III to reexamine the period as a whole from the perspective of theatrical questions: major innovations, direction, acting style, design, music, and journalistic criticism. The chronology is then resumed to trace the torturous paths of the Weimar theater movement into the Third Reich and exile.

Willett does a remarkable job of synthesis. He presents the continuum of interrelationships that made the work of Max Reinhardt as instructive to the mainstream intendant Leopold Jessner, as to the Expressionist designers, Brecht and Piscator, and even the revolutionary collectives. After all, as Willett emphasizes, the Weimar theater world integrated low and high culture, radicalism (political and aesthetic), and a decentralized network of theaters in the provinces and capital into a broad innovative mainstream. At the same time, he recognizes the discomfort of the aristocratic circle around Reinhardt in the new context of the Republic, the limits of Leopold Jessner and the Expressionists, and the very different, almost contradictory approaches to political theater pursued by Brecht and Piscator. Likewise, Willett captures the complex impact of the advent of Nazism; even while discerning the threads of continuity running through the theater of the Third Reich and preserved in the various exile communities,

he makes us feel the devastating effects of those years, indeed with a genuine pathos for the careers, friendships, and lives broken by the collapse of the Republic.

Despite the realization of these difficult tasks in such a brief volume, the intended audience for this book remains unclear. Willett has a journalist's penchant for getting all the names down, even if it means detracting from descriptions and analyses of productions, scripts, and ideas. This density of proper names is no stumbling block to the informed amateur or specialist – in fact, the thoroughness of such naming expresses our own and Willett's sense of loss and remembrance for those people – still these same readers would be quick to pass on to his focused monographs on Brecht and Piscator, or his more controversial and speculative survey *Art and Politics in the Weimar Period*. But if the book is meant to be, as suggested in the opening chapter, "a short textbook" serving to introduce the period to students of theater history or general readers, then the wealth of names will prove off-putting and the lucidity of the style will seem spoiled by pedantry. The Frankfurt theorist Theodor Adorno, for example, is only mentioned in a passing reference which cites his approbation of the 1931 performance of *Mahagonny* ("the best *Mahagonny* production yet, in Theodor Adorno's view"). This superficial tidbit can alternately point up the relative lack of attention to the rich theoretical work of the Weimar theater for the informed reader and provide another obscure reference for the uninformed (sharing a page, as it does, with over 30 other proper names!).

*The Theatre of the Weimar Republic* also includes extensive appendices (one-third of the text) listing the main German-language theaters, a thirty-year chronology of theater seasons, and other facts. The lists are far too detailed to clarify the text for the novice, while the specialist is warned by Willett himself to beware of the incomplete and inexact nature of the data, necessitating follow-up checks for scholars in any event. In either case, the appendices give the unpleasant impression of "padding" to justify the large-format hardcover edition. This reviewer hopes that plans are being made to bring out an inexpensive paperback of the "short textbook," which Willett's terse, informative survey represents, along the lines of the Grove Press Modern Dramatists Series. Such a volume would serve an audience as broad as the theater it describes.

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### briefly noted ...

**The "Golden" Twenties: Art and Literature in the Weimar Republic.** By Bärbel Schrader and Jürgen Schebera. New Haven: Yale, 1988. 271 p.

**Damals im Romanischen Café: Künstler and ihre Lokale im Berlin der zwanziger Jahre.** By Jürgen Schebera. Berlin (West): Westermann, 1988.

These two books, both originally published in the GDR and intended for a general readership, provide a pictorial and textual introduction to artistic activity in the Weimar Republic. In both volumes, the wealth of photographic reproductions of fine art, posters, photographs, and documents gathered from archival repositories and publishers located in East Berlin and Leipzig (most notably the ADN/Zentralbild, Berlin) offers the main attraction for scholars. Both volumes include a serviceable bibliography and an index of prominent artistic and cultural figures.

*The Golden Twenties*, originally published in German by Edition Leipzig and translated for Yale Press by Katherine Vanovitch, presents an interdisciplinary approach to cultural life in Germany from 1918-1933. The authors attempt to delineate a paradox of cultural activity in the Republic: "artistic masterpieces alongside a reactionary flood of chauvinistic mass production; important aesthetic innovations alongside routine perfectionism; the influence of the Soviet avant-garde alongside ambitious imitations of American show biz." Organized chronologically, the book touches upon art movements, architecture, cinema, radio, literature, and the performing arts, all set within "the scientific and technological context against which they evolved." To this end, the appendix provides a tabular "synchronology" which juxtaposes concurrent events in the areas of politics; science and economics; literature, theater, music; and art, architecture, film.

*Damals im Romanischen Café ...* provides a discussion of the various meeting places of artists and writers in Berlin: the Romanisches Café (and its predecessor Café Grössenwahn), the Schwannecke and Mutter Maenz, the restaurant Schlichter, and the hotels Adlon, Eden, and Kempinski. The book contains over 100 photographs of the establishments and of the artists who frequented them.

D.F.

## RECORDINGS

**Kleine Dreigroschenmusik.** London Symphony Orchestra members, Michael Tilson Thomas, cond. **Die sieben Todsünden.** Julia Migenes, soprano; Robert Tear, tenor; Stuart Kale, tenor; Alan Opie, baritone; Roderick Kennedy, bass; London Symphony Orchestra, Michael Tilson Thomas, cond. CBS Records (CD: MK 44529).

**Kleine Dreigroschenmusik.** Orchestra of St. Luke's, Julius Rudel, cond. **Concerto for Violin and Wind Orchestra, Op. 12.** Naoko Tanaka, violin; Orchestra of St. Luke's, Julius Rudel, cond. Musicmasters (cassette: MMC-40164F).

**Kleine Dreigroschenmusik** -- Nos. 2, 4, 5a, 6. Berlin State Opera Orchestra members, Otto Klemperer, cond. [from Polydor 24172/3 (matrixes 2743½/4/6/5 BH II), recorded 1931]. Symposium (CD: 1042, with orchestral works by Auber, Beethoven, Debussy, Offenbach, Ravel, Wagner.

Whereas only a single movement in *Die sieben Todsünden* bears a metronome marking (No. 6, "Unzucht": ♩ = 66), every section of the *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* has one, and with minimal exceptions they correspond to the markings in the original stage work. (The major divergence is the "Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit," which in the suite's second movement is joined to the "Moritat" under a single tempo – the latter's 66 rather than the former's original 85. The markings for the first two tempos of the Finale differ insignificantly.) You might think that this precision on Weill's part would have resulted in some consensus about tempos among performers. Not so. Even in the partial recording made a couple of years after the premiere by Otto Klemperer, who commissioned the arrangement from Weill, two tempos (No. 4, "Die Ballade von angenehmen Leben," and No. 6, "Kanonen-



# RECORDINGS

Song") are measurably faster than the markings. What's more, the haste is not a result of 78-rpm side limitations: these two sides, at 2:17 and 2:05, are in fact significantly shorter than the other two (2:32 and 2:41), so slower tempos would have easily been feasible. More recent recordings diverge variously and conspicuously in tempo, even more significantly in character.

Strikingly, Klemperer's nearly complete 1961 recording of the *Dreigroschenmusik* with the Philharmonia Orchestra (Angel, out of print) takes No. 6 at Weill's metronome, and No. 4 even more slowly (118 in 1931, 80 thirty years later, vs. the score's 96). Aside from No. 4, the 1961 recording more consistently matches Weill's tempos than

ductor's detachment remains, but his position in the musical universe has shifted—not merely geographically and chronologically, but hierarchically, from rebellious outsider to pillar of the Establishment: not any less his own man, but surely regarded differently by the players (themselves a long distance from the Berlin opera pit of the 1931 bandmen). In consequence, the Philharmonia version provocatively balances the professional respect paid an acknowledged masterpiece by experts against a dryness and edginess of spirit still in touch with the original setting. We must hope for an early and well-engineered CD reissue of this important recording (coupled with some highly original performances of Johann

tionally even picky; irony is reduced to bland geniality. Some may find here a nostalgic reminiscence of the "real thing"; to my ears, it is rather a cosmeticization, into mere *Unterhaltungsmusik*.

The CBS recording under Michael Tilson Thomas shares the tendency to spotlight lines, to suppress detail and clarity of texture, downplaying the contrapuntal bias characteristic of the music and its time, and in some way romanticizing it. I like the fading end of the "Moritat" and the agogic accents in the Tango, but No. 4 drags badly, and the Finale is rather vulgarly accelerated up to the entrance of the Chorale (during which the faster-moving inner voice is so stressed as to distract from the overall line).



do either of the new ones listed above (or David Atherton's with the London Sinfonietta, recently reissued on DG CD 423-255-2). Yet the difference between Klemperer's two performances is more than a matter of tempo. In the earlier one, the conductor's characteristically relaxed steadiness guides playing of an unself-consciously vernacular flavor, with accents of both the modish palm court and the sleazy beerhall. The stolid, punchy stride of tuba and bass drum, the timbral nuances of solo players, even the occasional lapses of unanimity (especially in the Tango) are all communicative, and vividly registered in a recording that seems astonishing for its date. (The Symposium dubbing is remarkably clean, from a source with quieter surfaces than an earlier LP edition, Past Master PM-31. Nothing else on this CD sounds as good, but both repertory and performances make fascinating listening to those raised on the post-war Klemperer. Symposium's attention to the niceties of CD presentation is inadequate, however: no clue is offered as to track numbers for the various works, nor are the movements of the *Dreigroschenmusik* individually tracked.)

The transparently and elegantly executed 1961 Philharmonia version is miles from that unique earlier combination of Klemperer deadpan and Weimar funk. The con-

Strauss, plus a waltz of the conductor's own composition).

In later recordings, the subject of the performers' discourse gradually shifts. Atherton and the Sinfonietta are steady and accurate, and fortunately also fairly aggressive about the work's leanness and vernacularity (perhaps because they came into the studio fresh from extensive immersion in a wide range of Weill at the 1975 Berlin Festival). While several earlier tempos are on the fast side, the finale is consistently below Weill's markings. Atherton's occasional tendency to "layer" the textures, to clarify by letting other lines recede behind a primary melody, makes for less interesting listening than Klemperer's subtler balancing.

Rudel's performance, also recorded in the aftermath of a Weill festival (in September 1987 at New York's Hebrew Arts School) is more prone to fast tempos, including the most rapid Overture of all (at 130, vs. Weill's 84), and espouses an unwarranted tempo articulation in No. 3, the "Anstatt-dass-Song." "Top-line" textures are very much the rule here, except in No. 5a, the "Tango-Ballade," where the accordion (presumably played by the irrepressible William Schimmel) takes a vigorous rhythmic role, to the point of obscuring the melody. More damagingly, the playing is short on projection and sass, occa-

This combination of good and bad ideas is further rendered non-essential by its coupling, a version of *Die sieben Todsünden* that disappoints on fundamental textual grounds (as forecast in Paul Meecham's review of the same performers' 1987 London concert performance, *Kurt Weill Newsletter*, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 15). From Julia Migenes, a singer who can encompass the tessitura of Berg's *Lulu*, and Thomas, a conductor who is known to interest himself in editorial niceties, one might have expected the authentic version of this score, not the posthumous partial transposition made to accommodate Lenya in her later career. (The only recording to date in the original keys, Angel 37981, by Elise Ross and Simon Rattle, is vocally quite inadequate.)

Down in the Lenya basement, Migenes frequently resorts to a Broadway belt that eventually, in the march of No. 8, undermines her intonation. She knows what she is singing about on a local level (her slightly exotic German diction can be careless about vowel qualities) and conveys a generalized toughness and "low-down" quality, if little of the balancing humanity and warmth that Lenya and Gisela May have found in key passages of the role(s). The competent male quartet is less characterful than May's, the first tenor's upper register scarcely toler-

able; the orchestration is presented with some precision and care. (The English liner note is unsigned, although its translators into German and French are credited. A literal English translation, rather than the Auden-Kallmann singing version, is supplied for *Die sieben Todsünden*.)

The second fruit plucked by Musicmasters from the New York Weill festival, the Violin Concerto, is distinctly more valuable than its coupling. The opening pages are unpromising: the two clarinets are so close that we can hear keyclicks during the trills. In general, the soloist – a fleet, vigorous, and virtuoso player – has been made more consistently audible than in the other available recording (Nona Liddell and the London Sinfonietta under Atherton, on the DG CD mentioned above). The penalty is a rather congested tutti sound, everyone pressed against the front of the soundstage, enshrouded in a positive dearth of ambience. This problem abates, if only thanks to the light scoring, in the tripartite middle movement, where soloist and band come closer than did Liddell and the Sinfonietta to evoking – and justifying – the designations Weill gave its outer sections, as well as shaping the central cadenza fleetly and logically. In the “Notturmo,” the solo xylophone concentrates on bell-like tone rather than clatter, and the last pages have a suspenseful anticipation, while the “Serenata” is compellingly songful.

In both recordings, the expressive character of the first and last movements is less clear. This relatively short-lived phase of Weill's musical language is still unfamiliar to performers (and listeners) – as, indeed, are the aspects of Busoni's language to which it is indebted. Instead, we are likely to focus on the occasional signposts pointing to Hindemith and Stravinsky (as well as the occasional pre-echoes of later Weill stage works); their expressive import has become firmly established, at least in part by the use of their languages in well-known vocal and theatrical works. But these are in fact peripheral to the Violin Concerto's central style, and we will all benefit from its further “playing in” by a variety of musicians. The Musicmasters recording takes us some part of the way. (The annotations in the cassette edition lengthily rehearse the familiar Weill avant-garde/Broadway dichotomy but tender little information about the specific works; preposterously, instead of a biographical note about the excellent soloist, we are given one about the annotator.)

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Projection slides for “Pride” from the Sacramento Symphony production of *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Artist: Robert Doucette; ©Robert Doucette 1988. Photo: Jeffery Ault

## The Seven Deadly Sins. Sacramento Symphony, Carter Nice, cond; Angelina Réaux, soprano; Marc Jacobs, dir.; Sacramento Community Center, 21 October 1988.

*The Seven Deadly Sins* shares with many of Weill's works a stubborn resistance to categorization, a circumstance which has proved an obstacle to its finding a place in any standardized repertoire. Recordings have helped ease the piece into the corpus of Weill's popularly known oeuvre, but there has yet to develop any accepted performance tradition. Stage director Marc Jacobs has taken a bold step in that direction with a witty and imaginative concert staging, which was given its premiere by the Sacramento Symphony on 21 October 1988.

Jacobs, in collaboration with artist-animator Robert Anthony Doucette and photographer-projectionist Jeffery Ault, has designed a colorful multi-media event in which two sets of slides – in a medley of styles veering between Georg Grosz and Jules Feiffer and drawing upon modern icons ranging from Degas to Bogart – projected on raised screens on either side of the stage provide a rapid-fire commentary on the texts sung by Anna, stage left, and the male quartet representing her family seated on rocking chairs, stage right. An occasional prop or costume change lent realism to the characterizations and gave the concert setting the necessary touch of theatrical illusion. Jacobs's generally light-hearted gloss of the work's text conjures up an eclectic assemblage of associations including Germany's Weimar culture (Sloth), *Film noir* of the fifties (Lechery), and Wall Street's merger mania (Greed). More provocative – and perhaps more in keeping with the work's biting tone – is the McCarthy-era context given the Hollywood portion of the sisters' odyssey (Anger) in which we see

Anna II taking the stand before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. (This might have been an ideal opportunity to make more of Brecht's own appearance before that committee, but there is only one brief allusion; moreover, the poet is curiously absent at the outset of Jacobs's slide series in which matching photographs of Weill face each other across the stage).

In any stage or concert production of the “Ballet with Song,” at least one of its vital components – dance, text, music – is likely to be compromised. Here, Jacobs readily sacrificed dance for the play of images on the screen, where Anna II could most often be found. Unfortunately – at least in Sacramento's large Community Center concert hall – text intelligibility was not what it should have been. Though sung in English and amplified, it is doubtful that the audience understood more than half of the text, which is especially regrettable in a production as finely tuned as this one. On occasion, in venerable epic theater tradition, Jacobs makes effective use of captions; these might have been employed more consistently to help delineate the action. It would likewise have been helpful if the text – or at least a detailed synopsis – had been included in the program. This production deserves a wider hearing and with slight modifications for local conditions it could find a place on the programs of orchestras around the country.

Concluding a program consisting of Copland's suite from *Billy the Kid* and Haydn's Symphony No. 91, the Weill-Brecht work was well-received by an attentive and responsive audience. Minor technical gaffs on the first night were eliminated in two subsequent performances, which likewise met with a warm, enthusiastic reception. The Sacramento Symphony under Music Director Carter Nice played with verve and precision. Angelina Réaux, who replaced Georgia Brown in the role of Anna, struck a delightful balance of insouciance, melancholy, and worldly cynicism. She was in fine



# PERFORMANCES

vocal form as was the excellent male quartet consisting of tenors Mark Daniel and Ed Betts, baritone Tom Hart and bass Mark Keller.

CHRISTOPHER HAILEY  
Occidental College

**Happy End.** Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Jan Latham König, conductor. Cologne Radio Orchestra, Cologne, 29 October 1988.

Between two radio productions of *Street Scene* (May 1988) and *Der Silbersee* (March 1989), the Westdeutscher Rundfunk presented *Happy End* in a late-night performance broadcast from the Kölner Musikhochschule on 29 October 1988.

Weill took pride in his musical contributions to this collaboration with Brecht, asserting that, for example, the "Matrosen-Tango" and the "Heilsarmeelied" exceeded by far his former *Songstil* in seriousness and expressiveness. Good music, Weill claimed, had been wasted on a bad play. Appropriately, shortly before his emigration in 1933, Weill had contemplated the rearrangement of his material into a *Songspiel*. Attracted by the advantages of a version for six actors and eleven musicians, he nonetheless shied away from having to take up again his increasingly strained relationship with Brecht and eventually abandoned his plan. In 1975, David Drew prepared a "Songspiel" version of the music which was performed by the London Sinfonietta at the Akademie der Künste in West Berlin and which was subsequently recorded for Deutsche Grammophon (2740 153).

Now, almost 60 years after the premiere of *Happy End*, WDR producer Harald Banter presented a new radio version that included all the songs as well as some radically shortened dialogue scenes to provide a narrative link. The production's dramaturg, Josef Heintzelmann, provided the actors with lines which, while not straining for absolute plausibility, did indeed get across Hauptmann's and Brecht's highly sarcastic commentary on money and morals. However, the fact that the singers had been double-cast did not make matters easy for those unfamiliar with the storyline.

Karin Ploog (Sister Jane and The Fly) and baritone Steven Kimbrough (Mammy) certainly came across well on the broadcast, but it was their colleagues Walter Raffener and Gabriele Ramm in the lead roles whose charming and witty performance moved the live audience. Cologne's Hallelujah Lil was

rather flirtatious and did not overload "Surabaya Johnny" with excessive *Weltschmerz*; and the Bill Cracker of this well-known Wagnerian tenor offered a thoroughly fetching performance.

Jan Latham-König, familiar as the conductor of last year's *Street Scene*, led his impeccable ensemble in a dashing first performance of Gary S. Fagin's new edition of Weill's score. The "Hosiannah Rockefeller" finale, a wonderful climax to this hour-long performance, had not been included in previous German productions. It was in this particular part, of course, that Johannes Hömberg's Pro Musica Köln Choir could best demonstrate all its fine ensemble and verve.

STEFAN KRÜGER  
Cologne

## briefly noted...

**The Seven Deadly Sins and The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken.** University Opera Theatre, University of Houston Symphony Orchestra, and University of Houston Concert Chorale, Niklaus Wyss, Conductor. 3 March 1989.

Performances of two Weill works provided the primary musical fare at the University of Houston symposium on German literature and music, held 1-4 March. Under the direction of Niklaus Wyss, Associate Conductor of the Houston Symphony, three U of H student ensembles gave spirited accountings of *The Seven Deadly Sins* and *The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken*, works which revealed notably distinct sides of Weill's European years and the corresponding diversity of his interests.

*The Tsar* has been staged very few times in the United States and only sporadically in the United Kingdom. The libretto, written by Georg Kaiser, relates the story of the urbane Tsar who is visiting Paris. He is scheduled to sit for a photographic portrait and becomes the target of an assassination plot. A substitute photographer - the false Angèle - is committed to kill the Tsar but is unable to carry out her task, and instead, falls victim to the Tsar's considerable charm. The alternately ingenuous and ardent, but seemingly humble, antics of the Tsar prevent the murder from taking place.

Buck Ross's clever staging of *The Tsar* came as an expected surprise after an under-rehearsed and under-staged *Sins*. The orchestra played the more difficult score far better than it had the *Sins*, and most of the principals dispatched their roles with vocal

and dramatic aplomb. In Lionel Salter's translation, the farce played breezily to a large and appreciative audience.

A significant corps of the University of Houston School of Music participated in this admirable effort to realize two very diverse pieces; the distinctions between them are indeed greater than their time difference. A rapid metamorphosing of style is of course the hallmark of Weill's brief career, and it is to the credit of the students that they spanned this aesthetic distance.

SAUL FISHER  
Houston

**The Threepenny Opera.** The Canadian Stage Company and The Banff Centre, St. Lawrence Centre, Toronto. 9 March-1 April 1989.

To assert that the Banff-Canadian Stage production of *Threepenny Opera* is one of the best I've ever seen is not to deny that it nevertheless is largely miscast and misdirected. Rather, it is to acknowledge the extreme demands of the piece and the rarity of occasions in the post-1945 era on which they have been met.

Fortunately the director, designers, and most of the cast in Toronto recognized that the play is, above all, a comedy. The central problems with the production are the inconsistencies in style and execution of that comedy. With stunning post-modern reworkings of constructivist-cum-commedia sets and costumes, Kelly Robinson has chosen to play the comedy so broadly that all but the most adroit individual performances deteriorate into caricature. Local Toronto actresses Nora McLellan and Shirley Douglas, who respectively play Jenny as a stock, brazen horror and Mrs. Peachum as a tip-toeing, Canadian honker, were especially disappointing in light of Banff's commitment to high musical standards. Except for a voiceless Tiger Brown-Messenger, the rest of the cast could sing their roles, with Lucy and Polly particularly impressive. The biography of the actor playing Macheath confirmed that he had recently played the Leading Player in *Pippin*; I thought he still was. Precariously lowered from the flies and suspended mid-air in a cage, conductor Wyn Davies conducted the seven-piece orchestra stylishly in an accurate if limp account of the score. The opening night audience cheered enthusiastically at the final tableau.

KIM H. KOWALKE  
Kurt Weill Foundation for Music

# SELECTED PERFORMANCES

## AUSTRIA

*Happy End*, Jura Soyfer Theater, Vienna, Ilse Scheer, dir.; Rudi Stodola, cond., November-December 1988

## AUSTRALIA

*The Threepenny Opera*, Brisbane, QLD, La Boite Theatre, 9-11, 15-18, 21-25 March 1989

*The Threepenny Opera*, Darwin, Northern Territory, Darwin Theatre Group, 23, 26-30 September, 3-7 October 1989

## CANADA

*Der Jasager*, Banff, ALB, The Banff Centre, School of Fine Arts, includes tour to Canmore and Calgary, 24, 27, 29 February 1989

*Johnny Johnson*, Banff, ALB, The Banff Centre, School of the Arts, 23-25 March 1989

*Mahagonny Songspiel*, Edmonton, ALB, Alberta College Music Department, 15 October 1988

*The Threepenny Opera*, Vancouver, BC, Touchstone Theatre, 11 February - 5 March 1989

*The Threepenny Opera*, Bluma Appel Theater, Toronto, ONT, co-production, The Banff Centre and Canadian Stage Company, 9 March-1 April 1989

## ENGLAND

*The Threepenny Opera*, Chichester, Chichester Festival, 1989

*Street Scene*, London Coliseum, London, co-production, English National Opera and Scottish Opera, David Poutney, dir.; Carl Davis, cond., 11 October-25 November 1989

## FRANCE

*Der Jasager*, Valenciennes, Conservatoire de Musique, February 1989

## FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Augsburg, Staatstheater, 1989-90 season

*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Kampnagel-Fabrik, Hamburg, Hamburg Staatsoper, Günter Krämer, dir., June 1990

*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Hof, Theater-Hof, 6 May 1989

*Concerto, violin & winds*, Cologne, Musikhochschule, 20 October 1988

*Die Dreigroschenoper*, Stadttheater, Aachen, Dieter Loebach, dir.; Joseph Thelken, cond., October 1988

*Die Dreigroschenoper*, Theater des Westens, Berlin, July 1989

*Die Dreigroschenoper*, Schauspielhaus, Wiesbaden, December 1988

*Happy End*, Städtische Bühnen, Bielefeld, December 1988

*Happy End*, E.T.A.-Hoffmann-Theater, Bamberg, Peter-Christian Gerloff, dir.; Gloria Roberts, cond., October 1988

*Happy End*, Cologne, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Jan Latham-Koenig, cond., 29 October 1988

*Der Jasager*, Augsburg, Geoffrey Abbott, cond., February 1989

*Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, Stuttgart, Stuttgart Philharmonic, 2 February 1989

*Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, Freiburg, Musikverein, 26 November 1988

*Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, Frankfurt, Radio-Sinfonie-Orchesters Frankfurt, Erich Leinsdorf, cond., 10-11 November 1988

*Mahagonny Songspiel*, Dortmund, Kölner Collegium Vocale, 6 October 1988

*Die sieben Todsünden*, Stadttheater, Remscheid, Guest performance by the Oberhausen Stadttheater, 2-4 December 1988

*Der Silbersee*, Kölner Philharmonie, Köln, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Jan Latham-Koenig, cond., 18 March 1989

## GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

*Die Dreigroschenoper*, East Berlin, Puppentheater Berlin, September-October 1988

*Die sieben Todsünden*, Weimar, Deutsches Nationaltheater, Günter Kahlert, cond.; Udo Wandtke, chor.; 1 April 1989

## ITALY

*Die Dreigroschenoper*, Bolzano, Südtiroler Theater Ensemble, 2-5, 9, 12 May 1989

*Die Dreigroschenoper*, Teatro Bellini, Naples, Cooperative Teatrale Nuova Commedia, Tato Russo, dir.; Antonio Sinagra, cond., 15 October-31 December 1988, tour throughout Italy during 1989

## JAPAN

*Die Dreigroschenoper*, Kokoshuko-Tent, Tokyo, October 1988

*The Threepenny Opera*, Tokyo, Parco Theatre School, 2-3 November 1988

## NETHERLANDS

*Der Silbersee*, Amsterdam, 24 December 1988

*War Play*, Amsterdam, Netherlands Wind Ensemble, 20, 27, 29 November, 20 December 1988

## SCOTLAND

*Street Scene*, Glasgow, co-production, Scottish Opera and English National Opera, David Poutney, dir.; John Mauceri, cond.; 23, 25, 27, 31 May, 1 June 1989, tours to Liverpool, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and Edinburgh during June.

## SOUTH KOREA

*Die Dreigroschenoper*, Seoul, Goethe-Institut, October 1988

## SWEDEN

*Totuskillingsoperan*, Stockholm, The Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden, Karin Betz, dir.; Peter Langdal, set design; Jean Billgren, cond.; October 1988

## SWITZERLAND

*Johnny Johnson*, Zug, Institut Montana, March 1989

## TURKEY

*Üç Kurusluk Opera*, Istanbul, Turkish State Theater, 1988-89 season

## USA

*Das Berliner Requiem*, Urbana, IL, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Alexander Ringer, cond., 7 April 1989

*Down in the Valley*, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Brookline, MA, Brookline Opera Theater Workshop, Hanni Meyers, dir., 26-27 January 1989

*Happy End*, Milwaukee, WI, Marquette University, 12-15, 19-23 April 1989

*Happy End*, Rochester, NY, University of Rochester, 28 April-7 May 1989

*Happy End*, Chicago, IL, Court Theatre, University of Chicago, 9 March-9 April 1989

*Happy End*, Urbana, IL, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Alexander Ringer, cond., 7 April 1989

*Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, Cedar Rapids IA, Cedar Rapids Symphony, 19 November 1988

*Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, Reading, PA, Reading Symphony Orchestra, 13 November 1988

*Mahagonny Songspiel*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Ensemble, 1 January 1989

*Mahagonny Songspiel*, Urbana, IL, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, 8 November 1988

*Mahagonny Songspiel*, Buffalo, NY, SUNY, Buffalo, 1 February 1990

*Mahagonny Songspiel*, Brooklyn, NY, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Peter Sellars, cond.; Craig Smith, cond., 30 March-2 April 1989

*Mahagonny Songspiel*, Madison, WI, University of Wisconsin, School of Music, 7-8 October 1988

*Mahagonny Songspiel*, Florence Hollis Hand Chapel, Washington, DC, Mount Vernon College, 8, 11, 12, 14 March 1989

*The Seven Deadly Sins*, Cullen Auditorium, Houston, TX, University of Houston, Buck Ross, dir.; Nicklaus Wyss, cond., 3, 5, March 1989

*The Seven Deadly Sins*, Sacramento Community Center, Sacramento, CA, Sacramento Symphony, Carter Nice, cond.; Marc Jacobs, dir.; Angelina Réaux, sop.; 21-23 October 1988

*Symphony no. 2*, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, Bard College Orchestra, 28-29 October 1988

*The Threepenny Opera*, Milwaukee, WI, co-production, Skylight Opera and Opera/Omaha, 25 January-19 February 1989

*The Threepenny Opera*, Arts Center, Little Rock, AR, Arkansas Opera Theater, 24 February 1989

*The Threepenny Opera*, Omaha, NE, co-production, Opera/Omaha and Skylight Opera, March-April 1989

*The Threepenny Opera*, Berkeley, CA, Theatre of the Blue Rose, 4-13 November 1988

*The Threepenny Opera*, Cleveland, OH, Great Lakes Theatre Festival, Gerald Freedman, dir., Fall 1989

*The Tsar has his photograph taken*, Cullen Auditorium, Houston, TX, University of Houston, Buck Ross, dir.; Nicklaus Wyss, cond., 3, 5 March 1989

*Vom Tod im Wald*, Urbana, IL, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, Alexander Ringer, cond., 7 April 1989

Ballet, "Zircus Weill," Seattle Opera House, Seattle, WA, Pacific Northwest Ballet, 15-18 March 1989



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