

AROUND THE WORLD

Singing and Acting: The Banff Model

Three years ago I was invited by The Banff Centre School of Fine Arts in Canada to take up the position of artistic director and composer-in-residence of its music theater program. This is a remarkable and unusual program not only for young singers but also for mid-career professionals. The aims of the program are essentially two-fold: first, special performance projects and advanced training for singers, and second, the development of new work for the singing theater.

The program is not content to fulfill these aims simply in a narrow technical sense but has broader ambitions. For the singer this means redeveloping the innate, sometimes forgotten, relationship of voice and body, concentrating on the work of our time, and developing a critical understanding of the context in which a performer works today. Similarly, with composers and librettists we like to encourage a wider and more searching analysis than is sometimes the norm, in addition to a thorough dramaturgical process.

Banff is not alone in this work. My home country Wales now has its own music theater company. There is good work in the USA at the American Music Theatre Festival in Philadelphia and at Minneapolis and Houston. The renewal of the singing theater is still in its youth, however, and though these new developments are powerful, they are not yet part of the mainstream of our artistic life. Therefore, it seemed natural to us at The Banff Centre to seek a degree of historical perspective to this work, and for many reasons we decided to undertake a cycle of Weill's stage pieces.

Kurt Weill's stage works cover most of the available forms of the singing theater – plays with music like *Happy End* and *Marie Galante*, works that defy obvious classification like the *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *The Seven Deadly Sins*, American musicals like *Johnny Johnson* and *Lady in the Dark* and, of course, operas. Thus far, at The Banff Centre we have performed *Happy End*, *Threepenny Opera*, the school opera *Der Jasager*, and *Johnny Johnson*. The challenge to singers in this range of works is quite enormous.

It is not easy even today to assess the Weill legacy. Normally when looking at a composer's work it is simply qualitative questions which are at issue – not that these are easy to resolve even when afforded an historical perspective. In the case of Kurt Weill the questions are broader: What sort of composer was he? What is or should be a composer's relationship to society, to politics, to commercial forces? Does the music

of one period of his life (the European period) differ sharply in quality and originality from that of the other (American) period? Perhaps the most interesting question – and this applies to all of the artists who were deeply involved in the Weimar period – is what would have happened to Kurt Weill had political circumstances in Europe evolved differently? In an age where artists have perhaps even more reason to be concerned about the future of society than in the 1920s, it is not surprising that Weill's work holds a particular fascination.



Marcia Bellamy (Lillian Holiday and Richard Morris (Bill Cracker) in the Banff Centre 1988 production of *Happy End*.

Photo: Monte Greenshields

For composers the direct relevance is more difficult to define. Questions of musical style and originality are key issues in what is now somewhat blithely described as the "post-modern" era. (If this is indeed the "post-modern" era, perhaps someone should inform at least a few of our more prominent music critics.) The dilemma of what determines originality in music, apart from stylistic questions, is not easily resolved even in the period following the white canvas, the silent piece of music, and the wordless play. The key to its resolution will lie, I think, in the relationship of art to society. Here the work of Kurt Weill offers us a paradox. No one doubts the relationship of his work to the two very different societies in which he

lived. What Weill's music still needs is excellent performance to develop a full recognition of its purely musical values. In this way those who come after will be better encouraged to follow his bold lead. I hope that in our cycle of his work we are contributing to this process of awareness.

JOHN METCALF

Each of the four works we produced was selected as both a training vehicle and performance opportunity for singers. The individual directorial approach and production objectives help exemplify this important goal; and accordingly, a work which demands singing, acting, and movement skills proves essential to the on-going training of singer-actors. The fact that the works have enjoyed favorable public attention and response is an added bonus.

Each of the productions has involved an ensemble approach integrating an extended rehearsal period with intensive training, culminating in a production. *Happy End* was produced and toured during March and April 1988. It received a total of twenty-two performances in three different venues. Young professionals from the United States, Great Britain, and Canada came to Banff for a six-week period of training and rehearsals, followed by two weeks of touring in regional theaters in Edmonton and Vancouver. Similarly, *The Threepenny Opera* brought together fifteen professionals from across Canada for seven weeks of training and rehearsals concluding in three performances at Banff before moving to the St. Lawrence Centre in Toronto for a four-week run. Because both productions were directed by Kelly Robinson, a former choreographer and dancer, each production was infused with a sense of movement. Further, the efforts of faculty members in speech (dialects), singing, movement, and art history-criticism contributed to the overall training of the singer-actors. The final productions and their generally positive reviews seem to justify this unique approach. Similar collaborations amongst faculty have benefitted the productions of *Der Jasager* and *Johnny Johnson*.

Director Michael Ashman of Great Britain describes *Der Jasager* as "epic" theater in a narrative framework wherein a chorus functions in part as storyteller and in part as prompter of the action. Ashman relates his unique approach to the text and the subsequent results as follows:

Brecht's and Hauptmann's script is virtually a literal translation of Zenchiku's 15th-

century Japanese Noh play. All this seemed to dictate a non-realistic approach to the staging of the piece, in which the specialist skills of two movement directors – one for choreographic movement, the other for mountain climbing, and, more specifically, Oriental skills (including Tai-Chi, Noh drama, and martial arts) – would be fully integrated into the rehearsal process.

For the first week, we did virtually no direct work on the text of the piece except for music rehearsals, but instead tried to assemble a vocabulary of useful influences. These included movement classes in the skills mentioned above, improvisations on the basic plot of the piece within given hypothetical stylistic guidelines (a "Fascist documentary" version, a "soap opera" version, and wordless "spiritual" version) and a reading and discussion of Zenchiku's original play. At that point, the only firm decisions taken by the production team were about the shape of the playing area – an adapted version of the traditional Noh layout based on the ground plan of an actual 15th-century drama festival – the nature of the chorus' involvement (moving for virtually the entire playing time), and the intention to suggest to the solo performers stage positions and actions based on the Noh-playing style.

When we began work on the text, we created material with the soloists and the chorus separately, each rehearsal conducted by a director and a movement director, the former suggesting entries and positions, the latter sculpting the movements and intentions. The first session with the soloists for Act I contained an interesting moment of panic when it was realized that a Stanislavskian line of inquiry into character and situation (e.g., "How old is the teacher?" "What kind of house do the mother and child live in?" etc.), was, at least at that stage, totally irrelevant to the working process.

Rather than being dictated, emotional color could be found in the movement. Dialogues between characters were enhanced by a total lack of physical or direct visual contact. It was decided not to use masks or props but to identify characters simply by means of colors chosen from everyday rehearsal clothing – the three soloists in white, the chorus in black, gray, and

purple. There would be no "set" elements apart from the playing area mentioned above and a black box for the Mother to observe the action of Act II.

Our production was scheduled to play to five audiences of school children ranging in age from eleven through seventeen, with a short discussion after each performance. The first audiences seemed to have no problem with the style of acting chosen, feeling that it fitted well with the music and made the singing a natural method of communication. They also were quick to identify the role of the chorus as that of "heightening the tension" of the story and (in Act II) providing a moving scenic backdrop of living mountains.

The diverse range of characters in *Johnny Johnson* offers additional musical and acting challenges to the singer. Director Keith Turnbull of Canada, aided by singing voice

and individual performance.

Johnny Johnson is a study in contrast. From the opening scene in small-town America, to the trenches of Europe, and finally to an asylum, the changes in style present challenges to the actor. The musical contrasts, although at times eccentric, are equally challenging to the singer and serve to heighten the interest and dynamics of the piece. The basic theme of individual freedom and the anxiety created by war emphasize further the conviction behind the writing, both musically and lyrically.

The cast of *Der Jasager* and *Johnny Johnson* discussed their reactions to Weill's music. Here are a few excerpts from their comments:

Panel Moderator: "How has your involvement with Weill here at The Banff Centre contributed to your training?"

Robert Firmston (Canada) "Having been trained classically and having aspirations for an operatic career when I came here two years ago and being introduced to Weill's music, I was afraid of having to scream my guts out in a *Threepenny Opera* rehearsal or something like that. However, utilizing the acting skills we learned here, I found out how to perform this music, and it was absolutely fantastic. I think it has furthered my knowledge of singing theater and new works a tremendous amount.

Jean-Yves Dionne (Canada) "When you do an art song you have to think of the beauty of the line, the beauty of the sound you're producing, the tone and all that. When you do Weill you still work with those things but additionally you strive for emotion, words, and character. Now I feel more comfortable making sounds that aren't always the most beautiful – for the sake of meaning. I like that. It's a new thing, something I appreciate."

Jennifer Maybee (New Zealand) "[The music] starts to make more sense when you find the character. In conventional opera the musical line dictates a lot of what you need to know and do,

whereas Weill's work doesn't. It's probably some of the most difficult music I've sung. On the page it looks simple but it's not like that."

Compiled and edited by
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Director Michael Ashman, right, with Jean-Yves Dionne, left, and Carl Brown, center, in the music theater workshop presentation of *Der Jasager*. Photo: Ray Steinke

faculty member Selena James and movement coach Lea Schaezel, provided a unique approach to this challenging and timely work. Initially, *Johnny Johnson* has to be considered (at least historically) a Broadway musical. Yet the level of musicality and textual contrast is far more demanding than a "traditional" musical. Through an ensemble approach, 16 singers play some 100 different roles and thus are forced to expand their acting skills and creative approach to character development. Add to this a minimal concept of the set and costume design, and further emphasis is placed on the text

The Weill-Lenya Research Center Acquires The Hanns and Rita Weill Collection

By David Farneth

The Weill-Lenya Research Center has recently acquired an extensive private collection of music manuscripts and letters by Kurt Weill. The group of early compositions (1913-1919) and family correspondence (1917-1939) had been preserved by Rita Weill, wife of Kurt Weill's brother Hanns. Their daughter, Hanne Weill Holesovsky, acquired the collection by the bequest of her mother and has graciously made it available to the Weill-Lenya Research Center.

The Weill-Lenya Research Center obtained photocopies of approximately two-thirds of the music manuscripts in 1983, when they were displayed for scholars attending the Kurt Weill Conference held at Yale University in November of that year. Photocopies of the remainder were given to the Research Center in December 1985. The correspondence, on the other hand, has never been available for study by scholars. Although these autographs have remained in family hands for many years, their exact provenance remains uncertain. Rita Weill first showed a group of scores and correspondence to Kim Kowalke, President of the Kurt Weill Foundation, in 1982. At that time she indicated that Weill had given her the materials in 1923; she allowed Kowalke to make a partial inventory of the collection. Although Hanne Holesovsky did not know the extent of the collection until after her mother's death in 1983, she did know of the existence of the letters from Kurt Weill to her father Hanns (Weill's brother). (The items inventoried by Kim Kowalke were stored in a bank vault in New York, whereas the Kurt-Hanns correspondence familiar to Mrs. Holesovsky had been kept in her mother's apartment in Forest Hills, New York.) Mrs. Holesovsky speculates that if her mother did not in fact take possession of the music manuscripts in 1923, then they might have been given to her in 1936 by Weill's parents before they emigrated to Israel; both families were living near Heidelberg at the time.

There is no evidence that Weill knew his early compositions had survived, even though he was in close contact with Hanns and Rita until Hanns's death in 1947. Some scholars would undoubtedly postulate that Weill did not place much importance on the preservation of his *Jugendwerke*, especially in light of his well-known statements about posterity. To enhance the scant information available about the provenance of the collection and to provide some insights into the relationship between the brothers, it may be useful here to provide some biographical information about the family members who were responsible for preserving this important part of Weill's *Nachlass*.

Hanns and Rita Weill

Hanns Weill (b. 1899) is the second of Albert and Emma Weill's four children; the others were Nathan (b. 1888), Kurt (b. 1900), and Ruth (b. 1901). He was the only member of the family to pursue a career

in business and, according to the accounts of his daughter, had an outgoing and warm personality. Hanns was very gifted musically; even though he never completed formal music studies, he knew thoroughly the standard repertoire and was an avid concert- and opera-goer. After completing an apprenticeship in a metal pipe company, Hanns took a position with a prominent German company; he married Rita Kisch in 1922 in Leipzig, and in 1923 Rita gave birth to their only child, Hanne. Employment duties required Hanns to move with his family to various cities including Vienna, Brno, Frankfurt, Berlin, and Mannheim. Forced to leave Germany in 1938, the family fled to Switzerland. Soon Hanns ventured to America while Rita and Hanne remained for a short time in Paris before joining him. With the assistance of an affidavit from Kurt, the entire family reunited in New York.

They moved to Queens, and Hanns started a scrap metal company on the Lower East Side; he began to learn Yiddish. Perfecting his English at the same time, he read the works of Joseph Conrad, Henry James, and E. B. White. The family spent weekends and summers in New City, sometimes renting a house next door to Weill and Lenya. New City represented a restful retreat where the two brothers could discuss in private their reactions to the world events which continued to shape their lives. According to his daughter, Hanns's business was moderately successful; but because of his moral principles he failed to gain the benefits of others in his trade who readily sold scrap metal to the Japanese before the U.S. became involved in World War II. Like Kurt, Hanns suffered from disabling hypertension and died in 1947 at the age of forty-eight. Rita continued to run the business; after Kurt's death in 1950, she and Lenya seldom visited each other.

Hanne Weill Holesovsky

Hanne Weill Holesovsky was born in 1923 in Leipzig. Her early memories include those of her father energetically singing all the songs from *Die Dreigroschenoper* in their home.

When attending her first performance

of the work at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, Hanne, age 6, was taken home early because she kept joining in the singing of the songs, much to the dismay of the surrounding audience members. Her family lived in Berlin at the time, and she recalls visiting Weill and Lenya (she did not like Lenya's pet monkey), taking car rides in Uncle Kurt's new Buick, going on walks in the Grunewald with Weill and Brecht, and always being introduced as the "niece of the composer of *Die Dreigroschenoper*." She recalls her Uncle Kurt as quiet, but fun-loving, and a bit mischievous.

Hanne began her formal education in an Oberrealschule, being denied entrance to the Humanistisches Gymnasium because she was female and Jewish. In 1936, the Jewish children were expelled from school and the religious leaders established an ad-hoc, alternative



school in order to continue the children's education as best as they could while preparing the children for an inevitable emigration. After coming to the U.S. in 1938, Hanne Weill finished high school at the Julia Richman Country School and was accepted to Swarthmore College. True to her Zionist beliefs, Hanne wanted to study something "practical" – chemistry, and her Uncle Kurt offered to obtain for her admission into the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. However, because of her father's poor health, she went to Queens College where she earned a bachelor's degree in three years and then completed additional studies at Harvard University. After working for a short time in a chemical factory in New Jersey, Hanne completed a Masters degree in organic chemistry at Johns Hopkins University. After her father's death and with some financial assistance from her Uncle Kurt, she traveled to Paris. There she met her husband Vashek Holesovsky who was pursuing an M.A. degree in political science at the Sorbonne. Upon their return to New York, Vashek earned a Ph.D. in Economics at Columbia University while Hanne completed additional coursework for a teacher's certificate and taught school in Westchester County. In 1965, they moved to Amherst where Vashek took a position on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts. Again living in an academic setting, Hanne earned her Ph.D. in German language and literature while raising their two children, Janet and Thomas.

Inventory

The following inventory is intended to provide only a brief summary of the range of the collection. As soon as it is fully processed and catalogued, a complete inventory will be available from the Weill-Lenya Research Center.

The Music

Weill wrote the compositions found in this collection between the ages of 13 and 19. The scores allow scholars the opportunity to study the development of Weill's compositional skills beginning in late childhood, continuing through his period of study with Albert Bing, and ending after the time when he enrolled full-time at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin and studied composition with Humperdinck.



Left to right: Hanne, Rita, and Hanns Weill, ca. 1942. Photo courtesy of the Weill-Lenya Research Center and Hanne Holesovsky.

Weill's developments in the areas of melody, harmony, and formal organization are readily apparent. Upon studying this collection David Drew has noted, "Whereas 'Abendlied' still belongs to the conventional world of *Ofrah's Lieder*, 'Die stille Stadt' is the earliest-known song in which Weill projects his own individual vision in a form powerful enough to overcome structural inconsistencies."

For the purpose of this inventory the term "holograph" specifies a document in Weill's hand. The titles appear below exactly as indicated on the manuscript, and information not on the manuscript is given in brackets. For a more complete description, see David Drew's *Kurt Weill: A Handbook* (therein the manuscripts are identified with the sigla RWC which designates the Rita Weill Collection).

Abendlied (Bierbaum)/Duett von Kurt Weill [holograph, 5 p., fair copy, 1917]

Andante aus der A-Dur-Sonate/von C. M. v. Weber/Instrumentiert von Kurt Weill/Marz 1918 [holograph, 19 p.]

Cellosonate [first movement, holograph, 22 p., 1919]

Gebet. von Em Geibel. Zu Ruths Confirmation/Kurt Julian Weill [four-part chorus, holograph, 2 p., 1915]

Gebet [incomplete set of chorus parts in various hands, 10 p.]

Ich weiss wofür für Männerchor von Kurt Weill/Guido Von Güllhausen [holograph, 1 p., fair copy, 1914?]

Intermezzo/Kurt Weill/Dezember 1917 [for piano, holograph, 4 p., fair copy]

Maikaterlied (Bierbaum)/Kanon für 2 Sop. Stimmen/von Kurt Weill [holograph, 9 p., fair copy, 1917]

Mi addir/Jüdischer Trauungsgesang/Kurt Weill Dessau [holograph (?) sketch, 1 p., 1913]

Ofrah's Lieder I, I, III [holograph, 7 p., early draft, text underlay incomplete, 1916]

Ofrah's Lieder von Jehuda Halevi/Kurt Julian Weill. [holograph, 8 p., fair copy of three songs with text, 1916] [The holograph for the finished song cycle is in the Music Division of the Library of Congress.]

Orchestersuite E dur von Kurt Weill/Meinem Vater in dankbarer Verehrung 61 p. [holograph, 1919]

Sehnsucht/Eichendorff/Kurt Julian Weill. 1916 [incomplete holograph, 2 p.]

Die stille Stadt/Dehmel [holograph, 5 p., fair copy with text underlay, 1919]

Streichquartett in H-moll/Kurt Weill/1918 54 p. [holograph of full score, fair copy in black ink with additional markings in a different ink]

Parts:

I. Violine/Streichquartett in h moll/von Kurt Weill [holograph, 8 p., fair copy]

I. Violine/Streichquartett in h-moll/v. Kurt Weill [incomplete ms. in copyist's hand, 4 p.]

II. Violine/Streichquartett h moll/Kurt Weill [holograph, 8 p., fair copy]

Viola/Streichquartett h moll/Kurt Weill [holograph, 8 p., fair copy]

Violon-Cello/Streich-Quartett in H moll/Kurt Weill [ms. in copyist's hand, 8 p., with annotations in Weill's hand]

[Untitled lied] Es blühen zwei flammende Rosen [title from first line of text] [incomplete holograph, 1 p., 1913]

The Correspondence

Weill's correspondence to his brother Hanns, dating from 1917-1920, provides insights into his reactions to his musical studies, to the music he was hearing, studying, and performing (the letters contain numerous musical examples), and to other literary and cultural influences. The later correspondence (1921-1939) discusses mainly his work as a composer. Because of the frequency of the correspondence between 1917 and 1920, one can compile an almost complete chronology of Weill's life during this period. A substantial amount of the correspondence is written on postcards, which were less expensive to mail.

The exact order and arrangement of the correspondence cannot be determined until the collection has been studied in detail because some of the letters are incomplete, while the pages of many others are in disarray. A careful analysis of the content, paper, ink, and accompanying envelopes will be required to determine a definitive ordering. It should be noted that most of the letters are in Gothic script. Because of these circumstances, the collection will not be open to researchers until its processing is completed and reference photocopies are prepared.

An initial appraisal of the collection, omitting unidentified pages, yields the following rough inventory:



Kurt Weill in Lüdenscheld, 1919. Photo courtesy of the Weill-Lenya Research Center.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Number of items</i>		
1917		1933	
Kurt Weill to Hanns Weill	18	Kurt Weill to Hanns Weill Family	1
Kurt Weill to Parents	8	1936	
Kurt Weill and Family to Hanns Weill	3	Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya to Rita Weill	1
Family to Hanns Weill	1	1937	
1918		Kurt Weill to Hanns Weill Family	1
Kurt Weill to Hanns Weill	33	1939	
Kurt Weill and Family to Hanns Weill	4	Kurt Weill to Hanns and Rita Weill	2
1919		Undated from Europe	
Kurt Weill to Hanns Weill	28	Kurt Weill to Hanns Weill	18
Kurt Weill and Parents to Hanns Weill	2	Kurt Weill to Family	8
Parents to Hanns Weill	3	Kurt Weill and Family to Hanns Weill	3
Albert Bing to Hanns Weill	1	Family to Hanns Weill	1
1920		Undated from America	
Kurt Weill to Hanns Weill	10	Kurt Weill to Parents	1
Kurt Weill to Parents	1	Kurt Weill to Rita Weill	2
1921		Lotte Lenya to Leni Weill	1
Kurt Weill to Hanns Weill	2	Miscellaneous Items	
1923		Program and press clipping. <i>Feuge-Abend</i> , 2 February 1918 featuring Kurt Weill as pianist.	
Kurt Weill to Parents	1	Program. <i>Wohltätigkeits-Abend/Verein für das Deutschtum im Auslande/Jugendgruppe Dessau</i> 18 December 1915. Kurt Weill performs Chopin and Liszt.	
1924		Poem by Kurt Weill to Parents	
Kurt Weill to Parents	3	Assorted news clippings	
1925		Family photographs	
Kurt Weill to Parents	7		
1926			
Kurt Weill to Parents	7		
Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya to Parents	5		
1927			
Kurt Weill to Albert Weill	2		

The following four letters, presented in their entirety, demonstrate the tone and content of the correspondence. Lys Symonette provided the transcriptions from the Gothic script and the English translations. The complete German texts appear at the end of the article.

26 June 1917

My dear Hanns,

Although because of those damn essays my time feels pressured like the air in a stopped-up flute, I am immediately answering both your letters, which are excellent in form and content. This [effort] should prove to you how much I enjoyed them. First, about that concert business: Don't you think that the event you have in mind will put our public concert (which Bing seems to consider seriously) somewhat into jeopardy? Of course, I would love to participate, if for no other reason than to do you a favor. Can your society afford such an expenditure for two guests? Or is this a very special event? I don't doubt that I will have a good and worthwhile audience, otherwise you would not ask me to perform. Of the Jewish composers, I would consider only Mendelssohn as suitable for me; which means that I would have to study something. I guess Miss Hurwitz could sing the "Ofrah Lieder," although she is a mezzo-soprano, as far as I know. Of course, the violin concerto, too, is alright with me. Altogether you can completely count on me for this entire affair; once I have made my choices, I will send you my selections for the program. Sometime you might explain to me the society's position, significance and activities. The books you want will be sent off in a few days; I will send uncle Aaron's work along and will see whether I can hunt up more. Your lecture will be a smash hit again.

The poems by Franz Werfel (is he Jewish?) are really good. Although Bing advised me against it, I will still try and compose them; this might become my first "philosophical composition" à la Palestrina.

Of course, Bing will get [a score of] *Palestrina*, and we both are awaiting its arrival with truly royal pleasure. I hardly get the time to do any reading; once in a while an "Indian Short Story" by Dauthendey, which are very beautiful. Meyerbeer, Offenbach and Goldmark are out of the question for the concert; Mahler's songs: yes; everything else: works by Mendelssohn. My string quartet – like all string quartets – is being written for 2 violins, viola and cello; the difficulties for the viola are not too great. Of course, it is impossible to find time for other composing. Until now, I hardly find time even for the string quartet because I have to do a lot of work with Bing on brass instruments: transposing to F, D and E. I have understood the terribly complicated horn and trumpet matter very well, that's one big advantage. Yesterday I had a piano lesson, today conducting (*Meistersinger*) and score reading (*Fidelio* and *Lohengrin*), Thursday again a piano lesson. It now is 10 o'clock, I have worked all day and still have to do my English writing exercises. Therefore I have to leave the military affair, the journey through the Harz mountains, and several other topics alone until the end of the week. Right now, work is the most beautiful thing; thereby one does forget, e.g. that for some time now we are without news from Nathan. Well, don't get too bored, good night, sleep well and dream sweetly about your old

Kurt.

20 August 1917

[date in another hand]

Dear Hanns,

Since till now we haven't received even a postcard from the Jewish mailbox, you can imagine how happy we were to get your wonderful long letter. As always, it was very cozy in Cöthen; I had been invited by Thornmeyer as artistic director of the *Jugendwehr* [young people's defense organization] to appear only as accompanist for Miss Feuge. From now on I will have my honorarium computed by the minute, i.e. 1.50 Marks per minute; to wit: I had hardly been

playing for 10 minutes (did not rehearse either), and for that I got 15 Marks with many apologies that it had not been more. Besides, I have been eating very well again, especially cake in such quantities that my stomach is getting wobbly just thinking about it. There were a lot of girls at the concert and I had lots of fun with Käthe Benkewitz and consorts. Of course they had red wine again, chocolate, fruit, etc.; 1:30 to bed, out again at 4:45, at 5:30 to meet Bentscher [?], changed, at 7, under tremendous pressure at school, where once again half (!) of the Ia [final class before graduation] was absent, so that every 2 minutes we three little gremlins were being called upon. You somewhat exaggerate my accomplishments by comparing the school orchestra to Wotan's illegitimate daughter. Perhaps a comparison with the last upbeats of an expiring light would be more appropriate; because even if once more – and of course, with considerable effort – I would have assembled an orchestra of 20-25 with acceptable achievements, the whole thing would be over the moment my age group is mustered; and this will not be too far off. For the

Duke's birthday I could only work up the "Torgau March," but, I did it in rigid rhythm and with everything that can be gotten out of it. For S...[illegible] I want the Coronation March and for the Male Chorus. I could pound it into a stone. The conducting, however, I'll definitely do myself. Well, there is not much going on with my studies right now; Bing just canceled again, because tomorrow morning they will do marching exercises. Naturally, I am not making any progress at all because of that; also I haven't heard from the trumpeter, so I am rather depressed and angry; well, this, too, is just a transitory state. Oh, I would love to have a nice little room in Berlin, in Leipzig, in Munich and a closet filled with scores and books and piano-vocal scores and music paper, and work myself to the bone; and for once without the concerns of a head of the household, without school stuff, without worries about being called to the colors, to write down uninterruptedly everything that makes my head practically burst, and only hear music and only be music. Oh yes, all the things one wants to do, and Herr Hindenburg has no intention of participating. But you must not think that I always let my head hang low like this and that I have a black outlook on everything. No, first of all, I still believe that this war is going to end this year. I still believe that.

[Example 1]

When the need is the greatest, God will hold out his hand

secondly, everything is not over yet, and I still trust in my good luck, and thirdly, anyway ... Bing's protest has gone through, and he hopes to get free any day now. With your "Mi-it mir, mit mir," etc., you have awakened melodies within

me about which I have not thought for a long time, and I am grateful to you for that. I would just love to see *Rosenkavalier* again; perhaps somehow it will be possible this winter that we can see it together somewhere. If only I knew what to do with you. Concerning you, some definite steps must now be undertaken.

In school everything is as always; in mathematics, the serials are really quite some fun, we have to again do another French essay about the value of foreign languages. Well, today I have really slept, so I don't look as if I have a hangover when the dear parents arrive. Besides, my inkwell is exhausted. Therefore, stay well and write very soon in detail to your

Kurt.

I am now reading *Oberhof* by Immermann, which I highly recommend to you. A thoroughly lyric creation by a romantic of Heine's times.

Charlottenburg, May 9, 1918

My dear Hanns,

First of all: many thanks for your letter which I want to answer right away while the goyim are driving straight to heaven, i.e. to the Grunewald and Wannsee. I am very happy that you are taking over Mr. Korp's [?] job. But you can't yet arrange what Mr. Korp has already done. I can just see you – a trainee – going along to the Ukraine. Mrs. Levy said that they hardly ever see you. How come? I would not be that formal, especially with those people. Or are you occupied by those little girls? That Ruth – God permits – can be with you next week makes me very happy for her and for you. I still would have

preferred if we all had been together at home; it would have given you the opportunity to admire me as stud.mus. (Kriegsmus!) * et phil., especially in my new hat colored in the latest fashion, for 22,50 Marks.

We will probably be closed from the 15th to the 22nd. By now, I have already been to lessons twice with the old Humperdinck. For the first one he had me come to his home, and on a brilliant May morning I went to the idyllic Wannsee where H. owns a magnificent villa in a big park. The maid already knew my name and led me through the vestibule, where a bright colored, oaken grand piano attracted my attention, and on to the music room. The master still was quite ill, had gotten out of bed only on my account, and he could hardly breathe. A manuscript score of his new opera was lying on the piano. He asked me about this and that, gave me some homework, and then I was dismissed. But yesterday he came into the Hochschule, gave me new homework, and told me that I should show him a sketch of my string quartet at the next lesson. I immediately dug it up and am now working on it. Only because of an accident

comfortably and take best regards from your old

Kurt.

[* "Kriegsmus" or war-pulp: often the only thing to eat during the war.]

[Berlin-Charlottenburg, ca. May-June 1918]

My dear Hanns,

I am taking advantage of an hour of "intermission" to answer your letter, which made me very happy. But should you be dragging my title "stud.mus. et phil." once more into the mud of your sarcasm, you can expect me to ask for revenge, you old business whipper-snapper!

You must not make too much of my "First Appearance In The Capital City." It is a school concert with 14 numbers and 3 accompanists and the only extraordinary thing about it is, that 1) it is the final concert of the Stern Conservatory for this term, 2) I am the youngest [student], and 3) this is the first time that someone who is not from the Stern Conservatory (and a student of the

have I gotten to Humperdinck. They got me mixed up with somebody else, someone who had only inquired whether it might be possible to arrange for lessons with Humperdinck. I am quite satisfied with the arrangement, although the professors speak rather disparagingly about him, and I hope that if I work hard I will learn at least as much from him as from Professor Koch, with whose opera the Deutsche Opernhaus has quite some problems. In any case, it already means something to have been studying with Humperdinck at all.

I have already heard two magnificent lectures at the university. In Dessoir's "Philosophy of Art" every word is a revelation for me, and Cassirer's essays about the philosophy of the Greeks I follow with great pleasure and interest. Koethe [?] (History of Literature from 1830) and Reich (Antique Drama) we do not read as yet. It is a wonderful thing to be able to follow the entirely unique range of ideas of these esteemed intellects. It opens one up to very new worlds of thought, to new concepts and new stimulations. And yet, the life of a student is a curious thing; one can hardly ever find complete satisfaction because one never knows what one is working for and because, most of all, one does not work regularly enough. Thank God, it's not quite the same with the study of music, although here, too, one has to depend almost entirely on oneself, and until now, I do not find the real inner satisfaction there either; but after studying for only two weeks that is hardly possible.

Sunday evening I went to an "Evening of Eastern Jewish Art," where some Jewish artists performed their own compositions and recitations to Yiddish words - very amateurish and of poor quality. In addition, the audience showed a true "Eastern-Jewish" noise level.

With an inexpensive but very good ticket from the Hochschule I heard a performance of *Tiefland* under Blech at the Royal [Opera] on Monday, which altogether was not much better than the one in Dessau.

On Tuesday I went to a very good performance of Haydn's immortal "The Seasons," one of the most beautiful musical works I know. Last night at the Lessing Theatre I saw Sternheim's terribly ingenious, idiotic comedy *Perleberg* and after that the very strange but light *Variété* by Thomas Mann. Today I have visited the Bings. Well, now I have talked enough. Spend your Sabbath

Hochschule at that) has been chosen, while there were three other accompanists available, that's the real honor for me; also, because I can take it for granted that Rothmühl [?] doesn't have me there because he needs someone in case of an emergency, but because I am good.

Only an ignorant layman like you could ask whether the string quartet is already finished; I am satisfied that yesterday I could show Humperdinck the finished score of the first movement, after I had labored like an idiot during these past few days. It is a somewhat solemn, but very passionate movement, with the following themes:

Main Theme:

[Example 2]

The second movement, on which I am working now, is a fast one, which I want to give the title "Nachtstück" [next word illegible], very fast, with a lot of pizzicato and chromatic elaboration of the main melody and the following themes:

[Example 3]

On H.[umperdinck]'s advice I will chose a slow Intermezzo for the third movement and for the Finale the usual Presto.

I approve of your ideas concerning vacation; there is only the problem of whether your vacation will be too early for us to come back here together, since my fall term begins only in October, yet I still will have to be here already during the first half of September (unfortunately! I am sorry to say). I had made some plans for something which probably will not work out: At the end of July I wanted to go to the assembly of the Agendas Jisroel and visit you for 1-2 days before going home; actually a really crazy idea.

Did you, too, get 10 Marks from the grandparents? Congratulations on your successes in your office. At Hekscher's, I met a friend of yours, Neuberger, and already got one pound of artificial honey from him. I am to give you his regards. Have a good Sabbath and a thousand greetings from your

Kurt

26.VI.17.

Mein lieber Hanns!

Obwohl meine Zeit durch die verschiedenen Mistaufsätze zusammenge-drängt ist wie die Luft in einer gedeckten Flöte, will ich doch heute noch an die Beantwortung deiner beiden nach Inhalt und Form ausgezeichneten Briefe gehen. Du kannst daran sehen, wie sehr ich mich damit gefreut habe. Zuerst einmal zur Konzertangelegenheit: Meinst du nicht, dass die Veranstaltung, die du vorhast, unser öffentliches Konzert nicht ein wenig in Frage stellt, zu dem Bing scheinbar ernstlich Lust hat? Natürlich würde ich herzlich gern mitwirken, schon um dir einen Gefallen tun zu können. Könnt Ihr denn in Eurem Verein einen solchen Aufwand mit 2 Gästen machen? Oder ist das eine ausserordentliche Veranstaltung? Dass ich gutes, lohnendes Publikum haben werde, daran zweifle ich nicht, sonst würdest du mich ja auch nicht spielen lassen. Von den jüdischen Komponisten käme für mich zum Spielen nur Mendelssohn in Betracht; ich müsste also etwas studieren. Die "Ofrah Lieder" wird Fr. Hurwitz wohl singen können, obwohl sie meines Wissens Mezzosopran ist. Auch mit dem Violinkonzert bin ich natürlich einverstanden. Überhaupt kannst du in der Angelegenheit vollständig über mich verfügen; ich schicke dir, wenn ich sie ausgesucht habe, meine Programmnummern. Du könntest mir bei Gelegenheit einmal die Stellung u. Bedeutung des Vereins u. seiner Veranstaltungen erklären. Die gewünschten Bücher gehen dieser Tage ab; ich schicke dir Onkel Aarons Werk mit u. will sehen, dass ich noch einiges auftreibe. Dein Vortrag wird wieder den Laden schmeissen.

Die Gedichte v. Fr. Werfel (ist er Jude?) sind wirklich gut. Bing riet mir zwar von einer Komposition ab, ich will es aber doch versuchen; es würde vielleicht meine erste "philosophische Komposition" à la *Palestrina* werden. Bing will sich natürlich *Palestrina* anschaffen u. freut sich mit mir schon königlich darauf. Zum Lesen komme ich fast gar nicht; ab u. zu einmal eine "indische Novelle" von Dauthendey, die sehr schön sind. Für das Konzert kommen wohl Meyerbeer, Offenbach und Goldmark kaum in Betracht, Mahler mit den Liedern, alles übrige Mendelssohns Werke. Mein Streichquartett wird wie alle St. für 2 Viol. Bratsche u. Cello geschrieben, die Schwierigkeiten mit der Bratsche sind nicht allzu gross. Anderes Komponieren ist natürlich ausgeschlossen, ich komme bis jetzt auch zum Streichquartett selten, da ich bei Bing mit den Bläsern kolossal zu arbeiten habe: Transponieren nach F, D u. E. Ich habe die äusserst schwierige Horn und Trompetensache gut verstanden, das ist ein grosser Vorteil. Gestern habe ich Klavierstunde gehabt, heute dirigieren (*Meistersinger*) u. Partiturlesen (*Fidelio* u. *Lohengrin*), Donnerstag wieder Klavierstunde. Es ist jetzt 10 Uhr, ich habe den ganzen Tag gearbeitet u. muss noch Englisch schriftl. machen. Daher muss ich mir die Mi-litäre-gelegenheit, die Harzreise u. einige andere Sachen für Ende der Woche aufsparen. Arbeit ist jetzt das schönste; da vergisst man wenigstens manches z.B. auch dass wir von Nathan seit einigen Tagen keine Nachricht haben. Na, nun langweile dich nicht zu sehr, gut Nacht, schlaf schön u. träume süß von deinem alten

Kurt

20. August 1917
[Date in another hand]

Lieber Hanns!

Da wir bis dato auch von der Karte aus dem jüdischen Briefkasten nichts gesehen haben, kannst du dir unsere Freude über deinen wunderschönen grossen Brief vorstellen. In Cöthen war es wieder sehr gemütlich; ich war von Thormeyer als künstlerischer Leiter der Jugendwehr aufgefordert, u. zwar nur als Begleiter von Fr. Feuge. Ich werde mir auch künftig meine Gage nach Minuten berechnen lassen, u. zwar die Minute 1,50 M; ich habe nämlich knapp 10 Minuten gespielt, geprobt haben wir auch nicht, u. dafür bekomme ich 15.- M u. dazu noch mit vielen Entschuldigungen, dass es nicht mehr ist. Ausserdem habe ich wieder wunderbar gegessen, vor allen Dingen Kuchen in solchen Mengen, dass mir heute beim blossen Gedanken daran schon der Bauch wackelt. In dem Konzert war mächtiger Betrieb mit Mädeln, u. ich habe ganz schönen Spass gehabt mit Käthe Benkewitz u. Konsorten. Es gab natürlich wieder Rotwein, Schokolade, Obst u.s.w. um 1/2 2 ins Bett, um 3/4 5 raus, um 1/2 6 mit K. Bentscher (?) hier, umgezogen, um 7 mit gewaltigem Hochdruck im Pennal, wo wieder einmal die halbe (!) Ia fehlte, sodass wir 3 Männkens alle 2 Minuten drankamen.

In dem Vergleich des Schulorchesters mit Wotans unehelicher Tochter ist mein Verdienst ein bisschen übertrieben. Vielleicht wäre der Vergleich mit den letzten Auftakten eines erlöschenden Lichtes etwas angebrachter; denn wenn ich auch noch einmal, allerdings mit ziemlicher Anstrengung, ein Orchester von 20-25 Mann u. ganz annehmbaren Leistungen zusammengebracht habe, so ist die Sache in dem Augenblick vorbei, wo mein Jahrgang gemustert wird; u. der ist ja nicht mehr allzu fern. Zu Herzogs Geburtstag habe ich nur den

Torgauer Marsch geschafft, den allerdings auch mit straffem Rythmus u. allem, was herauszuholen geht. Zu S... [illegible] will ich den Krönungs-marsch u. für den Männerchor. Ich kann ein'n hellen Edelstein einstudieren. Dirigieren tue ich natürlich höchst eigenhändig. Ja, mit meinem Studium ist bis jetzt noch nicht viel wieder los; eben hat Bing mir wieder abgesagt, da sie morgen früh einen Marsch [machen]. Dadurch komme ich natürlich garnicht vorwärts, auch der Trompeter hat sich noch nicht gemeldet, sodass ich ziemlich niedergedrückt und verärgert bin; na, das ist ja auch nur ein Übergangsstadium. Ach, ich möchte jetzt so ein nettes kleines Zimmer haben, in Berlin, in Leipzig, in München, und ein Schrank voll Partituren u. Büchern u. Klavierauszügen u. Notenpapier u. arbeiten, dass die Schwarte knackt u. einmal ohne Hausvatersorgen, ohne Schulkrum, ohne Einberufungssorgen hintereinander aufschreiben, was mir meinen Kopf manchmal fast bersten macht u. nur Musik hören u. nur Musik sein. Ja, ja, was man so alles will, u. Herr Hindenburg macht nicht mit. Aber du brauchst nicht denken, dass ich nun den Kopf immer so hängen lasse u. alles schwarz sehe. Nein, erstens glaube ich ja immer noch, dass der Krieg dieses Jahr noch aufhört, glaube ja immer noch, dass

[Beispiel 1]

Wenn die Not am höchsten steigt, Gott der Herr die Hand uns reicht

zweitens ist ja noch nicht aller Tage Abend u. ich vertraue immer noch meinem Schwein, u. drittens überhaupt so. Bings Reklamation ist also durchgegangen u. er hofft schon dieser Tage frei zu kommen. Mit deinem "Mi-it mir, mit mir," u.s.w. hast du Melodien in mir wachgerufen an die ich lange nicht gedacht hatte, u. ich bin dir dafür dankbar; den "Rosenkavalier" möchte ich mir ja zu gern noch einmal ansehen; vielleicht lässt sich's doch einmal machen, dass wir ihn diesen Winter zusammen irgendwo hören. Wenn ich nur wüsste, was mit dir zu machen ist. Es müssen jetzt entschieden Schritte getan werden, in deiner Angelegenheit. In der Schule ist alles beim alten; in Mathematik machen mir die Reihen ziemlichen Spass, einen französischen Aufsatz haben wir auch schon wieder auf über den Wert fremder Sprachen. Na, ich will mich heute einmal ausschlafen, damit ich nicht zu verkert aussähe, wenn die l. Eltern kommen. Ausserdem ist meine Tinte alle. Also gehab dich wohl u. schreib recht bald wieder so ausführlich deinem Kurt.

Ich lese jetzt den "Oberhof" von Immermann, den ich dir sehr empfehlen kann. Eine durch u. durch lyrische Schöpfung eines Romantikers aus Heines Zeit.

Charlottenburg, 9.V.18

Mein lieber Hanns!

Vor allen Dingen vielen Dank für deinen Brief, den ich gleich heute beantworten will, während die Gojim in den Himmel, d.h. nach Grunewald u. Wannsee, fahren. Dass du den Posten von Herrn Korpf (?) übernimmst, freut mich ausserordentlich. Du kannst doch aber noch nicht disponieren, was Herr Korpf doch schon getan hat. Ich sehe dich ja als Stift noch mit nach der Ukraine fahren. Fr. Levy sagte, du liessest dich so wenig sehen. Wie kommt das? Ich würde gerade den Leuten gegenüber nicht so förmlich sein. Oder nehmen dich die kleinen Mädels so in Anspruch? Dass Ruth s.g.w. [so Gott will] nächste Woche bei dir sein wird, macht mir grosse Freude für sie u. dich. Noch lieber wäre es mir zwar gewesen, wenn wir zusammen daheim gewesen wären; da hättest du mich damals stud. mus. (Kriegsmus!) et phil. bewundern können, besonders in meinem neuen modefarbigen Hut für 22,50 M.

Wir werden voraussichtlich vom 15.-22. schliessen. Ich habe nun schon zweimal beim alten Humperdinck Unterricht gehabt. Zum 1. Mal war ich in die Wohnung bestellt u. fuhr dann auch an einem strahlenden Maimorgen hinaus nach dem idyllischen Wannsee, wo H. eine herrliche Villa, in einem grossen Park hat. Das Mädchen kannte schon meinen Namen u. führte mich durch die Diele, wo mir ein heller, eichener Flügel auffiel, ins Musikzimmer. Der Meister war noch sehr krank, war nur meinewegen aufgestanden u. konnte kaum japsen; auf dem Flügel lag eine neue Opernpartitur von ihm im Manuskript. Er fragte mich nach diesem u. jenem, gab mir einige Aufgaben, dann konnte ich mich trollen. Gestern kam er dann in die Hochschule, gab mir neue Aufgaben u. sagte mir, ich solle ihn in der nächsten Stunde eine Skizze meines Streichquartetts zeigen; ich habe es gleich herausgekratzt u. arbeite nun daran. Durch einen blossen Zufall bin ich zu Humperdinck gekommen. Man hatte mich nämlich mit einem anderen verwechselt, der nur einmal angefragt hatte, ob er bei H. Unterricht kriegen könnte. Obwohl die Herren Professoren ziemlich abfällig von ihm reden, bin ich ganz zufrieden mit der Sache u. hoffe, dass ich, wenn ich arbeite, bei ihm mindestens so viel lerne wie bei Herrn Prof. Koch, mit dessen Oper das Deutsche Opernhaus seine liebe Not hat. Und jedenfalls bedeutet es schon etwas, überhaupt bei Humperdinck gewesen zu sein.

Auf der Universität habe ich schon 2 herrliche Vorlesungen gehört. In Dessoir's "Philosophie der Kunst" ist für mich jedes Wort eine Offenbarung u. auch Cassirers Abhandlung über die Philosophie der Griechen folge ich mit viel Freude u. Interesse. Koethe [?] (Literaturgeschichte von 1830 an) u. Reich (Antikes Drama) lesen [wir] noch nicht. Es ist doch eine schöne Sache, den vollständig eigenartigen Gedankengängen dieser erlauchten Geister folgen zu können. Da gehen einem ganz neue Gedankenwelten, neue Begriffe u. neue Anregungen auf. Und doch ist es mit dem Studentenleben eine komische Sache; die richtige Befriedigung kann man dabei wohl kaum finden, weil man niemals weiss, wofür man arbeitet u. weil man vor allen Dingen nicht regelmässig genug arbeitet. G.s.D. ist das bei dem Musikstudium nicht in dem Masse der Fall, obwohl man auch hier fast ganz auf sich selbst angewiesen ist u. ich bis jetzt auch hierin noch nicht die richtige innere Befriedigung finde; das ist aber auch nach einem 14 tägigen Studium kaum möglich. Sonntag Abend war ich zu einem "Ostjüdischen Kunstabend", wo einige jüdische Künstler eigene Kompositionen u. Rezitationen auf jiddischen Text sehr dilettantenhaft u. minderwertig vortrugen. Dazu kam noch, dass das Publikum eine echt "ostjüdische" Unruhe an den Tag legte. Montag hörte ich dann auf ein etwas billigeres, aber sehr gutes Billet von der Hochschule im Königlichen eine "Tiefend" Aufführung unter Blech, die im grossen ganzen auch nicht viel besser war als in Dessau. Dienstag war ich zu einer sehr guten Aufführung von Haydns unsterblichen "Jahreszeiten," einem der schönsten Musikwerke, die ich kenne. Gestern Abend sah ich im Lessing-Theater Sternheims äusserst geistreich-blödsinnige Komödie "Perleberg" u. darauf das ganz eigenartige, aber anspruchlose "Variété" von Thomas Mann. Heute habe ich bei Bings Besuch gemacht. Na, nun habe ich aber genug geschmust. Verlebe den [Hebrew] angenehm u. sei vielmals begrüsst von deinem alten

Kurt.

[Berlin-Charlottenburg, ca. May-June 1918]

Mein lieber Hanns!

Eine Friststunde in der Hochschule benutze ich dazu, deinen Brief zu beantworten, mit dem ich mich riesig freute. Wenn du nochmal meinen Titel "stud mus et phil" in den Dreck deiner Spöttelei ziehst, kannst du dich auf eine Forderung gefasst machen, alter Kaufmannsstift du! Von meinem "1. Auftreten in der Reichshauptstadt" darfst du dir keinen übertriebenen Begriff machen. Es ist ein Schulkonzert von 14 Nummern mit 3 Begleitern, u. etwas aussergewöhnliches ist es höchstens, weil es 1). das Abschlusskonzert des Sternschen Kon. für dieses Semester ist, weil ich 2). der jüngste bin, u. weil es 3). das 1. Mal ist, dass einer, der nicht vom Sternschen ist u. dazu noch Hochschüler, dort begleitet, dass 3 Begleiter hier sind ist für mich eine Ehrung; denn daran sehe ich, dass Rothmühl mich nicht in der Not nimmt, weil er mich unbedingt braucht, sondern weil ich etwas kann. Ob das Streichquartett schon fertig ist, kann nur so ein unwissender Laie wie du fragen; ich bin froh, dass ich gestern Humperdinck die fertige Partitur des 1. Satzes zeigen konnte, nachdem ich die letzten Tage wie ein Blödsinniger geschuftet hatte. Es ist ein etwas getragener, aber sehr leidenschaftlicher Satz, mit folgenden Themen:

1) Hauptthema:

[Beispiel 2]

Der 2. Satz, an dem ich jetzt arbeite, ist ein schneller Satz, den ich "Nachtstück" überschreiben will, [next word illegible], sehr schnell, mit viel Pizzikato u. chromatischer Umkleidung der Hauptmelodie u. folgende

Themen:

[Beispiel 3]

Als 3. Satz werde ich auf H.'s Rat ein langsames Intermezzo wählen u. zum Schluss das übliche Presto. Deine Absichten betr. Urlaub finden meinen Beifall; es fragt sich nur, ob dein Urlaub nicht zu früh fällt, dass wir zusammen hierher fahren, da mein Semester doch erst im Oktober wieder beginnt u. ich doch in der 1. Hälfte des September schon hier sein muss (Leider Gottes). Ich hatte einen Plan ins Auge gefasst, der wohl aber doch vereitelt werden wird: Ich wollte nämlich Ende Juli zum Bundestag der Agendas jisroel vor meiner Heimfahrt dich 1 bis 2 Tage besuchen; eigentlich eine ganz verrückte Idee. Hast du auch von den Grosseßlern 10 M gekriegt? Zu deinen Erfolgen im Geschäft herz. Glückwunsch. Einen Freund von dir, Neuberger, habe ich bei Hekscher getroffen, u. schon 1 Pfund Kunstthong von ihm gekriegt. Ich soll von ihm grüssen. Gut [hebrew] u. tausend Grüsse von deinem

Kurt.

- 1 -

Nicht schnell. *Streich quartett in H-moll.* *Kurt Weill 1919.*

Streichquartett in H-moll by Kurt Weill, 1918. First Movement. © 1977 European American Music Corp. Used with permission

RECENT RESEARCH

Researchers are invited to send progress reports on forthcoming articles, theses, dissertations, books, media projects, etc. for inclusion in this column. Also invited are author's and research queries.

Dissertations

William Thornhill, recipient of a dissertation fellowship from the Kurt Weill Foundation, is completing a study of *Street Scene* for the Ph.D. in musicology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He submits the following report:

In the dissertation, I will attempt to answer some of the questions raised by Weill concerning the essential character and nature of *Street Scene*. What role should it assume in the overall scheme of his career? Does it contain within it a partial solution to the reconciliation of his European and American careers? Did he ascribe to it an importance beyond its scope and aesthetic value, or was it instead the most ideal representation of his thoughts on the American musical theater to that point? In order to discuss these questions I have divided the dissertation into three sections, each of which should lead cumulatively to a clearer perception of what the work represented for Weill, and what relationship it bore to his vision for the American musical theater.

The first section attempts to reconstruct *Street Scene*, tracing its development from Weill's original conception to the final preparation of the Broadway production. In addition to all the relevant secondary sources, I have utilized all the available primary sources from Weill's diaries, letters, project notes, and, most importantly, his own annotated copy of Elmer Rice's original *Street Scene* play. The evidence from the primary sources presents an earlier version of *Street Scene* than hitherto known; in certain statements made by Weill in letters, he indicated that he was not adverse to certain additions which would be of benefit in future productions. Also, I have concentrated on Weill's own constantly evolving ideas for the show and the consequences of the collaborative process which led inevitably to something quite different from the original conception.

The second section represents an examination of selected American writings by Weill, their relationship to his European and American careers, and their influence on what he sought to achieve in *Street Scene*. Here I emphasize Weill's notions of opera and Broadway opera, how these are connected to his ideas formulated in Europe, and how in *Street Scene* he attempted to reconcile seemingly disparate genres.

The third section focuses on *Street Scene*'s music, seeking to synthesize an examination of the music with the discussion presented in the previous two sections. By considering the piano-vocal score, along with the musical drafts and sketches, I hope to clarify the relationship of the music to his writings on music, and to demonstrate that some aspects of the music represent a thread of continuity with that which he had achieved already in Europe.

Finally, the dissertation contains an appendix that illustrates the transformation of the original play to the musical theater work, a synopsis corresponding to the individual musical numbers, and a complete list of all the cuts, omissions, and projected numbers from the annotated play, all coordinated with Rice's original work.

Andreas Hauff, a doctoral candidate in musicology at the Universität Mainz reports:

Two years of preliminary research into "Kurt Weills Bühnenwerke (1922-1935)" has resulted in the decision to limit discussion to two stage works instead of seventeen. As indicated by the new scope and title - "Kurt Weills Musiktheater im Spannungsfeld von Tradition und Moderne: *Die Bürgschaft* und *Der Silbersee* als Beispiele" - with the dissertation I intend:

- to provide a deeper understanding of *Die Bürgschaft* and *Der Silbersee*, especially in terms of their uniqueness within Weill's oeuvre and development and the resulting peculiarities of their character and musical theater forms. (Whereas *Der Silbersee* has recently been revived appropriately and successfully, *Die Bürgschaft* still lacks both a recent stage performance and serious examination in the scholarly literature.)

- to illuminate those distinctive traits of Weill's musical theater composition from 1922 through 1950 that are present in both works.

- to provide a more thorough knowledge of Weill's collaboration with Caspar Neher and Georg Kaiser.

- to demonstrate the significance and meaning of these works with regard to the cultural and social conditions prevalent during the decline of the Weimar Republic.

- to shed light on Weill's position between the poles of tradition and modernism.

This last aspect deserves further explanation. In February 1931 Weill stated that opera had "to keep pace with contemporary theater" and claimed operatic music should be of a kind "that does not intoxicate the listener but makes him reflect; hence, it has to be of a reflective character itself and determine the dramatic structure of the work by using its formal powers and renouncing its 'absolute' possibilities" [*Ausgewählte Schriften*, Frankfurt 1975, p. 76; the translation is my own]. Weill's inclination would seem to be (although some may view this conclusion as overly simplified) toward a modern musical theater that requires music which is not too modern. Weill even designated opera as "the intensified form of theater ... that most appropriately can shape great contemporary ideas into a timeless and human form" [*Ibid*, p. 78]. This notion, a little inaccurate even in the published version, might also be translated as "a timeless form dealing with man and his behavior."

Without explaining outright what he regarded as "great contemporary ideas," Weill wished to reconcile contemporary ideas with tradition. A thorough investigation of *Die Bürgschaft* and *Der Silbersee* will help to reveal this facet and provide a deeper understanding of the multiple relationships between artist, art, and their social and cultural environment during that period.

Musical analysis will not be central to the dissertation but will serve as a means to illustrate the discussion. Nonetheless, perhaps in the end, sections of the dissertation may represent a small but useful contribution to the analysis of these works.

Paul W. Humphreys, University of California, Los Angeles reports:

In "Expressions of *Einverständnis*: Musical Structure and Affective Content in Kurt Weill's Score for *Der Jasager*" (volume one of my Ph.D. Dissertation in Composition, U.C.L.A., 1988), I survey the essential developments of epic theater as the background for a musico-dramatic analysis of *Der Jasager*. In particular, I discuss relationships between the text and tonal usages of the work that illuminate its central didactic concept of *Einverständnis* ("agreement"). My conclusion rebuts the view of Weill's biographer, David Drew, that Weill seeks to refute the argument of *Einverständnis* as Brecht presents it in the text of the work. I suggest instead that Weill sets out not to criticize the act of agreement, but rather, to reveal that implicit within that act are the seeds of profound emotional conflict.

Several topics for prospective research emerge from the work described above. One such topic is the musico-dramatic grammar of Weill's "simple style." This investigation would interpret and extend the useful observations of I. Kemp (1976) and G. Wagner (1977) from the perspective of linear-structural analysis. Another topic is Weill's notion of "musical distancing" and its relationship (parallel or derivative?) to Brecht's notion of *Verfremdung*, or "alienation." D. Jarman (1986), K. Kowalke (1979), and A. Ringer (1986) have suggested or implied directions such a study might take. A third topic that develops naturally from my previous work is the aesthetic complementarity of Weill's setting of *Der Jasager* and both the mood and music of the Japanese Noh theater.

Pascal Huynh, a Ph.D. candidate at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris and the Université de Tours, has compiled a catalogue of articles about Weill which appeared in France and Germany between 1923 and 1933 as volume two of his dissertation, "Kurt Weill et la République de Weimar; une vision de l'avant-garde dans la presse (1923-33)." The survey of published sources includes music and theater periodicals, the intellectual and political press, and major newspapers.

Huynh's dissertation will be organized as follows: 1) Weimar and the vanguard, 2) New perspectives of the press and the critic, 3) Weill and his critics; Premiere performances; Weill as the hope of a new musical generation; Weill and the "ism's"; A new radio music; Gemeinschaft- and Gebrauchsmusik; Weill-Brecht or Brecht-Weill?; "Kultur-bolschewismus"; Weill, Adorno and Bloch; Expressionism and surrealism. The projected date of completion is Fall 1989.

J. Bradford Robinson, a Ph.D. candidate in musicology at the Technische Universität, Berlin, is writing a dissertation entitled, "Der Jazz in der Oper: Beiträge zum musikalischen Zeittheater der zwanziger Jahre."

My topic focuses on the use of jazz in Central European operas of the late 1920's. Up to now, scholars of 1920's jazz have shown little understanding of opera, and few research attempts have been made to discover what Central European composers of the 1920's understood, compositionally and ideologically, by the term "jazz." In my dissertation, I isolate the music (Chapter 1) and the stylistic devices (Chapter 3) that constituted "jazz" as the specified composers understood it in the 1920's. Additionally, I outline the importance of 1920's jazz as a holistic cultural phenomenon, pointing out the various, and often conflicting, symbolic meanings that jazz assumed in music and other arts of the time (Chapter 2). I have drawn my material from contemporary recordings, performance manuals, trade journals, sheet music, published essays, and composers' statements.

The foregoing makes up Part 1 of the dissertation. Part 2 provides detailed analyses of the use of jazz elements in five operas: *Jonny spielt auf* by Ernst Krenek; *Maschinist Hopkins* by Max Brand; *Transatlantic* by George Antheil; *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* by Kurt Weill; *The Cradle Will Rock* by Marc Blitzstein.

Research Projects

Tamara Levitz, doctoral student in musicology at the Eastman School of Music, is conducting research on Busoni's master-class in composition:

From 1921 to 1924, Kurt Weill attended Busoni's master class in composition at the Berlin Akademie der Künste. Busoni's artistic and musical philosophy strongly influenced Weill and helped to shape his subsequent development as a composer. Nevertheless, Busoni's master class and Kurt Weill's involvement therein have not yet been examined in detail. The object of my research is to illuminate the nature of the master class by determining Busoni's method of teaching, his class format, the music studied, the class assignments, and the performances undertaken. I have been able to eliminate uncertainties about the number of students involved in the class and their names and have given particular attention to five outstanding students - Kurt Weill, Wladimir Vogel, Luc Balmer, Robert Blum, and Walter Geiser.

Busoni's master class reflects and foreshadows important trends in music history of the 1920s. I examine the class in the context of the political situation of Weimar Germany and in relation to Leo Kestenberg's educational reforms of the 1920s. I then focus upon Busoni as a teacher through an examination of his letters and writings. The core of my research, however, centers on Busoni's students themselves. The breadth of Busoni's influence is assessed by interviewing the students, by examining their letters, and most importantly, by studying their compositions. I concentrate on Busoni's musical aesthetic because I feel it is central to understanding his role as a teacher of composition.

My research on Busoni makes extensive use of materials gathered at the Weill-Lenya Foundation in New York, the Busoni Nachlass in East Berlin, the Archives of the Akademie der Künste in West Berlin and the city archives, Wladimir Vogel Nachlass, and conservatory records in Zürich, Switzerland. This summer I plan to continue my study with an oral history project funded by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music. In Zürich, Switzerland I hope to interview the former students Walter Geiser, Robert Blum, and Wladimir Vogel's widow, Idamarie Vogel. I will also examine further archival materials in Switzerland and Berlin, visit the Walter Geiser Nachlass at the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel, and meet with the composers Paul Müller and Bernhard Henking. In this stage of the project, special attention will be given to Kurt Weill's involvement in the class and his relationship to his Swiss classmates.

I presented the preliminary results of my research in a paper entitled *Busoni's Master Class: An Example of Music Education in the Weimar Republic* at the national meeting of the American Musicological Society in November 1988 at Baltimore. I plan to publish my research results in German and English in Winter 1990.

Joachim Lucchesi of Berlin (East) is beginning a study on "Kurt Weill und das verlorene Vaterland."

The aim of the study is to examine Weill's artistic output with respect to the overall shifts imposed upon him by forced exile from Germany. An attempt will be made, on the one hand, to shed light on Weill's loss of a cultural *Heimat*, and, on the other, to explain the impulses behind his rise to one of America's leading composers of the musical theater. It is only by analyzing in detail the artistic sacrifices, continuities, and new qualities brought about by the period of transition in Europe and the exile in America that contemporary misinterpretations of Weill (at least as they exist in Germany) can be overcome.

Related Topics

Alan Lareau is writing a dissertation entitled, "The Struggle for a Literary Cabaret. Berlin 1919-35" at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The study documents the repertoires and reception of four major literary-artistic cabarets (Schall und Rauch, Die Wilde Bühne, Die Gondel, and Die Katakomben) and highlights the frustration of intellectuals attempting to work with an often cynically commercial medium and the inability or unwillingness of the cabaret to become the avant-garde form artists had dreamed of from the beginning of the century. The projected completion date is February 1990.

Lareau is also working on an article on the Baden-Baden Music Festival, 1927-29.

Conference on Jewish Experience in 20th-Century Music Set for April

The National Foundation for Jewish Culture, the 92nd Street Y, and the Hebrew Arts Center are sponsoring "Counter-Harmonies: Jewish Experience in 20th-Century Music," 2-4 April in New York City. The conference will examine the relationships between Jewish culture and contemporary music and includes panel discussions, lectures, roundtables, demonstrations, and performances by scholars and artists from the United States and Israel.

Among the participants, Alexander Ringer of the University of Illinois will speak on "Bloch, Schoenberg, and Wolpe: Three Jewish Emigre Composers" at 9:00 am on 3 April, and Milton Babbitt from the Juilliard School will offer a paper on "Popular Music: Theatre, Film, and Stage" also on 3 April at 3:30 pm. All events are at The Hebrew Arts Center, 129 West 67th Street. For more information, call Toby Crystal or Neil Levin at (212) 629-0500.

University of Illinois Sponsors Symposium

The Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures and the School of Music at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, are sponsoring "Music and German Literature: An International Symposium" to be held 6-9 April 1989 at Urbana. The schedule of papers is arranged chronologically, spanning from the Middle Ages and continuing through the Twentieth Century. Topics for the last day include "The Libretto," "Song," and "Theoretical Considerations." The University has invited scholars from England, Amsterdam, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Austria, Switzerland, Australia, and the United States to participate. For more information, call (217) 244-3241.

University of Maryland Sponsors Bentley Conference

The University of Maryland at College Park is sponsoring a conference, "The Theatre of Eric Bentley: A Celebration," 1-2 April 1989. The panel topics include theater journalism, alternative theater, Bertolt Brecht in the 1980's, and relationships among literature, theater, and music. The Hedgerow Theatre, Philadelphia, will mount *Unholy Trinity: Scenes and Songs by Eric Bentley*, and excerpts from Bentley's translations and adaptations of Brecht's works will be presented. For more information, contact Professor Jackson Bryer, Department of English, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, tel. (301) 454-6957.