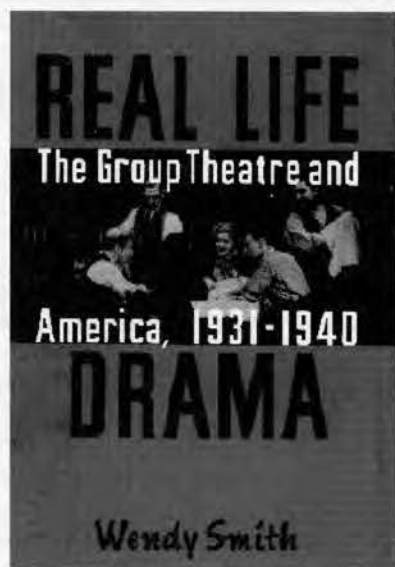


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- Farneth, David. "Kurt Weill: A Tale of Two Cities." *ASCAP in Action* (Spring 1991): 8-12.
- Lucchesi, Joachim. "Eine moderne und politische Kunst: Der Komponist Wladimir Vogel." In *Stefan Wolpe und die musikalische Avantgarde: Sechs Kammerkonzerte im Bauhaus-Archiv: 17. bis 21 Januar 1990*. (Berlin: Schaubplatz Museum, 1990): 34-37.
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- Caspar Neher: *Zeichnungen und Aquarelle aus dem Besitz der Städtischen Kunstsammlungen Augsburg*. Augsburg: Städtische Kunstsammlungen Augsburg; Hofmann-Druck, 1990.
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- Die Dreigroschenoper: Berlin 1930*. Various artists. Teldec 9031-72025-2. [Includes reissues of the 1930 Ultraphon/Telefunken recordings and songs by Rudolf Nelson, Friedrich Hollaender and Wilhelm Grosz.] See review on page 22.
- Die Dreigroschenoper*. Frankfurt Opera; Wolfgang Rennert, conductor. Philips 426 668-2. [CD reissue of 1966 recording.]
- Der Jasager. Down in the Valley*. Soloists; Fredonia Chamber Singers; Kammerchor der Universität Dortmund; Orchester Campus Cantat 90; Willi Gundlach, conductor. Capriccio 60 020-1. [Release date: 1 May 1991.]
- Weill and Gershwin*. Georgia Brown. Pearl SHECD 9617.

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- Weill, Kurt. *The Best of Kurt Weill*. Arranged [for advanced piano solo] by Tony Esposito. (Secaucus, NJ: Warner Bros., 1990) [8 songs.]

LETTERS

(Continued from page 3)

Opera production demonstrated that the mainspring of the show is the cumulative claustrophobia generated by the street and the lonely house, and to dissipate this for the sake of a reference forward to *West Side Story* is merely to play to the gallery.

Finally, the New York production had an additional resonance. There seems to be something of a trend at present for pointing ways in which Weill either acted as a direct influence upon those who followed or anticipated developments which came to fruition only after his death. Listening to the rich, almost verismo performance of the City Opera Orchestra under Chris Nance, I was struck by the similarity between *Street Scene* and what I suppose one might call the American Lyric Opera tradition which weaves (rather uncertainly) from the Copland of *The Tender Land* through the Bernstein of *A Quiet Place* to the schmalz of Menotti. Yet more research?

SEYMOUR ADAMS
London

To the Editor:

May I restore a few words in my essay on "Lucy's Aria," which were lost somewhere along the line between my typescript and the final printing in the *Newsletter* (vol. 8, no. 2)?

In paragraph 3, the third sentence requires an indefinite article, and should read: "... which implies there was a little time before the opening night..."

In paragraph 9, two lines or so are missing from the penultimate sentence. In full, it should read: "One solution would be to give the 2nd Violins a chain of repeated on-the-line Gs in the same rhythm as the lower strings for the four bars beginning at 'Hier!'; and then get them to double the 1st Violins at the lower octave for the four final scales on C, D, E, and F which come between Lucy's last sung or spoken lines."

I must also apologize for a careless piece of writing which repeats the mistaken belief that "Seeräuberjenny" belongs to Jenny and not Polly. I can only plead a sort of "Freudian" attack of amnesia after playing my old Lotte Lenya record while writing my essay! The history of Lenya's annexation of the song is dealt with in some detail by Stephen Hinton in his *Cambridge Opera Handbook*, which had not been published when I wrote my essay nearly two years ago. My carelessness, though, both in writing and proof-reading, weakens the point I was trying to make, since that extraordinary song becomes even more unsettling when delivered by that "nice little girl," Polly!

CHRISTOPHER SHAW
London

BOOKS



Kurt Weill: Musik und Theater: Gesammelte Schriften: Mit einer Auswahl von Gesprächen und Interviews. Edited by Stephen Hinton and Jürgen Schebera. Preface by David Drew. Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, 1990.

In 1975 Suhrkamp Verlag published a volume of selected writings by Weill (*Ausgewählte Schriften*) and a companion volume of writings about Weill (*Über Kurt Weill*), both edited by David Drew. Now, fifteen years later, we have the collected writings of the composer in one volume. A comparison of Drew's edition with the new one, which coincided with Weill's 90th birthday, results in two clear-cut conclusions: first, Drew's selection sketched a fair enough portrait of the European Weill so that the more comprehensive Hinton-Schebera collection ultimately provides a fuller and more subtle account of what we already knew. (The most interesting additions to the pre-1935 selections are various novelties unearthed in Weill's writings for German radio and a 1934 interview published in Copenhagen (p. 314).) Second, the real value of this new compilation derives from the reprinting of writings and interviews from Weill's American period. Indeed the "American" Weill is anything but well-known, and the original sources are often difficult to obtain, not only in Europe. In that respect we owe much to the two editors for their attempts to give us a comprehensive offering.

Whereas Drew's edition had a strongly thematic emphasis and organization, this one aims for a comprehensive overview. Three headings subdivide the book: "Aufsätze und Essays," ["Articles and Essays"], "Beiträge für die Zeitschrift 'Der deutsche Rundfunk,'" ["Contributions to the Periodical 'The German Radio'"] and "Gespräche und Interviews" ["Conversations and Interviews"]. The texts are presented chronologically within each section. A brief introduction that in-

cludes biographical annotations and a discussion of selection criteria precedes each section. In the case of Weill's contributions to *Der deutsche Rundfunk*, the editors have limited their selection to eighty insightfully chosen articles out of the four-hundred-some-odd texts available. Therefore, the title "collected works" is not particularly appropriate to this section. Those lucky enough to have a copy of Drew's out-of-print volume will find that some of the important German radio writings included were, surprisingly, omitted from Hinton-Schebera; for instance, "Der Berliner Sender," "Der Mittelweg," "Der 60. Geburtstag Maxim Gorkis," "Verfassungsfeiern" "Kommunisten-Attentat," and "Wiederkehr des Revolutionstages." Readers may be irritated, therefore, by the need to page back and forth between the two editions to compare and supplement one with the other. Although Drew concedes in the foreword that *Musik und Theater: Gesammelte Schriften* replaces his *Ausgewählte Schriften*, those of us who know this body of material from Drew would have appreciated an appendix listing variants, additions, and omissions from the earlier edition. Passages in several essays in Drew's edition, for example, were omitted without indication, whereas they appear in complete form in Schebera-Hinton.

The annotations for each selection are conveniently printed immediately following the article (an improvement on Drew's endnote format). Unfortunately, the editors' handling of the annotations is inconsistent: some writings are carefully and completely annotated, while others lack notes altogether; some individuals have merited annotation while others have not. For instance, information about the film music pioneer Giuseppe Becce appears on page 243, but nothing is included for the important Berlin radio conductors Selmar Meyrowitz, Bruno Seidler-Winkler, and Wilhelm Buschkötter. While the list of unidentified names is lengthy, I am less concerned with an endless commentary under the rubric of "Who was Mozart?" than with the lack of a tight, precise, and above all, unified scholarly apparatus. The editors should not have assumed that their readers have at hand the necessary sources to look up half-forgotten lore of the musical life of the Weimar Republic. One also wonders at the disparate treatment accorded Weill's writings occasioned by particular inquiries or events. Whereas a full context is provided for his reaction to Trantow concerning *Die Bürgschaft* (pp. 107-8), Weill's often quoted letter to *Life* magazine is reprinted without comment (p. 149).

This reviewer would have appreciated references to modern reprints of writings referred to in the annotations. For example, Brecht's and Eisler's "open letter" to the producers of the "Neue Musik Berlin 1930" is mentioned on page 90, and the annotation quite properly indicates the primary source:

Books

Berliner Börsen-Courier, 13 May 1930. But the editors do not also inform us that the letter has been reprinted in both Eisler's and Brecht's more recent and readily accessible collected works.

While most of these criticisms are admittedly minor, the volume suffers decidedly from the lack of adequate access to the essays through an introductory discussion of the broader context for Weill's writings. The short preface by David Drew does not fill this gap. Instead, readers not accustomed to Drew's involuted manner of argument are more likely to be confused than enlightened. (There is one minor inconsistency between the main text and the prefatory matter. While the annotation correctly states that Weill's sketch for the "Ruhrepos" of 1927 was first published in *Brecht-Jahrbuch* 1977, Drew states in his foreword that it is being published here, in *Musik und Theater*, for the first time.)

In summary, I rejoice over the appearance of the most comprehensive collection of Weill writings yet to appear and applaud the editors for their achievement. However, I could have wished for greater attention to editorial principles and details.

JOACHIM LUCCHESI
Berlin

Translated by Margaret M. Sherry

The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey. By Joseph P. Swain. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

In his book *The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey*, Joseph Swain's intention is to make "music the principal focus of the criticism" because, as he states, "this sort of analysis has never been applied to Broadway stage music before." In order to accomplish this, Swain organizes the book both chronologically and categorically, with each chapter revolving mostly around a single composer or work and a thematic idea. These themes range in topic from First Maturity (*Show Boat*) to The Pure Love Story (*The Most Happy Fella*) to the Thriller as Musical (*Sweeney Todd*). The result, however, produces a highly selective, almost arbitrary collection that excludes many works that deserve representation.

Perhaps the omissions reveal more about the book than anything else. Curiously, in a volume that devotes so much space to musical analysis and interpretation, it seems odd that two essential musical figures in Broadway history, Kurt Weill and Gian-Carlo Menotti, receive little or no attention. Weill is mentioned only in passing as a composer of Broadway musicals. Apparently Swain regards him seriously only as the composer of *The Threepenny Opera* and not as the composer of any legitimate American works. Gian-Carlo Menotti is not mentioned at all. Most ironic is that Weill and Menotti probably had greater control over the musical

fabric of their work than did any other contemporary composer of the Broadway theater; indeed, Menotti wrote both score and libretto for his Broadway works. The omission of these two composers at once casts serious doubts about the overall critical perspective of the book. Furthermore, without significant explanation, Swain dismisses Marc Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* as being important only as a historical document in which political themes dominate (p. 12). Certainly this assessment of Blitzstein's musical talents should not go unchallenged. Particularly rankling are statements such as, "The long-range interconnections of motive, leitmotif, and dramatic character find no parallel until Leonard Bernstein. They were simply beyond the reach of all other Broadway composers." His disregard for and obliviousness to Weill's musical technique seems extraordinary. And what about Menotti? (Or does he stand outside all of the traditions simply because no one wants to claim him?)

The two chapters devoted to Rodgers and Hammerstein serve only to reinforce Swain's selectivity. Despite his detailed dramatic and musical analyses, I do not believe *Oklahoma!* and *Carousel* contrast sufficiently to warrant individual chapters to the exclusion of other more worthy works. I also doubt that *Godspell* merits an entire chapter. (If the quality of Swain's analysis is any indication, he seems to have had second thoughts also.) Other works that could have illustrated new areas of achievement in the Broadway theater would include *Street Scene*, *The Medium*, *The Consul*, and *The Saint of Bleeker Street*.

The number of technical mistakes and inaccuracies further diminishes the book's authority. While attempting to use traditional musicological and analytical tools, Swain often obscures the meaning of a passage with imprecise terminology. For example, "texture" sometimes describes a musical style, at other times a rhythm, and at other times some unspecified element; for example, "the texture is close to song" (p. 105). Swain is not discussing texture in this passage but rather is describing dramatic technique or style. He alludes to "the slow rhythm" where he obviously means tempo, and in another passage he refers to "interlude music" where he clearly means underscoring. The accumulated effect of such imprecision leaves the reader bewildered.

Swain gives the impression that he cannot make up his mind whether he is writing for the layman or the professional. Some explanations and analyses are simplistic, obviously intended for a general reader. On

the other hand, some analyses invoke a vague and loosely applied Schenkerian terminology, as if to give the book an air of musicological respectability. For whom then is this book intended? I believe the book fails on either count: first, it is too technical and obscure for a general audience; and second, the analyses do not hold up under close scrutiny by a professional or literate musician or music scholar.

Too often Swain tends to generalize his analysis rather than state specifically the evidence necessary to support his claims. Moreover, in those sections in which the analysis becomes the most complex, the author leaves too much to the reader's imagination. Rather than define the point clearly, he forces the reader to guess his intentions. In addition to these problems, Swain's writing style is profuse, obtuse, and dishearteningly obscure at times. Frequently,

the text reads like a first draft rather than a polished monograph: "Thereafter the five parts are severally introduced, the chromatic notes of the first theme coloring the predominant second theme, the structure of which governs the rest of the course" (pp. 230-31).

The book also contains some inexcusable historical errors and numerous typographical mistakes or miscalculations. Swain includes *Fiddler on the Roof* in a brief list of works with exotic settings from the 1940s and 1950s. *Fiddler on the Roof* premiered in 1964.

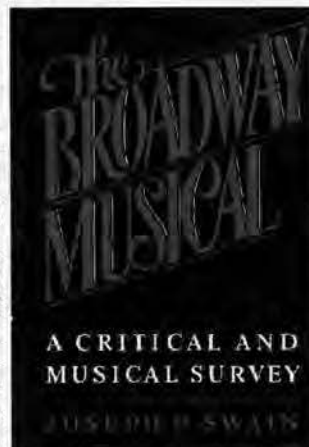
He also mentions in passing a blues and bop influence in *Porgy and Bess*. *Porgy and Bess* premiered in 1935, while bop did not arrive until the 1940s.

An index of musical examples and figures would have been helpful. Some have been mislabeled in the text, e.g., Fig. 6.1 = Fig. 6.3 (pp. 146-47). On page 42 he refers to Fig. 2.2 which does not appear until page 46. Without some reference the reader cannot make the association.

In defense of the book, Swain presents an excellent dramatic and musical account of "Lonely Room," one of the neglected and most effective moments in *Oklahoma!* He also argues convincingly for the inclusion of *The Most Happy Fella*.

Too often one senses a writer not quite at ease with his material. Swain seems too concerned at times with what Broadway is not, that it is not Verdi or Wagner. Also, I miss the big picture of the American musical theater that this book could have provided. It is a great disappointment that more care and precision were not expended on what could have been a terrific book.

WILLIAM THORNHILL
Chapel Hill, NC



PERFORMANCES



A stock exchange setting for *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* by the Frankfurt Opera as directed by Arie Zinger at the Schauspielhaus. Photo: Maria Eggert. Courtesy: Frankfurt Opera.

The "Spiel von Gott" scene, Scene III, from Henry Akina's production of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* in Halle. Photo: André Geßmer. Courtesy: Landestheater Halle.



Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny. Frankfurter Oper, Arie Zinger, dir., Steven Sloane, cond.; 14, 20-21, 25, 27, 29, 31 October; 3, 5, 14, 16 November; 3, 6, 8, 15 December 1990.

How can a society function when it promises free fulfillment of all material needs, and when it views people, above all, as consumers? Brecht and Weill gave the answer in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*: at the expense of those who have to pay the bill. The inhabitants of Mahagonny consume the cynical trial of Jimmy Mahoney simply as a spectacle of the mass media, not without considering, of course, what would become of them if *they* could no longer pay their bills. In the capitalistic city of paradise it is every man for himself - a perspective relevant to the recent demise of the communist utopia in Germany and Eastern Europe and the frequently stated (or claimed) victory of the capitalist, social order.

It might seem appropriate that in Arie Zinger's new Frankfurt production the spectators at the trial were clothed in carnival costumes; however, such costuming caused the trial scene to be barely recognizable. Zinger, whose *Mahagonny* represented his first opera staging, did not seem to understand that an opera consists of words, as well as music.

The singers could scarcely be understood, a shortcoming that the Frankfurt production had in common with the one recently done in Hamburg under Günter Krämer. But whereas the company in Hamburg managed to compensate for this shortcoming with a choreography that was well coordinated with the music, a starkly calculated set design, and a clear overall conception of the production, the Frankfurt team (music director Steven Sloane, set designer Peter Paul, and choreographers Roy Bosier and André Notter) fragmented the work into a hundred disparate pieces. The director limited himself to realizing the opera within the context of the Frankfurt stock exchange. As a result, the varying achievements of the orchestra and the singers remained largely ineffectual. The singers included Gleny Linos as Begbick, Valentin Jar as Fatty, Yaron Windmüller as Trinity Moses, Michal Shamir as Jenny, and William Pell as Jimmy, together with members of the chorus who were also used as soloists. Zinger may well have been trying to avoid formulaic direction, yet his more or less artificial ideas, (for example, the portrayal of Trinity Moses as a lame-brained pervert), lacked a unifying coherence.

For the final death march, a few people stumbled onto the stage while the screen in the stock exchange remained ablaze with the words "To perpetuate the Golden Age." Was that supposed to be the final message? That the city of Mahagonny does not fall?

PERFORMANCES

Frankfurt am Main, the metropolis of German capital often jokingly dubbed "Mainhattan," is, in fact, getting to be more and more like its transatlantic model, especially with respect to the growing number of homeless people and the increasing array of skyscrapers. A brief visit to some of the city's subway stations would perhaps have given this director a different perspective.

ANDREAS HAUFF

Mainz

Translated by Margaret M. Sherry

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny. Landestheater Halle - Musiktheater. Henry Akina, dir.; Karl-Heinz Zettl, cond.; 25 January 1991 (premiere).

Halle's production of Weill-Brecht's *magnum opus* is the first in five years in East Germany, or whatever it is now called - shall we say, in the new federal states? Needless to say, the actuality of the piece is incontrovertible. Within a matter of months, millions of people have had to adopt the basic principles of a market economy, and many, too many, have been suddenly and fundamentally confronted with their own lack of financial power: "Was das größte Verbrechen ist/ Das auf dem Erdenrund vorkommt.." [which is the greatest crime on earth!]. In the short time since unification (3 October 1990) it has also become apparent, how quickly the "Haifische" [sharks] from the West are settling east of the Elbe.

Of course, I am not advocating a straightforward adaptation of the opera to the East German situation. But I must say that the Halle Landestheater was a bit ill-advised to engage an American guest-director at a time like this. Henry Akina, who is originally from Hawaii and has been living in West Berlin, and his set designer Volker Ansorge, have shown themselves to be oddly indecisive, or perhaps incapable of settling upon a stylistic concept for a 1991 *Mahagonny*. The set designs vacillate between contemporary ambience (a decaying urban-scape on the front section of the stage, sprayed with juvenile graffiti) and Alaska-nostalgia coupled with stale imagery from American television culture on the main stage. The costumes draw upon both *Dynasty* and *Star Trek*. And why Begbick, of all people, wears a violently red hair brush will remain a secret known only to the director! Take also, for instance, Trinity Moses, who

in "Spiel von Gott in Mahagonny" is forced to put on a golden crown and a gigantic red toga with an aura of antiquity reminiscent of Emperor Nero. Eclecticism seems to be the order of the day. However, there are also some very successful ideas, above all the stagings of soloists and chorus and the finale, where the director has the city collapse in real flames. Nonetheless, even a matter as important as the characterization of the principal roles seems to have been carried out without a real underlying concept: from the beginning to the end Jenny is simply a worn-out prostitute; Begbick is a business woman who is anything but cold-blooded; and her two accomplices appear to be more comic figures than hardened criminals. In addition to all of this, Akina has invented an "aged Jenny" who has to sit silently for two and a half hours on the stage without anything to do, except declaim the captions for each scene. If ever there were a classical misunderstanding of epic theater!

Musically, thank goodness, the production does offer something special. For the past few decades the theater in Halle has been used for the revival and promotion of Handelian operas - Halle is his birthplace - and so it can make use of the excellent Handel Festival Orchestra and an extraordinary chorus. Under the confident baton of Karl-Heinz Zettl, who grasped the balance of the score perfectly and used a convincing range of tempi, both chorus and orchestra served the production well. The evening's high points, in fact, were in the big chorus scenes. Outstanding!

The soloists, on the other hand, were a mixed success. Although the men had some trouble with their parts, the two convincing female protagonists - the Czech alto Maria Petrasovska in the role of Begbick and the young soprano Evelin Garbrecht as Jenny - proved both effective and impressive. Garbrecht was the discovery of the evening; she has a lyric voice with flawless intonation on the highest notes and deserves all the recognition she has been getting. The final curtain brought almost twenty minutes of stormy applause at the end of the show.

So, here is testimony to Halle's varied capabilities. After Handel's *Poros* we now have Weill's *Mahagonny* in a production which can be assured of a long run, despite the reservations of this reviewer.

JÜRGEN SCHEBERA

Berlin

Translated by Margaret M. Sherry

RECORDINGS

Die Dreigroschenoper: Historic Original Recordings, 1928-31. Moritat,

Kanonensong, II. Dreigroschenfinale, Ballade vom angenehmen Leben: Harald Paulsen, orchestra [from Homocord H-3747/8]. Die Seeräuberjenny, Barbara-Song: Carola Neher, orchestra [from Orchestrata 2132]. "Songs": Carola Neher, Kurt Gerron, Arthur Schröder, die Dreigroschenband [from Electrola EH-301]. Kanonensong, Zuhälterballade: Dreigroschenoper-Band (Lewis Ruth-Theo Mackeben) [from Odeon 2703]. Die Seeräuberjenny: Lotte Lenja, Lewis Ruth Band, Theo Mackeben, cond. [from Ultraphon A-753]. Barbara-Song, Eifersuchtsduett: Lotte Lenja, Erika Helmke, Lewis Ruth Band, Theo Mackeben, cond. [from Ultraphon A-751]. Chant de Barbara: Lys Gauty, orchestra [from Columbia DF-873]. Fiancée du pirate: Odette Florelle, orchestra [from Polydor 522.172]. Chant des canons: Marianne Oswald, orchestra [from Columbia DF-1115]. Barbara-Song (in Danish): Gerda Madsen, orchestra [from HMV X-4362]. Moritat: Haller-Revue-Jazz-Orchester, Hans Schindler, cond. [from Polyphon B-12039]. Tanz-Potpourri: Marek Weber und sein Orchester [from Electrola EG-1281]. Kleine Dreigroschenmusik—Nos. 2, 4, 5a, 6: Berlin State Opera Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond. [from Polydor 24172/3]. Nos. 2, 5a, 6, 7 (Chorale only): wind orchestra, Theo Mackeben, cond. [from Audiphon-Electro 5007]. Capriccio (CD: 10 346).

O Moon of Alabama: Historic Original Recordings, 1928-44. Mahagonny-Songspiel

- Alabama-Song: Marek Weber und sein Orchester [from Electrola EG-853]. Der Zar lässt sich fotografieren - Tango Angèle: Saxophon-Orchester Dobbri [from Beka B-6313]. Konjunktur - Die Muschel von Margate: Otto Pasetti, Alfred Schlee (piano) [from Paloma 3501]. Happy End - Surabaya-Johnny, Bilbao-Song: Lotte Lenja, Theo Mackeben mit seinem Jazz-Orchester [from Orchestrata 2311]. Matrosensong, Surabaya-Johnny: Lewis Ruth Band [from Electrola EG-1590]. Song von Mandelay: Lewis Ruth Band [from Electrola EG-1569]. Surabaya-Johnny: "Red Roberts" [Theo Mackeben] mit seinem Ultraphon-Jazz-Orchester [from Ultraphon A-198]. Surabaya-Johnny [in French]: Marianne Oswald, orchestra [from Columbia DF-1114]. Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny - Alabama-Song, Denn wie man sich bettet: Lotte Lenja, ensemble, orchestra [from Homocord 3671]. Querschnitt: Lotte Lenja, grosses Ensemble und Orchester des Theaters am Kurfürstendamm, Hans Sommer, cond. [from Electrola EH-736]. Der Silbersee - Das Lied vom Schlaraffenland, Der Bäcker backt uns Morgenbrot: Ernst Busch, orchestra, Maurice de Abravanel, cond. [from Gloria GO-10703]. Six Songs (Lost in the Stars, Lover Man, J'attends un navire, Complainte de la Seine, Surabaya-Johnny, Denn wie man sich bettet): Lotte Lenja, Kurt Weill, piano [from Bost 6-5017/9]. Two Songs for shortwave broadcast to Germany (Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib, Wie lange noch?): Lotte Lenja, Kurt Weill, piano [OWI recordings]. Capriccio (CD: 10 347).

Die Dreigroschenoper - Excerpts (#1 [abr.], 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11/11a, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, Moritat, 21 [chorale only]): Lotte Lenja, Erika Helmke, Willy Trenk-Treibtsch, Kurt Gerron, Erich Ponto, Lewis Ruth Band, Theo

Mackeben, cond. [from Ultraphon A-752/5]. Moritat, Lied der Unzulänglichkeit: Berthold Brecht, Theo Mackeben's Jazz Band [from Orchestrata 2131]. Moritat (in French): Mme. Damia, orchestra [no source given]. Kleine Dreigroschenmusik - Nos. 2, 4, 5a, 6: Berlin State Opera Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond. [from Polydor 24172/3]. Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny - Alabama Song, Denn wie man sich bettet: Lotte Lenja, The Three Admirals, Theo Mackeben und sein Jazz-Orchester [from Telefunken A-371]. Querschnitt: Lotte Lenja, grosses Ensemble und Orchester des Theaters am Kurfürstendamm, Hans Sommer, cond. [from Electrola EH-736]. Happy End - Bilbao Song. Lotte Lenja, Theo Mackeben mit seinem Jazz-Orchester [from Orchestrata 2311]. Mastersound Profile Series (CD: DFCD 1-110).

The Collector's Three Penny Opera. Die Dreigroschenoper - Excerpts (#1 [abr.], 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11/11a, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, Moritat, 21 [chorale only]: Lotte Lenja, Erika Helmke, Willy Trenk-Trebitsch, Kurt Gerron, Erich Ponto, Lewis Ruth Band, Theo Mackeben, cond. [from Ultraphon A-752/5] Chant des canons, Chant d'amour, Tangoballade, Ballade de la vie agréable: Albert Préjean, Margo Lion, Jacques Henley, Lewis Ruth Band, Theo Mackeben, cond. [from Ultraphon AP-113/4]. Mahagonny - Alabama Song, Denn wie man sich bettet: Lotte Lenja, The Three Admirals, Theo Mackeben und sein Jazz-Orchester [from Telefunken A-371]. Teldec (CD: 9031-72025-2, with songs by Rudolf Nelson, Friedrich Holländer, and Wilhelm Grosz, sung by Kurt Gerron, Marlene Dietrich, Curt Bois).

Here, served up on four silver platters, is the bulk of the phonographic evidence about the performance of Weill's German works when they were new - including, in the case of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, virtually all known recordings by the orchestra and cast members of the original Berlin production. Neither Puccini nor Richard Strauss has ever been treated so systematically in reissues; their "creators' records" have to be assembled in dribs and drabs on a hodgepodge of reissues or tracked down in distant archives.

Although prepared under three different auspices, the four CDs entail surprisingly little duplication, most of it between the Mastersound and Teldec discs, both of which include the 1930 Ultraphon/Telefunken excerpts set - but in different sequences: the Mastersound version follows the order of the original 78 issue, while the Teldec, like its LP predecessors, reshuffles the pieces into the order of the score. Capriccio's *Dreigroschenoper* disc also includes two sides from this set - evidently because it was the only way to include Lenja - although any potential purchaser of these historic anthologies will obviously want the complete set.

Teldec and Mastersound also duplicate the Lenja Telefunken single from *Aufstieg und Fall*; Capriccio offers the much rarer and more "authentic" Homocord version. (In a discography in this Newsletter, IV/1,

p. 7, Jürgen Schebera, Capriccio's annotator, wrote that Weill was credited as conductor on the Homocord disc, but that claim is not repeated in the CD booklet, where a photo of the label shows the accompaniment listed merely as "Orchesterbegleitung.") Teldec's only Weill unicas are the four *Dreigroschenoper* titles with cast members from the French version of the Pabst film, though the additional cabaret songs will surely interest addicts of the style. Mastersound and Capriccio both include the Klemperer excerpts from the *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, already reissued on CD by Symposium (see this Newsletter, VII/1, pp. 23ff.).

In their duplicated material, the Mastersound and Teldec editions differ sonically. The latter credits the Cedar digital restoration process, the results of which are quieter in terms of surface noise, less natural because of fake-sounding added resonance. The other discs all employ more traditional technology, which means some grindy or scratchy surfaces - probably unavoidable; many of the originals are considerable rarities, thanks to the depredations of time and Nazi cultural police. As far as one can tell, they have been correctly pitched. Capriccio furnishes source data, approximate recording dates (more precise ones for some titles were given in this Newsletter, V/1, p. 12), interesting pictures, and essays by Schebera. Mastersound furnishes only approximate (often inaccurate) dates, plus a single page of conventional background information. Teldec's more elaborate booklet has precise recording dates but no discographical information, another Schebera essay, pictures, texts, and translations (especially welcome for the non-Weill cabaret songs).

(In the case of the Ultraphon *Dreigroschenoper* recordings, the proximity of the recording dates [27 November 1930 for the French sides, 7 December for the German ones] to those of the G. W. Pabst film [for which work began on 19 September and was completed on 15 November of the same year, according to Stephen Hinton's valuable Cambridge Opera Handbook to the work] strongly suggests that they were made to capitalize on the film's release, even if they contain music omitted or presented only instrumentally in the film. In any case, they do include, on the final side, the additional verses for the "Moritat" reputedly

first used in the film. On the other hand, whether the assignment of "Seeräuberjenny" to Lenja in the Ultraphon set reflects its appropriation by Jenny in the film remains a moot point, for on the records, confusingly, she sings music for all three of Mack's ladies, sharing Polly with Erika Helmke, who doubles as Frau Peachum - and, as Hinton tells us, Lenja was concurrently singing Lucy in a November 1930 revival.)

Few readers of this newsletter will need any further incentive than the listing of contents to decide that they need these records. Some of those contents have not been available for decades, and even on the second-hand market most are, as noted, not easily found. The clipped, precise delivery of Harald Paulsen, the original Macheath, is beguiling, while Carola Neher, who had to withdraw as Polly in the premiere but took

it over later in the stage run and in the film, confirms Herbert Jhering's report that she sang the "Barbara-Song" with "charm and an ability to juggle wit and sentiment that is overpowering." The tenor Otto Pasetti, Lenja's sometime lover, sings "Die Muschel von Margate" with

Alfred Schlee, postwar director of Universal Edition, at the piano. And Ernst Busch's *Silbersee* sides must have been the last Weill recording made in Germany until after the war.

Most important, as an antidote to the famous 1950s LPs, are all the early records by Lenja (as it was spelled then), corroborating Ernst Bloch's 1935 description of her voice as "sweet, high, light, dangerous, cool, with the radiance of the crescent moon." (These quotations were gleaned from Stephen Hinton's Cambridge Opera Handbook on *Die Dreigroschenoper*.) And there are the important "transitional" Lenja recordings from the early Forties: the elusive Bost set and the powerful propaganda songs, the latter never before released commercially.

Some will devour these sounds in search of "truth" about "authentic" ways to perform the German Weill. Schebera calls attention to the only two recordings that Weill seems to have considered faithful to his intentions. One is the Odeon disc under Mackeben containing instrumental versions of the "Kanonensong" and the "Zuhälterballade" - but even this diverges from the score (see Geoffrey Abbott's chapter in the Hin-



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ton handbook, which also draws on the evidence of Mackeben's own band parts). The other is the "Querschnitt" from *Aufstieg und Fall*, which compresses more of the work than you might think possible into eight and a half minutes. (Only one of the participating singers is credited—Lenya, whose identity we could have guessed anyway; any clues as to who the others are?)

To my ears, the focus lies elsewhere—not in establishing what is "canonical" in the performance of these works, but in glimpsing (to invoke a loaded phrase) "what really happened." Of course, the phonograph transmits as selectively as any other type of historical documentation, and the recording studio invariably interacts with the music-making it preserves. But by the late 1920s "preserved music" was already beginning to replace live music, if not yet to dominate it, so that recordings are themselves part of "what really happened" as well as testimony thereto. Because most of these Weill works were poised near the elusive boundary between art and popular music, the varieties of treatment—of "fidelity" and "infidelity"—on display make especially fascinating study.

For an experimental cross-section, I took the "Moritat," represented here in nine versions: Paulsen, who may have hoped to sing it; two by Gerron (a short one in the "Songs" medley, more in the Ultraphon set), who did sing it; Brecht, who wrote the words; Klemperer and Mackeben leading Weill's wind-band arrangement; "slow-fox" versions by the Haller-Revue jazz band and Marek Weber's palm-court dance orchestra; and Damia in French. The most striking revelation is that only Klemperer thinks much of Weill's metronome marking of 66: the others range from 80 (Gerron "Songs" and Mackeben) to 100 (Brecht), while Mme. Damia gradually builds from 80 to 110, a procedure about as appropriate as Toscanini's notorious accelerando in Ravel's *Bolero*. (Some others gain a bit in tempo, but in a non-purposive manner.) Like the other French recordings, this one, from its introductory saxophone solo to its orchestral *Gestalt*, reminds us that translation is a matter of more than mere words.

Of the German vocal recordings, only Paulsen and Brecht are complete, and both evidently employ the original Bacigalupo barrel-organ roll for the first two stanzas. Thereafter Brecht's orchestra rearranges Weill's scoring, but Paulsen's is remarkably faithful, and the singer picks up the barrel organ's sec articulation of the melody to achieve an ironic elegance quite the opposite of Gerron's familiar rasp. The latter's condensed recordings are otherwise relatively uninformative; the "Songs" potpourri (accompanied by the "Dreigroschenband") follows the first verse with an improvisatory chorus for the band, after which the repeat of the concluding couplet is sung; the latter, oddly, remains purely instrumental in the

Ultraphon set, where Gerron sings the first two verses with orchestra instead of barrel organ, then skips to the last.

The same barrel-organ roll surfaces for one stanza in the Haller-Revue band setting, where, taking a cue from the *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, it is introduced by the "Lied der Unzulänglichkeit." (Here and in Brecht's record, we encounter again the uncanonical upward keyboard glissando between verses noted in Mackeben's versions of the "Kanonsong"; it may well have been a period cliché.) And to the "Moritats" on these CDs we can add the film version (available on a laserdisk in Voyager's "Criterion Collection"), where the barrel organ carries the burden throughout, although the downward chromatics of Weill's orchestration can be heard in the final stanza; the most marked feature of this performance is Ernst Busch's prominent trilling of his r's, possibly picked up and amplified from Brecht's rendition. Surprisingly, everyone retains the original C major (a temporary modulation in the Haller-Revue charts puts an improvisatory chorus in a higher key), and even Marek Weber incorporates features of the original setting, notably the imitative counterpoint of the last two stanzas, into his potpourri.

That's a sample of what's in prospect for those inclined to pursue comparative studies. (I'm sorry the elusive Fritz Massary versions of the "Seeräuber-Jenny" and "Barbara-Song" are not here, for they would represent the *Dreigroschenoper* interacting with yet another institution of its time, the world of Berlin operetta.) Whether Weill approved of it all or not is neither here nor there, in a cultural sense: it's all part of an historical fact that Weill originated and that European—especially Weimar—culture took from there. Some may regard this historical cornucopia as also a Pandora's box, undermining the authority of printed score and "composer's intentions." I rather think it an enrichment and a supplement, a testimonial by turns raucous, sentimental, heroic, and profound, to the living, breathing presence of Weill's music in its own time and thereafter.

DAVID HAMILTON
New York

Berlin im Licht: Frauentanz; Bastille Musik; Öl-Musik; Suite Panaméenne; "Berlin im Licht"; "Slow Fox and Algi-Song"; "Klopslied"; "Ach, wär mein Lieb ein Brunnlein kalt"; "Cowboy-Song"; "Captain Valentine's Song"; "Die stille Stadt." Ensemble Modern; HK Gruber, cond., Rosemary Hardy, soprano. Largo (CD: 5114)

The music of the twentieth century evolved extraordinarily varied and interconnected forms of modernity, which responded to one another in unmediated fashion. Yet these forms were also pulled apart, en-

graved in stone, and polarized by partisans, cohorts, and epigones. For example, one narrow-minded, but influential contingent discounted as "pointless" those compositional tendencies which departed from the alleged mainstream, or forced a connection with it. Consequently, critics attempted to legitimize the unusually differentiated forms of entertainment music in Weill's oeuvre by calling attention to corresponding tendencies in the works of Mahler or Berg, instead of classifying them as a special, unmistakable modernity in their own right—one defined in a specific socio-historical context.

Fortunately, such thinking has begun to disappear, admittedly without the contours of convincing alternative musico-historical concepts to take its place. At least one no longer brackets the different or heterogeneous and denounces it as "pointless," but rather an attempt is made to detect and identify the most disparate forms of modern music. The differences, rather than the similarities, are now emphasized, and more faith is placed in the originary, authentic utterances of a composer than in his participation in some higher musico-historical tradition; in short, our judgment these days stems more often from the "aesthetic" rather than the "historical-philosophical" mode.

In this regard there is a directly programmatic significance to the recording being reviewed here, a collection of virtually unknown works by Weill, some of which have for a long time been assumed to be lost. The title of this collection, "Berlin im Licht" (borrowed from one of the songs), recalls a modernity specific to Berlin—different from Viennese or even Parisian—which was characterized by pluralism, cosmopolitanism, openness, and liberalism. (By the close of the 1920s Berlin had gained a reputation as being the center of musical experimentation; it was here that works of Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Eisler, Weill, Prokofiev, Milhaud, Honegger, and Hindemith were premiered.) Such a multiplicity is reflected in the styles of the works recorded here; one finds a late romantic Lied ("Die stille Stadt," 1919), songs ("Berlin im Licht," 1928, "Cowboy-Song," and "Captain Valentine's Song," 1936), parodies ("Algi-Song," 1920/21, "Klopslied," 1926), a neo-Baroque cantata ("Frauentanz" op. 10, 1923), and fragments of theater music ("Bastille Musik," 1927, "Öl-Musik," 1928, and "Suite panaméenne," 1934).

The surprise in the program is not its multiplicity, but rather its inner unity. Perhaps it resides in the instrumental texture of all the pieces: again and again Weill succeeds in creating a special, seemingly natural, musical style with the fewest musical means. His music never gives the impression of being arranged for certain instruments; instead, it seems to arise naturally and spontaneously from the chosen ensemble.

Music with these qualities calls for interpreters who give themselves wholly and intimately to its impetus, almost as if they were improvising. In this respect all the participating musicians do a thoroughly excellent job. However, at the risk of seeming a bit unjust, I must also raise a few very basic objections.

HK Gruber, the composer and interpreter of *Frankenstein!!*, who has cultivated his own unmistakable compositional and interpretive style, seems to espouse the viewpoint that the parodistic tendencies of some songs simply do not work without grotesque exaggeration. A more objective interpretation would have allowed the parodic kitsch to create its own effect, perhaps as a form of musical silliness which, superficially at least, would not be perceived as such.

By the same token, Rosemary Hardy sings a little too artfully. In "Frauentanz" Weill composes less *in* than *with* the neo-Baroque; the style here serves as a means of liberating the music from an ardent expressiveness; at the same time, it objectifies its performance.

The songs might have been sung instead with an easy naturalness, almost like folk songs. Even the Ensemble Moderne plays these works like art music; their performance is lacking in atmosphere. Precision and emphasis are there, but without the ease necessary to sublimate those technical features in the listener's mind.

David Drew's enthusiasm for Weill's music is understandable, but he succumbs to a peculiarly mystical tone in some of his commentaries in the extravagantly designed booklet that accompanies the recording. One occasionally gets the impression that he is alluding to obscure facts, which he might be willing to reveal under other circumstances.

From Weill's Berlin modernity one can still reap astounding new musical experiences, which in almost every respect go beyond the usual and the familiar. Most striking of all are the totally new connections to be discovered between his European and his American periods. Perhaps we have only just begun a real discourse about Weill, a discourse in which this very-well-thought-out and richly suggestive recording vigorously takes part.

GISELHER SCHUBERT
Paul-Hindemith-Institut
Trans. lated by Margaret M. Sherry

Die Dreigroschenoper. Bulgarian Television and Radio Mixed Choir and Symphony Orchestra; Victor Symonette, cond. Koch International Classics (3-7006-2)

I discussed some of the questions about performance practice in *Die Dreigroschenoper* in my review of the Decca/London recording [Vol. 8, No. 1], and in a subse-



quent letter, to which Stephen Hinton added his comments [Vol. 8, No. 2]. This recording raises different issues.

As to what is performed here: the text is that of the Philharmonia full score, to which has been added in three cases (Nos. 6, 13, and 15) one extra stanza, following the precedent of the original Berlin run. (In No. 13, the "Zuhälterballade," this has been achieved, unusually, by repeating the accompaniment of the *second* stanza.) Lucy's aria, which Weill never orchestrated, is performed with piano accompaniment; once again, it is inserted in Act Two (between Nos. 15 and 16), rather than in Act Three (after No. 18). The brief instrumental "Gang zum Galgen" (No. 20a) is omitted. There is no linking narration, and, other than those brief passages spoken over music, no dialogue.

Conductor Victor C. Symonette shows his respect for the composer through his commendable commitment to presenting the piece without musical transposition or "octave dropping" in the voice parts. This is especially welcome after the compromises of the Decca/London version. He has taken a careful look at orchestral detail, for instance, in using a harpsichord for the solo keyboard chords in No. 21 (fifth bar after letter E). In many numbers, such as the "Liebeslied," he shows a firm command of style. His tempos take account of performance tradition, to the advantage of a number such as the "Ballade von angenehmen Leben," where the slow metronome marking is difficult, if not impossible, to bring off. (On the other hand, the Overture goes at such a clip quarter note = 112, as against a suggested 84 or 100 that all sense of *Maestoso* vanishes.) Occasionally he slips into overstatement (the too-loud opening of the second finale) or self-consciousness of instrumental detail. A few verbal slips suggest a lack of time for retakes: Mrs. Peachum sings the wrong words in her stanza of the second finale, and the first word of "Auch du, mein Sohn!" in the "Salomon-Song" emerges as "ach." I believe Symonette makes one bad misinterpretation, by taking No. 19 ("Ruf aus der Gruft") and No. 20 ("Grabschrift") at the same tempo with virtually no pause between - a choice which shows a lack of

understanding of the very different situations of Macheath in the two numbers. This is exacerbated by the failure of the singer to convey the underlying meaning of each piece. But this brings me to the cast, the main source of my misgivings about the performance.

Any recording of *Die Dreigroschenoper* which omits dialogue (not to mention a synopsis) faces a tough challenge in trying to convince us that the characters have a life between musical numbers. I can't say that the performers here succeed all the time: there is a pervasive sense that they are far more familiar with their individual words and music than with their character's function in the action of the play. This failure to serve Brecht, paradoxically, means they end up falling short of doing justice to Weill.

The main problem, however, lies in the casting itself. Having praised Helga Dernesch and René Kollo on the Decca/London recording, it may seem odd to question the use of opera singers in this version. There, however, it was a matter of two roles (and of two powerful personalities); here it is eight out of eight, which gives an entirely different sound to the performance. Furthermore, the intervening months have brought a new perspective, and greater clarity, to the vexing matter of "singing actors" versus "acting singers."

I believe the fundamental issue to be the spiritual qualities inherent in Western operatic singing. We perceive the vibrational richness of classically trained singing as an expression of the human soul; it, in turn, connects the listener to a direct sense of transcendental reality, which is calmer and more serene, more compassionate, more impersonal (in the positive sense) than the emotional, mental, and physical struggles of our daily existence. Implicit in this experience is the knowledge that healing is always possible, for over and above even the most selfish, violent, or evil action there exists a higher plane on which such actions have no reality.

Listen to Herman Becht, the Mr. Peachum of this recording. He has a lovely voice. When, in the finale of Act Three, he calls for the singing of "the chorale of the poorest of the poor," he might be Don Fernando dispensing justice in *Fidelio*, or Hänsel and Gretel's dad drawing his pious moral ("Wenn die Not auf's höchste steigt, Gott der Herr sich gnädig uns neigt"). The tone, warm and compassionate, is filled with an unspoken certainty that unconditional love stands ready to suffuse our hearts and minds in a potentially transformational way.

What could possibly be more inappropriate to Mr. Peachum and *Die Dreigroschenoper*? Brecht's point is that Don Fernando *doesn't* arrive on schedule. The world of the piece is haunted by the *absence* of transcendental connectedness, whether to a higher power or between human beings. The char-

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acters are predators, who act only from voracious self-interest, whether what they want is money, power, sexual gratification, or revenge. True sentiment has been corrupted into self-regarding sentimentality. Mr. Peachum's last speech is grounded not in any acknowledgement of a mitigating spiritual reality, but rather in an earthbound, pessimistic vision: any redeeming compassion can be born only out of despair and a realization of the world (or at least this society) as a cold, dark, literally God-forsaken place. In such a world, Macheath can ask everyone for forgiveness, and yet not forgive *them* - a grotesque, despairing distortion of a fundamental moral principle.

So the strengths of an opera singer like Becht are not only irrelevant, but a hindrance to a convincing portrayal. This applies to almost everyone else on the recording as well: the gleeful, sadistic voyeurism of the "Moritat" gains nothing, and loses much, from the mature operatic tones of Waldemar Kmentz; Anita Herrmann's smooth singing never quite suggests Mrs. Peachum's acid mixture of moral rectitude and cynicism; Manfred Jung's Macheath fails to show us the knife concealed beneath the elegant clothing and does not capture the ferocious nihilism of his farewell. In the end, the carefully considered colors of the individual voices go for little: by and large, these performers are simply misqualified.

The most successful member of the cast is Stephanie Myszak as Polly. I think it is significant that she has performed the role in public with this conductor, and that she has experience in operetta and musical comedy. Her light, clear voice is good for the part, and she has a lively temperament which translates well to disc. The "Barbara-Song" finds her at her best. In "Seeräuberjenny," she comes across somewhat green, trying out "effects" which are not yet fully integrated and convincing. Her German is generally so good that the occasional slip becomes all the more jarring. A performance of genuine, if uneven, accomplishment.

The orchestra makes a generally good impression, accomplished but not excessively refined; but neither they nor the cast really stack up against the performers on Decca/London, frustrating as aspects of that recording may be. The sound is good, although the trombone is awfully far out in right field (I assume that his added part in No. 13 derives from some authentic source).

The booklet is a disgrace. Not one word about the plot of the work, plus the same unsatisfactory Manheim-Willeit singing version. The true disaster, however, is the layout: parallel columns of German and English do not match up for one single line of text, and by the second page are off by an entire musical number. Both versions include material in the "Moritat" which isn't performed; the English text omits two huge chunks of the third finale, and the German simply gives out before the end of No. 20. Is this incompetence, understaffing, or cynicism? Only Koch International knows. Whatever the answer, they should be ashamed to put such shoddy work on the market; Weill, Brecht, the artists on this disc, and potential listeners all deserve better.

NICHOLAS DEUTSCH
New York



Kleine Dreigroschenmusik/ Kiddush/Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12. Amor Artis Orchestra and Chamber Choir; Johannes Somary, cond.; Grayson Hirst, tenor; Yuval Waldman, violin; Ray Pellerin, organ. Newport Classics (NCD 60098).

One of the many reasons why I love Kurt Weill is his proclivity for writing melodies which jam in my head and refuse to leave. We've all got our favorites, starting with the "Moritat" (recently re-immortalized for a new generation as "Mac Tonight"), but every now and then, when we think we've heard them all, a new one jolts into our psyche: something from *Mahogony* that we never quite noticed before, or a tune from *Johnny Johnson*, or one of the chansons from the Paris years. In reviewing the recent Newport Classics CD of the *Kleine Dreigroschenoper* and Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, two pieces quite familiar to me, the last thing I expected was for yet another Weill melody to sneak up on me. But there it was in the form of a four-minute filler: the first commercial recording of the *Kiddush*.

Commissioned in 1946 by Cantor David J. Putterman for the 75th anniversary of his Park Avenue Synagogue (along with pieces by many other prominent contemporary composers), this blessing of the Sabbath wine lodged into my mind from its first measures. Against a lulling organ *ostinato* and a wordless chorus, the traditional tenor cantor states the main theme, one of those gorgeous, almost-but-not-quite-sardonic tunes typical of Weill. And then the magic: with one deftly placed harmony, it turns to *blues*. And it works. Perfectly.

Grayson Hirst, a *bel canto* specialist at New York City Opera in the 1970s, gives an ardent and lilting, if somewhat throaty, account of the Hebrew text, ably accompanied by Ray Pellerin at the organ. Unfortunately, the Amor Artis Chamber Choir is a rather scruffy lot of vocalists. It's almost

worth purchasing this disc for the *Kiddush*. Almost; but there's little else to commend this album.

With eight entries in the current Schwann catalogue, *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* would seem to be Weill's most popular work. One can still find the 1960's studio recording made by Otto Klemperer (who commissioned the work and led its world premiere in 1929) in used record shops (a "pirated" live recording, also from the 60s, is more readily available on CD). And with David Atherton's spirited 1977 reading with the London Sinfonietta coupled with the best recording to date of the Violin Concerto and the *Mahogony Songspiel* (on Deutsche Grammophon CD 423 255-2), this album certainly fills no gaps in the Weill discography, *Kiddush* excepted. Although quite competent, the Amor Artis Orchestra under the direction of Johannes Somary lights no fires with its performances of the suite.

The adequate but pedestrian performance of the Violin Concerto, with Yuval Waldman as soloist, is a bit expansive for my taste. I miss the tension and release given the piece by Atherton and Nona Liddell on the Deutsche Grammophon album. One wishes that a more interesting framework had been assembled for the recording of the *Kiddush*, perhaps some other hitherto-unrecorded pieces.

More than half of the brief liner notes are devoted to telling us who Kurt Weill is ("...one of the more extraordinary composers of the twentieth century."). However, we are told nothing about Maestro Somary, his orchestra, chorus, or soloists, nor are we given the location or date of the recordings, or any technical information other than the vague "DDD" code on the package.

Judging from the strange balances that permeate these recordings, I suspect them to have been made direct to two-track digital, the quickest and cheapest method of achieving a digital recording (each group of players and soloists are miked, but instead of recording each onto a separate track and mixing after recording, the tracks are all fed through a mixing board and roughly mixed down to two tracks as the performance is taking place, thus recording only two tracks). Unfortunately, this method serves to highlight the shortcomings of the performers, particularly the *Kiddush* chorus and the out-of-breath reed players in *Dreigroschenmusik*.

The cover art is among the most baffling I've ever encountered. It appears to be Marlene Dietrich as the Phantom of the Opera done up as the Blue Angel in a 1960s psychedelic Peter Max poster. Whatever could they have been thinking? How this cover even remotely relates to any of the three pieces of music contained therein is far, far beyond me.

LARRY L. LASH
New York

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

AUSTRIA

Vom Tod im Wald, Bastille Musik, Vienna. Ensemble Kontrapunkte, Peter Keuschnig, cond., Robert Holl, bass baritone, 4 March 1991.

BELGIUM

Die sieben Todsünden, Gent, Grand Théâtre. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, David Porcelijn, dir., 25 January 1991.

ENGLAND

Happy End, Wells, Strode Theatre. Webb Theatre Company, Lois Harbinson, dir., 6-7 November 1990.

Johnny Johnson Concert Suite, The Seven Deadly Sins, Royal Festival Hall, London. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Rhonda Kess, cond., Ute Lemper, vocalist, 26 March 1991.

Lost in the Stars, Sussex. New Sussex Opera, Keith Warner, dir., Lionel Friend, cond., 22-26 May 1991.

Mahagonny Songspiel, London. Matrix Ensemble, Robert Ziegler, dir., 7 December 1990.

The Threepenny Opera, Leeds. Opera North, 3,5, 10-12, 16-18 (Manchester) 24, 26 (Nottingham) October, 1-2 (Hull) November 1990.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Frankfurt. Frankfurter Oper, Arie Zinger, dir., Steven Sloane, cond., 14, 20-21, 25, 27, 29, 31 October, 3, 5, 14, 16 November, 3, 6, 8, 15 December 1990, guest performance in Leipzig, 15-20 January 1991.

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Freiburg. Freiburger Oper, Städtische Bühnen, Elmar Gehlen, dir., Gerhard Markson, cond., 13, 18, 27 October, 6, 10, 23, 25, 28 November, 1, 12 December 1990, 13 January, 3, 17 February, 3, 10 March 1991.

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Halle. Landestheater Halle, Henry Akina, dir., 25 January, 27 February, 3, 16 March 1991.

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Hannover. Stadttheater Hildesheim, 6 May 1991

Bastille Music, Berlin. Philharmonische Kammerkonzert, Peter Keuschnig, cond., October 1990.

Berliner Requiem, Frankfurt, Alte Oper. Ensemble Modern, Ingo Metzmacher, cond., 18-19 February, 18 March 1991.

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, Leipzig, Radio Sachsen. Radio-Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, 7 March 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Bad Hersfeld. Bad Hersfelder Festspiele, Peter Lotschak, dir., 20 June - 4 August 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Bochum. Bochumer Schauspielhaus, Frank-Patrick Steckel, dir., 3 March 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Ettlinger. Ettlinger Schloß-Festspiele, Peter Preissler, dir., Summer 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Hamburg. Guest performance by the Warsaw Theater, Jerzy Grzegorzewski, dir., September 1990.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Ludwigsburg. Ludwigsburger Schloßfestspiele, Dresdener Staatsschauspiel, Klaus-Dieter Kirst, dir., 16-25 August 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Mannheim. Ensemble der Schloßfestspiele, Peter M. Preissler, dir., 20 July 1991.

Happy End, Heilbronn. Stadttheater, Heilbronn, Klaus Wagner, dir., Nicolas Kemmer, cond., 10 January 1991.

Happy End, Konstanz. Konstanz Stadttheater, Donald Berkenhoff, dir., 12 January 1991.

Happy End, Aschaffenburg. Die Theaterreihe A, guest performance, Münchner Tournée and Theater Heilbronn, Klaus Wagner, dir., 12, 15 (Rheda-Wiedenbrück), 16 (Friedrichshafen), 18 (Kleve), 20 (Eggengelden) 22 (Rosenheim) January, 6 (Wolfsburg) 7 (Elmshorn) 20 (Weilburg) February 1991.

Knickerbocker Holiday, Ingolstadt. Stadt Theater Ingolstadt, Jürgen Voigt, dir., 15-16, 22, 29-31 December 1990, 11, 24, 25 January, 8, 10-11, 16-17 February, 3, 12-14, 19, 22 March 1991.

"Pantomime" from *Der Protagonist*, Weimar. Studio für Neue Musik, Franz-Liszt-Hochschule, Reinhard Schmiedel, dir., 6 February 1991.

Die sieben Todsünden, Berlin, Berlin Philharmonie. The Chamber Orchestra of

Europe, Michael Tilson-Thomas, cond., Karen Armstrong, soprano, 28 February 1991.

String Quartet in B minor, Kiel. Mandelring-Quartetts, Kiel Schloss, 31 October 1990.

String Quartet, Op. 8, Frankfurt. Großen Haus, Städtische Bühnen, 7 October 1990.

Symphony No. 2, Bremen. Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Bremen, Michael Luig, cond., 12-13 November 1990.

ITALY

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, Ancona. Società Philharmonia Marchigiana, 3-9 March 1991.

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Milan. Sala Verdi del Conservatorio, Gruppo Carme, Guido Guida, cond., 2 March 1991.

NEW ZEALAND

Seven Deadly Sins, Wellington, New Zealand. The Fringe Opera Company, Emily Mair, dir., 30 October - 10 November 1990.

SCOTLAND

Symphony No. 1, Aberdeen. Scottish National Orchestra, Matthias Bamert and Neil Mentel, conds., 12, 13 (Dundee), 15 (Edinburgh), 16 (Glasgow), 17 (Carlisle) February 1991.

Symphony No. 2, Aberdeen. Scottish National Orchestra, Lionel Friend, cond., 29, 30 (Edinburgh) March 1991.

SWITZERLAND

Die sieben Todsünden, Basel. Basel Sinfonietta, Mark Fitz-Gerald, dir., Serena Wey, alto, 31 January 1991.

UNITED STATES

Berliner Requiem, Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, Palo Alto, CA. Sinfonia San Francisco, Samuel Cristler, cond., 11 February 1991.

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, Cambridge, MA. Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston, Gunther Schuller, cond., 21 April 1991.

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, New York. Riverside Symphony, George Rothman, cond., 22 May 1991.

Frauentanz, Op. 10, Olympia, WA. Olympia Chamber Orchestra, Timothy Brock, cond., 16 February 1991.

Happy End, Costa Mesa, CA. South Coast Repertory, Barbara Damashek dir., Dennis Castellano, cond., 31 May-13 July 1991.

Happy End, New York, NY. Juilliard School Drama Theater, 20-23 March, 19-21 April 1991.

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Los Angeles. Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Lawrence Foster, cond., 21-23 March 1991.

Lady in the Dark, Houston, Texas. Houston High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Raymond Baron, dir., Patricia Bonnor, cond., 21-24 February, 1-3 March 1991.

Marie Galante Concert Suite, Torrance, CA. El Camino College Resident Artists, Hector G. Salazar, cond., Ann Gresham, soprano, 28 April 1991.

"Pantomime" from *The Protagonist*, Boston, MA. New England Conservatory, Michael Webster, dir., 6 December 1990.

Seven Deadly Sins, Colorado Springs, CO. Colorado Springs Symphony Orchestra, Christopher Wilkens, dir., Anne Adair, dance, Marcia Ragonetti, soprano, 18-20 October 1991.

Seven Deadly Sins, Albuquerque, NM. New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, Neal Stulberg, cond., Dominique Labelle, soprano, 9-10 May 1991.

Street Scene, Cleveland, Ohio. Cleveland Institute of Music, Andrew Foldi, dir., Carl Topilow, cond., 17, 19, 21 April 1991.

Street Scene, Rochester, NY. University of Rochester/Eastman School of Music, David Runzo, dir., Kim Kowalke, cond., 5-6 April 1991.

Symphony No. 2, Glen Ellyn, IL. New Philharmonic, Harold Bauer, cond., 25 January 1991.

Symphony No. 2, Richmond, VA. Richmond Sinfonia, Thomas Wilkins, cond., October 1990.

Vom Tod im Wald, Los Angeles, CA. University of Southern California ensembles, Leonard Stein, Larry Rachleff, conds., 11 March 1991.

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