



ARTICLES

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RECORDINGS

Concerto, violin and wind instruments, op. 12. Leonard Bernstein: Serenade for violin, string orchestra, harp, and percussion. Rodrigue Milosi, violin; Orchestre de Caen; Jean-Louis Basset, conductor. ADDA 590033. [Compact disc]

Symphony no. 1; Symphony no. 2. The Gulbenkian Orchestra; Michel Swierczewski, cond. Nimbus Records NI 5283. [Compact disc]

Symphony no. 1; Symphony no. 2. Staatsphilharmonie Krakau; Roland Bader, cond. Koch International 311 147. [Compact disc]

The Young Gods Play Kurt Weill. Play It Again Sam Records BIAS 188. [Compact disc]

COMPACT DISC REISSUES

The Berlin Project: Kurt Weill, Max von Schillings, Franz Schreker. Vox Box CDX 5043.

Includes: *Suite from "The Threepenny Opera"*, Music for Westchester Symphony Orchestra; Siegfried Landau, conductor. *Quodlibet, op. 9*, Westphalian Symphony Orchestra, Recklinghausen; Siegfried Landau, conductor. *Mahagonny Songspiel*, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra; Lukas Foss, conductor. [Misabeled as "Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny"] *Concerto for violin and wind orchestra, op. 12*, Susanne Lautenbacher, violin; Detmold Wind Ensemble; Jost Michaels, conductor.

Lost in the Stars. Original Cast Recording. MCA Classics MCAD-10302.

Tryout: A Series of Private Rehearsal Recordings of Actual Performances by Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin. DRG 904. [Reissue of Heritage LP H-0051.]

The Young Otto Klemperer. The Berlin State Opera Orchestra. Koch International 3-7053-2 HI. [Includes nos. 2, 4, 5a, and 6 of *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*.]



Bertolt Brecht. Briefe an Marianne Zoff und Hanne Hiob. Herausgegeben von Hanne Hiob. Redaktion und Anmerkungen von Günter Glaeser. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990.

The letters in this collection were mostly written between 1920 and 1927, when Brecht was a young man with elevated literary aspirations. It was a period of great creativity, as he wrote unforgettable ballads and poems (later to be collected in the *Hauspostille*), as well as the plays *Im Dickicht der Städte*, *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England*, and *Mann ist Mann*. It was also the time of his first stage productions (*Trommeln in der Nacht*, Munich, 1922; *Baal*, Leipzig, 1923; *Im Dickicht der Städte*, Munich, 1923; *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England*, Munich 1924; *Mann ist Mann*, Darmstadt, 1926), and of his first cooperation with Kurt Weill for the production of *Mahagonny Songspiel*, performed at the 1927 Baden-Baden Music Festival.

During these early years, Brecht ventured from the relatively sheltered life of his Augsburg boyhood home to the hardships of having to make a living in the big cities, Munich and Berlin. He needed to rely on influential friends, not only to provide occasional shelter, as Frank Warschauer did in Berlin, but to help him gain access to theater and film (Lion Feuchtwanger in Munich, Arnolt Bronnen in Berlin). He spent years trying to establish himself in the film industry, which he saw as a quick way to big money, but instead had to settle for more modest forms of income from paid positions at theaters in Munich (Kammerspiele, 1922-23), and Berlin (Deutsches Theater, 1924-25). He also derived some income from contracts with publishing houses (Drei-Masken published *Trommeln in der Nacht* in 1922, Kiepenheuer *Baal*, 1922, *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England*, 1924), reaching some degree of financial stability when he signed with Ullstein in 1925.

The letters to Marianne Zoff were released after her death by her daughter Hanne Hiob and represent the first

uncensored collection of Brecht letters. The earlier *Briefe* (Suhrkamp 1981; English *Letters*, translated by Ralph Manheim, Methuen 1990) omitted those which could violate the privacy of certain individuals. The biggest drawback of both the earlier edition and this one is that they are unilateral, focusing on Brecht's letters while omitting those of his correspondents. It would have helped, for example, to have read Marianne Zoff's letters to better understand what Brecht refers to, especially in those instances where he calls her letters "depressing" (No. 9, 19, 55), "bitter" (No. 74), "cold" (No. 55), "unreasonable and unfriendly" (No. 90), "sloppy, unreflective, plaintive," only written when she needed money (No. 93), "full of ironies and hidden reproaches" (No. 109), and "excessive" (No. 113). The four inserted texts by Marianne Zoff do not provide sufficient background. Written at lengthy intervals, they range in tone from ironic distance (a statement from around 1921, lamenting Brecht's disregard for personal hygiene: "Bertolt Brecht does not wash"), to bitterness and desperation (a very touching letter to Paula Banholzer, written after the birth of Hanne, and another text, possibly a diary entry from around 1927), ending with a friendly and pleasant letter to him in exile. These texts do, however, suggest that while Zoff may have exhibited some distance and irony in her earlier dealings with Brecht, there was genuine pain when she discovered his lack of loyalty toward her — his legal wife — and toward his child.

When Brecht met Marianne Zoff in 1918, she was an accomplished singer and almost five years his senior. He needed to be very charming to win her over. Therefore, his initial letters to her were passionate and seductive, usually ending with a declaration of love. Their tone was impatient, full of expectation and excitement (Zoff at that time was still seeing O.C. Recht, a stubborn suitor who was bestowing generous gifts on her). His letters took on more urgency during the time he wrote from Berlin, where he must have felt quite out of place. He told Marianne he hated the "Abortwandvisagen" ["faces like outhouse walls"] (a favorite term of his in those days) of people around him, said he was bored, and emphasized how much he missed being physically close to her. One cannot help but feel that Zoff at that time represented maternal warmth and nurturing for the young poet. What is only hinted at is the fact that all along he was seeing other women, and that he had continued his relationship with Paula Banholzer, "Bi" (who had born him a first son, Frank, as early as 1919), promising to marry her eventually (there are occasional apologies and denials).

The tone of Brecht's letters changes in the spring of 1922 (earlier in the year, Marianne had found his letters to Bi and was understandably shaken). In the summer, Zoff becomes pregnant a second time (her first pregnancy was aborted in 1921). In Munich, she

takes care of Frank for a time, while Brecht continues to work on his plays in Augsburg. His letters now are briefer, while also expressing a genuine concern for Marianne and the unborn child, whom he calls "Hannepeter." In November of that year, the two marry, and Hanne is born in March of 1923. Brecht is now spending more time in Berlin where he soon meets Helene Weigel, who eventually will bear him another son (Stefan, born November 1924). Brecht's correspondence with Marianne Zoff dwindles (to a total of eight letters in 1923 and 1924). At one time he declares his readiness for a divorce (No. 79, October 1923). In the fall of 1924, Brecht moves to Berlin. In February of 1925, he assures his wife: "I have no woman beside you and will not have one" (No. 89). He urges Marianne to write or call, not without giving due notice, however (obviously to avoid being caught with Weigel). Later in the spring, he tries to reassure her: "It is of course untrue what you have found out, and wrong is what you write about it. I have never gotten used to another child but Hanne, and I will never get used to another one, never!!! As I have told you always, *I cannot give her up*, there would be terrible fights, *I cannot give you up either!* You also err about my position toward Weigel, I am not on good terms with her, and whatever you do, she will never be my wife" (No. 95).

The letters become more frequent in the summer of 1925. Marianne was pregnant again, yet was expected to perform in Münster during the following season. The most shocking pieces in the collection are those in which Brecht advises her on how to induce an abortion, actually sending her ten quinine pills with instructions on how to take them: "It is possible that your ears will ring/ If it's not too bad, continue/ You have to try it, by all means" (No. 104).

The letters which follow are remarkably lacking in affection. Brecht complains of Marianne's financial woes (she and Hanne are now in Münster), promises to come and see her productions, apologizes for not showing up. In February of 1926 (No. 123) he loses his composure: "I am completely beside myself." He has learned that Marianne has befriended Theo Lingen, which he sees as a "crime" of terrifying dimensions. Threatening to "move heaven and earth in order to get custody of the child," he ends with the following curse: "Perhaps you think I cannot harm you, but I vow before Hanne that you will not be able to do one more step without me bringing misery and shame on you, and you will never be happy again, and surely you will fall ill, *if you don't move the child immediately from Münster.*" His rage continues until Marianne takes the child to her parents near Vienna. In the meantime, he tells her that he has started divorce proceedings. The final letters are attempts at calming her down, most probably in order to obtain a

favorable divorce settlement. After that, there is only one additional letter addressed to both Marianne and Hanne, written at the end of the war from his exile in Santa Monica, California. The collection concludes with six letters to Hanne, written between 1946 and 1948.

What makes the reading of the letters to Marianne Zoff fascinating is that they reveal astonishing aspects of Brecht's personality which had never surfaced before with such clarity. They tell of the fervor with which he courted the accomplished singer, of his physical attraction to her, and of his great need to control her. Much of the passion in the early letters stems from the challenge he saw in tearing her away from O.C. Recht. Once he succeeded, his interest in Marianne faded. At the time she was married to him, his attention shifted elsewhere. He did, however, show much concern for the unborn child, and later on became a very proud father, a surprising trait, since he had not cared nearly as much about Frank Banholzer. What counted most, obviously, was that Hanne was his first *legitimate* child, the one who bore his name. It is in this context that we can understand his rage. The prospect of losing control over his child tormented Brecht. He treated his wife and child as property, which he felt compelled to defend from others, thus behaving like an old-fashioned family patriarch. Seen in this light, Brecht was surprisingly bourgeois, an image which significantly differs from the previous one of the young Brecht as anti-bourgeois and anarchistic.

The explanatory notes and comments by Günter Glaeser, who also edited *Briefe*, are useful. Should this volume ever be translated into English, I would, however, recommend that the comments be more accessible. It would help to have one overall introduction as opposed to having periodic commentary about certain groups of letters. Finally, it is to be hoped that we will eventually have access to all of Brecht's correspondence, including both those letters which are currently withheld and those addressed to him.

RENATE FISCHETTI
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Real Life Drama: The Group Theatre and America, 1931-1940. By Wendy Smith. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.

In 1925 a quiet young man named Harold Clurman began talking with friends about the state of American theater. After work each night he and Lee Strasberg, a novice actor who had recently directed his first play, bemoaned the fact that Broadway was controlled by people who had little or no interest in theater as an art. Before long, they were joined by Cheryl Crawford, an assistant stage manager with the Theatre Guild, and all three agreed that things had to change.

Wendy Smith, in her lively investigation of the Group Theatre, *Real Life Drama*, chronicles what happened next. Along the way she not only recounts a fascinating era in American cultural history but lays out in bold relief the issues that still map the terrain of American theater.

Clurman, Strasberg, and Crawford talked for five years before gathering together a group of some thirty actors and setting out on their difficult journey. Smith writes, "The Group defined what serious theater must be: a permanent company dedicated to presenting plays that revealed in the deepest, most complex way the unshakable connection between theater and real life." For The Group, living through the Depression, this meant producing plays that were portraits of people on the edge, explorations of individuals and families struggling with despair and striving to keep hope alive. It meant presenting works which admitted that the world was horribly unjust and which proclaimed that something could be done about it. It meant finding plays that presented not caricatures of human beings — as were usually seen on Broadway — but real people. And, because most Broadway audiences were not interested in seeing such serious fare, it meant developing a new audience which, though it might not be able to pay top dollar, would be eager to see theater that related to real life.

Such plays also required the development of a new acting style, and Smith demonstrates how Lee Strasberg was the right man at the right time to take on such a daunting task. He based his ideas on teachings of the Russian director Constantine Stanislavsky, but modified them to create what he thought would achieve more truthful, emotional performances. He demanded that his actors be utterly honest on stage and relinquish the tricks they had used to suggest rather than experience real emotion. As Smith describes it, his first intensive summer with the group (in 1931) and his early productions with them were enlightening experiences for the actors and, ultimately, for the audiences. But she also takes special care to describe Strasberg's

weaknesses: he could be terribly harsh on actors, and as time went on and more of Stanislavsky's teachings became known, he dug deeper into his own conception of acting as emotion rather than consider a wider range of possibilities. Eventually, he left The Group and attained fame as Director of the Actors' Studio.

Despite (or perhaps because of) these ups and downs, the Group Theatre's primary legacy has probably been its redefinition of good acting. Master teachers such as Stella Adler, Bobby Lewis, Sanford Meisner, and, of course, Strasberg and Clurman have set the agenda for most American actors, one which remains in effect today. They transformed not only actor training but the way performers saw themselves: no longer were they freelancers in the entertainment business, they were artists.

Real Life Drama is about many things, but it is at its best when it presents anew the idealism of Clurman, Strasberg, and others. In part this is because, for all the changes that have occurred in the American theater in the last half century, many of the conditions encountered by The Group still prevail. America still has pitifully few permanent theater companies, and the Broadway stage remains largely paralyzed by fear of the critics. Now, as then, a play on Broadway must be a smash hit to survive, and a work that is good but not perfect can look forward to a quick closing notice. Despite unions, film, and television, actors remain itinerant retailers forced to sell themselves to the highest (but usually the only) bidder. And, just as Clurman gradually came to compromise his vision to keep his theater afloat, so producers everywhere continue to mouth fine words while presenting plays they do not really believe in to audiences who do not really want to be challenged.

Wendy Smith's story is not just about art. It is about people. The Group Theatre represented a collection of talented young men and women full of needs and fears, delicate sensibilities, and high drama. They were — how else to put it? — theatrical. They fell in love, divorced, departed, and returned home like prodigal children. The book charts all their trials, yet never falls to the level of gossip: it keeps a focus on the work of The Group and on the way even the personal difficulties of its members informed and even enriched that work.

Real Life Drama contains a brief but excellent section on *Johnny Johnson*, Kurt Weill's 1936 musical collaboration with Paul Green. While there is little information about Weill himself and not much about the play, there is a careful examination of how the production focused the problems of The Group and suggested its eventual demise.

If the book has a drawback it is that it contains too much — too many bits of minutia which many readers will want to skim. But this may be inevitable in a book with a

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cast of characters that numbers in the dozens. Many are fascinating people, worthy subjects for other individual studies. And as Smith weaves their stories together, her details seem finally to suggest something one would not expect: the Group becomes a single being, exploding into life like a child, full of innocence and enthusiasm, growing unpredictable as it encounters realities, learning from painful experience, and finally disintegrating as life saps its energy. Its story is indeed a real life drama, and Wendy Smith tells it with authority and affection.

ALAN MOKLER MACVEY
University of Iowa



Tondokumente der Kleinkunst und ihre Interpreten 1898-1945. Edited by Berthold Leimbach. Göttingen: Leimbach, 1991. Unpag., ca. 1400 pp.

Discographie der deutschen Kleinkunst. Band 1. By Manfred Weihermüller. Berlin: Lotz, 1991. 281 pp.

These recent discographies will prove useful tools for researchers of German entertainment, theater, and film. Both catalog 78 rpm recordings which were made until the end of the Second World War. Whereas the first is broader in scope, the second is more detailed, and together, these volumes are an important contribution to the historical sources on German popular music and cabaret.

Leimbach's *Tondokumente der Kleinkunst* contains an alphabetical listing of over 500 artists, all of whom performed on stage and made recordings prior to 1945. Leimbach uses the term *Kleinkunst* as broadly as possible to include not only cabaret performers, but also actors and actresses, humorists, revue stars, music hall singers, and vocal ensembles. Most are German-speaking, such as Trude Hesterberg, Paul Graetz, Robert Koppel, or Lale Andersen, as well as a large number of little-known regional humorists and variety theater singers from Germany and Austria. Yet the catalog also features selected international stars such as Piaf, Baker, Rossi, Astaire, and the Revellers. Not listed are purely classical and oper-

atic singers, although some operetta stars are to be found. Since the qualification for inclusion is live performance on stage and film, stars such as Willy Fritsch and Lilian Harvery are not listed, although figures like Hans Albers and Zarah Leander are.

For each performer, Leimbach offers a short biography with photo and a list of all known recordings up to 1945, including those titles with only incomplete information. Record titles are given with both matrix and order numbers. Issue dates can for the most part be verified in the chronological table at the front, but it should be noted that despite the book's title, quite a few recordings cited here were made after 1945, such as Kate Kühl's recordings for *Lied der Zeit* in the former German Democratic Republic, or a number of chansons recorded for Deutsche Grammophon by Hesterberg and others — therefore caution is warranted! Although Leimbach has uncovered a great deal of unknown biographical information on the artists, there are also some serious factual errors; for example, Frank Günther is listed as Günther Frank, and Klaus Günther Neumann's records are included among those of Günter Neumann. And surely the variety theater humorist Georg Kaiser is not identical to the famed expressionist dramatist whose biography Leimbach offers.

Weihermüller's discography, the first of a series of volumes (although it is not revealed how many are planned), contains information on fifty cabaret, film, and theater performers, including the most renowned stars such as Marlene Dietrich, Willy Fritsch, Fritz Massary, Otto Reutter, and Claire Waldoff. Though it offers a smaller selection of performers and lacks the biographies and photographs of Leimbach's work, this book has more systematic entries, including important data on recording dates and locations, accompanists, and the titles of the revues, operettas, or films from which the songs are taken. Where possible, Weihermüller also indicates when recordings were first released. His information on composers and authors is more complete than that of Leimbach's, who, as noted, occasionally reverses author and composer names, and Weihermüller generally provides full names instead of initials or a last name alone. Whereas Leimbach lists titles alphabetically, Weihermüller arranges them chronologically and by label, which offers a good view of the development of an individual performer's work. He also includes multiple takes, unreleased titles, and test pressings.

Unfortunately, neither volume has an index of song titles or composers' and authors' names, which greatly restricts their usefulness. Nor do they indicate which recordings survive in public and private archives, or which have been re-released; as a result, researchers will have great difficulty finding the recordings themselves.

Both authors admit to incomplete information and unreliable sources. Researchers

looking for definitive answers should be sure to consult both volumes, because each contains listings not found in the other. Nonetheless, after the wartime loss of recording firm logs and the recordings themselves, many of which had already been destroyed by the Nazis, the compilation of this information is admirable, despite all the shortcomings.

The discographies are admittedly high-priced but definitely something reference libraries, archives, and specialists should own. *Tondokumente der Kleinkunst* is privately published by the author and is available for DM280 from Berthold Leimbach, Nikolausberger Weg 84, W-3400 Göttingen, Germany. Weihermüller's volume costs DM100 hardcover, DM80 paperback, and can be ordered from Birgit Lotz Verlag, Jean Paul Str. 6, W-5300 Bonn 2.

ALAN LAREAU
Bemidji, Minnesota

Joyless Streets. By Patrice Petro. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. 247 pp.

Whoever has felt the visual fascination of G.W. Pabst's 1931 film adaptation of *Die Dreigroschenoper* will find this book worth more than a glance. Taking her title from Pabst's 1926 film melodrama, *Die freudlose Gasse*, Petro explores the relationship of the spectator to the depiction of women in the German silent film tradition of the Weimar era. Her deconstructive framework relies upon Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* and upon the problematics of "the gaze" as presented by Walter Benjamin in his Baudelaire studies, by Siegfried Kracauer in his early essays as well as in his famous book on Weimar film, *From Caligari to Hitler*, and most notably by the Freudian revisionist Jacques Lacan.

Given the pervasive presence of the last of these four thinkers in Petro's text, one might be more inclined to think of the path her analysis takes as a "freudvolle Gasse," but her feminist perspective on Freudian theory more than tempers that slant. It revises our evaluation of German silent film melodrama by revealing the conscious appeal of such a genre — exemplified in roles played by such greats as Louise Brooks, Asta Nielsen and Greta Garbo — to a *female* spectator who is defined in socio-political terms as historically different from the male spectator. In doing so, the author evokes a feminist critique of Freud and stretches the limits of Kracauer's thesis about authority in his film book, a thesis dependent on a definition of the spectator as *male*.

In contrast to the familiar imbroglio about the "Threepenny Trial" with all its attempts to interpret Pabst's aesthetic and political relationship to Brecht's epic theory, Petro's study offers us a more topical and historical path towards an appreciation of Pabst's film.

In the context of Pabst's development one realizes that the visual material of his *Threepenny* film is indebted to the cinematic tradition of melodrama as he has used it in earlier works. Undoubtedly Pabst has made a leap from straight melodrama to a satire of that genre by standing on the shoulders of Brecht and Weill, but in a manner that still hinges upon a melodramatic notion of the "gaze" and in particular upon the relation of Polly and Jenny, the two primary female characters, to the sexually differentiated spectator.

Although many of the situations in the film have stock melodramatic qualities, the action's farcical pace often drains every potentially melodramatic scene of the signifying excesses the spectator might be inclined to endow it with. Petro's emphasis upon the spectator sheds light, however, upon Pabst's persistently melodramatic awareness of the spectator in his cinematographic technique. In a film in which the complex texture of looking is still so indebted to the silent film, such scenes are especially striking as Polly's rendition of the "Barbara Song" before the startled faces of Macheath's gang at the wedding, or Lenya's singing of the "Seeräuberjenny" song for Macheath alone, just before he flees the brothel and is captured and sent to jail. These scenes are, in a Brechtian sense, rehearsals by the two actors before their fellow actors of songs intended for the film's future spectators. But if we resist deconstructing the male-female dichotomy, as Petro would do, then one can argue that in depicting male reactions to the songs, Pabst also mocks those reactions, thereby maneuvering Polly and Jenny into more ironic positions theatrically, positions with implicit appeal to the *female* spectator.

The *female* spectator is likely to have found this shift liberating, after the many films in which women had to bear the burden of mystery and suffering, including in Pabst's own earlier films. Polly's song is a tale of submission, but her stance foreshadows the moment when she takes control of Macheath's gang. The apocalyptic message of the long-suffering chambermaid in Jenny's song seductively foreshadows both her betrayal of Macheath to the police and her magnanimous assistance in his escape from jail afterwards. Such examples of women in control reverse tradition as moments of unabashed wish fulfillment, images of the freer economic and sexual roles women were experimenting with in the Weimar years. To the female spectator such material is also a reminder of the social privileges of the successful actress which both Carola Neher and Lotte Lenya enjoyed. It helps to explain the complex aura, at once vulnerable and powerful, that came to surround the figure of Lenya in her American years as a symbol of Weimar culture.

PEGGY MEYER SHERRY
Kurt Weill Foundation for Music

Inventing Champagne: The Worlds of Lerner and Loewe. By Gene Lees. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990. 350p.

In his latest book, Gene Lees provides an overview of the artistic collaboration between Alan Jay Lerner and Fritz Loewe. Although his study arises from an enthusiastic and genuine affection for his subjects and the stage works they produced for Broadway, Lees's critical judgment is often clouded by a dogged advocacy of their contributions, in particular, his opinion of the overwhelming achievement represented by *My Fair Lady*. ("There are remarkable felicities in his [Lerner's] work, and no musical up to that time had the sustained brilliant virtuosity of lyric-writing that Lerner achieved in *My Fair Lady*. He [Lerner] would never give Broadway a show that good again. But nobody else would either.") In the face of developing musicohistorical critical inquiry into Broadway, many of Lees's assertions seem less than compelling and, at times, grossly overstated.

The biography holds some interest for readers interested in Weill and his collaboration with Lerner that resulted in *Love Life*. In a text devoted to the two L's (Lerner and Loewe), Lees devotes not an inconsiderable amount of space to *Love Life*, a description of its genesis and production. Lees's appraisal, a blunt dismissal of the work, stems from a surprising misreading of the script. He interprets *Love Life*'s premise as a naive and insolvent commendation of romantic love, one that posited the pre-Industrial Revolution era as affording the ideal possibility for an unadulterated love life. Clearly, he reads the show's book at face value, missing its acid critique of modern life and its values, particularly in socioeconomic terms, and, notably, the stresses wrought on the institution of marriage. This is surprising given Lees's inclusion of Lerner's remark about his reluctance to take up a revision of *Love Life* (as well as

Lees's mostly sensitive discussion of the psychological underpinnings of Lerner's numerous marriages). "I can't ever allow *Love Life* to be revived," declared Lerner. "Why?" responded an enthusiast of the work. "Because I have turned into everything I satirized in that show." (Lerner later agreed to make revisions to *Love Life* for a revival planned by the American Theater Festival; however, he died before beginning work on the project.)

Lees eschews the use of documentation or explanatory notes in a biography that is admittedly intended for a popular audience. While this makes for quick reading, it diminishes the authority of the narrative (with reference to Weill, the book contains some factual errors, e.g., Weill was born in Dessau, not Berlin) and the deficiency of dates connecting certain events, persons, and reportage proves frustrating, raising certain unanswered—and perhaps unanswerable—questions. Lees does consider the various writings by and about Lerner and also draws from interviews with other collaborators, performers, professional associates, friends, and family, as well as newspapers and secondary sources.

Inventing Champagne does offer some interesting details linking various artistic circles on Broadway. Lees recounts the story of Weill suggesting to Lerner that he consider making an English-language adaptation of *Die Dreigroschenoper*. In response to Lerner's question as to who would be suitable for the role of Mack the Knife, Weill recommended Rex Harrison. Lerner was surprised by the suggestion and asked how he knew Harrison could sing, to which Weill supposedly responded, "I just know. He sings well enough for that." Lerner relayed Weill's remark to Loewe, filed away the idea, and, some years later, approached Harrison about the role of Henry Higgins for a musical version of *Pygmalion*.

MARIO R. MERCADO
Kurt Weill Foundation for Music



Tenpin (Dirk Schmidt) and a sidekick (M. Flückiger) in a scene from *Knickerbocker Holiday* at the Stadttheater Ingolstadt.

PERFORMANCES

Knickerbocker Holiday, Ingolstadt. Stadttheater 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.

As chance would have it, the Stadttheater in Bavarian Ingolstadt, one of Germany's smaller stages, chose to make *Knickerbocker Holiday* a part of its 1990-91 season's offerings, one year after the Weill anniversary of 1990 during which Weill's American stage works had been mentioned often in Germany but seldom performed. The happy, if unintended, result of this production? Strong evidence of the improved "performability" of the American Weill in Germany!

The most striking characteristic about this musical is the subtle alternation between the comic and the serious. While the Stadttheater in Münster presented *Knickerbocker Holiday* in 1989 as a slightly dusty period piece, Ingolstadt's production was entertaining and serious at one and the same time, sometimes even in dead earnest. The development of political events in Europe and in the Middle East during the last two years has sharpened our awareness about the problems of dictatorship, corruption, and illegal weapons trading. Given the circumstances, *Knickerbocker Holiday* had no need of superficial touches to make it seem current, and director Kay Metzger presented it from beginning to end in its original form, except the finale of the first act which gradually developed into a big Nazi party meeting. Here, the new governor revealed himself to be a dictator; a parallel could be drawn from Stuyvesant to the Adolf Hitler of 1933, a chancellor who came to power in legal fashion, but whose resolve as well as methods were widely underestimated.

Unlike the 1989 Münster production, the figure of Washington Irving was retained in Ingolstadt; a German audience thereby had the opportunity to consider how the epic theater developed by Brecht and Weill evolved. When the "narrator-author" reflects on the possibilities of writing a piece which is both good and entertaining, without limiting the potential box office, one can almost hear the composer himself commenting, and perhaps with more than a little irony, on his efforts to get a foothold on Broadway. And when Irving intervenes at the end of the piece and is able to prevent Governor Stuyvesant from allowing a massacre among the citizens of New Amsterdam by reminding him of his reputation in the eyes of posterity, German audiences were inevitably reminded of the events in the fall of 1989 in East Germany, when the peaceful revolution of the populace came within a hair's breadth of ending with a "Chinese solution."

The ending of the piece is quite a challenge for any director; it was not completely

convincing in this production. The script calls for a politically-motivated resurrection of the "deceased" Tenpin: the newly fallen and mourned character comes back to life to testify against the governor's illegal weapons trading. Such a finale borders on the grotesque anyway, but with many lines of the text cut, it just seemed absurd.

Otherwise, Metzger and his team stuck to the original book faithfully. Only number 18, Stuyvesant's song "Sitting in Jail" was cut. They treated the piece as what it is: not as a fully characteristic American musical, but as an extraordinarily interesting species along the evolutionary path of the musical, which does not deny its origins in theater, operetta, and opera (an allusion to *Tristan* included). Set designer Konrad Kulke and costume designer Günter Kappel produced a suitable Dutch atmosphere with appropriate designs, lighting, and costumes. Only the scenic elements for the setting of the song "How can you tell an American?" hinted at a Broadway milieu. The set, which was neither too spare nor too lavish, made rapid scene changes possible but did not allow the spectator a complete view of the stage.

The orchestra under the direction of Jürgen Voigt played with sovereign skill and great feeling for the stylistic idiosyncrasies of Weill's highly differentiated score, if at times too loudly. Unfortunately, in spite of amplification, the chorus was not always intelligible, especially regrettable with the important text, "To war, to war, we don't know what we are fighting for." Hence, one failed to appreciate many of the lyrics in the convincingly updated translation by Ursula Friedl and Jürgen Voigt.

Evidently the actors and amateurs who formed the chorus had little experience in singing and moving at the same time. But if the choreography of Franz Hujer suffered at times from flawed execution, his style demonstrated a welcome lack of artifice. The whole production team proved itself capable of the greatest sensitivity and attention to detail — right down to the handsomely designed program.

The actors with comic roles shared a significant part of the evening's success. To the delight of the audience Wolfgang Krebs, Karlheinz Habelt, Sascha Rönisch, Reich Schaffner and Martin Hofer proved the very embodiment of the Council members of New Amsterdam, and without ever falling into a caricature, despite their Dutch accents. Thomas Krause played the youthful rebel and grass-roots American Brom Broek with just the right touch; the same was true for Dirk Schmidt as Tenpin, Claudia Losch and Eberhard May as the couple who oversee the prison, and Klaus Nierhoff as narrator-author Washington Irving. One of the few unconvincing touches was the change in gender occasioned by the casting of a woman in the role of General Poffenburgh; Ellen Brugger had to attempt a character-

ization for a role that had been drastically cut as a result of the transformation.

The most difficult roles must be those of Governor Stuyvesant and the young Tina Tienhoven. Ralf Novak lent a well-differentiated profile to the ambivalent character of the governor. The tyrannical, crusty old soldier occasionally showed glimpses of a more sympathetic side, e.g., when he entered the battle with the Indians despite his artificial leg, or when he played down Tina's compromising visit to the imprisoned Brom and also, of course, when he wooed Tina in his own rough manner with the "September Song." To Claudia Wauschke as Tina, alternating with Regine Leonhardt, goes the credit for the most memorable scene of the evening; Ms. Wauschke brought special finesse to the scene in which Tina first withdraws but then briefly falls under the spell of the governor's charm. Claudia Wauschke's face and gestures spoke tellingly of the conflict between her love for Brom and her admiration for Stuyvesant. Her winning interpretation was representative of the most successful features of the Ingolstadt production: the merging of a love story with a political *Lehrstück*.

ANDREAS HAUFF

Mainz

Translated by Peggy Meyer Sherry

Die Dreigroschenoper, Vienna. Volkstheater, Piet Drescher, dir., Alexander Drcar, cond., 20 March, 2-3, 11-14, 16, 19-21, 25, 27-28 April, 2-4 7-8 May 1991.

Erected in 1889, the Vienna Volkstheater, a monumental structure which sits at a rakish angle aside a major intersection just beyond Vienna's Ringstrasse, is one of the largest theaters for spoken drama in the German-speaking world. In a city of monumental cultural institutions, however, the Volkstheater is something of an anomaly. It is not state-run but largely supported by unions, worker's organizations, and private funding, and cultivates an image of decidedly unostentatious egalitarianism. It is a theater with only a few private boxes, its ticket prices are reasonable, its friendly ushers do not wear uniforms, its buffet is modest, and its programs are free (though informative and moderately priced booklets of work-related documents are also available). What is more, its current director, Emmy Werner, is a woman. The Volkstheater repertoire is composed of a balance of classics, folk plays (Raimund and Nestroy are particular favorites), socially conscious drama, and new works. In this mix *Die Dreigroschenoper* had long enjoyed a place of honor. Of the seven productions the work has received in Vienna over the years, the Volkstheater has produced four, including shared honors (with the Raimundtheater) for the first performance there in 1929. Since the war the Volkstheater

has mounted new productions of the work at roughly twenty-year intervals: 1951-52, 1970-71, and now during the past 1990-91 season (premiere: 20 March 1991).

For a generation schooled on the *Godfather* and titillated by Madonna, German stage director Piet Drescher has shown remarkable circumspection, but no shortage of inventiveness. The clever sets by Rumanian Helmut Stürmer suggest a 1920s warehouse with 90s yuppie accents. Sheets of corrugated steel, imposing beams, and blinds create a variety of spaces and lend a slightly surreal aura to the proceedings. One particularly effective touch was placing a bed for Polly and Macheath within a giant cage that could be hoisted above the stage, thus permitting a lively scenic counterpoint. The same cage brought down to earth later serves as Tiger Brown's jail.

Outstanding among an energetic cast made up of Volkstheater regulars, young free-lance professionals, and a few ringers from Austrian television were the engaging Polly of Gabriele Schuchter and Erwin Ebenbauer and Brigitte Neumeister as Mr. and Mrs. Peachum. Though the singing was generally competent, Schuchter, a trained musician, was exceptional and in the "Barbara Song" even accompanied herself on the harpsichord. By contrast, Judith Keller was vocally no match as Lucy, and her uncomfortably strained performance of "Lucy's Aria," which opened the third act after the single intermission, might as well have been cut. Veteran Georg Trenkwitz was a Macheath characterized less by good looks and debonair charm than the magnetic vitality of the con artist with years of self-indulgent dissipation under his belt. His scenes with Tiger Brown (Adolf Lukan) were particularly rich with the flavor of rum-soaked camaraderie. The only truly jarring bit of casting was the crude and incoherent Jenny of Vera Borek, who wandered about as if in a drunken stupor.

Unfortunately, Drescher appears to have been tempted by the size of the theater to clutter the stage with chorus members and extras. The verses of the "Moritat," for instance, were given successive arrangements (including as a waltz with vocal backup) accompanied by a parade of extraneous characters (such as a chorus line of nuns) who turned out to have no relationship to the subsequent action. Other musical liberties included a choral part for the "Kanonensong" and interpolated instrumental arrangements of the "Moritat," the "Zuhälterballade," and the "Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit des menschlichen Strebens." Though there were no major musical cuts, "Seeräuber-Jenny" was moved to the beginning of Act II, where it was sung by Polly (its place in Act I was taken by the "Barbara Song"), and the second Finale was given to Jenny instead of Mrs. Peachum (who was allowed to sing a verse of the

"Ballade der sexuellen Hörigkeit" in Act III). Conductor Alexander Dröcar led his orchestra competently, if at times too self-effacingly.

Though it is impossible to compare the current Volkstheater production with its predecessors, it is clear from both the critical response and sold-out performance statistics throughout the spring that *The Threepenny Opera* has lost none of its appeal for Viennese audiences — and that the Volkstheater continues to provide those audiences with a nourishing supplement to their theatrical diet.

CHRISTOPHER HAILEY
Occidental College



Gabriele Schuchter as Polly and Georg Trenkwitz as Macheath share a little romance in *Die Dreigroschenoper* at the Vienna Volkstheater. Photo: Irmgard Wagner-Strauß.

The Threepenny Opera, Théâtre Jean Vilar de Suresnes (Paris). L'Opéra éclaté (Saint Céré), March-April 1991.

Performances of *L'Opéra de quat'sous* in France, particularly when given in French, seem to be a risky venture. The Châtelet's super-production five years ago, directed by Giorgio Strehler and proclaimed throughout the media with a fanfare of publicity, stands as a glaring reminder. The mountain gave birth to a mouse. The work, which has proved increasingly difficult to stage successfully because of certain lengthy passages and an ideological content that is often felt to be obsolete, does not adapt well to a large theater. The standard French translation by Jean-Claude Hémery only makes matters worse by destroying the effect of the strongest passages of Brecht's play (for example, the marriage scene).

Against this background, the Olivier Desbordes production for Opera éclaté, a company in St. Céré, Périgord that has toured throughout France, could have been entirely successful if not for some faulty

casting. The dimensions of the stage were ideal at the renovated Jean Vilar Théâtre in Suresnes near Paris (one of the centers of the avant garde after the war) and recalled the beautiful, intimate version done at the Théâtre Présent (Porte de Pantin) about ten years ago. Olivier Desbordes set the work in a 1930s ambience reminiscent of *Pépé le Moko* (a 1937 French film directed by Julien Duvivier, starring Jean Gabin), an African port with muggy brothels and a motley population, where misery rubs shoulders with indulgent luxury. The scenery depicted an underground cabaret inhabited by soldiers and sailors, and the producer had Jenny (played by Sapho) appear as a film star preparing for an audition.

The high musical quality of the production struck the listener immediately. All the actors had solid operatic experience, and they declaimed the songs perfectly, for the most part in German. This can be the only truly satisfying solution to producing *Die Dreigroschenoper* in France, even though the spectator is still left with a sense of frustration because of the lack of textual content and contrast. (One should perhaps project the French text on a screen or leave the lights on in the theater, as done in Germany, in order to allow the spectators to follow the text in French.) In the Châtelet production the songs were sung in a disastrous translation by Strehler and Myriam Tanant. Here the effect of operatic parody (chorus and messenger's recitative) in the third finale was destroyed completely when the text was first recited in French. Consequently, the ending fell flat.

The casting of the female roles was outstanding, especially that of Agnès Host (Mrs. Peachum), whose vocal presence and jeering irony seemed especially well-suited to the framework of the production. The same can be said for Francesca Congiu (Polly) and her beautiful soprano voice. Also notable was Frédérique Wolf-Michaels's Lucy, which was very "bourgeoise de Neuilly." Sapho stood out more for her dramatic stage presence, with a voice somewhere between Milva and Greco. On the other hand, little can be said of the male leads. They were all weak from the barely existent Mackie of Gilles Ramade to the little-better Peachum of Michel Hermon (both used a very irritating, self-consciously operatic style when singing). The production lacked dramatic pacing (absence of narrator, no placards). It excelled on the other hand in its musical direction, entrusted to Marie-Claude Albaretaz, who often succeeded in making us forget the casting deficiencies and weaknesses in the translation.

PASCAL HUYNH
Paris

PERFORMANCES



Bill Cracker (Christopher Allport) remains calm as the Fly (Fran Bennett) asks him for a light, indicating that he is a marked man, in *Happy End* at the South Coast Repertory Theater.

Photo: Charlaine Brown.

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

Southern California's theaters have always extended a certain benevolence to the writings of Bertolt Brecht, its one-time resident (if reluctant, as he would have us believe). Perhaps the Los Angeles Music Center Opera covered itself with something less than glory with the Jonathan Miller *Mahagonny* of two seasons ago; but others of the Brecht plays, not to mention the Weill-Brecht musicals, have fared well in smaller venues. Fond memories remain of a *Happy End* of a decade ago at Mako's tiny East-West Playhouse, and of several high-minded excursions into the repertory at Ron Sossi's Odyssey theater. (And one remembers most kindly of all Sossi's *Johnny Johnson* in 1986, which all knowing Angelenos hunger to have revived.)

The South Coast Repertory, whose energetic artistic directors are Martin Benson and David Emmes, has made a fair name for itself in its 25-year history; this past season's *Happy End* was its first incursion into Weill-Brecht, and it can be considered a good try, perhaps a shade more. Located at the edge of a shopping complex larger than some states, in the town of Costa Mesa halfway between Los Angeles and San Diego and gradually merging into both larger cities' sprawl, the theater has evolved a survival pattern that larger organizations (including Los Angeles' own enterprising but dying-on-the-vine Theater Center) might well emulate. It honors the local political outlook with a steady diet of Hart-Kaufman chestnuts and its annual *Christmas Carol*, and then sneaks in some decent, challenging fare for Orange County's small population of closet intellectuals. It was a delicious irony, therefore, to note the presence on the *Happy End* program of the First Interstate Bank as "honorary producer," thereby tacitly underwriting The Fly's incendiary proclamation, at the "happy end," that "robbing a bank is no sin compared to owning one."

Barbara Damashek directed; her credentials include a truly splendid *Sunday in the Park With George* at South Coast two seasons back. On a properly scaled-down stage she created a lively, romping production, with some especially cute effects involving shadows gallivanting behind scrims, as in a hilarious re-enactment of the big robbery number near the end, wherein the spirit of the Keystone Kops reigned supreme. Ralph Funicello's adorable junkyard of a set served its purpose and contributed a few gags of its own — best of all a ludicrously oversized Industrial-Revolution-type engine to drive a mere nickelodeon in the "Bilbao Song." Dennis Castellano's musical direction, which merely added one discreetly-used synthesizer to Weill's jazzband, was for the most part lively.

And so, all told, was the cast. Oh yes, perhaps Christopher Allport's Bill Cracker was a little on the stiff side; perhaps Ron Boussom might have controlled his accent so that Doctor Nakamura didn't keep sliding out of Japanese and into middle-high German. But the Lillian of Patricia Ben Peterson (recently of Broadway's *Into the Woods*) couldn't have been much better, with her "Surabaya Johnny" genuinely spellbinding. Among the thugs there were marvelous solo turns by Robert Machray and Jerome Butler, while Jane A. Johnston's Salvationist Major Stone was a starchy delight.

Michael Feingold's high-flying Englishing was used. I have no less trouble than I always have had with the transmogrifying of "Es war das schönste/Auf der Welt!" into "It was fantastic/Beyond belief!" but the pain comes early and passes quickly. Basically, Feingold has accorded the silly original text with a higher outpouring of artistic regard than it probably deserves. All was clear, graceful, and witty in the South Coast Rep's treatment of words and music. If *Happy End* in Costa Mesa didn't quite outdraw *The Phantom of the Opera* at the Los Angeles Music Center, that only proves that Brecht was on to more than he probably realized.

ALAN RICH
Los Angeles

Kurt Weill Revue. Théâtre de l'Odéon, Paris. Guest performances by the Theater-des-Westens, Berlin, Helmut Baumann, Jürg Burth, dirs., Peter Keusch, cond., 11-30 June 1991.

Five years ago, Giorgio Strehler's *L'Opéra de quat'sous*, a recital by Milva, and, most especially, the concert given by the Ensemble Musique Vivante, conducted by Diego Masson, allowed the theater-going crowd in Paris to discover that the melodies that characteristically accompany Bert Brecht's texts were those of an extraordinary composer. The 1991 season provided a graceful confirmation: an impressive production of *L'Opéra de quat'sous* in the Paris suburbs (see page 19 for a review), an unusual performance of *Der Lindberghflug* at the Musée de l'Air et de l'Espace de l'Aéroport du Bourget (decidedly, Weill seems to be taking root in the suburbs), and the successful revival of the Kurt-Weill-Revue from Berlin in Paris.

Helmut Baumann had already seduced the audiences of the Theater des Westens and Hebbel Theater in Berlin with this stylish, three-language revue, despite a lack of familiarity by Berliners with such shows. During the course of the Paris performance, Baumann successfully won over the cosmopolitan opera-going public of the Odéon Theatre, which was also that of Strehler's Théâtre de l'Europe. Polite and somewhat reserved when the Berlin portion began (probably because of the language barrier), the audience readily applauded the delightful choreography of the *Petite musique de quat'sous*, a comic and offhandedly staged farce that slowly but perniciously evolves towards the nightmarish evocation of Nazism and exile. We can only salute Baumann and Burth for having built, without any stacy excess, a bridge between Berlin and Paris, and then between Paris and New York.

Weill's career followed this path and thus offered an obvious scenario. Baumann understood this and succeeded through his direction in translating it to the stage. However, when the curtain falls at the end of the first part, our feelings remain unfortunately mixed, largely because of Hana Hegerova's inaccurate singing of "Le Grand Lustucru" from *Marie Galante*.

When the audience returns to its seats, the stage, in turn, fills with men and women who are also searching for their place. Their clothing, hesitant steps, and their overwhelmed yet resigned expression portrays that they represent the exiles of Hitler (to whom the Odéon recently dedicated another excellent review, *Lost in the Stars and Stripes*, on 1 and 2 July). Despite their hopes, expressed through the reading of Brecht's *Über die Bezeichnung Emigrant*, they quickly realize that "home" has be-

come a trap: Hitler is not the local clown he was made out to be, and he will soon invade all of Europe. Could Paris be the haven of peace described in Roger Fernay's "Youkali," beautifully sung here by F. Dion Davis ("the country of our desires, the land with no worries")? Mahagonny did not exist and neither does Youkali.

We can pardon Randy Diamond's approximate French in "Les Filles de Bordeaux," and that of Hana Hegerova as well, given Ms. Hegerova's excellent rendition of texts by Kästner and Brecht ("Nannas Lied"). Her German, tinged with a Czech accent, along with her perfectly adapted voice and poses (worthy of Dietrich) made for exceptional moments. Little by little, New York began to appear on the horizon: "September Song," "My Ship." Rather than *Marie Galante's* long-awaited boat for Bordeaux, the one that arrived carried Weill to Broadway.

The calm and refined songs gave way to commotion. Once the curtain was lowered, an extravagant American journalist informed the audience that it was about to witness a day in the life of Liza Elliot, Woman of the Year. The announcement produces its desired effect, and the audience laughs uncontrollably. Once again, Baumann's bet pays off.

In stagings derived from *Lady in the Dark* and *Street Scene*, a storm of applause rewarded a tennis players' ballet and a seduction number in which the straight-laced Silvia Wintergrün was transformed into an insatiable man-eater. Little room was accorded to refinement (for instance, the portrait scene from "The Girl of the Moment" in *Lady in the Dark*). With the exception of certain phrasing details, the performance of Peter Keuschnig and the Orchestre des Concerts Colonne, was generally satisfactory. The audience was delighted, and the Weill of Paris and Broadway conquered Paris.

PASCAL HUYNH
Paris

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

Forty-two years after its first performance, Weill's final, completed stage work received a professional staging in Britain. Unfortunately that is the only positive thing to say about this production, given at the handsome auditorium, the Gardner Centre, which is part of the Sussex University campus. In the same week that saw an unofficial but "State" visit to South Africa by Britain's former prime-minister Margaret Thatcher, the still-topical theme of Paton's novel ought to have spurred a production that spoke to a modern audience. Instead, this staging and musical offering had the opposite effect and made one aware of the gaps in style between the harsh realities of the story of



Gaye Mac Farlane brings to life Kurt Weill's New York with a song from *Lady in the Dark* in the Kurt Weill Revue at the Théâtre de l'Odéon in Paris. Photo: Manfred Neugebauer.

color prejudice and the compromises necessary to make it into a Broadway show. My companion who had visited South Africa — I have not — approved of some aspects of Spyros Coscina's set, a perspective of barbed wire fences, corrugated iron roofs, and a corner of the Jarvis study. Ewart James Walters gave a dramatically convincing portrayal of Stephen Kumalo, but his voice was not equal to the demands of the music, and by the end of the first act at the performance I attended, he sounded over-taxed. The same was true of Hyacinth Nicholls as Irina; Miss Nicholls, a winner of the Maggie Teyte prize, is one of the most promising young singers in Britain, but she was out of her element in this part. The chorus gave the best account of themselves, but this too accentuated what was made to seem like the lopsided nature of the piece, and I was more than ever aware of the joins showing, where numbers like "Trouble Man" and the title song had been incorporated from earlier works. If I had never seen *Lost in the Stars* before, and I have seen it done very effectively by companies with even less at their disposal, this performance conducted by Lionel Friend, would have left me with the impression that it was a work irretrievably dated. This is not so, but it is hard to imagine anyone being captivated by the work through this performance. No more needs to be said.

PATRICK O'CONNOR
London

Happy End, New York, NY. The Juilliard School Drama Division, Moni Yakim, dir., Deborah R. Lapidus, musical dir., 19-21 April 1991.

The Drama Division of The Juilliard School in New York provided a wonderful evening of theater with its production of *Happy End*, one in a series of five works in its Spring 1991 Repertory season. The Gang and the Salvation Army were cast from the versatile members of Group XX, Juilliard actors in their fourth year of training; six dancers

from the Juilliard Dance Division were Members of The Fold.

The intimacy of the Juilliard Drama Theater — its three-quarter, thrust stage, and the shallow, steeply-raked house — combined with the youthful exuberance of the actors and the sharp focus of the production to absorb the audience in the proceedings. By the time the Act II sing-along version of "Don't Be Afraid" arrived (lyric sheets were provided as inserts in the programs), even those of us who cringe at audience participation felt compelled to sing. The two-level set by Allen Moyer, who also designed the marvelous costumes, had many clever touches (the hanging, stuffed wild animal heads in the band's playing area, the Beer Hall bar and the mission pulpit as reverse sides of the same set piece). Yet, one did wish for more use of the upper level in Act I, where the doorway seemed only to imply the Chicago streets, rather than provide a clear visual sense of the outside. Both the Gang and the Salvation Army owe their desperate existences to those streets, and the Beer Hall and the Mission sets needed to be indoor retreats from the outside world.

Director Moni Yakim (and Associate Director Deborah R. Lapidus) favored an overall exaggerated, at times farcical, external manner of acting that, with internal reality and skilled actors, worked quite nicely. Daniel J. Kelley's lighting was excellent as were the hair and wigs and makeup designs of Anne Devon Chambliss. Taking to heart Michael Feingold's change of the Brecht-Weill "Lane" subtitle of the show from "Comedy with Music," to "A Melodrama with Songs," as well as the spirit of Feingold's adaptation of the original book and lyrics, the Juilliard creative team and its company of actors did everything in a heightened melodramatic style (full sensation, romance, violence, extravagance) that pushed the evening even more compellingly toward the silliness and requirement of the "happy end".

David Alford was outstanding as Bill Cracker. Although not the customary Bill

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The finale from *Happy End* at the Juilliard School. Photo Jessica Katz.

Cracker "physical" type, Alford's characterization projected a strong, self-assured persona, and, best of all, a wry humor. Peter Jacobson supplied a superb Dr. Nakamura, and Heather Mathieson as Miriam was as good as her role is written. Still, had her character been given more to do, the audience would have gained a better understanding of the Miriam-Bill-Lillian relationship. In a role defined by its brief but striking appearances and one terrific song, Christina Rouser as The Fly came off, nonetheless, as a weak vocal presence. Kathleen Christal is a lovely actress, but as Lillian Holiday, a woman who supposedly raises her strong voice in sermonizing and harmonizing, she seemed unable to find the character's vocal strength. Lisa Dove offered a sweet-voiced Sister Jane and Tucker McGrady played a campy but beautifully sung Captain Hannibal. Having the Cop (delightfully rendered by Lisa Benavides) act both as cop and emcee-announcer was a nice added touch.

Weill's scoring for *Happy End* calls for eight players: alto saxophone (doubling on piccolo and flute and clarinet), tenor saxophone (doubling on bass saxophone, and clarinet), two trumpets, trombone, banjo (doubling on Hawaiian Guitar or mandolin, bandoneon or accordion, and bass guitar), percussion, and piano (doubling on harmonium). The musical director for this Juilliard production, Deborah R. Lapidus, and her associate F. Wade Russo (pianist in the band), rescored the show for five players: piano, trumpet, percussion, reeds, and synthesizer. Synthesizers have come a long way, but up against acoustic instruments and the unamplified voices (a most welcome and nearly vanished species in New York), synthesizers demonstrate their greatest inadequacy — they are only good with percussive, staccato, or marcato sounds, not with legato or sustained lines. Sometimes exotic tonal effects work well on the synthesizer, but here even the Hawaiian guitar line, which we all wait to hear in the third chorus of "Surabaya Johnny," emerged feebly. Still another musical liability was

the evening's pianist: he played all the notes, but rarely touched on the wit, the incisiveness, and the sense of character that Weill lavished upon the score of *Happy End*. Unfortunately some of this lack of musical character carried over into the performances of the other instrumentalists.

As for the musical transpositions: since Weill created his own orchestrations in keys chosen for optimum aesthetic and acoustic sense, any subsequent transposition alters the chosen essential timbre

and tessitura of a particular song, not only violating Weill's intentions but also throwing askew singularly definitive vocal qualities Weill wanted for a specific character. The pragmatists disagree (what about Lenya's transpositions, for instance? — what about a small key change?), but in the Juilliard production, all of Lillian's music was lowered considerably, transforming what should be her fresh vocal innocence into a mature earthiness ("Lieutenants of the Lord" was taken down a major third; "The Sailors' Tango" and "Surabaya Johnny" down a fourth.) The Fly's "Ballad of the Lily of Hell" was lowered a major sixth (!) and even "The Mandalay Song" was lowered. If Juilliard had used the original orchestrations and original keys, and recast two or three roles, this production of *Happy End* could have easily joined the ranks of top-notch productions, professional or amateur.

RICHARD BOWER
New York

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

The Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston is a player-owned co-operative ensemble that consists of some of the best musicians in the Boston area. Its co-founder and longtime music director, the late Larry Hill, also instilled a social and moral consciousness in the group. Pro Arte has an extensive outreach program, making concerts accessible to the handicapped and the aged. And most programs include at least one contemporary work, often a work composed for the ensemble.

A most recent Pro Arte concert (at Harvard's Sanders Theatre, April 21) featured Kurt Weill's Concerto for violin and wind orchestra, Op. 12, as the centerpiece of a program devoted exclusively to wind orchestra. The contemporary piece, which

opened the concert, was songwriter/composer Alec Wilder's Serenade for winds, written in 1979, the year before he died at the age of 73. The closing work was Mozart's great Serenade no. 10 for 13 instruments, the so-called Grand Partita, K. 361.

It would be hard to find a more ideal musician than the Pro Arte's conductor laureate, Gunther Schuller, to lead this concert. With his own interest in both classical, jazz, and contemporary music (and a horn player himself), Schuller was stylistically at home with each of these choices. The performances were at every moment alive marvels of style, musicianship, and taste.

The Wilder Serenade is a quiet, small-scale work in four short movements nostalgic, flowing, understated, in a sort of post-Nadia Boulanger Franco-American vein, owing a bit of inspiration to Poulenc here, to Virgil Thompson there, looking back to modern jazz and 50s film scores. The third movement, "In a Jazz Style," and the fourth, a pastorello marked "Slow and rubato," seemed particularly effective, with Schuller allowing the rubato plenty of breathing room.

The Mozart was extraordinarily eloquent. Schuller gave the great Adagio, the songful Romanze, and the dance movements a delicate lilt, and lift. The trio of overlapping oboe (James A. Sulger), clarinet (Ian Greitzer), and mellow basset horn (Diane Heffner) sang out in the sublime Adagio as if it were from an unknown late Mozart opera or an ensemble of solemn lovers mysteriously lost from *Così fan tutte*.

Both of these works combine classical and popular forms, and so provided a perfect context for the Weill, with its own sense of tradition and its very definite views of contemporary life. The soloist, also familiar with both classical and popular idioms, was the Boston Symphony Orchestra's brilliant associate concertmaster (and concertmaster of the Boston "Pops"), Yugoslavian-born violinist Tamara Smirnova-Sajfar. Oddly dressed in a loose-fitting gray gown that draped her as if she were a Greek statue, she didn't look like someone who could capture the modern energy and drive of the Weill Concerto. But there was no need to have worried.

Smirnova-Sajfar's mood-swings were dazzling exhibitions of her technical and emotional flexibility. She could be intense and brilliantly assertive. Jumpy, or muted, inward, or repressed, she played with the same grace and polish one would expect to hear in the Beethoven or Brahms concertos, yet without prettifying Weill's harder edges. But her main achievement was that, with the close co-operation of Schuller and every individual player, she made full dramatic sense of this score. Weill, of course, was a dramatist even in his absolute music. The violin here is as much a Weill hero as Macheath or Johnny Johnson. But in this performance, everyone was a hero.

LLOYD SCHWARTZ
Boston

PERFORMANCES

Marie Galante. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY. "Les Dames et Las Damas," The Music Today Ensemble, John McGlinn, cond., Angelina Réaux, soprano, 26 September 1991.

Soprano Angelina Réaux and conductor John McGlinn mounted with great success a varied and ambitious program of twentieth-century music on texts in French, Spanish, Catalan, and other Iberian-peninsula languages. The concert opened with the United States premiere of the *Cancionero de Pedrell* (1941) by Roberto Gerhard, a Spanish composer of Franco-Swiss descent, and closed with the concert suite from *Marie Galante*. The program also included songs by de Falla, Granados, Moulou, Valls, Mompou, Poulenc, and Bernstein. In the Gerhard cycle, the "Songbook" assembled by the Catalan composer Felipe Pedrell of lyric texts from the regions of Spain, gained richly detailed harmonic and colorful orchestral settings.

This performance of Weill's songs and instrumental pieces from *Marie Galante*, the 1934 play by the French novelist and playwright Jacques Deval, included the New York premiere of the original orchestration to the popular tango-habanera (Weill was later to recast this tango in a setting for voice and piano entitled "Youkali," employing Roger Fernay's lyrics). Weill's full score to the tango-habanera was only recently discovered in 1988 in the archives of the Parisian publisher Heugel.

To this performance, Ms. Réaux brought special interpretative insights, as well as her vocal gift, supported by superb French diction. Over the span of the suite, she presented a Marie that was coquettish in "Le Roi d'Aquitaine," plaintive, yet intense in "Le train du Ciel," and alluring and forceful in "J'attends un navire." The Music Today Ensemble earns praise for its performance of Weill's score. Although the ensemble seemed decidedly against taking risks (and consequently, performed an unadventurous and rather frumpy tango), it tendered a rich, lovely sound. Mr. McGlinn elicited a full dynamic range from the ensemble, leaning on the expert percussion section to carry the group through the rhythmically incisive, instrumental numbers.

The provocative encore: a rendition of "Youkali" (in the song version) by Angelina Réaux, with Bill Shimmel providing the accompaniment on the accordion. Their performance figured as the best example of improvisatory bravura and delighted the audience.

AMY DAKEN
New York, NY

RECORDINGS

blessing, for whereas "the only available version" would be self-recommending, the comparison and evaluation called for by rival candidates usually exposes flaws in both.

But first a moment for gratitude that two complete recordings finally exist; it has been a long wait. Lest this be interpreted as a complaint that the 1947 original-cast recording (recently transferred to CD) contained only excerpts, let me stress that that first *Street Scene* album was an extraordinarily generous Broadway cast album for its day: 52 minutes of ambitious music (courageously by-passing the one unabashed pop-style number, "Moon-Faced, Starry-Eyed"), at a time when far more popular shows had to make do with far less comprehensive coverage. Much is omitted and curtailed, of course (strophic repeats vanish, Frank Maurant is unheard till the finale), yet what remains does approximate a kind of continuity that suggests *Street Scene*'s power. Maurice Abravanel conducts firmly and spiritedly, and the cast has the sound of people who have truly absorbed and lived with their roles. Some have adjusted the musical requirements (Hope Emerson speaks most of Mrs. Jones's music), but there are no vocal compromises in the leading roles. Polyna Stoska (Anna Maurant) and Brian Sullivan (Sam Kaplan) would make Metropolitan Opera debuts within the year, and Anne Jefferys (Rose Maurant) had quite a lovely soprano, heard too seldom during her acting career. All three deliver moving performances, Sullivan and Jefferys especially so. It's good to have this recording on CD.

Nevertheless, how marvelous to have genuinely complete recordings at last. But (here one must venture onto sensitive territory) how frustrating that for whatever practical reasons they have originated on the other side of the Atlantic. Certainly capable Weill performances are welcome wherever they happen, and both sets suffice in a general way: all the notes and words are there, performed accurately and with the right intent. But it is as if the only recording of *Peter Grimes* had been made in Los Angeles; in a piece so thoroughly rooted in the speech and customs of a particular place one wants to hear its permanent documentation rendered by those rooted in the milieu. Further, the musicalized *Street Scene*, like the Elmer Rice play on which it is based, calls for the skills of a true acting ensemble. A host of characters must live and interact, and a multitude of national accents must serve the character rather than caricature. Weill, Rice, and lyricist Langston Hughes left whole scenes (far longer ones than in, say, *The Most Happy Fella* or *Sweeney Todd*) as unaccompanied spoken dialogue—including, surprisingly, the crucial murder sequence. For all these reasons, *Street Scene*



Street Scene. Original cast recording, 1947; Maurice Abravanel, cond. CBS Records (MK 44668).

Street Scene. Scottish Opera; John Mauceri, cond. Decca (433 371).

Street Scene. English National Opera; Carl Davis, cond. TER (1185).

Of the exceedingly diverse works from the past that have been pigeonholed as "Broadway Opera," just about the last to receive a complete recording is *Street Scene*. And, as fate seems to arrange these things sometimes, when we finally get a complete recording, we get two at once. Such abundance can prove as much a curse as a

RECORDINGS

is a huge challenge for any opera company which must study the New York working class environment as a foreign phenomenon.

The two recordings have the advantage of being based on a stage production – the same production, shared by Scottish Opera and English National Opera. For the recording, John Mauceri filled most of the main roles with important talent, while Carl Davis retained his staged cast (a few secondary roles are performed by the same people in both). Neither cast quite disguises or surmounts those challenges. We hear singers who have intelligently studied their dramatic timing and their various accents, but rarely do we hear and become involved with the living people of the street. Spoken scenes suffer the most (the ENO cast manages them somewhat more convincingly), and even listeners who would prefer to hear everything in continuity will probably choose to skip these after the first listening or two.

Though the lack of shared stage experience among Decca's importations may lower the dramatic temperature at times, the greater color and "class" of their vocalism brings its own advantages, and a few of them create some theatrical magic as well. Angelina Réaux for one: a real actress with the vocal skills and the dramatic imagination to create an uncommonly interesting Rose Maurant – tough, complicated, in no way a conventional ingenue. Her scene with Harry Easter, the equally gifted Kurt Ollmann, stands as the most completely realized passage on either recording. And the incongruity of Arleen Auger and Della Jones taking time off from Monteverdi and Handel for a turn as the scandal-hungry nursemaids makes their scene (a comic parenthesis in any case) an utter delight. Josephine Barstow sounds uncomfortable with the speech patterns, but as one of the great operatic actresses of our time, in excellent voice for these sessions, she creates a touching and heartfelt Anna Maurant.

In all these roles the corresponding people on TER are less distinctive (Janis Kelly's Rose does sound a conventional ingenue, and Kristine Ciesinski seems more vocally a Rose than an Anna). Honors are more even elsewhere. On the Decca recording, Jerry Hadley's gifts suit him well to Sam Kaplan, but his acting is fairly basic, and he impairs the climax of his aria with a toneless falsetto, so the less immediately impressive but more involved Bonaventura Bottone (TER) might be considered preferable. Both Samuel Ramey (Decca) and Richard Van Allan (TER) have their struggles with Frank Maurant, especially with the mysterious (and unnecessary) accent that dominates the aural impression they make. Maurant is in any case a difficult character dramatically, with music

that does not really "sing" until the finale; neither has solved him, but Ramey's is the smoother sound and style of the two.

For the others, a few representative mentions must suffice. Decca has three effective tenors for important secondary roles: Emile Belcourt (now more actor than singer, but effectively so), Anthony Mee (TER also has a good Florentino in Peter Bronder), and David Kuebler. By contrast to TER's ill-tuned choice for Henry Davis, Decca offers the beautiful baritone of the late Ben Holt, sadly in his only recorded role (Bruce Hubbard replaced him for the final sessions, supplying as far as I can hear only spoken lines). Another Decca import, Barbara Bonney, is a major singer ill-fitted to the idiom, her coy chirps exactly wrong for "Wrapped in a Ribbon." Both sets of children are weak – listen to the CBS reissue to hear their scene work.

Both conductors lead solidly, with feeling for the drama and with nearly identical pacing. Mauceri, aided by a more promi-

nent orchestral balance, punches the accents harder and makes more of Weill's (and Ted Royal's) orchestration audible; Davis takes a little more care with balances, allowing ensembles like the Ice-Cream sextet to come out cleaner. The basic sound of both recordings is fine, but TER has done better by dialogue scenes, with a light undercurrent of street noises for ambiance and continuity, and with a more convincing spatial differentiation between sidewalk, stoop and window. (Neither version solves the problem of placing offstage voices).

The two recordings each have strengths and weaknesses, both have stretches of off-center attempts at American speech, and neither comes consistently to life with the kind of electricity that makes small flaws unimportant. As they are too similar to justify buying both, Decca's superior casting of several of the leading roles probably makes it the preferable choice.

JON ALAN CONRAD
University of Delaware

Cast Lists

	Decca	TER
<i>Frank Maurant</i>	Samuel Ramey	Richard Van Allan
<i>Anna Maurant</i>	Josephine Barstow	Kristine Ciesinski
<i>Rose Maurant</i>	Angelina Réaux	Janis Kelly
<i>Sam Kaplan</i>	Jerry Hadley	Bonaventura Bottone
<i>Emma Jones</i>	Meriel Dickinson	Meriel Dickinson
<i>First Nursemaid</i>	Arleen Auger	Fiammetta Doria
<i>Second Nursemaid</i>	Della Jones	Judith Douglas
<i>Mae Jones</i>	Mary Munger	Catherine Zeta Jones
<i>Dick McGann</i>	Philip Gould	Philip Day
<i>Harry Easter</i>	Kurt Ollmann	Simon Masterton-Smith
<i>Abraham Kaplan</i>	Emile Belcourt	Terry Jenkins
<i>Shirley Kaplan</i>	Blythe Duff	Blythe Duff
<i>Greta Fiorentino</i>	Elaine Mackillop	Susan Bullock
<i>Lippo Fiorentino</i>	Anthony Mee	Peter Bronder
<i>Carl Olsen</i>	David Marsh	Arwel Huw Morgan
<i>Olga Olsen</i>	Fiona Kimm	Angela Hickey
<i>Steve Sankey</i>	Tom McVeigh	Edwin Criag
<i>Willie Maurant</i>	Ryan McBride	Daniel Ison



KURT WEILL

Sinfonien / Symphonies

No 1 & No 2

Staatsphilharmonie Krakau
Krakow Philharmonic Orchestra
ROLAND BADER

Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2; Kleine Dreigroschenmusik. Gulbenkian Orchestra, Michel Swierczewski, cond. Nimbus NI 5283.

Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2. Krakow Philharmonic Orchestra, Roland Bader, cond. Koch/Schwann 311 147.

Of all the neglect Weill's concert music has suffered, that of so ambitious and powerful a work as the Second Symphony may be the most inexplicable. While recordings have generally provided us with opportunities to hear music that is not presented in our concert halls, the Weill Second received no attention in that form until 1968, when both symphonies were recorded by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Gary Bertini. Those performances enjoyed circulation, first on an Angel LP, then on Argo and London. Edo de Waart subsequently recorded both symphonies in 1974 for Philips, and MHS issued a CD of the Second, with Julius Rudel conducting, in 1989. But now we have two new CDs pairing the two symphonies.

The Bertini recording was made as part of a series supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; one of the two new ones, on Nimbus, offers performances by that foundation's own orchestra, under the young French conductor Michel Swierczewski. Among the other advantages of the compact disc, the new medium

allows for enough playing time to include the *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*. The three works are presented chronologically on the disc, which means that the familiar one serves as a well-placed intermezzo between the two symphonies. On the other disc, from Koch/Schwann, Roland Bader conducts the Krakow Philharmonic in the two symphonies alone.

Bertini's performances were serviceable, but by no means without flaws, suggesting that a skilled and sensitive conductor had brought them off with minimal rehearsal. Regret was expressed at the time they came out, and since, that Abravanel was never given an opportunity to record these works. I have heard a tape recording of his performance of the Second with the Utah Symphony Orchestra from about fifteen years ago; it too was less than perfect in some technical respects, but Abravanel's authority and commitment made it unforgettably convincing. While both Bertini's performance and Swierczewski's follow Abravanel's general proportions, Swierczewski has clearly surpassed his recorded predecessor. Without quite achieving Abravanel's sense of spontaneity and urgency, he shows a similar feeling for the work's momentum, and his performance clarifies numerous details obscured in Bertini's. The funeral march that is the Symphony's emotional crest gains especially from the sane, unexaggerated phrasing and the fine balance in both the performance and the recording.

Roland Bader, who has been known to me until now only as the director of the Choir of St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin, takes a conspicuously different approach, with noticeably broader tempos in all three movements. The central Largo sustains this broadening best, for Bader doesn't merely slow things down but invests his reading with the sort of *weight* that more or less dictates a deliberate pace. The opening movement, too, retains both its character and its shape. The final one, though, turns into something quite different from what we hear in the other performances, suggesting an episode from Shostakovich (the Shostakovich yet to come, in 1933) or the sort of defiant affirmation proclaimed in socialist parades, rather than the giddy-macabre tarantella that comes through in the other performances. In his very helpful annotation Heinz Geuen makes no specific reference to questions of tempo, but does cite both Jürgen Schebera's notion of the Second Symphony as "the reaction of a sensitive artist to contemporary events" and various motifs shared with *Der Silbersee* and *The Seven Deadly Sins* that might point to a sort of darker and more solemn commentary — something more overtly Mahlerish.

In any event, both orchestras play well, and both are well recorded. While Swierczewski's disc is the stronger in both

respects with conspicuously more brilliant brasses and an overall sharper aural focus (and I'm sure his is ultimately the more persuasive reading), the very difference between the two performances may argue more for the idea of having both than for a clear preference in either direction: it is a matter of a work of substance sustaining more than a single interpretive approach.

The two conductors are more in agreement in their performances of the First Symphony. This single-movement work, in the nature of an extended tone poem, came out of Weill's thoughts of writing incidental music for a play by his senior contemporary Johannes R. Becher called *Arbeiter, Bauern, Soldaten Der Aufbruch eines Volkes zu Gott* ("Workers, Peasants, Soldiers A People's Moving toward God"). The socialist-religious idealism of Becher's drama, which Weill cited as an epigraph in his score, is reflected in a general way rather than a graphic one — far short of the emotional impact of the Second Symphony's Largo. But as a chronicle of a young composer's progress, and a subtle indicator of various musical influences and antecedents (Andrew Porter suggested some time ago that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony might have been a strong influence, if not outright model), it is more than intriguing; in terms of craftsmanship alone, it is impressive. Again Bader may underscore a point a bit more here and there, but overall his reading is as straightforward and flowing as Swierczewski's.

The additional time taken for Bader's performance of the Second Symphony ruled out the idea of a third work on the Koch/Schwann disc. At 56 minutes plus, it is hardly short weight, but the *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* on Nimbus is a substantial bonus. Swierczewski's performance does not exude the almost mystical aura of decadence that half-lit the excerpts Klemperer recorded in 1931 (available now in several different CD collections), but it is utterly convincing in its own right and comes as close to that *nonpareil* as any recording of the complete suite, including Klemperer's own with members of the Philharmonia Orchestra. If a choice does have to be made, this could surely help to make it. Like the two performances of the Second Symphony, the respective annotations — the aforementioned Geuen's comprehensive one for Koch/Schwann, David Gutman's more concise one for Nimbus — both give us valuable information on the music without simply duplicating each other.

RICHARD FREED
Rockville, Maryland

RECORDINGS



The Seven Deadly Sins, Happy End. Wilhelm Brückner-Rüggeberg Orchestra and Chorus; Lotte Lenya, soprano. CBS Records Masterworks Portrait (MPK 45886).

The Seven Deadly Sins, Mahagonny Songspiel. RIAS Berlin Sinfonietta, John Mauceri, cond., Ute Lemper, soprano. London Records (430 168-2).

Lenya's recounting of *The Seven Deadly Sins* was the second recording I owned of music by Kurt Weill. I was led to it by the pungent magic of her voice that permeates her landmark Columbia LP of German theater songs, a disc that could be said to have sparked the modern Weill revival. But with *The Seven Deadly Sins*, it was the score itself, not Lenya's singing, that so hypnotized me; she was no longer the center of attention but rather a conduit through which music passed.

That was 1958, the year George Balanchine brought the work he had choreographed originally in the Paris of 1933 into the repertory of the New York City Ballet. The next year I moved to the East, and among the plums in that late Manhattan summer were repeat performances of *The Seven Deadly Sins* by NYCB with Lenya again as Anna I, paired with Allegra Kent as Anna II.

I was present at the first night and returned for every performance thereafter. Rarely have I experienced so vivid a combination of heat and chill in the theater as

happened with this remarkable hybrid piece that is part-cabaret, part-dance, part-circus, part-opera, part-pantomime, and all-theater (Weill termed it a "Ballet chanté"). The production, designed by Rouben Ter-Arutunian in a expressionistic mixture of canvas and cellophane and sung in the English translation of W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman, presented the music and the drama as though newly minted.

I think few if any of us lucky enough to be there had a sense of protest or place that the original Parisian audience twenty-five years earlier must have felt when they witnessed Lenya's first telling of the story with Tilly Losch as Anna II. Rather we left the City Center building smiling at what had become in its reincarnation a modern immorality play in which virtue was a dead-end street and where sin garnered the rewards.

This final collaboration of Weill and Bertolt Brecht, with its alternately bitter and wistful songs, its hymn-like quartets sung by Anna's family, and its often acerbic, motorized but always singing orchestral score, was music — as one critic of the time wrote — "that floated like blue smoke through the beerhalls, night clubs, and dives of Berlin in the late twenties and Paris of the early thirties."

Yet, though you could put a date to its sounds and moods, the work itself was anything but dated. It had, with the years, taken on a universal character that sustains it today. Perhaps this was so because sin has always been an intrinsic and seducing part of our lives, and Weill and Brecht found the means to give it immediacy, make it entertain and set our frailties aglow with an aura of art.

After Balanchine and Lenya, I saw the work onstage only once again — a curious and misguided production by Maurice Béjart that caused Lenya to snort and release a stream of invective when I chanced to mention it to her. But though strangely and sadly absent from the stage these days (rumors continue to surface that the Joffrey company will eventually stage a revival), *The Seven Deadly Sins* was handsomely served on LP and continues to receive its due on CD.

Lenya's recording with conductor Wilhelm Brückner-Rüggeberg for Columbia, the first ever of this ballet-singspiel, has just returned cleaner and brighter in the format [this CD recording, though issued in Europe, is not currently available in the U.S.]. And the last three years have brought three *Sins* into the CD catalog to join Lenya (Simon Rattle's recording from 1983 with Elise Ross for EMI is still awaiting reissue, as is, if my memory isn't playing tricks on me, an LP in Italian with Milva as Anna I).

Julia Migenes and Michael Tilson Thomas traversed the terrain of *The Seven Deadly Sins* in 1988, also for Columbia (CBS Masterworks 44529); in 1989 Polydor brought back the 1967 performance by Herbert Kegel

and Gisela May (Polydor 429 333-2); and last year, John Mauceri and Ute Lemper newly recorded the score as part of an ongoing Weill series for London Records. There is still room for at least one further version, as the foregoing are sung in the original German, and it would be a nice bit of lagniappe to have a CD using the superb and witty Auden-Kallman translation. What do you think, Teresa Stratas?

It is only in the Rattle recording that we encounter the original keys on record, a surprise given Columbia's version by Julia Migenes, who, one would have thought, would opt for the higher keys. But remember, when it comes to opera, she is both Manon and Carmen, and as a pop singer (an area of song in which she is remarkably at home) she ventures successfully down into deep vocal subterranean. If she felt that the colors of this score called for her pop rather than operatic sound, she was right.

In a pressing sense, all of the newer recordings of the score must proceed in the shadow of Lenya's version, and not just because she is Lenya, with all that implies, but because of her acute sense of Brecht's words and her riveting ability to give texture and profile to his text. But Gisela May easily does as much, with greater ease and with a much finer and more detailed orchestral accompaniment. The Polydor CD also boasts the best of the male quartets for the family's music.

In comparison to Kegel's conducting — the most finished and sharpest on record — the Mauceri, Rattle, and Thomas versions are softer and have less punch. I like the scrupulous way Rattle links number to number in a continuous flow of sound, but at times — the March in "Envy," for example — he overshoots the mark and loses the cutting edge of the section. And the Mauceri performance is, for me, oddly engineered; the orchestra sounds often heavy for so transparent a scoring, and the wind parts don't always bristle and shine as they should.

Ross with Rattle sings rather than narrates the story, and with a minimal variance in color; Migenes with Thomas is both childlike and catlike; and Lemper with Mauceri is at her best in lyrical sections and never quite bites deeply enough into the words.

As one of the benefits of the CD is a longer playing side, and as *The Seven Deadly Sins* runs only about 35 minutes in length, there is an opportunity to pair it with other Weill pieces and even provide a period context. Lenya's recording has been coupled with her 1960 studio performance of music from *Happy End*, Thomas adds the *Threepenny Suite*, David Atherton's version of the *Berliner Requiem* has been appended to the Kegel *Sins*, and Mauceri offers the *Mahagonny Songspiel*. All add up to more music for the money than the LP era and more grist for the Weill mill.

JOHN ARDOIN
Dallas, TX

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

AUSTRIA

Die Dreigroschenoper, Vienna. Volkstheater, Piet Drescher, dir., Alexander Drkar, cond., 20 March, 2-3, 11-14, 16, 19-21, 25, 27-28 April, 2-4 7-8 May 1991.

Die sieben Todsünden, Salzburg. Salzburg Festival, Cleveland Orchestra, Christoph v. Dohnanyi, cond., Anja Silja, soprano, 29 July 1992.

CANADA

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, Toronto, Ontario. Music Toronto, 8 October 1991.

ENGLAND

Mahagonny Songspiel, excerpts from *Happy End*, Birmingham. City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Simon Rattle, cond., Elise Ross, soprano, Ameral Gunson, mezzo soprano, Damon Evans, John Graham-Holt, tenors, Benjamin Luxon, baritone, Nicholas Folwell, bass, 5 October 1991.

Die sieben Todsünden, London. London Symphony Orchestra, Kent Nagano, dir., Ute Lemper, soprano, 6 June 1991.

Street Scene, London. English National Orchestra, James Holmes, cond., 13, 19, 22, 27 February, 2, 5, 11, 14, 19 March 1992.

Symphony No. 2, Leamington. Leamington Chamber Orchestra, Andrew Mogrelia, cond., 2 May 1991.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Bonn. Schauspiel Bonn, Oper Bonn, Siegfried Schoenbohm, dir., Dennis Russell Davies, cond., 20, 22, 26-27, 29-30 December 1991, 2, 5, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 24, 26-27 January, 2, 5, 8, 10, 14, 16, 24, 26, 28 February, 4, 7, 15 March 1992.

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Hildesheim. Stadttheater, Rainer Friedemann, dir., Johannes van Slageren, cond., 6, 8, 11, 15, 21, 23, 28 May, 13, 29 June 1991.

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Stuttgart. Ruth Berghaus, dir., Markus Stenz, cond., 22, 25, 27, 29 March, 2, 8, 10, 14, 27 April, 9 May, 6, 14 June 1992.

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, Kiel. Schleswig-Holsteinisch Landesorchester, Gerhard Schneider, cond., 1991-92 season.

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

Die Dreigroschenoper, Erfurt. Schauspielhaus Erfurt, Klaus Stephan, dir., Uwe Hanks, cond., 15, 22, 30 June 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Ettlinger. Ettlinger Schloß-Festspiele, Peter Preissler, dir., Matthias Hammerschmitt, cond., 5 July - 25 August 1991 (including various touring locations).

Die Dreigroschenoper, Gera. Bühnen der Stadt Gera, Reinhardt Ottmar Schuchart, dir., Günter Schimm, Michael Stolle, conds., premiered 16 May 1991; 18 June guest performance in Darmstadt.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Hamburg. Ernst-Deutsch-Theater (40 year anniversary), Friedrich Schütter, dir., daily from 15 August-28 September 1991 (guest performance in Rostock, Oct.).

Die Dreigroschenoper, Hannover. Bühne des Theaters an der Glocksee, 14 September (6 performances) 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Heidenheim. Opernfestspiele Heidenheim, June-July 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Ludwigsburg. Ludwigsburger Festspiele and Staatsschauspiel Dresden, Klaus-Dieter Kirst, dir., Jens-Uwe Günther, cond., 16, 18, 20, 22, 24-25, 31 (Dresden) August 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Ulm. Ulmer Theater, Markwart Müller-Elmau, dir., Sören Eckhoff, cond., 16, 19, 25, 27-28 April, 8, 14, 16 May, 9, 15, 19, 21, 26, 28 June 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Wadgassen. Theater in der Cristallerie, Burkhard Jahn, dir., Alfred Lauer, cond., 29 June, 3-7, 11-12, 18-21 July 1991.

Die Dreigroschenoper, Weimar. Deutschen Nationaltheater, Detlef Heintze, dir., Jens-Uwe Günther, cond., 24 April - July 1991.

Mahagonny Songspiel, Leipzig. Leipzig Oper, Udo Zimmerman, dir., Michael Heinicke, cond., 11 June 1991.

Symphony No. 2, Braunschweig. Staatsorchester Braunschweig, Friedrich Cerha, cond., 15-16 December 1991.

Vom Tod im Wald, Mahagonny Songspiel, Berlin. Ensemble Neue Reihe (musicians from the Berlin Philharmoniker), Peter Keuschnig, cond., Robert Holzer, bass, 10 April 1991.

Zu Potsdam Unter den Eichen, Altrup. Regionzentrum, Amateur Group, 8 June 1991.

FINLAND

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, Oulu. Oulun kaupunginorkesteri, William Forman, cond., 30 May 1991.

FRANCE

Der Lindberghflug, Paris. Aéroport du Bourget. Choeur La Fontenelle, Ensemble Alternance, Yves Gourvil, dir., Mirella Giardelli, cond., 27-28 March 1991.

L'Opéra de Quat'Sous, Lannion. L'Opéra Eclaté, Olivier Desbordes, dir., 2 April, 3 (Brest), 4 (Chambéry), 5 (Annecy), 6 (Roanne), 11 (Grenoble), 12-13 (Orléans) April 1991.

IRELAND

The Threepenny Opera, Dublin. The Gate Theatre, Patrick Mason, dir., with Marianne Faithfull, 9 July-October 1991.

ISRAEL

The Seven Deadly Sins, Tel Aviv. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, January 1992.

ITALY

Opera da tre soldi, Rome. Spoleto Festival, Günter Krämer, dir., 27 June 1991.

SWITZERLAND

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Geneva. Grand Théâtre, Kurt Josef Schildknecht, dir., Jeffrey Tate, cond., 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23 May 1992.

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, Lausanne. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Eliahu Inbal, cond., 2 May, 3 (Geneva) May 1991.

UNITED STATES

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, Stockbridge, MA. Atlanta Sinfonietta, 14 May 1991.

Concerto for violin and wind instruments, Op. 12, New Paltz, NY. Music in the Mountains, 21 July 1991.

Happy End, New York, NY. The Juilliard School Drama Division, Moni Yakim, dir., Deborah R. Lapidus, musical dir., 19-21 April 1991.

Happy End, Dallas, TX. Classic Theatre Company, 15-30 October 1991.

Happy End Songspiel, Mahagonny Songspiel, Philadelphia, PA. The Curtis Institute of Music, Rhoda Levine, dir., David Hayes, cond., April-May 1992.

Johnny Johnson, New York. Neighborhood Playhouse School, 11-17 May 1991.

Lady in the Dark, Houston, TX. Main Street Theater, May 1992.

Lady in the Dark, Milwaukee, WI. Skylight Opera Theatre, Christopher Markle, dir., James Valze, cond., with Paula Dewey, 11, 13-15, 18, 20-22, 25, 27-29 September, 2-6 October 1991.

Lost in the Stars, Boston, MA. Boston Lyric Opera, Bill T. Jones, dir., Christopher Larkin, cond., 17, 19, 21 January 1992.

Marie Galante, The Seven Deadly Sins (concert perf.), Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, Middletown, CT. Wesleyan University, Mel Strauss, cond., Angelina Réaux, soprano, 29 February 1992.

Marie Galante, New York, NY. Merkin Concert Hall, Music Today Ensemble, John McGlinn, cond., Angelina Réaux, soprano, 26 September 1991.

Seven Deadly Sins, Colorado Springs, CO. Colorado Springs Symphony Orchestra, Christopher Wilkens, dir., Anne Adair, dance, Marcia Ragonetti, soprano, 16, 18-20 October 1991.

Street Scene, Tucson, AZ. University of Arizona, Charles Roe, dir., Josef Knott, cond., 1, 3 November 1991.

Street Scene, Pittsburgh, PA. Carnegie Mellon University, Janet Bookspan, dir., Robert Page, cond., March 1992.

The Threepenny Opera, Newport Beach, CA. Newport Theater Arts Center, Irene George, dir., Tim Nelson, cond., 6-9, 13-16, 20-23 June 1991.

The Threepenny Opera, Philadelphia, PA. The Pennsylvania Opera Theater, 2, 6, 8, May 1992.

YUGOSLAVIA

Der zar läßt sich photographieren, Zagreb. Televizije Zagreb, May 1991.

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