

More Radical Than Most *Gebrauchsjazz*

Music for the "Berlin im Licht" Festival

by Nils Grosch

"The harmonies and melodies are more radical than with most *Gebrauchsjazz*" concluded Erwin Stein in his 1928 report to Universal Edition, Vienna (UE) when asked to evaluate the music composed by Max Butting and Heinz Tiessen for the "Berlin im Licht" festival. Butting and Tiessen, along with Kurt Weill, Wladimir Vogel, Stefan Wolpe, Hanns Eisler, and Philipp Jarnach, were counted among the leaders of the music section of the *Novembergruppe* and considered representatives of Berlin's musical avant-garde.

Some months earlier, Max Butting had explained his ideas for the "Berlin im Licht" festival in a letter dated 2 July 1928 to UE: "Naturally, only popular events are planned, featuring about six simultaneous open-air concerts (*Stand-musiken*). The music would include "two movements of Hindemith's military music, and then Krenek, three military marches, Butting, Tiessen, and Weill." Butting was asked by the artistic leaders of the festival to undertake "the leadership of all musical matters," and he used his charge to "promote modern music."¹

Butting proposed to include two works – Hindemith's *Konzertmusik*, op. 41 and Krenek's *Lustige Märsche*, op. 44 – originally performed at the 1926 Donaueschingen Chamber Music Festival, the first festival to present cultivated *Gebrauchsmusik* in the form of modern music for wind band.² New compositions would be composed by Butting, Tiessen, and Weill, each in two versions: one for military band and one for piano. The piano versions were to be published in one volume under the "Berlin im Licht" logo and sold during the festival. Butting anticipated healthy sales. Four of the five composers (all but Hindemith) were already under contract with UE, and the organizers of the festival assured that at least 1,000 copies would be purchased.³

As members of the *Novembergruppe*, Tiessen, Butting, and Weill were undoubtedly in close communication and therefore probably discussed unifying conceptual and stylistic ideas for

their "Berlin im Licht" pieces. On 8 July 1928 Butting reported to UE, "I will speak with Weill and Tiessen about the festival during the next few days." Six weeks later, on 18 August, Butting submitted his two compositions (a "Blues" and a "Marsch") along with a "Foxtrott" and a "Boston" by Tiessen. Weill's song was to follow in a few days.⁴

Butting made clear his intentions for the festival in a polemical announcement intended for publication in UE's *Musikblätter des Anbruch*. The open-air concerts were to be an affront to the devotional behavior of bourgeois German concert-goers as well as a reaction to the snootiness of many of his colleagues.

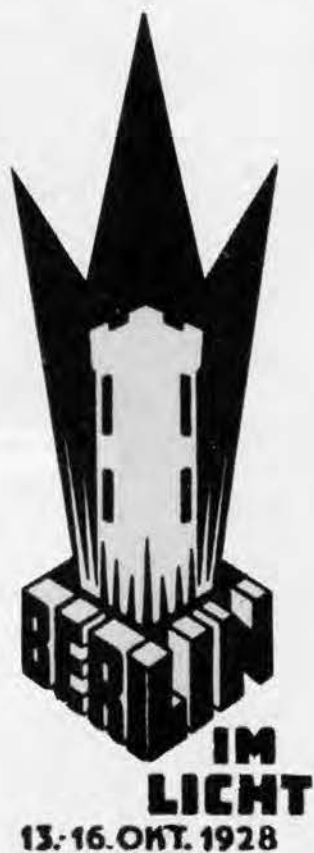
"We Germans are a strange people. We have an indestructible respect for things that we can scarcely understand or do not understand at all. On the other hand, we have no respect for what we understand easily. We go to a concert as if to church, perhaps boring ourselves with decency, and yet we still feel morally obliged to take a necessary dose of edification home with us. If, for some reason, we are not edified, we are shocked. If we are amused, then we are convinced that the work of art is not at the level one expects from 'high' art. The average German art-lover is always a bit ashamed when he derives too much pleasure from a work of art."

But Butting goes on to reveal his true concerns:

*Because the so-called serious composers are strictly forbidden to compose amusing and entertaining music... , such music is consequently not written by good musicians. Thus the rift between popular music and serious music ... cannot be bridged.*⁵

Butting hoped that the "Berlin im Licht" festival would bridge this gap, and he used the example of the 1926

Donaueschingen festival to make his case. While he admitted that some of the works in the festival were suited as showpieces for a military concert, the other works were intended "to be loved unconditionally everywhere." They were not conceived as a synthesis of concert music and military music, but rather



"Berlin im Licht" Festival Logo

as truly good popular music. At the Donaueschingen festival, the so-called *Gebrauchsmusiken* for military orchestra were performed before a small circle of educated and intellectual friends of music, but "in the open air, conducted by the celebrated [Hermann Scherchen]." The "Berlin im Licht" festival took this idea one step further by presenting "music for the people, in front of the people."⁶ For that reason the "Berlin im Licht" experiment forged a truly new approach, bringing about unique musical solutions.

Erwin Stein, a composer and former pupil of Schoenberg, was commissioned by UE to write an assessment of the newly-commissioned works. He was not equipped to understand the "Berlin im Licht" aesthetic or to recognize its novel approach. He found the works "weak compositionally," and continued, "I find the piece by Butting better than the others, but at the same time I don't feel that it follows popular style. The harmonies and melodies are more radical than with most *Gebrauchsjazz*. The pieces don't seem to have the potential of being hits." Stein disagreed with efforts to restructure and broaden the public for new music, so he had little use for this "lower-level" type of *Gebrauchsmusik*.⁷ Acting upon Stein's recommendation, but before Weill had submitted his piece, UE decided not to publish the "Berlin im Licht" compositions and returned the rights to Butting and Tiessen.⁸

For Weill, though, an exception was made. He had just scored a tremendous success with *Die Dreigroschenoper*, so UE decided to publish his "Berlin im Licht-Song" just in time for the beginning of the festival.⁹ The promoters of "Berlin im Licht" had a disagreement with UE and banned from the program any works that previously were to be published by the firm. Therefore, Krenek's "Marsch" was replaced with Ernst Toch's "Spiel für Blasorchester," which also had been commissioned for Donaueschingen in 1926 and published by Schott. UE then pulled Butting's description of the festival from publication in *Musikblätter des Anbruch* and instead announced only Weill's composition as being a "continuation of his successful songs, ... begun with *Mahagonny* and *Die Dreigroschenoper*, which had created an entirely new genre of social chanson."¹⁰

The program book suggests why the "Berlin im Licht" festival created such a stir. The lighting exhibitions could be viewed in all parts of the city and were accessible by any number of means according to one's financial resources: walk-

ing tour, rail, bus, car, or even *Lichtcorso* motorboat. Aside from these light performances, there were several cultural attractions that included music: the open-air concerts took place on 15 October, and the festival closed with the "Official Light Ball" at the Kroll-Oper on 16 October.¹¹

Butting is credited in the program as the concert director, but the conductor for each performance is not credited. Five simultaneous concerts took place at two different times, for a total of ten in all:

7 pm - 8 pm	Rathaus Spandau Kleiner Tiergarten Hohenstaufenplatz Rudolf-Wilde-Platz (Schöneberg) Rathaus, Lichtenberg.
9 pm - 10 pm	Wittenbergplatz Platz der Republik Königstraße Lauterplatz (Friedenau) Märchenbrunnen (Friedrichshain). ¹²

With one exception, the works composed for the festival by Butting and Tiessen were not published; they do not even appear in the composers' works indexes.¹³ Indeed, these works were forgotten until the recent discovery of the piano score for Butting's "Blues," published in an illustrated section of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, and of Tiessen's "Foxtrott," located in his *Nachlaß*.¹⁴ Butting's observation that he wanted "either to

compose something new or adapt the instrumentation of the 'Marsch' (op. 31, no. 4) for military band"¹⁵ can lead to the conclusion that his "Marsch für Berlin im Licht" was, in fact, an adaptation of the fourth piece of his 1925 UE publication, "Vier Stücke für Klavier, op. 31."

In order to envision what was heard during those ten open-air concerts on 15 October 1928, it is worthwhile to take a short look at the pieces composed for the event. The works by Butting, Tiessen, and Weill tend to allude to the simpler

structures of *Unterhaltungsmusik*. The inner substance betrays the expressionist background of all three composers by employing the harmonic language of brusque dissonance, but the outer surface is characterized by bluesy or popular harmonies. The result does not constitute a musical "middle way." The prevailing understanding of "modern" did not see these elements as extremes set against one another, but rather allowed for the synchronicity of both sound worlds or the constant



Cartoon by Benedikt Doblin. Left to right: Tiessen, Toch, Butting, Weill, and Hindemith. Reprinted from *Tempo Berlin*, 15 October 1928.

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alternation between one and the other. The structural elements associated with *Unterhaltungsmusik*, such as a concise rhythm (in Tiessen's piece) or a simple phrase structure (in Weill's) are always perceptible on the surface. These works demonstrate the tendency to create forms that are both modern and popular, without renouncing the possibility of contemporary musical expression. In so doing, by heeding the trend of "Americanism," this music shows a dimension of modernism that goes beyond the strictly musical, to show an association with social and historical modernism of the Weimar Republic.

the Stransky example) does not disrupt this expectation. The first verse begins with a predictable eight-bar setting of the first two lines, as foreshadowed in the introduction:

*Und zum spazierengehen
genügt das Sonnenlicht*¹⁷

But in the third line Weill goes beyond the prescribed periodic and harmonic structures set up in the introduction. [See example 3.] Here the harmonic logic appears to be disrupted, until it is taken up again seemingly unbroken in



Example 1. Kurt Weill: "Berlin im Licht Song," mm. 1-8. © 1928 Universal Edition.
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Example 2. Otto Stransky: "Marschlied Berlin im Licht," mm. 1-8.



Example 3. Kurt Weill: "Berlin im Licht-Song," mm. 13-16.

This development can be clearly illustrated by comparing Weill's "Berlin im Licht-Song" with a model of typical popular song, Otto Stransky's "Marschlied Berlin im Licht."¹⁶ [See examples 1 & 2.] Both composers write an eight-bar introduction. Weill borrows material from the beginning of the song, while Stransky uses material from the closing refrain. The function of the opening measures of most popular songs is to signal a four-measure phrase structure. Here, the periodicity of the eight-bar structure in each example affirms the simple structure of the music to follow. Weill's introduction springs from a simple melodic motive which follows four times the formal model a-b-b-a of a I-II-II-I sequential pattern. The simple periodic structure is assimilated by the listener, who expects it to continue throughout the composition. Even the suggested harmonic duality found at the beginning of this song (and also

measure 16. Weill remains true to an overall periodic effect but does so by expanding the harmonic language between decisive but predictable target points: the beginning, middle, and the end. This is a unique invention that cannot be explained by traditional or jazz-oriented analysis. The widening expansion of the melody is resolved through the rhythmic structure of the text with surprising results. The melody is colored by chromatic elements in the tritone-based harmony, which produces a tension that is released in a passage of parallel, descending chords made up of a minor sixth over a tritone; a construction, one might say, which only appears to drive toward the dominant seventh chord and from there to the tonic. This is an example of how a unique harmonic progression is achieved within large-scale periodic constructs borrowed from *Unterhaltungsmusik*. The technique is typical of Weill's compo-

sitional process during this period, but it is rarely so clearly revealed as in this song.

Weill's song may suffice as an example of what the audiences at the open-air concerts experienced. In spite of all the dire predictions, UE might have been misled by uninformed advice. "The pieces by Tiessen, Weill and me were not so technically difficult that they couldn't be played by *all*, even the rather mediocre local bands!" reported Butting. He reported in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* that "in spite of distractions caused by unfortunate external circumstances, [the Berlin im Licht pieces] were more willingly received and without prejudice by the general public than the first performances of modern music had been received years ago in the concert hall."¹⁸ In a postscript to his publisher, Butting commented that "new things were hard to judge." He understood why their experts were skeptical. But he was nevertheless very pleased that the pieces "sounded so wonderful."¹⁹

Translated by Kathleen Finnegan

J E D E W O C H E M U S I K 159

Berlin im Licht

Blues

von Max Butting

Tempo di Blues

Max Butting
Phot. Harnisch

Stützpunkte vorbehalten. Nachdruck verboten!

Wappen für „Jede Woche Musik“ liefern bei den Adressen Hefen-Gläser in Berlin 0,25 M. (noch unterhalb 1 M. gratis)

Max Butting, "Berlin im Licht: Blues für Klavier, op. 36, Nr. 1," *Haus, Hof, Garten, Illustrierte Wochenschrift des Berliner Tagesblatts*, (13 October 1928): 159.

Notes

- ¹ Butting's letter of 2 July 1928 to Universal Edition, in the UE archive, Musiksammlung der Stadt- und Landesbibliothek Wien. All of the correspondence to follow may also be found in the UE archive.
- ² See also: Hans-Peter Bennis, "Die Donaueschinger Kammermusiktage von 1921-26," Ph.D. diss., Freiburg, 1961, p. 165.
- ³ Butting's letter of 2 July 1928 to UE.
- ⁴ Butting's letter of 18 August 1928 to UE.
- ⁵ Max Butting, Untitled [Draft announcement of the "Berlin im Licht" festival]. From the UE Archive in Vienna, Musiksammlung der Stadt- und Landesbibliothek Wien.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Erwin Stein, "Utopien," *Pult und Taktstock* 6 (1929): 25-30.
- ⁸ UE's letter of 4 September [1928] to Butting.
- ⁹ UE's letter of 8 October [1928] confirming receipt of Weill's "Berlin im Licht-Song" and informing Weill that the "propaganda" for this edition is underway. UE Archive, Vienna. See also Kim H. Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 70.
- ¹⁰ "Ein Berlin-Song von Weill," *Anbruch* 10 (1928): 304. This paragraph is reprinted anonymously, but one can credit it to Hans Heinsheimer who had utilized similar formulations in his correspondence to Weill.
- ¹¹ *Berlin im Licht-Festprogramm mit Lichtführer durch Berlin* (Berlin, 1928). See also Barbara Schrader and Jürgen Schebera, *Kunstmetropole Berlin: 1918-33* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1987), 136-40.
- ¹² Ibid. 12 concerts with 6 orchestras were planned originally, as confirmed in a 30 August 1928 letter by Butting to UE. Apparently one orchestra cancelled at the last minute.
- ¹³ Dietrich Brennecke, "Das Lebenswerk Max Buttings," Ph.D. diss., Leipzig, 1973; Manfred Schlosser, ed., *Für Heinz Tiessen 1887-1971: Aufsätze, Analysen, Briefe, Erinnerungen, Dokumente, Werkverzeichnis, Bibliographie*, (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1979).
- ¹⁴ Max Butting, "Berlin im Licht: Blues für Klavier, op. 36, Nr. 1," *Haus, Hof, Garten, Illustrierte Wochenschrift des Berliner Tagesblatts*, (13 October 1928): 159; Heinz Tiessen, "Foxtrott für Blasorchester, op. 39, Nr. 1," unpublished autograph score, Akademie der Künste Berlin, Stiftung Archiv.
- ¹⁵ Butting's letter of 2 July 1928 to UE.
- ¹⁶ Otto Stransky, "Berlin im Licht-Marschlied" (lyrics by Günther Bilbo), *Haus, Hof, Garten, Illustrierte Wochenschrift des Berliner Tagesblatts*, (13 October 1928): 157f.
- ¹⁷ Evidently the poem "Wir haben zu viel parat" is a collaborative reworking of an earlier poem written by Brecht. See *Bertolt Brecht: Werke. Grosse kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, Vol. 14 (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1993), 12f, 470f. According to Butting's 2 July 1928 letter to UE, Brecht was supposed to write the text. Brecht is not credited in UE's published version.
- ¹⁸ Max Butting, "Unterhaltungsmusik," *Sozialistische Monatshefte*: 929-30.
- ¹⁹ Butting's letter of 18 August 1928 to UE.

Weill and Schoenberg

by David Drew

The following essay is reprinted from *Sundry Sorts of Music Books: Essays on The British Library Collections, presented to O.W. Neighbour on his 70th birthday*, edited by Chris Banks, Arthur Searle, and Malcolm Turner (London: British Library, 1993). From 1974 until his retirement in 1981, Neighbour was superintendent of the Music Library of the British Library (having begun his notable career in the British Museum in 1946).

Introduction: An open letter to O.W. Neighbour

The letter below is dated 30 July 1992, and was in fact the preface to the Schoenberg-Weill essays which I drafted that August. I realized at the time that many other contributors to the Festschrift would be sending similar letters, and that there might not be room for them (I was right); but I hoped that there might be another opportunity for publishing it (and so there is).

Dear Tim

In your advocacy and analysis of Schoenberg during the decisive years following his death, your many early admirers could already recognize the qualities that distinguish your critical and scholarly work in every field. Your dedication to musical realities -- to the audible sense -- was present and passionate from the start. With it went your principled inclusiveness and your freedom from critical prejudice of any sort: while the partisans of Schoenberg and Stravinsky were still squabbling about territorial rights or historical necessity, you quietly occupied yourself with the music of both masters, as of every other.

From those far-off days you will certainly recall the magazine poll of American concert-goers which placed Schoenberg a long way behind Vaughan Williams. Much amused, you had speculated about Schoenberg's conceivable reaction to such a result -- not "who is whose contemporary?", but rather, "who is this Williams?". You, of course, have always known exactly who that particular Williams was (not to mention other Williams before and after him); and you never hesitated during the 1950s to speak up for him in circles where it was heretical to do so. [The author refers to the forename of the composer whose music was the subject of Neighbour's largest undertaking to date -- *The Consort and Keyboard Music of William Byrd*, *The Music of William Byrd*, vol. iii (London 1978) -- and also to that of (Sir) William Glock, who as Editor of *The Score*, published Neighbour's two articles on Vaughan Williams (March 1955 and November 1958). -- Eds.]

Equally dangerous to a comfortable life in the 1950s was the music of Weill as it began to emerge from the shadows (unnoticed, of course, by the American pollsters). While the Brecht battalions were pulling it in one direction and the nostalgia-merchants in another, you were one of the very few who took the trouble to listen and then steadfastly to read and play and consider whatever the printed pages had to offer.

In principle, and by example, it was a true service to Weill's cause. Perhaps your first small reward for it was your delight at discovering in a Paris bookshop a manuscript copy, signed by the composer, of his unpublished a cappella work, the *Recordare* of 1923. Until that discovery in 1971 the work had been lost without a trace (as you, almost uniquely, had reason to know). Since then, no other copy has come to light.

Recollections are proper to the celebration of an anniversary such as yours, and there are perhaps more of them reflected in this modest contribution to your Festschrift than are apparent to the naked eye or the nostalgic lens. But if its subject-matter reminds us of what had seemed, in our discussions three decades ago, to be as provocative as it was speculative, it is also a reminder of how easily the wilder speculations of yesteryear can become the commonplaces of today. Weill and Schoenberg? But of course...

David Drew was in charge of the New Music department at Boosey & Hawkes from 1975 until his resignation in 1992, and since then has been concentrating on recording work, mostly in Germany. In preparation are a revised edition of *Kurt Weill: A Handbook* (1987), and the first volume of his critical survey of Weill's work.

Until recently, there were only three sources to which students interested in the relationship – if any – between Weill and Schoenberg could safely be referred: Weill's published writings,¹ his music,² and Schoenberg's gloss on a *Feuilleton* item by Weill.³ To these sources might be added a few scraps of more-or-less reliable hearsay.

The first source remains the largest, and although it is no longer the most revealing, it serves an indispensable purpose. References to Schoenberg in Weill's contributions to the Berlin radio journal *Der deutsche Rundfunk* during the crucial years 1925-7 are quite numerous and uniformly positive, whether his subject be the composer of *Gurrelieder* or of *Pierrot Lunaire*. "Even his opponents," he wrote in the issue of 28 February 1926, "have to recognize in him the purest and most noble artistic personality and the strongest mind in today's musical life."⁴

No such awe informs the handful of published references to Schoenberg that Weill permitted himself in his Broadway years. Nevertheless, one trace of the early attitude survives in an inverted form: whereas the Weill of February 1926 lauded a Schoenberg "who regards success in his own lifetime almost as a setback for his art," the Weill of 1940 declared that whereas he himself composed "for today" and didn't "give a damn for posterity," Schoenberg wrote for a time "50 years after his death."⁵ Merely attributed to Weill by the writer of the newspaper article – and indebted, perhaps, to a view of posterity already offered to the American public by Stravinsky – Weill's most celebrated *aperçu* fulfills a need but lacks a context. Whether a relevant one is provided by another remark attributed to Weill is a matter of opinion: as recalled some thirty years later by no less an authority than T.W. Adorno,⁶ Weill apparently suggested that his "way" was the only valid alternative to Schoenberg's. Flattering on all three sides, it is the kind of drastic formulation that serves its defensive purposes without inhibiting conversation. Although the remark, if authentic, must have appealed to Adorno's dialectical imagination, it was not necessarily calculated to do so, and certainly cannot be brushed aside as opportunistic. Weill's experience of Schoenberg may well have been remote in time, yet it had played a significant if restricted part in his creative development (and indeed in his early musical life, as we shall see).

According to Heinrich Strobel⁷ – who may simply have been relaying information from Weill himself – the (lost) symphonic poem of 1919 based on Rilke's *Die Weise von Liebe und Tod des Cornets Christoph Rilke* was influenced by Schoenberg's *Pelleas und Melisande*. The first known traces of Schoenbergian interests appear in the second and third movements of the Cello Sonata, which date from the summer of 1920.⁸ While there is no irrefutable evidence that Weill at this stage had studied Schoenberg's opp. 9 and 10 – rather than merely read about them and seen a few music examples – the influence of the *Kammersymphonie*, op. 9, on Weill's one-movement Symphony of 1921 is unmistakable, as is the intervention of Busoni in the Symphony's final chorale-fantasy. Apart from the scherzo

of the *Divertimento*, op. 5 (1921-2) – some of whose non-tonal material pre-dates Weill's studies with Busoni – the "new classicality" of Busoni now ousted all overt Schoenbergian influences (though the impressive and technically demanding *Recordare*, op.11, for unaccompanied four-part chorus and children's chorus, surely acknowledges the precedent of Schoenberg's *Friede auf Erden*, op. 13).

In so far as Weill was liberated by Busoni's death in 1924, it was in the non-tonal direction indicated by the first movement of his Violin Concerto, op.12, of the same year. In a letter to Lotte Lenya of 28 October 1925 he described a disastrous performance of the work in his native town of Dessau and declared that the piece presupposed knowledge of Schoenberg and was (therefore?) far above the heads of the local public.⁹ Although from a strictly musical point of view no Schoenberg influence is audible in the Concerto, the sense of Schoenberg's spiritual leadership to which Weill's radio notes of February 1926 pay tribute is perhaps implicit in some of the Concerto's characteristic attitudes.

With his discovery – partly a rediscovery – of his own tonal voice in 1926-7, Weill removed himself from anything suggestive of Schoenberg. Yet it was precisely in this period that personal encounters would have been almost inevitable. Once Schoenberg had succeeded to Busoni's position as director of the Masterclass in Composition at the Prussian Academy of Arts, the circle of their mutual acquaintances was notably enlarged – in addition to Fritz Stiedry, who was more than a mere "acquaintance" of both composers, and Scherchen, who was a key figure for Weill, there were links through several composers and critics, including H.H. Stuckenschmidt, Heinz Tiessen, Stefan Wolpe, and Wladimir Vogel (good friends with Weill since the Busoni days). Towards the end of 1927 – that is to say, some months after Weill's *Mahagonny Songspiel* and Berg's *Lyric Suite* had been the outstanding successes at Hindemith's international "chamber music" festival in Baden-Baden – Schoenberg recommended Weill, unsuccessfully, for membership of the Prussian Academy of Arts, together with Zemlinsky, Tiessen, Berg, Webern, Hauer, Kaminski, and Krenek.¹⁰ Schoenberg would certainly have known Weill's friendly words in *Der deutsche Rundfunk* and may even have heard one or two of his pieces at concerts presented by such bodies as the (very active) Berlin section of the International Society for Contemporary Music.

That was all changed by *Die Dreigroschenoper* and its sensational success in September 1928. According to some of the younger members of his Masterclass,¹¹ Schoenberg was affronted and felt betrayed: to the Masterclass he declared – or, as some would have it, demonstrated – that Weill as a composer of "*Unterhaltungsmusik*" was immeasurably inferior to Léhar. This was still his position five years later. At the time, both he and Weill were refugees in Paris; but whereas Weill was the toast of the salons, Schoenberg was in every sense an outsider. "Franz Léhar, yes," he told Virgil Thompson, "Weill, no. His is the only music in the world in which I can find no quality at all."¹²

Although an unknown item entitled "Der Musiker Weill" was listed in 1960 by Josef Rufer in his catalogue of the Schoenberg *Nachlass*,¹³ a further 20 years were to pass before any notice was taken of it (my own earlier attempts to obtain a copy of it having been only half-heartedly pursued, perhaps for fear of what might be uncovered). In 1980 Professor Alexander Ringer published an essay, "Schoenberg, Weill and Epic Theater,"¹⁴ which reproduced and discussed the item catalogued by Rufer – a newspaper cutting, without date or source, containing a short article by Weill, copiously and angrily annotated by Schoenberg. Though not identified as such by Professor Ringer, Weill's article was in fact an excerpt from a symposium for serious-minded 12-year-olds, published on Christmas Day 1928 by the *Berliner Tageblatt*. Both as a would-be humorous sally and as a light-hearted, not to say irresponsible, disavowal of Wagner, it could hardly have been better calculated to upset Schoenberg.

In 1980 it had seemed that the material published by Professor Ringer was likely to constitute the third and last source for our knowledge of the constant if vacillating relationship between the two composers. In 1989, however, the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music acquired a substantial collection of Weill's letters to his family, the majority dating from the formative years about which little had hitherto been known. Indeed, the very existence of the letters had been unsuspected until about two years beforehand. Now that they are available for research, they are proving revelatory in many respects, not least with regard to our present topic.

First, however, a word about Weill's early music education. The bare facts have long been known: initial studies in Dessau (1917-8) with the conductor and pianist Albert Bing, a pupil of Pfitzner and a close family friend of the Weills, followed by a year (1918-9) at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, studying composition with Humperdinck and conducting with Krasselt. Weill's reasons for interrupting his studies at the Hochschule had always been a matter for reasonable surmise, based on a few remarks and asides in the handful of long-familiar letters to his parents and to his sister Ruth. From the latter source we have also known of his interest in Schreker both as a composer and teacher – an interest spanning the winter of 1919-20 and connected with hopes or dreams of finding some way of studying with Schreker in Vienna. Until now it has been assumed that the Vienna plan was postponed for financial reasons and then dropped after the first news, or rumors, that Schreker would be moving to Berlin in the early autumn of 1920 and taking over the direction of the Hochschule für Musik. Weill's return to Berlin in September 1920 seemed to support that assumption, though there was (and still is) no record of his having applied to the Hochschule for readmission. By December he had entrusted his future to Busoni and the Academy of Arts.

In the course of a brief discussion with the present writer some thirty years ago, Hermann Scherchen spoke of Weill bringing the score of a string quartet to him in the early 1920s.

At that stage I knew of no quartet by Weill prior to his op.8 of 1923, and so it did not occur to me to ask Scherchen whether he had played any part in Weill's modulation from Schreker to Busoni. The newly discovered letters explain everything. Most of them are addressed to Weill's brother Hans who was a year older than Weill but obviously respectful of his musical, literary, and philosophical outlook. It is clear that Hans was passionately interested in music and not without technical training.

On 13 June 1919 Weill informed Hans that he would be seeing Humperdinck the next day with very mixed feelings, chiefly because he was unsure of how he would receive the news of his intended withdrawal from the Hochschule and wanted to avoid a row. Krasselt too, he believed, would be astonished: "but that doesn't change things; 3 semesters in the Hochschule are sufficient for my requirements." At the beginning of the following week he would be meeting Scherchen and by the end of it he hoped to have a better idea of where he stood. Meanwhile he would be putting some questions to the Academy of Arts in Vienna.

On 20 June Weill sent Hans news of that morning's momentous meeting with Scherchen:

Naturally, he too advised me to go to Vienna; he doesn't know Schreker very well, but he thinks there is really only one man from whom a talented person (he had looked fleetingly at my string quartet) could still learn something, and the very first through whom I would really understand who the Young Ones in music are, and what they want to be: Arnold Schoenberg, the acknowledged apostle of new music, who accomplishes fantastic things in a private school for composition. He understands his pupils at once, points out even their smallest weaknesses, opens up fantastic new points of view, and does not put them under a yoke and pull them in his own direction, the way Pfitzner and many others do. From the start it was my intention to visit this school in Vienna at some time or other. Then at the same time, I could perfect my pianistic abilities. But probably this private study would cost so much that I couldn't think of it, at least for the time being. Now I'm all the more undecided, because I can hardly remain here. In any case, I shall write to Schoenberg today.

The following week was a turbulent one for Weill. It is clear from the extensive and remarkable letter he wrote to his brother on 27 June 1919 that he was still a long way from resolving the struggle between his innermost wishes and his sense of what was practicable. His argument with himself begins thus:

Again and again the question runs through my head: Can you remain here? And always the answer: To Vienna! And then each time the disappointment: it's pretty well impossible for me at present to realize such a plan.

Impossible for financial reasons, of course; and for the same reasons he has been "seriously" considering wintering in the Dessau opera house in order to gain more conducting experi-

ence and prepare himself for the “massive” experience of Vienna and studies with Schoenberg. But Dessau would be a last resort. He thanks providence for his interest in “the New”:

Strauss has faded. Think of everything in Strauss that is false, trivial, veneered and contrived being replaced by the finest kind of modernism, in Mahler's sense, as the result of a great personality expressing itself in the most profound way: then you have Arnold Schoenberg as I am getting to know him now from his “Gurre-Lieder” ... Together with Cassirer's lecture on Spinoza,¹⁵ this work has kept me calm amidst inner struggles. I don't mind how it comes about, but – sooner or later – I must go to Vienna. What this man Schoenberg brings to me is something so new that I was quite speechless.

By 3 July Weill is reporting that Bing has returned to his earlier recommendation that he go to Munich – much less expensive than Vienna – to study composition with Pfitzner and conducting with Bruno Walter. An even cheaper alternative would be to study both composition and conducting in Cologne with Hermann Wetzler, a Humperdinck pupil of Straussian persuasion, from whom Weill nevertheless believed he could profit “kolossal.” Finally the retirement of the aged and arch-conservative Hermann Kretschmar (1848-1924) from his post as Director of the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin added fuel to his and Scherchen's hopes of a modernist coup in that dusty institution.

On 14 July Weill wrote from Berlin to his brother:

Did I write to tell you that Schoenberg sent me from Vienna an extremely nice card in which he announces, in the most noble fashion, that he will accommodate me in every way. The card is so modern in its formulations that all of us here, and our parents as well, are most enthusiastic about it. In my next letter I will give you the actual words. All the same there is little chance of my getting to Vienna before next spring, and I've already written to tell Schoenberg that.

So ends the Schoenberg-Vienna story, as far as Weill's known correspondence is concerned. The “next letter” to Hans has not survived, and no trace of the Weill-Schoenberg correspondence has yet come to light. Subsequent events are not, however, hard to surmise. In that same letter of 14 July, Scherchen is quoted as telling him that a big upheaval at the Hochschule is imminent, because of the appointment of a “very modern composer” to whom Weill could safely entrust himself. “Ich glaube nicht daran,” commented Weill; and the events proved him right. The “very modern composer” did not materialize, and the “upheaval” did not begin until Schreker's appointment a year later.

All else having indeed failed, Weill duly returned to Dessau, where Bing's new *Generalmusikdirektor* was Hans Knappertsbusch. After three months Weill left to take up a conducting post for which Humperdinck had recommended him. By the summer of 1920 economic conditions in Germany and the domestic circumstances of the Weill family had surely put paid to his dreams of studying in Vienna – but how telling

that “Song of the Wood Dove” from the *Gurrelieder* ends the program of twentieth-century Lieder and piano music (Reger, Schreker, Pfitzner and Weill) which he gave with soprano Elizabeth Feuge on 22 June 1920! Specially devised for the concert series promoted by the music society that his brother Hans was directing in Halberstadt, the program served among other things as a kind of personal statement at a time of crucial transition.

Whatever significance Weill may have attributed to the official announcement of Schreker's appointment to the Hochschule – and the news of that must have reached him by July 1920 – it would be surprising if his enthusiasm were quite the same as a year before. All the stronger, therefore, must have been the impact of the subsequent announcement that Busoni would be leaving the Swiss canton to which he had exiled himself during the war and returning at long last to his Berlin home in order to take up a highly influential position – an event for which Scherchen had been campaigning with his customary vigor. If, however, Weill had been led to believe that Busoni was still in some sense to be identified with Schoenberg's cause, he would soon discover his error.

The concept of Weill as a pupil of Schoenberg, like that of Britten as a pupil of Berg, is not without a certain cryptic charm. Whether or not there is anything more to it remains to be demonstrated.

Notes

¹ Stephen Hinton and Jürgen Schebera, eds., *Kurt Weill, Musik und Theater, Gesammelte Schriften. Mit einer Auswahl von Gesprächen und Interviews* (Berlin: Henschel, 1990). Although this collection largely supersedes David Drew, ed., *Ausgewählte Schriften* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), the latter includes several significant items omitted from the otherwise much more comprehensive 1990 collection – among them Weill's Schoenberg tribute of 28 February 1926, cited here in paragraph 2.

² With the following exceptions, all the works mentioned here are published by Universal Edition (Vienna): Symphony no. 1 (Schott, Mainz), String Quartet in B minor, Cello Sonata, *Recordare* (European American Music Corporation, Valley Forge).

³ Original in the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, Los Angeles. See no. 14 below.

⁴ The extracts from Weill's letters are the copyright of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music and may not be reprinted without permission. The translations are by Lys Symonette and the author.

⁵ “Composer for the Theatre – Kurt Weill talks about ‘Practical Music,’” *New York Sun* (3 February 1940).

⁶ In conversation with the author, Frankfurt, 1967.

⁷ Heinrich Strobel, “Kurt Weill,” *Melos* 6 (1937), 427ff.

⁸ The dating is discussed in David Drew, *Kurt Weill: A Handbook* (London: Faber, 1987).

⁹ An edition by Kim H. Kowalke and Lys Symonette of the Weill-Lenya correspondence is in preparation.

¹⁰ H. H. Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg, His Life, World and Work* (London: Calder, 1977), 325.

¹¹ For example: Roberto Gerhard, Walter Goehr, and Marc Blitzstein, in separate conversations with the author during the period 1957-60.

¹² Virgil Thomson, *Virgil Thomson* (New York, Knopf, 1966).

¹³ Josef Rufer, *Das Werk Arnold Schönbergs* (Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1959).

¹⁴ Alexander Ringer, “Schoenberg, Weill and Epic Theatre,” *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* 4, no. 1 (June 1980): 77-98.

¹⁵ Among the lectures Weill attended at the University of Berlin during the first semester of 1918-19 were those by the distinguished philosopher Ernst Cassirer.

Street Scene Research Documents at Yale University and the Rubin Academy of Music and Dance

The Beinecke Rare Book Library at Yale University contains material that opens a new avenue for research on the genesis of *Street Scene*. To date, our knowledge of the work's evolution has been restricted to two main sources: (1) occasional mention of completed numbers in Weill's letters and 1946 datebook; (2) marginalia in his copy of Rice's play.¹ Yale's James Weldon Johnson Collection of Negro Arts and Letters, which includes the papers of *Street Scene*'s lyricist, Langston Hughes (1902-67), substantially augments those sources.² When Carl Van Vechten established the collection in 1941, he urged his friend to consider giving his papers to Yale, enticing him with the prospect that the collection might be famous one day because of its Hughes holdings.³ Hughes, already given to squirreling things away for posterity, began sending boxes of materials to Van Vechten, who catalogued every page and sent them on to Yale. After Hughes began to work on the lyrics for *Street Scene*, Van Vechten reminded him, quite superfluously, to save everything.⁴ Thanks to these efforts, the collection includes a meticulously dated set of every draft of the lyrics, Hughes's copy of Rice's original play, handwritten notes taken by Hughes during the collaborative sessions and the try-out rehearsals, and correspondence between Hughes, the collaborators, and other colleagues.

Because Rice's 1928 play prominently featured European immigrants, Hughes was eager to incorporate African-Americans in the musical version. His first ideas for the lyrics included several numbers for a black janitor and his wife. Although the collaborators deleted the wife's role, they initially gave the janitor three numbers in Act I, including the finale, "Great Big Sky." In the spring of 1946, they moved "Great Big Sky" to the opening of Act II, and eventually dropped it all together in July. They also gave the janitor a solo, "A Little Swing For Swinging," in the Act I centerpiece, "A Nation of Nations." Designed to give a representative from each nationality a chance to recount his or her country's contribution to American society, this ensemble gave the collaborators problems all summer, and at the urging of director, Charles Friedman, they cut it in September, in favor of the intentionally corny graduation piece, "Wrapped in a Ribbon." The Negro character was thereby stripped of all but a blues number, "A Marble And A Star," which, according to Hughes, lacked authenticity and was "somewhat more in the tradition of Broadway shows."⁵

The Hughes material offers a fascinating glimpse of the collaborative process. During the first working session in the summer of 1945, Hughes jotted down Weill's desire that the opera should include humor, bitter commentary, and the emotional power of two love stories (Mrs. Maurrant's and Rose's). Weill instructed him to get the libretto of *La bohème* and make Mrs. Maurrant's aria begin and end in despair "like a Puccini." The marginalia in Hughes's copy of Rice's play, which pre-date by a few months the markings in Weill's copy, suggest that Weill waited for Hughes's lyrics before he fine-tuned his vision of the musical version. Having worked out the details of Act I by March 1946, the collaborators tackled Act II. They originally designed it to balance the weight of Act I, but pared it down from fifteen to nine numbers by the end of July. The comic relief number, "She's a Gemini Girl," was a very late addition, not being inserted until November, just one month before the Philadelphia opening. Despite the imbalance between the two acts, three numbers from Act II were cut after the tryout run. In their respective production notes, Hughes argued for the reinstatement of "She's a Gemini Girl," and Weill for "Italy in Technicolor," but neither number ever made it to Broadway.

The Hughes material could also be useful for dating Weill's sketches, and for other editorial purposes, since Hughes kept track of the changes made in the tryout rehearsals. The sheer bulk of the material reflects the enormous amount of work that went into making the final version.

NOTES

¹ For a detailed discussion of these sources see William Thornhill, "Kurt Weill's *Street Scene*" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1990): 17-97.

² I came across this material while working on a seminar project at Yale for Professor Stephen Hinton.

³ Van Vechten to Hughes, 27 October 1941, James Weldon Johnson Collection.

⁴ Van Vechten to Hughes, 19 May 1946, James Weldon Johnson Collection.

⁵ Hughes to Arna Bontemps, 20 July 1946, *Arna Bontemps-Langston Hughes Letters: 1925-1967*, ed. Charles H. Nichols (1980; reprint, New York: Paragon House, 1990): 210. Hughes lamented this fact and stated, "The only way for colored to do much down on that street without outside influences diluting their product will be for the race to open a theatre of its own."

DAVID D'ANDRE
Yale University

The Rubin Academy of Music and Dance in Jerusalem preserves in its library some music scores and documents from two donors who worked closely with Weill: tenor William Horne and soprano Polyna Stoska.

In 1942, Kurt Weill wrote his *Three Walt Whitman Songs*, dedicated to Max and Mab Anderson ("Oh Captain! My Captain!" "Beat Beat Drums!" and "Dirge for Two Veterans"). They were published by Chappell & Co. in the same year. In 1947, Weill added to them a fourth song ("Come up from the Fields, Father"), and that year, all four songs were recorded for Concert Hall Records by William Horne and pianist Adam Gardner. The fourth song remained unpublished until 1986.

The personal music library of William Horne was bequeathed to the Rubin Academy in 1985. Among his numerous scores were found two works by Kurt Weill:

1. A printed copy of the *Three Walt Whitman Songs* with the dedication on the cover: "For Ben Horne/who sang these songs beautifully/with all good wishes/Kurt Weill."
2. A blue print of the fourth Whitman song with some corrections.

More important for the musicologist is the gift of Polyna Stoska, donated to the Academy in 1984 during her visit to Jerusalem. Polyna Stoska, a singer of international fame with beautiful and unusual voice qualities, sang the part of Mrs. Maurant in the first performance of Weill's *Street Scene* on 9 January 1947. Her collection deserves some attention:

1. An album of records containing excerpts of *Street Scene* made by Columbia Records in 1947 with signatures and dedications to Polyna Stoska by the entire cast and conductor Maurice Abravanel.
2. A typewritten libretto, bearing the title *Street Scene: Final/pre-rehearsal version*. (Act I, 45 pp.; Act II, 54 pp., verso only). This libretto, which shows numerous changes and corrections, does not conform to the text of the published vocal score.
3. A vocal score published by Chappell & Co. in 1948, with the dedication on the title page: "For Polly-/the one and only Mrs. Maurant/with love and admiration/Kurt Weill," contains some annotations.
4. Five blueprint excerpts of an original earlier vocal score for the parts of Mrs. Maurant. These musical excerpts are differently numbered and have titles other than those found in the published vocal score.

The most important differences between the blueprints and the printed vocal score are the following:

1. The piano accompaniment is simpler in the blueprints (the piano accompaniment in the published vocal score is clearly made from the orchestral score).
2. There are many changes in the musical texture of the published score that sometimes affect the harmonic color of the music.

3. At points, the structure of the music is different. For example, the blueprint shows a different ending for "Somehow I Never Could Believe," and "It's You" is 32 bars longer than in the published vocal score.

Two more documents are found in this valuable collection:

1. An undated letter from Weill to Stoska:

Stoski dear,

Let me tell you once more how much I admire your great artistry and how happy I am, that you sing my aria tonight because nobodylike (but?) you can bring out the deep emotion which I have written into it. I know it will be a triumph for you. Here is a greeting from the Lady in the Dark to the Lady in the Light. Good luck!

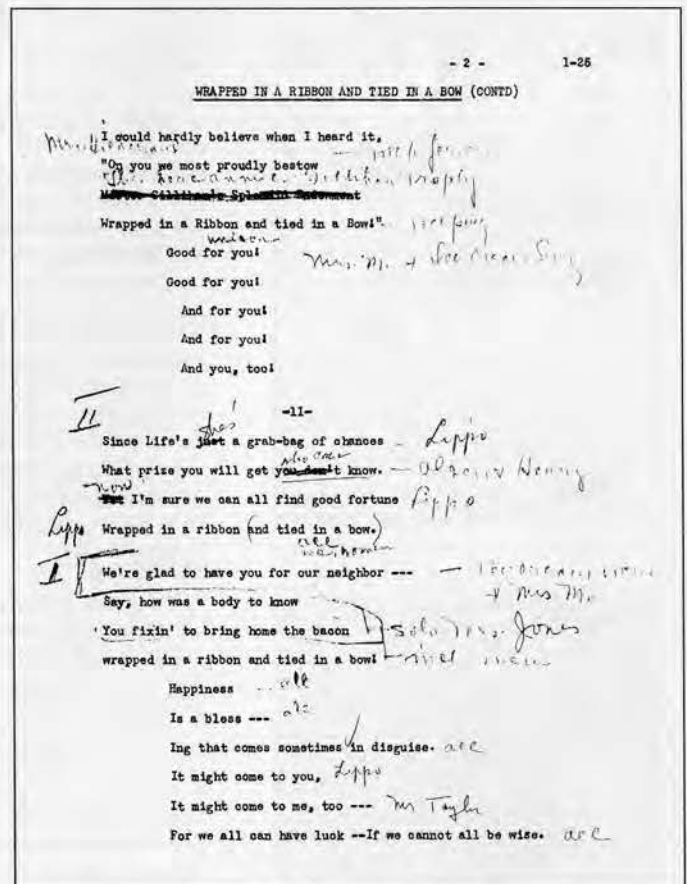
Kurt

2. A telegram sent to Stoska on 7 November 1947, the day she debuted as Donna Elvira at the Metropolitan Opera:

Oh, it is the grandest feeling any composer ever knew, to know there's somebody wonderful, to know there is a girl like you.

Love, Kurt.

CLAUDE ABRAVANEL
Rubin Academy of Music and Dance, Jerusalem



A page from the typewritten libretto labelled "*Street Scene: Final/Pre-rehearsal version*."