Books

Die Dreigroschenoper: A Facsimile of the Holograph Full Score.

(The Kurt Weill Edition, Series IV, Volume 1)

Edited by Edward Harsh.

Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc. and European American Music Corporation, 1996. 151 p.
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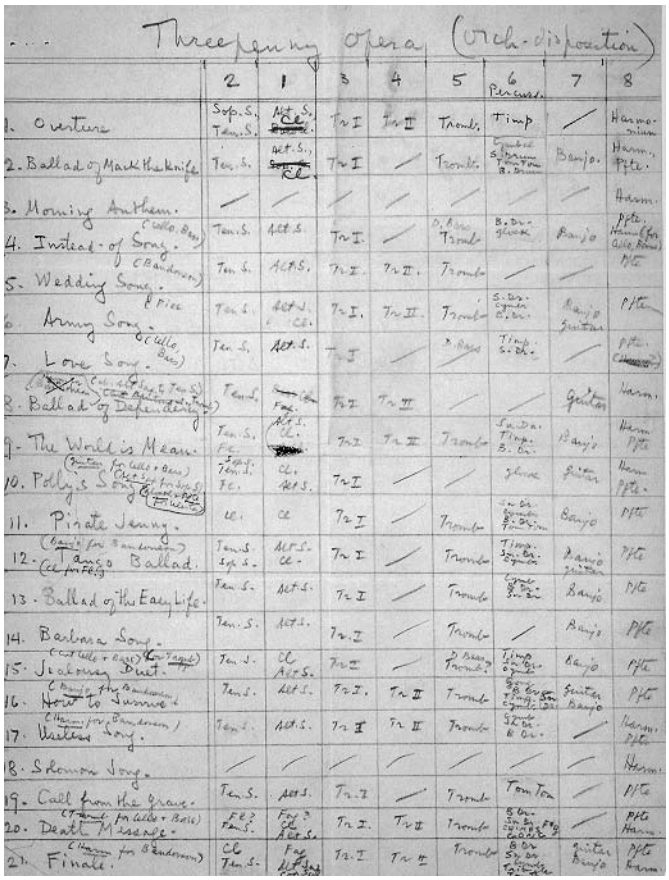

Marc Blitzstein's handwritten "orchestra disposition" chart for *The Threepenny Opera*, itemizing number by number the instruments each player was required to cover. Reproduced from the Kurt Weill Edition *Dreigroschenoper* facsimile volume, courtesy of the Blitzstein Estate and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Entry into the third millennium will dispel the notion that historical-critical editions of the oeuvres of important twentieth-century composers are premature, dealing as they do with creations that are still "contemporary." The Paul Hindemith and Arnold Schoenberg complete editions—already well underway, if not near completion—disprove such a reservation. Above all, these editions have shown what an important influence such enterprises can have on musicological research and cultural development. This will doubtless prove true for the undertaking whose first product is considered in this review: the Kurt Weill Edition.

The first volume of a complete edition virtually amounts to its calling card, and in that respect the decision to begin by publishing in facsimile a crucial source such as the holograph full score of *Die Dreigroschenoper* is a fortunate one. The composer is given the last word—for the time being—by way of his own handwriting. And the handwriting in this case provides both intellectual and aesthetic pleasure; the quality of the reproduction is so magnificent that one can almost "feel" the texture of the original.

The choice of this particular work justifies itself in several ways. It was, of course, *Die Dreigroschenoper* whose legendary premiere at Berlin's Theater am Schiffbauerdamm on 31 August 1928 made Weill's name famous overnight and has contributed significantly to his lasting reputation. Until now, a commendable but insufficiently scholarly edition, edited by Karl Heinz Füssl of Universal Edition in 1972, has been the only form of the score generally available. (Füssl mistakenly incorporated into his edition notations by a number of hands other than Weill's.) Thus, the appearance of the present facsimile can in many respects throw new light on the work.

The many annotations to the manuscript divide into "German" and "American" strata, reflecting the two most important countries of the composer's biography. The fact that the American layer is posthumous documents Weill's detachment from his own creation, a prerequisite for enduring eminence and historic greatness. The simultaneous transmission of the texts for both *Dreigroschenoper* and *Threepenny Opera* brings into full symbolic view the fate and career of Kurt Weill. In this facsimile, the work is published as part of the Edition's Series 4 (miscellanea), but it can appear as well as an "opera" in Series 1 (stage works), as *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* in Series 2 (concert works), and (at least implicitly) as a "film" in Series 3 (film music). This manifold work identity reveals the eminently contemporary nature of Weill's artistic creations.

The volume's contents are bounded on either side by a Preface by Edward Harsh, the Managing Editor of the KWE, and an "Afterword as Introduction to the Kurt Weill Edition," in which David Drew reflects generally upon the meaning of such an edition. Three essays offer a sweeping commentary regarding the source and the reception of the work. Eschewing what he calls *Dreigroschen Mythologie* about the Berlin premiere, Stephen Hinton reconstructs the complex genesis of the work and its early reception history. He considers along with the manuscript itself a number of additional sources, some of them previously unpublished. Kim Kowalke uses his consideration of the American layer of annotations to describe both Weill's own efforts to secure performances of the work in the United States and the work's eventual (posthumous) triumph in the Blitzstein version in the early 1950s. David Farneth's contribution, "The Score as Artifact" offers a detailed description of the source itself. A "Foliation Diagram," an index of musical numbers in both their English and German titles, and some other facsimile documents from the reception history of the work round out the volume. The primary achievement of the composer combines favorably with the achievements of musicology.

In all these contributions musicology manifests itself in the way best able to do justice to Weill—as a science that promotes understanding of the special functional character of his music while at the same time recognizing its claim to art. Such a claim can only be assessed when not evaluated on the basis of the longstanding notion of the autonomous artwork, according to which Weill is almost automatically determined to be more or less deficient. Instead, his work can be legitimized for its ability to be flexible and adaptable from the ground up. The category of the "Work," although still doubtless to be assumed (as revealed by the full score), is to be understood here as different from an autonomous, aesthetic object that exists outside of time in a fully notated, definitive score. In this regard the contributions by Hinton and Kowalke offer many a revelation.

Stephen Hinton makes it clear that, contrary to the misleading date of "23. August 1928" entered on the final page, the notation of the score did not entirely precede the initial rehearsal and performance of *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Rather, it was the result of a process in which the experiences of the production still very much played a role. (The exact nature and sequence of this process is no longer entirely reconstructable since a number of sources for it have been lost.) The order, casting, and orchestration of several numbers, like many musical details, were finalized only in the course of rehearsals and first performances.

The Lewis Ruth Band, engaged as the instrumental ensemble for the premiere, was a competent partner to the composer. This was signficant for the orchestration of *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Each of the seven players had to play several instruments; flexibility was key. The Band's parts have been preserved and are an important source for the early Berlin performance history of the piece.

Although the work was given by many theaters, especially before 1933, no full score was published during the composer's lifetime. This had something to do with the operetta tradition, whereby works were conducted not from a full score but from a "Klavier-Direktionsstimme" (piano-conductor score). Hans Heinsheimer of Universal Edition invoked this tradition as a way to save the cost of printing a *Partitur* (full score). (A number of performance materials were published soon after the premiere, but no full score.)

Co-author Bertolt Brecht (who based his work on Elisabeth Hauptmann's translation of the English *Beggar's Opera*) also influenced the development and reception history of *Die Dreigroschenoper* up until his death in 1956. Particularly decisive was his "ideological" turn to Marxism around 1930. After a sharp reprimand in the periodical *Rote Fahne* (Red Flag), he published in his 1931 *Versuche* edition a new *Dreigroschenoper* text that was altered to conform to party ideology. The work has since then been performed largely in a hybrid form in which Weill's music from 1928 is combined with Brecht's text from 1931.

From 1937 onwards, Weill himself tried with Lotte Lenya to establish the work in the United States. An American adaptation of the text—and of the music as well to some extent—proved to be unavoidable since the first attempt at transplanting the work in America (on 13 April 1933) led to a fiasco. In Kowalke's account, the relationship between Weill and Marc Blitzstein—who was to be responsible for the successful American revival of the work in the fifties—reveals itself to be a complex constellation. Early on (and also later) Blitzstein did not think much of Weill's music; Weill in turn saw Blitzstein as more a music critic than a musician. The relationship would be a fertile proving ground for Harold Bloom's theory of misreading, since Blitzstein walked in Weill's compositional footsteps with *The Cradle Will Rock*.

It was only after Weill's death that Blitzstein's adaptation had its first concert performance—on 14 June 1952 at Brandeis University under Leonard Bernstein (the stage premiere following nearly two years later on 10 March 1954). Universal Edition had sent Weill's full score to the United States and both Bernstein and Blitzstein used it. The manuscript bears markings by both (as well as those made by Universal Edition employees), allowing it to be read as a reflection of human relationships as well as music notation.

In sum, this *Dreigroschenoper* facsimile edition can be characterized as a successful initial step for the Weill Edition. The actual editing of the works is obviously a different—in many ways much more difficult—assignment. Important decisions will have to be made about the form of the text, a matter that can remain open in a facsimile edition. Only then will it be clear whether the editors have succeeded in fruitfully reconciling the contradiction between the flexible text categories of the Weillian concept of art and the claims appropriately made by a historical-critical edition for a "definitive" text. One tends to be confident, though. Other editions, such as that of Rossini, have had to struggle with comparable problems. What is more, the responsibility for the Weill Edition lies in the hands of those who—if the aforementioned difficulties are indeed soluble—will prove themselves up to the task.

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Books

The American Musical Theatre Song Encyclopedia

by Thomas S. Hischak

(Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995) 543 p.
ISBN 0-313-29407-0

Sometimes the rediscovery of the obvious can be a revelation. In *The American Musical Theatre Song Encyclopedia*, in which 1,800 songs representing more than 500 shows are chronicled, Thomas S. Hischak indicates that old tenets dictated by common sense are valid after all. His investigation confirms given perceptions: that the songwriters thought to be the most important, the songs most unforgettable, the shows most memorable (for whatever reasons, good or bad) are precisely that—important, unforgettable, and memorable. It is reassuring to know that even after such a thorough examination of songs spanning more than a hundred years, from *The Black Crook* (1866) to *Passion* (1994), the ever-changing history of

the American Musical Theater (or "song-and-dance entertainments" or simply "the American musical") warrants no urgent revision of concepts or reversal of assessments.

Hischak's rationale for his *Encyclopedia* is simple: Broadway shows are no more than originators of unforgettable songs. It is by virtue of their songs that they survive beyond their initial successes or failures. He treats all shows as equals among unequals, no matter if they were either undisputed commercial and artistic successes (*Oklahoma!*, *A Chorus Line*), or illustrious (*Anyone Can Whistle*), or even infamous flops (*Carrie*). A few Off-Broadway shows are also considered, as are some British imports (the Andrew Lloyd Webber shows most prominently, although the book stops short of the recent *Sunset Boulevard*). Hischak has included a few songs that were dropped from shows but that have acquired an independent afterlife following the demise of their original context. It seems that every effort was made to reclaim "famous and not-so-famous" songs, so as not to let "the source and history of some interesting but relatively obscure numbers" escape, as Gerald Bordman states in his foreword.

The songs, arranged alphabetically, were selected on account of their "popularity, high quality, historical importance, individual uniqueness, and [their] association with a particular performer." In his commentary, Hischak addresses a series of questions in the hope of "explain[ing a] song: what kind of song it is, what it is about, and what purpose it has in the show, as well as who originally sang it, what the song's history is, and what may be unique about this particular number." This he does while avoiding the use of any technical or analytical terminology. In fact, for analytical insights into this repertoire one will have to look elsewhere—Joseph P. Swain's *The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey* (Oxford, 1990) or Allen Forte's recent *The American Popular Ballad of the Golden Era* (Princeton, 1995), for example. There is the palpable danger that Hischak's *The American Musical Theatre Song Encyclopedia* could border on the territory of trivia, but this is avoided by consistent and perceptive insights into the soul of songs, by the occasional witty comment, and by a certain relentlessness of methodology.

Hischak's commentary follows the same format throughout the book. Each entry starts by indicating what a song "is" emotionally—songs are "hilarious," "zestful," "infectious," "dreamy," "poignant," "crafty," "tormented," "delectable." Definitions follow that describe what a song "is" objectively: a torch song, an eleven o'clock number, an "I am" song, a specialty number, explanations of which are found in a glossary. The comments hover between the epigrammatic and the detailed—in each case there is something intended to catch the reader's attention, occasionally with a humorous wink of the eye.

Songs from all of Weill's musicals are represented in the *Encyclopedia*, from "Ain't it Awful, the Heat?" to "Wouldn't You Like to Be on Broadway?", both from *Street Scene*. Songs from *The Threepenny Opera* and *Happy End* are included also, by virtue of the New York productions of 1954 and 1977. Being adventurous, the Weill shows elicit some conflicting terminology. Thus, *Johnny Johnson* is considered a "musical" and a "music drama"; *Love Life* is a "concept musical" and an "experimental musical vaudeville"; *Street Scene* is called alternatively an "ambitious music drama" and "operatic"; *Lost in the Stars* is a "powerful music drama" and a "powerful musical."

Weill's songs, often characterized as "haunting," are commented upon at length, with the composer taking precedence over his lyricists, except in the case of *Love Life*, where Alan Jay Lerner is considered the most illustrious collaborator. Song after song, the Weill contributions to the American musical theater are described, from "show-stopping bump-and-grind" numbers ("The Saga of Jenny") to "stirring songs of anguish" ("Cry, the Beloved Country"), "intoxicating" ballads ("Love Song"), and "very lyrical romantic duets" ("It Never Was You"). Some aspects of form are discussed to show how Weill often breaks away from the traditional plan of a musical theater song ("September Song," "This Is The Life"), always to the song's advantage.

Hischak points to a web of influences in Weill's songs in an attempt to situate the composer more easily among his peers. "It Never Was You," for example, is "Romberg-like," while "Foolish Heart" recalls Victor Herbert and "Speak Low" has a "Cole Porterish beguine quality." These are probably apt connections, but the oft-mentioned Puccini influence on *Street Scene* should be laid to rest once and for all. *Street Scene*, like the other attempts at an American opera of the same period, should be allowed to stand on its own merits. One could take issue also at Hischak's insistence on stressing Weill's origins: is it possible still to call Weill, quite bluntly, "a German immigrant"? These are but small points of contention, however, and they do not detract from Hischak's otherwise correct assessment of Weill's achievements.

All the wealth of information gathered by Hischak leads to the validation of perceptions long held to be true. But, in the end, what are these perceptions? Who are the most important songwriters and what are the most memorable shows in the history of the American musical theater? Hischak's answers are precise and reassuring: Richard Rodgers and Stephen Sondheim among the composers (or composers-lyricists), as *primi inter pares* in a group that includes Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, and Jule Styne; among the lyricists, Oscar Hammerstein, Ira Gershwin, Alan Jay Lerner, and Lorenz Hart. The shows? *Follies*, *My Fair Lady*, *Guys and Dolls*, *South Pacific*, and *Oklahoma!*.

And what are the unforgettable songs that serve as an abstract for the musical theater, this most American of art forms? Once again, Hischak's investigation transforms common sense into solid facts of intrinsic musical and poetic value: "Ol' Man River" ("arguably the greatest theater song in America"), "Bill" ("one of the musical theater's finest torch songs"), "The Man I Love" ("one of the Gershwin brothers' most beloved songs"), "Brother Can You Spare a Dime" ("one of the first theater songs to have a potent sociological message"), "Night And Day" ("unusual in several respects"), "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" ("the haunting ballad that saved the show"), "Tea for Two" ("one of the most recognized tunes in American culture"—certainly Shostakovich would not have disagreed), and "September Song" ("one of the most beloved of all theater songs").

In a final evaluation of Hischak's *The American Theatre Song Encyclopedia* should one paraphrase Alan Jay Lerner, and say that every song that should be there is there? Not yet. In his foreword, Gerald Bordman urges the reader to notify the author of any exclusion of something "unfortunately overlooked." So here is a suggestion: would the next edition of the *Encyclopedia* include "One Touch of Venus" and "I'm a Stranger Here Myself" from *One Touch of Venus*? As recent recordings and revivals have shown, these two songs are precious examples of Ogden Nash at his most caustic and Kurt Weill at his most, well, American.

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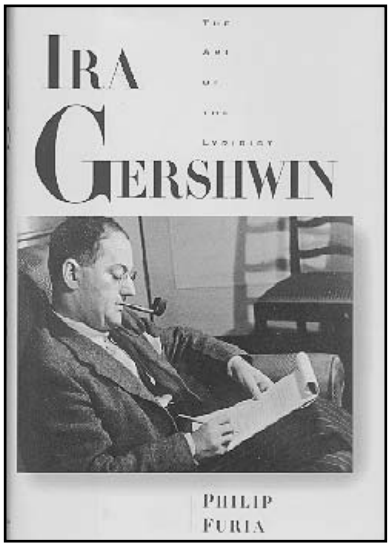
Books

Ira Gershwin: The Art of the Lyricist

by Philip Furia

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) 278 p.
ISBN 0-19-508299-0



The life and work of Ira Gershwin present a confounding paradox to the biographer-scholar. On the one hand, Gershwin is in many ways an ideal candidate for such a project. Meticulously organized and unusually articulate, he kept careful records of his creative process and retained copies of nearly all his published and unpublished lyrics. On the other hand, he was an enigmatic person, uncomfortable in the public spotlight. His lyrics are not remarkable for a sense of individual voice; rather, he seemed to take on the colors and characteristics of the composers with whom he collaborated. Many initiated listeners would find it difficult to pigeonhole—or even recognize—the style and sensibility of an Ira Gershwin lyric.

Philip Furia takes full advantage of the riches offered in Gershwin's extensive notebook materials, and he seems unperturbed by the problems posed in analyzing Ira Gershwin the man. Furia's background is in Modernist poetry, and it is in syntactical and structural analysis of individual songs that he is at his considerable best. On the subject of "The Man I Love"—a song whose elegant, simple lyric sits so naturally and gracefully on its melody that one is tempted to take the words for granted—Furia focuses particular attention on the fit between text and music by analyzing the stresses, rhymes, and intricate placement of "singable" vowels. Examining "This Is New," from *Lady in the Dark*, Furia illustrates how the progression of consonants acts as a kind of phonic analogue to the rising notes of the musical line. These observations are clear and trenchant, and through them (and many others like them) his book makes a noteworthy contribution to scholarship on musical theater.

Yet these songs *are* part of the musical theater, and it is in examining this larger arena that Furia's work is less successful. Even in the methodical reading of these two songs, the lyrics are never quoted in full, and sometimes stanzas are rearranged in the interest of making textual points. Such juxtapositions often are revealing, but they also do something of a disservice to Gershwin's scrupulous, sequential construction.

When Furia's book moves out of the realm of individual songs and into the world of the shows for which the songs were written, the lack of a grounding context becomes even more problematic. Nearly a full chapter is devoted to *Lady in the Dark*, which Furia believes to be one of Ira Gershwin's crowning achievements. Yet the plot is outlined in fragments, and even here, in the most detailed discussion of any Ira Gershwin show, there is no complete list of songs. Furia's decision to limit his discussion to highlights is well-reasoned, but it contradicts something that the author himself often articulates in the volume: that of Gershwin's ultimate goal to integrate music and drama. Selective discussion of lyric excerpts denies the reader an opportunity to see the dramatic curve that the lyricist worked so hard to establish. The problem is compounded in the case of the less familiar theater works. Some readers will know enough about *Lady in the Dark* to fill in what Furia has left blank; few will know similar specifics about *The Firebrand of Florence* or *Pardon My English*.

One would also like to learn more about Ira Gershwin in the larger culture of Broadway. His lyrics are never compared to those of his illustrious contemporaries: Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Lorenz Hart, and others. Very occasionally, the lack of reference points leads Furia into dubious conclusions. Writing on *The Barkleys of Broadway*, a 1949 Astaire-Rogers film for which Ira Gershwin wrote lyrics, Furia notes that in "My One and Only Highland Fling": "Not only did Ira study the poetry of Robert Burns, he combed the 'Mc' and 'Mac' entries in *Who's Who* and the Los Angeles phone book." One suspects that the inspiration for this song was less Robert Burns than Alan Jay Lerner; a few years before the young lyricist had used a nearly identical comic rhyming device in "My Mother's Wedding Day" from *Brigadoon*.

The structure of the book is chiefly chronological. Following the Broadway years, Furia traces the lyricist's later career in Hollywood films. These are works with a much less integral relationship between song and dramatic structure, and here the book again seems on firmer ground. A discussion of *A Star is Born* offers harrowing insights into the commercial factors that impeded Gershwin and his like-minded collaborator, Harold Arlen. This chapter also quotes unused lyric fragments from "The Man That Got Away," and the reader is dazzled by the lyricist's patient and unerring craftsmanship. That Ira Gershwin willingly (if complainingly) tolerated the debilitating pressures of Hollywood—he never returned to the Broadway stage—remains another troubling, enigmatic aspect of his life. Although Furia gallantly dismisses the charge that Gershwin's creative gifts were largely unused or squandered in his later years, in the end our suspicions are not quite dispelled.

Ira Gershwin is extensively annotated, though it lacks what might have been useful appendices: a complete list of Gershwin's shows and films, for example. Furia's clear prose and welcome avoidance of jargon make this volume helpful to specialists and generalists alike (though the latter will probably need a more basic, supplementary study of Broadway and film musicals). Still, what this book does best it does very well indeed. Nearly every reader will rethink the art of Ira Gershwin—and that of lyricists in general—in the light of Furia's work.

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Books

Teaching New Classicality: Ferruccio Busoni's Master Class in Composition

by Tamara Levitz

European University Studies 152.
(Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1996) 336 p.
ISBN 3-631-49230-8/US ISBN 0-8204-2961-9

Weill scholars should be enormously grateful to Tamara Levitz for setting the record straight, with the fullest documentation conceivable, on an area hitherto only sketchily researched and understood. Ever since Weill became a renowned composer it has been generally known that his most important and influential teacher was Ferruccio Busoni, with whom he studied from 1921 until 1924. Weill himself was happy to say as much on repeated occasions, from the almost fulsome panegyrics of the early years to intermittent expressions of indebtedness in interviews for American newspapers. Yet for a long time, despite Weill's own brief testimony, the actual nature and extent of the instruction, and hence of Busoni's influence, were more a topic of speculation than solid fact.

Just how far research has progressed in the last thirty years can be gauged by comparing Levitz's splendid new publication with the article published in *The Musical Times* in 1964 (vol. 105, pp. 897-99) under the misleading title "Weill's Debt to Busoni." In that piece the author, John C. G. Waterhouse, dwelt on a single, fairly inconsequential issue: "semitonal instability" or "ambiguity," as Waterhouse refers to this common feature of Busoni's and Weill's compositions (by way of tracing "the true lineage of Weill's harmonic style"—a precarious singular if ever there was one). Although comparisons between teacher and pupil based on such technical matters are not without interest, and perhaps only to be expected from an era of musical scholarship in thrall to the ideal of absolute music, the real debt that Weill owed to Busoni is more comprehensive—and in many ways more elusive. Its nature, if not extent, is indicated in a statement made by another Busoni pupil, Egon Petri, which is quoted as a kind of epigraph at the beginning of Professor Levitz's study. Concerning "How Ferruccio Busoni Taught," Petri wrote:

> To say that Busoni was a teacher, is both an understatement and an overstatement, depending upon one's point of view. In the sense of guiding a pupil's technical and artistic problems in a steadily progressive manner, he was not a teacher at all. But in the higher sense of imparting to a pupil a consummate understanding of art, and the need for cultural and spiritual completion, he was the most inspiring teacher of our time.

Presenting the findings of her extensive research, assembled over years in archives and libraries as well as through interviews, Professor Levitz provides not only ample evidence for comprehending what Weill and his fellow Busoni pupils took away from their Berlin master class, but much more besides. The first chapter gives a fairly detailed account of Busoni's career in the years immediately preceding the establishment of the master class, followed by a well-informed portrait of musical life in Berlin in the postwar era. All this serves as a backdrop to the main portions of the book on Busoni's actual teaching, which comprised far more than the kind of technical exercises and analysis taught by Schoenberg and Hindemith, to mention just two other prominent teachers working in Berlin during the Weimar Republic. The core of Busoni's pedagogy was a whole aesthetic or philosophy of art, identified by the label "New Classicality" (*Junge Klassizität*), which he imparted to his pupils in a multifaceted program of instruction, or what Germans more adequately describe as *Bildung*. Busoni, adopting an almost priestlike stance, strove to form the whole person and character of his pupils. Technical ability was but one—by no means the central—point of focus. As Weill put it in a letter dated 13 February 1923: "Indeed, your influence went much deeper than mere compositional matters. For me it culminated in the realization that we can create a true work of art only if we reduce the complexity of our human natures to their simplest and most concise form."

While Professor Levitz richly and colorfully documents this quasi-mystical dimension of Busoni's class, not always leaving a particularly sympathetic impression of The Great Man, she also goes a long way to identifying the key elements of the New Classicality, along with all its paradoxes. After all, composers as diverse as Weill and Jarnach would claim to be continuing his legacy. Most pertinently for Weill, Levitz states that "every aspect of compositional teaching . . . led towards the ultimate goal of composing opera." Here it could be argued that Weill was even more effective in realizing his teacher's precepts than the teacher himself.

By describing Busoni's unfinished magnum opus *Doktor Faust* as "an unrealizable ideal of perfection, a philosophical project, a pedagogical tool, a vision, the expression of his entire life and person," Levitz highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of Busoni's New Classicality. At best, it was the source of boundless inspiration to those who came under his spell. At worst, it appears to have been a veil, woven from an eclectic fabric (especially from Goethe and a number of nineteenth-century, mostly German, idealist sources) with which to cloak any number of failed aspirations and pretensions. And it is to his credit that, of all Busoni's pupils discussed by Levitz, Weill not only profited enormously from the teachings of the New Classicality, but also remained largely silent about its more unpalatable and pretentious facets from which his career can be seen as a successful liberation.

Although Levitz's study is, as indicated, exhaustive in its documentary detail, it still leaves much unsaid. The author has clearly won a hard battle amassing these huge quantities of material—a veritable *Materialschlacht* in the best sense of that expression. As extensively presented as it is in large translated chunks, however, the book's material is so rich in its implications that we can surely expect a number of more specific studies with fuller commentary to follow, particularly from the author herself. She acknowledges, for example, that Busoni's formulation of his aesthetic of New Classicality reflects a fundamental change in his ideas after the first version of the *Entwurf einer neuen Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (1907). Yet she says little about the nature of, or about the motivation for, that change. Similarly, Weillians will be tantalized by speculation about a possible meeting between Busoni and Brecht during one of the "Black Coffee Hours" attended by the Master's pupils and other guests. If confirmed, such a meeting would predate the first recorded personal contact between Weill and Brecht by four years or so. It might also suggest that Brecht's anti-Wagnerian opera aesthetic was inspired not just by his celebrated collaborator from Dessau but directly by the latter's own Italian-German teacher as well.

The book is an abridged version of the author's doctoral dissertation (University of Rochester, 1994). Those interested in the foreign-language (mainly German) originals of the many documents cited will have to consult the 67-page appendix of that work.

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Performances

One Touch of Venus

New York

City Center

28-30 March 1996

In just three years, the Encores! concert series has become an annual celebration for those who love musicals and can get to the New York City area. At roughly six-week intervals each spring, City Center audiences can see revivals of three shows in concert format with full cast and orchestra. Each production runs for four performances.

Under the leadership of artistic director Walter Bobbie and musical director Rob Fisher, the production team for each concert seems to be allowed some latitude in creating presentation formats that will elicit the best effect. These have varied widely, from simple story narration by a character (the very first in the series, *Fiorello!*), through book abridgements of various degrees (with score left more or less intact), to essentially fully staged presentation (the most recent, *Chicago*). Even though I have attended all nine productions, without having timed each one or researched the omissions, I couldn't say for sure which one was most abbreviated for the concert format. But I would suspect that *One Touch of Venus* is a prime contender for that dubious honor.

The decision to abbreviate might have been based upon the reputation of S.J. Perelman's and Ogden Nash's book as no more than an amusing trifle. According to those involved in the original 1943 production, the book was ultimately minimized to leave more time for the score and the star to work their magic. Still, characters need time to interact with each other and to register with the audience, and the show must retain continuity and atmosphere. Some of the City Center cuts caused confusion about place as well. For instance, after a scene in Rodney's apartment, Venus sings "I'm a Stranger Here Myself" and then is joined by Savory. In a staged version, that meeting would have been in the Arcade of the NBC Building. In this production it seemed that Savory simply wandered into Rodney's room, shortly to be followed there by the chorus!

A more critical problem lay behind this unclear transition: the omission of the ballet "Forty Minutes for Lunch." It is easy to list the reasons why this cut makes no sense: the ballet is needed to set the scene, it is a famous moment in the show, its inclusion in the (otherwise extremely truncated) original cast recording reveals how important it was to the show's creators.

A bigger issue related to cuts, though, is the whole Encores! concept: for whom are these concerts designed? We are told that the series now sells out early by subscription and that more than four performances of each production are now contemplated. With such loyal support, why a nervous eye on the clock and fear of boring the tired customer? An audience with enthusiasm for exploring the past can surely be trusted a bit more than that. Admittedly the assembling of these productions in just over a week tends to preclude full choreography of lengthy ballet sequences (although remarkable results were achieved with the *Chicago* concert). But if the ballets from *Allegro* and *Pal Joey* (in earlier seasons) could be played at something like full length without stage action, something could have been done with "Forty Minutes for Lunch." The "Venus in Ozone Heights" ballet was attempted, at least, and choreographer Hope Clarke also had the dancers strip to their skivvies to perform as models for the art students during the overture—undeniably an eye-catching opening, even as it muddied the point that Savory teaches art appreciation, not painting.

The performance itself proved a much more satisfying affair. Melissa Errico received widespread acclaim for her Venus, and rightly so. A beautiful woman, with both elegance and humor at her command, she easily provided that elusive star quality for which the role was written. She was also perfectly suited vocally, her lovely soprano easily blending warmth and sparkle. Having already made the audience her captives, she delivered a final knockout late in Act II by stretching out on a platform and purring "That's Him" with languid precision.

Her two leading men, good performers both, were less ideally cast. Andy Taylor showed a marvelous gift for putting over the humor of a convoluted lyric like "How Much I Love You," and his bewildered Rodney was superbly in character; all he lacked was the vocal sweetness to carry his share of "Speak Low" and all its reprises. The adept actor David Alan Grier leavened his performance (as he generally does) with a spark of self-deprecating humor; that quality may be welcome, in theory, as a contrasting personality twist in the usually self-important Savory, but in these pared-down circumstances the nuance made the character ill-defined. Who was Savory and why should we care? Grier's voice, though always strong and able, was not the classic Broadway baritone that the music requires.

As is happily typical of the series, smaller roles were cast from strength. Carol Woods's avid glee as Molly was a far cry from the dry delivery one associates with the role's originator, Paula Laurence. Even so, Woods showed that her approach can work equally well, and she nailed every laugh in her two songs. Jane Krakowski and Marilyn Cooper made the most of their few opportunities as Rodney's prospective wife and mother-in-law.

Another strength, by now a blessedly reliable one, was Rob Fisher's work with the Coffee Club Orchestra. The orchestra played Weill's orchestrations with stylish verve, and Fisher's leadership ensured that even as one might regret some of the curtailment, the evening was impossible not to enjoy.

Jon Alan Conrad

University of Delaware

Andy Taylor (Rodney) and Melissa Errico (Venus). Photo: Gerry Goodstein for City Center.

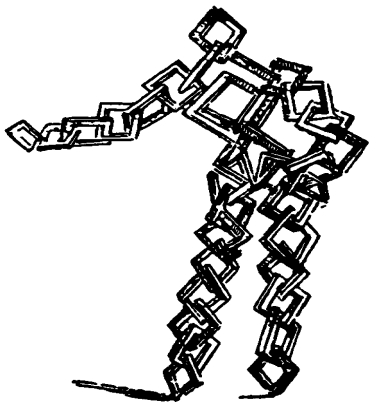
Performances

Der Protagonist

New York

Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center

10 May 1996



Cover of *Der Protagonist* vocal score, published by Universal Edition, Vienna (U.E. 8387).

The final program of the American Symphony Orchestra's 1995-96 season, conducted by Leon Botstein, recalled the parable of the blind men describing the elephant. If we think we know what German Expressionist music of the 1910s and 1920s sounds like, maybe we should check which part of the elephant we're holding onto.

Botstein, the president of Bard College, has brought a professorial touch to programming at the A.S.O., organizing each performance as a seminar-style inquiry into some interesting yet neglected corner of the concert music repertoire. The perspective he offered this night on Expressionism embraced such diverse items as Franz Schreker's Chamber Symphony (1916), Paul Hindemith's *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* (*Murderer, Hope of Women*) (1919) and Kurt Weill's early one-act opera *Der Protagonist* (1925). Originally billed as "Sounds of Insanity," the concert's final title was softened (no doubt by the marketing department) to "Sounds of Fantasy." The change was too bad, since *Wahnsinn* (madness) is a key word of Expressionism in the same way *Sehnsucht* (longing) is of Romanticism.

Performed in chronological order, these three works illustrate a historical progression from the rarefied atmosphere of pre-Expressionism to the tawdry shockers that blew it away around 1920. Through much of its duration, the Schreker sounds like a delicate collaboration between Richard Strauss and Claude Debussy while the Hindemith is an over-the-top Wagner parody complete with a dark tower, oaths, brandings, stabbings, and—of course—a conflagration at the end. Finally, we arrive at a work by the young but already recognizable Kurt Weill, wielding a well-developed and flexible idiom with its eye on the future.

Weill based his *Der Protagonist* on the tragicomic play of the same name by Georg Kaiser and composed it in close and friendly collaboration with the playwright. In the work's allegorical world, a troupe of actors in Elizabethan England represents suffering, striving, lusting humanity. The group's leader, referred to simply as the Protagonist, receives an invitation from the Duke's court to perform a light comedy about marital infidelity. The Protagonist throws himself into rehearsals with manic glee, becoming immersed in his comic role. We soon learn that his feelings for his sister, who is traveling with the troupe, are something more than brotherly. Then the Duke's Majordomo returns to say that a bishop will be present at the performance, and the play will therefore have to end tragically. The troupe rehearses again, and at the moment of tragic denouement the Sister appears with a young man she intends to marry. The Protagonist, unable to distinguish theatrical illusion from reality, stabs the Sister in a jealous rage and kills her. He is led away, proclaiming this catastrophe "my best role."

This story provides endless scope for Weill's musical trademarks—irony, lyricism, nervous dance rhythms, fateful ostinatos—and the 25-year-old composer does not disappoint. Although he has not yet made the stylistic transition from the classical, philosophical stance of his mentor Ferruccio Busoni to the pop ballads of *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Mahagonny*, his scoring in *Der Protagonist* is characteristically clear, economical, colorful, and tailored to Kaiser's expressive text. (Weill's atonal setting of the word *Wahnsinn*, sung by his main character, is one of the most weirdly beautiful moments in the opera.)

The orchestra under Botstein's direction did not do full justice to Weill's precocious mastery of tone color and dynamics; although secure in their parts, the instrumentalists rarely played below *mezzo forte* and often covered the singers. In the lead role, tenor Michael Hayes certainly looked the part of an Expressionist artist: tall, lean, angular of feature, pompadoured, he cut a figure in his concert attire that recalled photos of the Comedian Harmonists, the celebrated Berlin cabaret group of the 1920s. The strain in his voice as he coped with the role's punishingly high tessitura was surely an effect anticipated by Weill. It only added to an interpretation of the role that, within the limitations of book-in-hand concert performance, was satisfyingly fiery. Standouts among the supporting singers included bass Don Yule as the First Player, who gave his colleagues a lesson in projecting comical German dialogue to the back row, and Joel Sorensen, whose clear, brilliant tenor brought distinction to the small but crucial role of the Majordomo, spokesman for a distant authority.

The opera's comic and tragic pantomimes were enacted not by the singers, as they would be in a staged performance, but in a two-dimensional, Punch & Judy style by dancers on a platform behind the orchestra. The effect of the choreography was blunted by the dancers' distance from the audience and by sight-line problems. From a downstairs seat they were visible only from the waist up, and not even that when they disappeared behind the hulking figure of the conductor on the podium.

David Wright

New York

Performances

The Silver Lake

London

BBC Proms Concert

Royal Albert Hall

21 July 1996

Der Silbersee is, mythically, the problematic final masterpiece of Weill's German period. It has become commonplace to talk of an imbalance of text and music, to argue that Kaiser's play is too long, that the score makes excessive demands on actors who can't sing and singers who can't act. Its performance history (the Prom's version, regrettably, fit neatly into the tradition) has attempted to salvage Weill's score from a supposedly defective script or to treat Kaiser's contribution as a marathon to be endured before we can approach the music.

What is now perceived as a flaw was not a problem at the time of the 1933 premiere, when, Nazi thuggery apart, *Silbersee* played to great acclaim. Critics commented on a perfect fusion of text and music. Weill believed the play to be the best thing Kaiser had written. His letters refer to it as "beautiful," an adjective as unusual in any discussion of Kaiser as is the repeated criticism of overlength. Kaiser has a reputation for dramatic compression, an abrasive style, and for writing too much too quickly. The discursive quality of *Silbersee*, its craftsmanship, and its mixture of social realism and poetic fantasy mark it out as an oddity amongst his works. German literary critics have not helped its reputation by treating it as a curio.

Yet the play's uniqueness is its strength. Like Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*, *Silbersee* interweaves personal mythology with a retrospective survey of German culture. Kaiser's letters link the symbolic Silver Lake to the pool on his own estate. The figures of a sympathetic criminal and a morally conscious policeman derive from *Crime and Punishment*, his favorite novel. Kaiser's first success was a parody of *Tristan*. *Silbersee* gets in an anti-Wagner dig with the phrase "All that is, begins," traducing the *Ring*'s "All that is, ends."

Buried in the script are allusions to a culture fracturing into brutality. The *Singspiel* genre points to both the pivotal nature of *Zauberflöte*, poised between Enlightenment and Romanticism, and to the form that the early nationalists Weber and Lortzing made their own. Severin's miraculous recovery from his wounds echoes a comparable scene in Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans*, a masterpiece of Weimar Classicism. Heine, an enforced exile from Prussia, hovers over the *Wintermärchen* subtitle and the *Doppelgänger* relationship between Olim and Severin. Frau von Luber and Baron Laur are hangovers from Heinrich Mann's cult novel *Im Schlaraffenland*. "The Ballad of Caesar's Death" pays more than lip service to Brecht.

Weill's score peers over similar territory. Mozart is woven into the choral writing. The overture's trumpet tune blends jazz with the poise of a Haydn concerto. The *Singspiel* arias compare with Weber and Beethoven. Popular music underscores the text. The Lottery Agent's Tango is capitalism at its most obscene. The final Waltz posits a cautious optimism while mourning the end of an era. Weill and Kaiser, like Olim and Severin, reached safety. What makes *Silbersee* unbearable now is our awareness of the millions who stayed and died.

With contemporary Britain facing massive unemployment, a political shift to the right, the erosion of civil liberties, and the replacement of public funding by distribution of profits from a National Lottery, *Silbersee* has chilling resonance. The Prom version, attempting to resolve the work's "problems," weakened its impact. Shortening the script has been a successful formula in the concert hall, but when the singing is in German and the text is spoken in English by different performers, things get ludicrous. The prison scene amounts to nothing when the English-speaking Olim's conscience answers back in German. You end up with a Brechtian alienation effect when Weill and Kaiser were after something more emotive. Jeremy Sams's alarming translation replaced Kaiser's sporadic laughter with high-camp farce. A trio of actors battled with a treacherous sound system which distorted the words and swamped the orchestra.

It was left to the musicians—the Sinfonietta, Markus Stenz conducting, and a luxury cast—to save the day. Juanita Lascarro's often inaudible Fennimore apart, this performance was musically everything one could wish. Stenz got the balance between pathos and irony exactly right. The Sinfonietta sound was smooth and rich—*Silbersee* is not, ultimately, an acerbic jazz score. The use of singers known for Wagner and Strauss was telling. Heinz Kruse—a Siegfried and Tristan—portrayed a powerful Severin. Helga Dernesch fed years of experience playing Strauss monsters into a scary, obsessive Luber. Two Mimes, Heinz Zednik and Graham Clark, sang Laur and the Lottery Agent. Clark, strutting his stuff, shirt open to the navel, brought the house down with the Tango. We had ample proof of a musical masterpiece. The tragedy was that Kaiser was allowed to sink without a trace.

Tim Ashley

London

Performances

Die sieben Todsünden

Brussels

Théâtre Royale de la Monnaie

Premiere: 3 September 1996

Although *Die sieben Todsünden* has now become one of Weill's most frequently recorded and performed works, it still has not found a constant companion piece, the other half of a double bill such as the nearly inseparable *Cav-Pag* pairing in the operatic repertoire. Poulenc's *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* made a quite satisfactory partner when it was given in London at the English National Opera in 1981. For the current new production in Brussels, Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* seemed a fascinating complement, with the most poignant and tragic overtones. Ullmann (1898-1944?) composed the one-act opera during 1943-44 while in the Terezin concentration camp; it was also first rehearsed there. (On 16 October 1944, Ullmann was deported to Auschwitz, and his opera did not reach the stage until 1975, in Amsterdam.)

Anja Silja (Anna I) and Geraldine Grisheimer (Anna II). Photo: Johan Jacobs.

Anja Silja, one of Brussels' favorite prima donnas, played the role of the singing Anna in this new production, directed by Sabine Hartmannshenn. Silja made her debut at La Monnaie in 1962, as Isolde, and has returned there many times. Her voice still has that steely cutting edge, but it is under much firmer control now than in the 1960s when she made such a sensation at Bayreuth as Wieland Wagner's Senta and Elisabeth. Her association with the music of Weill dates back to the same decade, to the Stuttgart production of *Mahagonny*, in which Widow Begbick was played by another great Isolde, Martha Mödl.

For this production, set designer Bettina Neuhaus makes use of a pair of high, menacing, dark gray walls. In the prologue they are placed at either side of the stage, directing the viewer's attention toward the back, where the dancing Anna, Geraldine Griesheimer, is found wearing a short dress and bouncing a huge red ball. Against the blue backcloth the ball becomes a red sun. Then Silja appears at the side of the stage, dressed as a ringmaster and carrying a suitcase. Her movements are closely followed by the spotlight. She takes the ball away from her sister, tosses it behind the wall, and dresses the dancing Anna for their journey. Then the two walls close in on them to form a courtyard.

The family quartet pop their noses above the edge of the wall and observe the action. The male customers and then the two lovers, Edward and Fernando, are all personified by hands that punch holes through the walls. Every hand wears a red glove, except that of Fernando, the poor lover, who proffers a red rose; Edward holds out a diamond necklace. Gradually the stage is showered with paper money dropped by a dozen pairs of hands, and the sisters rush about scooping up the bills. At the end, the walls revolve again and form the little house, with the family hurrying to get inside and waving merrily. However, when the singing Anna eventually opens the door of this little house, the audience is confronted with her sister inside a coffin.

In a red satin top hat and elegant morning suit, Silja resembled Marlene Dietrich in the penultimate scene of Sternberg's *Blonde Venus*. She played the role of Anna with a wry, sad irony, a weary smile, and an obsessive glint in her eyes. It is a pleasure to hear *Die sieben Todsünden* as it should be, in a theater without amplification. At the Théâtre Royale de la Monnaie, all of the singers enunciated the text without any difficulty. Brian Bannatyne-Scott (the Mother) led the rest of the male quartet: tenors Marten Smeding and Klas Hedlund, and baritone Wojciech Drabowicz.

Bannatyne-Scott reappeared in the second half of the program as Death in the tragic fable of *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*. There are Weillian echoes in the third scene. One cannot witness this opera without wondering at the bravery and strength of its composer. Coincident with this production, the Palais des Beaux Arts organized an exhibition entitled *Art et résistance* featuring German paintings of the 1920s and 1930s from the collection of Marvin and Janet Fishman. The final image is a self-portrait painted by Felix Nussbaum, who, like Ullmann, perished at Auschwitz.

Mark Stringer conducted both works with a sense of style; he avoided those slow tempos in *Die sieben Todsünden* that have marred some recent interpretations. Although it is fascinating to hear Ullmann's work, it is ultimately too fragile a piece to make a satisfactory conclusion to an operatic evening. This production emphasized the child-like quality of Anna II, so perhaps Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* might offer possibility as a companion piece to *Die sieben Todsünden*?

Patrick O'Connor

London

Recordings

Kurt Weill—A Musical Portrait

Stefanie Wüst, Soprano
Thomas Wise, Piano
Albert Rundel, Violin

Edition al segno as2010 2

(Recording of twenty-two Kurt Weill songs)

Because the label of "songwriter" addresses just one aspect of Kurt Weill's compositional personality, a portrait of him in songs can best be considered merely a sketch. "Kurt Weill—A Musical Portrait" sets its sights elsewhere than on the well-known and beloved numbers so often included in "Weill evenings" and consciously directs its attention towards less familiar territory. It contains eight songs of the young Weill (all written pre-1920), five songs from the second half of the 1920s, two German and four French chansons from his short period in Paris, plus one German and two English songs from the American period.

There are two lines of tradition among Weill interpreters. One, as shaped by Lotte Lenya and Gisela May, originated in the legitimate theater and in the cabarets; the second one, which in the last few years has moved more and more into the foreground, has its roots in the classical tradition of opera and Lied. Neither side may claim exclusivity; Weill's musical theater moves back and forth between frontiers. One could cite as example the two versions of "Ach bedenken Sie, Herr Jakob Schmidt" from *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*: the first an operatic one for the work's premiere, the second written expressly for Lenya (who could not sing the first) for the 1931 Berlin performance.

Stefanie Wüst studied with Gisela May. Whoever has seen her on stage knows her as an alert, thoughtful, "gestic" interpreter. Yet her singing style is more rooted in the tradition of bel canto. Thus, she has great empathy for the high Romantic songs of Weill's youth, without trying to deny the Mahlerian broken-heartedness of his setting of "Im Volkston," by Arno Holz. Clean phrasing, clear enunciation, gestic instincts, and (for the most part) true intonation are positive points, while on the other hand her upper register generally lacks volume. One notes a certain quality of reserve in some places where the interpreter should give her all emotionally, especially in "Julia, das schöne Kind." Thomas Wise is a sensitive accompanist who knows where to put accents without pushing himself into the foreground. He may sometimes take this virtue too far, as in the nervous "Nichts ist die Welt mir," where I would wish for more vitality from the piano.

Less successful among Wüst's interpretation of the early songs is "Berlin im Licht," which is too operatic and communicates nothing of Berlin's élan or pizzazz. Likewise problematic is the "Klopslied," in which the tessitura asks too much of this interpreter—it should have been transposed downward. "Surabaya Johnny," though, is very impressive. Here Wüst brings out the changes of mood clearly, and her singing is so rich in nuances that the psychological profile of a split personality seems to develop as one listens. This is the first opportunity on the recording for the singer to use her strong and refined chest register.

I like the interpretation of all the songs written during Weill's time in France. Here, cabaret and operatic style find a happy mixture. The single exception is "Der Abschiedsbrief," which sounds artificial and over-refined. For example, instead of the dialect "von die feine Herrn" Wüst sings, in correct high German, "von den feinen Herrn" and thereby reveals a far higher educational level than Erich Kästner's Erna Schmidt. On the other hand, "Es regnet," often rather aloof and austere, comes across here as very lively. "Complainte de la Seine" is a truly moving funeral march. "Je ne t'aime pas" is gripping, with Wüst giving of herself unreservedly. In these songs, everything fits together interpretatively. A delightful arrangement of "Youkali" featuring violinist Albert Rundel adheres well both to the spirit and the notes of the original. Rundel plays with the improvisational mobility of a true folk music violinist.

In "Nanna's Lied," a 1939 setting of Brecht, harshness and tenderness meet in a touching way. The next to last song, "Buddy on the Nightshift," introduces a new nuance: a likeable and unrefracted liveliness. Still, Weill's successful transformation from German to American composer occurred during "the dark times" (to quote Brecht's poem "An die Nachgeborenen"), so it seems a reasonable idea to place "Dirge for Two Veterans" last on this recording. Unfortunately, this closing interpretation again lacks volume and tension.

The booklet accompanying the CD presents—after a concise introduction by Jürgen Schebera—the song texts in the original languages. In addition, German translations are provided for each of the English and French language songs and English translations for the German and French ones.

No single interpreter is in a position to plumb the depths of the entire interpretive spectrum offered by Weill's songs. Weill himself surely never imagined having all of his unbelievably diverse songs from 1916 to 1945 interpreted by one and the same performer. So it would be unfair to blame Stefanie Wüst for being only partially successful in the endeavor. Overall, this recording represents an enjoyable and enriching addition to the Weill discography.

Andreas Hauff

Mainz

Recent Research *(continued from p. 3)*

Gunther Diehl (Wiesbaden) has initiated a volume of essays devoted to the life and works of the "young" Weill to be published by Text und Kritik (Munich) in the series "Musikkonzepte—Die Reihe über Komponisten" edited by H.-K. Metzger and R. Riehn. Other contributors to the volume include Andreas Hauff, Steven Hinton, Nils Grosch, Tamara Levitz, and Jürgen Schebera. As co-editor, Diehl will contribute an essay in addition to a works list, bibliography, and discography. As a result of this project and his work as volume editor of *Der Protagonist* for the Kurt Weill Edition, Diehl plans to write a large monographic work about the three operas that resulted from the Weill-Kaiser collaboration: *Der Protagonist*, *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*, and *Der Silbersee*. A study of the genesis, aesthetic, structure, and reception of these three key musical musico-dramatic works will make clear their place in the development of the opera aesthetic between 1920 and 1933. (Address: Majoranweg 5, D-65191 Wiesbaden, Germany)

Nils Grosch (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg) will complete his dissertation, "Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit," in 1997. The term *Neue Sachlichkeit*, derived from the visual arts, became a catchword for modern developments in the Weimar Republic and embraced nearly all spheres of modern life. In music it marked less a concrete aspect of style than the opening of the modernist aesthetic to changed social realities, the commercialization of mass media, and the advent of popular culture. The composer-members of the Novembergruppe were strong activists for change, thus creating new genres such as Radiomusik and Zeitoper. Grosch is also co-editor of the series Veröffentlichungen der Kurt Weill-Gesellschaft Dessau. The first volume, *Kurt Weill-Studien,* included his article "'Notiz' zum Berliner Requiem von Kurt Weill: Aspekte seiner Entstehung und Aufführung." A second volume is planned under the title *Komponisten in der Medienlandschaft des Exils*. He recently published an article in *Orchester Kultur* (see "New Publications" on p. 8a) and another article, "'You Cannot Get Something for Nothing': Exilierte Komponisten zwischen Neuer Sachlichkeit und amerikanischer Unterhaltungsindustrie," is scheduled to appear in *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung* in 1997. (Address: Musikwissenschaftliches Seminar, Albert Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Werthmannplatz, D-79098 Freiburg, Germany)

Elmar Juchem (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen) is completing his dissertation on the collaboration between Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson. While his research focuses on *Knickerbocker Holiday* and *Lost in the Stars*, it also takes into consideration the "Ballad of Magna Carta" and the unfinished projects *Ulysses Africanus* and *Huckleberry Finn*. His article recently published in *Kurt Weill-Studien*, "Kein Geld für 'Gold!': Finanzierung einer Broadway-Produktion am Beispiel von *Lost in the Stars*," explores working conditions on Broadway. (Address: Groner Straße 50, D-37073 Göttingen, Germany)

Christian Kuhnt's doctoral thesis (Universität Hamburg) on the subject "Religious motifs in the work of Kurt Weill" is concerned with the religious elements in Weill's life and musical works. Because the study of Weill historically has been segmented into crude stylistic divisions, the process of continuous development in his life and work—including his relationship to religious questions—has not been appreciated. Hence the need for a study that overcomes these barriers. Biographical and other matters extraneous to music prepare the ground for a detailed study of the various scores as an introduction to the specific treatment of the religious motifs in Weill's oeuvre. The study will examine Weill's early religious compositions and his changing attitudes toward religion, especially between 1920 and 1933. Special attention is paid to *Der Weg der Verheißung/ The Eternal Road*, which marks an artistic and biographical watershed for which Weill draws on his situation as an exile to arrive at a new relationship to Jewish culture. His revised view of Judaism and altered attitude to Zionism, for instance, are also reflected in the productions of his later American period. (Address: Eidelstedter Weg 55, D-20255 Hamburg, Germany)

bruce mcclung has prepared the entry on *Lady in the Dark* for *Pipers Enzyklopädie des Musiktheaters* and provided the program note for City Center's concert version of *One Touch of Venus*, in *Playbill* 96, no. 3 (March 1996): 40. His article on the genesis of *Lady in the Dark*'s "Circus Dream" appears elsewhere in this issue. He is currently revising his doctoral dissertation on *Lady in the Dark* for publication, while researching music and politics and the 1939 New York World's Fair. The latter will include a study of Weill's *Railroads on Parade*.

Nathalie Mentré (École Normale Supérieure, Université de Tours) is planning a dissertation entitled "1933-1935: The French Period of Kurt Weill." After completing one year of research, Mentré has identified the following questions for further investigation: Can the three years that Weill lived in France be defined as a specific period in his artistic development? How can we understand his choice of such contrasting classical and popular musical genres? What place do the "French works" hold within his total output? What traces have these works left behind in France? Mentré is searching for the original score to *La grande complainte de Fantômas* and would be grateful to hear from anyone who might provide her with any information about this work or her dissertation topic in general. (Address: La Grande Bruyère, 02470 Neuilly-Saint-Front, France)

Jürgen Schebera (Berlin) is working on three book projects: *Hanns Eisler: An Illustrated Life* (Schott, 1997) will feature 225 photos and documents (many not published previously) and an updated bibliography and discography. He hopes to publish *Lotte Lenya: An Illustrated Life* in time for Lenya's centenary in 1998. The third project is an edition of 800-900 letters by or to Hanns Eisler as a part of the composer's complete works edition (Breitkopf & Härtel/Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1998). (Address: Rosenthaler Str. 19, D-10119 Berlin, Germany)

Kerstin Schweiger (Institut für Medienberatung, Technische Universität Berlin) is finishing a thesis entitled "Kurt Weill und sein Image: Eine Untersuchung von ausgewählten Programmheften." She recently completed an article, "On Air: Kurt Weill und das Radio," which has been submitted for possible publication in 1998. (Address: Seehofstrasse 69, D-14167 Berlin)

Larry Stempel (Mount Vernon, NY) plans to complete a book about Broadway musicals within the year for Norton. He is also delivering a paper, "Composers of Less Than Compositions/ Songwriters of More Than Songs: Problems of Authorship in the Music of the Musical," at the annual meeting of the American Musicological Society in November 1996.

Michael von der Linn (Columbia University) is writing his doctoral dissertation "From Entartung to Neoclassicism: Music in the Weimar Republic." This thesis argues that the turn to Baroque and Classical models by Paul Hindemith, Ernst Krenek, and Kurt Weill was motivated by a belief that German music had fallen into a degenerate state. Their selective appropriation of earlier styles aimed to counter the effects of this degeneration by reintroducing qualities like sobriety, moral purpose, and communal orientation into the aesthetics of contemporary music—characteristics they believed were central to the music (and culture) of the 18th century. (Address: 400 West 119th St. Apt. 8E, New York, NY 10027).

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