

PREFACE TO 1969 EDITION

Weill completed the full score of "Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny" in April 1929. While the vocal score was in preparation, he and Brecht were persuaded to modify certain passages whose frankness (particularly in the sexual sphere) was thought likely to be unacceptable at that time.

The first, and until now the only, edition of the vocal score was published several weeks before the world premiere at Leipzig in March 1930 (conductor, Gustav Brecher; stage-director, Walter Brüggmann). Already during rehearsals for that production, Weill and Brecht made certain revisions. Further revisions were made for the production a few days later in Kassel (conductor, Maurice de Abravanel; director, Jacob Geis), and yet more for the Frankfurt production in October 1930 (conductor, Wilhelm Steinberg; director, Herbert Graf). The last revisions were made for the special circumstances of the Berlin production at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm in December 1931 (conductor, Alexander von Zemlinsky; producer and designer, Caspar Neher). A definitive edition was then to have been prepared and published, but the events of 1932-3 made this impossible. The performance material used in the pre-1933 productions was confiscated and presumably destroyed in 1938.

The present edition incorporates all the verifiable revisions, and re-instates a few lines that were suppressed before publication for reasons of temporary expediency. Apart from these changes, and the correction of occasional misprints, the pages have been photographically reproduced from the first edition.

With one minor exception noted below, there are no purely editorial contributions; and with two exceptions similarly noted, material cut by the authors has not been omitted, but instead has been marked by Vi-de signs. The sources consulted — in addition to the printed full score, vocal score and libretto issued by Universal Edition in 1930 — are as follows:

- A. Autograph full score
- B. Composer's typescript of the original libretto
- C. Composer's corrected copy of the 1930 vocal score
- D. Alexander von Zemlinsky's marked copy of same
- E. Caspar Neher's marked copy of same
- F. Composer's correspondence
- G. Typescript production-notes by Neher and Weill
- H. Brecht, "Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny", in *Versuche* 1—12, book 2 (1930, Suhrkamp reprint, 1959).

Brecht's *Versuche* edition confirms certain manuscript textual changes in sources D and E, but is primarily a text for reading and contains some changes of order which from a musical point of view are impracticable. Appended to the *Versuche* are Brecht's "Anmerkungen zur Oper 'Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny'". It should be noted that this important document was not written in collaboration with Weill, and did not accord with his ideas about opera in general or *Mahagonny* in particular.

At some points, sources C, D and E conflict. Alternative readings are incorporated in the present text. A report on the other revisions follows.

Verso title-page: The authors' note about nomenclature was added to the first edition of the full score after the vocal score had been printed. The note about scenery and costumes is from source G.

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- 13 In the first editions, the inn was called "*Die Hier-darfst-du-Schenke*". The name was changed some weeks before the Leipzig production. The present reading is based on C, D, and E. However, G and H give "*Das Hotel zum Reichen Manne*", while one of Neher's projections omits "*Das*". Begbick's vocal line may be adapted in various ways. For instance:



und sie heißt "*Das Hotel zum Reichen Manne*".

- 16 "*Überschrift*." In the 1931 Berlin production, relayed announcements by an off-stage speaker replaced all the graphic texts.
- 48 Since Jenny's neo-classical *arioso* was unsuitable for Lotte Lenya, who was the Jenny in the 1931 production, Weill made for that production a *Song*-style setting of the same words (see Appendix). Although the new setting is, in itself, masterly, it is not, as one might expect, satisfactorily integrated with what precedes or follows it; and, unlike the *arioso*, it is in no way a preparation for the "*Kraniche-Duett*" (which, indeed, was omitted from the Berlin production). Since the *arioso* is finely

- integrated, and since the role of Jenny — like all the other roles in the work — was originally conceived for, and performed by, opera singers, the *arioso* has been retained in preference to the later *Song* version.
- 163—164 Before the publication of the 1930 vocal score, the following text changes were insisted upon, here and at every repeat: instead of “*der Liebesakt*”, “*die Liebe dran*”; instead of “*laut Kontrakt*”, “*so lang man kann*”.
- 172—182 The “*Lieben*” scene is here published for the first time in its original form and with the appropriate stage directions (see A and B). As published in the first editions, the scene consisted of two quite distinct numbers, the first being a bowdlerized version of the present “*Mandelay*” ensemble (marked as optional), and the second being a duet for Jim and Jenny (the so-called “*Kraniche-Duett*”). The duet was a last-minute interpolation, composed in October 1929, six months after the rest of the score had been completed and two or three months after inspection material had been sent to various opera houses. During the summer of 1929, several opera administrators told the publishers that the present form of the “*Mandelay*” ensemble was unacceptable. Although the text had already been toned down even before the inspection material was issued, Weill and Brecht were now persuaded to make more radical changes. They agreed to remove from the ensemble the two solos of Dreieinigkeitsmoses; to adapt the text of one of Brecht’s early love-sonnets so that it would serve for a duet, and to insert it after the (altered) final cadence of the ensemble; and to change the stage directions accordingly and in such a way that the duet could, if necessary, stand on its own. When Weill submitted the revision to Universal Edition, he stressed that it must be established as only a “provisional” version, which could be discarded as soon as theatres had the “courage” to stage the original one, which he greatly valued. For that reason he resisted suggestions that the entire “*Mandelay*” ensemble should be omitted from the published score, and compromised only to the extent of allowing it to be marked as *ad libitum*. It was not until the 1931 Berlin production that the “*Mandelay*”, ensemble was performed — without causing undue offence, though of course it was still in its bowdlerized version. The “*Kraniche-Duett*” was, in that production, omitted from Act II — and rightly so, for it is completely at odds with the style and structure of the other “*Sittenbilder*”. But the composer’s suggestion that the duet should be transferred to Act III could not be carried out in Berlin, since the soprano part was not within Lotte Lenya’s range. In the present edition, the duet has been transferred to the only possible place in Act III. By their very nature and function, the stage-directions for the version of the “*Lieben*” scene published in the first editions and in Brecht’s *Versuche* are to some extent incompatible with the scene’s original form. But they may, of course, be profitably referred to.
- 206 In the first editions, the *moderato assai* (“*Wer in Mahagonny blieb*”) was given to Jim, Fatty, Bill and Moses, and was followed by a *più animato* refrain (“*Auf der See, und am Land*”). Both elements were then repeated. The present and greatly abbreviated choral version was made for the original Leipzig production and used in all subsequent productions supervised by the authors. The complete setting of “*Wer in Mahagonny blieb*” properly belongs to the *Mahagonny-Songspiel* (UE 13163).
- 234 For the Frankfurt production, Weill re-orchestrated the chorale “*Laßt euch nicht verführen*” (see page 292) and placed it here, at the end of Act II — Jim’s aria “*Wenn der Himmel hell wird*” having already (in Kassel) been transferred to the beginning of Act III. This re-orchestrated version of the chorale is lost. However, the loss is of little account, since Weill — realizing, no doubt that the length and musical character of the chorale were unsuitable at this juncture — composed for the Berlin production an entirely new setting of one stanza only. This is included in the present edition, and replaces the last and otiose repetition of the ritornello chorus “*Erstens, vergesst nicht, kommt das Fressen*”, which the authors wisely cut. Weill’s orchestration of the chorale is lost, but a new one has been made by Leonard Hancock.
- 273 The Benares-Song was omitted from the Berlin production and also from Brecht’s *Versuche*. The dramaturgical reasons for that omission are obvious. However, the piece is musically of such importance and expressively so apposite that it is surely worth saving. While it does not justify its presence as a separate scene, it is wholly justifiable as a coda to the trial scene. (The separate numbering, as in the first editions, is therefore superfluous.) Given that function, nothing else need be sacrificed apart from the first stanza (“There is no whisky in this town” — cf. the *Mahagonny-Songspiel*); the newspaper in which the destruction of Benares is reported has merely to be picked up from the floor where it has been left by one of the observers of the trial. A Germanised version of the Benares-Song will be found in the Appendix, and was originally appended to the first edition of the libretto.
- 282 Source B specifies a gallows for this scene. Although an electric chair is specified in the first editions, the gallows was apparently re-instated for the Berlin production — in the sense of the prefatory note (see verso title page of this edition) concerning the unwanted emphasis on an American milieu.

- 291 In the original version of the spoken lines introducing "*Lasst euch nicht verführen*", Jim declared himself totally unrepentant. Since this "negative example" had given rise to misunderstandings at Leipzig, the speech was changed to its present form (see C, E, and H).
- 292 As an experiment during the rehearsals for the 1931 Berlin production, Begbick and Jenny appeared before the half-curtain (*Gardine*) and sang, on their own, the new setting (see p. 234) of "*Lasst euch nicht verführen*". Although this experimental staging was consistent with the new version of Jim's final speech, the original setting of the chorale was used in the actual performance — doubtless because its omission would have deprived Jim of a valedictory solo. However, in source D Jim's part is taken by Begbick throughout, and the vocal entries are allocated as follows: stanza 1, Begbick alone; stanza 2, Begbick with the first tenors, Moses with the basses; stanza 3, Begbick with the first tenors, Fatty with the second tenors, Moses with the basses; stanza 4, as in the previous stanza, but with the addition of Jenny and the female chorus.
- 295 An orchestral interlude, to follow the chorale-motet, was composed for the Berlin production, but is lost. The "*Gott in Mahagonny*" number, which follows, was cut from some early productions, including the Kassel one, for fear that it would be regarded as blasphemous. For the same reason, the scene was later presented as a "charade" staged by Begbick. However, the real problem is a formal one; and the substantial cut made for the Berlin production (and indicated in the present edition) does much to solve it.
- 306 The present superscription or announcement — see D, E, F and H — was substituted for the original one soon after the Leipzig premiere.
- 307—312 The texts for the banners to be carried by the demonstrators underwent various revisions. The present scheme is the one adopted for the Berlin production — that is, for the last production supervised by the authors. It thus post-dates the scheme noted in Brecht's *Versuche*. It was not Weill's intention that the demonstrations should appear to have any coherent tendency. In the *Versuche* text, virtually all the slogans are of uniform tendency; but there, the finale appears as a purely choric scene, without solo entries. The first editions give the following scheme, at rehearsal-figure 99: "1. *Tafel: Für die natürliche Ordnung der Dinge*. 2. *Tafel: Für die natürliche Unordnung der Dinge*. 3. *Tafel: Für die Freiheit der reichen Leute*. 4. *Tafel: Für die Freiheit aller Leute*. 5. *Tafel: Für die ungerechte Verteilung der irdischen Güter*. 6. *Tafel: Für die gerechte Verteilung der überirdischen Güter*." At fig. 102 in the same editions, a final column of demonstrators, headed by Fatty, appears with a huge banner reading, "*Für den Fortbestand des goldenen Zeitalters*". In source G, Weill and Neher stated that the first set of slogans could be reduced to two: "*Gegen die Teuerung*" and "*Für den Fortbestand des goldenen Zeitalters*"; and that Begbick alone was later to appear with another reading, "*Für die Teuerung*".