

EDITOR'S PREFACE

Weill composed the *Berliner Requiem* in Berlin during November and December 1928. The work was one of a number commissioned from leading composers (including Hindemith, Schreker and Hauer) by the Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft. It was planned with Brecht's assistance, but without his close collaboration - most, if not all, the poems were already in existence. The first performance of the *Requiem* was given by Frankfurt Radio on 22 May 1929. The conductor was Ludwig Rottenberg.

The publication of a vocal score of the *Requiem* was announced by Universal Edition in 1929. It did not materialize. After the first performance Weill withdrew his manuscript, with the intention of revising it. In January 1930 he sent his publishers a new list of contents; but again the production was delayed. On 1 December 1931 he announced that he would prepare a new version of the score suitable for amateur groups; and at the same time he specified certain alterations in the disposition of the voice parts. As far as is known, he never carried out the revisions. The autograph score has disappeared.

Two distinct versions of the *Requiem* precede the revised schemes of 1930/31. Version A was announced by Weill himself in *Der Deutsche Rundfunk* (7. Jahrg., Heft 20, S. 613). It opened with a bass solo "Vom Tod im Wald", composed in 1927 and performed in that year as Weill's op. 23. The full plan of Version A was this:

- (1) Vom Tod im Wald
- (2) Können einem toten Mann nicht helfen
- (3) Vom ertrunkenen Mädchen
- (4) Marterl (für den Grabstein dieses Mädchens)
- (5) Erster Gesang von dem unbekanntem Soldaten unter dem Triumphbogen
- (6) Zweiter Gesang von dem unbekanntem Soldaten
- (7) Großer Dankchoral

Version A was never performed. Shortly before the planned premiere, Weill realised that "Vom Tod im Wald" was musically at odds with the rest of the work. (It is in fact much closer to the style of his *Concerto for Violin and Wind Orchestra*). He therefore removed it from the *Requiem*, shifted the "Grosser Dankchoral" to the beginning, placed "Können einem toten Mann nicht helfen" after the original no. 6, and to conclude the work, introduced a new (or possibly transplanted) number - "Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen".

The "Grosser Dankchoral" was given to a full male chorus, instead of the three soloists as originally planned. This, then, was Version B - the version actually performed in 1929.

Soon after the first performance, the "Marterl" and "Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen" were published in arrangements for solo voice and piano, as part of the Weill Song Album (UE 9787). In the winter of 1929 Weill detached the "Potsdam"-march from the *Requiem* and arranged it for a capella chorus, in which form it was separately published (UE 9983). Meanwhile, Weill and Brecht had used "Können einem toten Mann nicht helfen" for the finale of the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*. On 6 January 1930 Weill confirmed that this number too was to be omitted from the *Requiem*. The December 1931 plan for a revised version indicates that the "Tote Mann" number was to have been replaced by an a capella chorus, "Die Legende vom toten Soldaten", composed in 1929.

EDITOR'S REPORT

DAS BERLINER REQUIEM, Kleine Kantate für Tenor, Bariton, Männerchor (oder 3 Männerstimmen) und Bläserorchester, nach Texten von Brecht.

- Sources:
1. Non-autograph manuscript (MS) of full score of Version A, in the Weill estate. Title: Das Berliner Requiem / Kleine Kantate / für 3 Männerstimmen und Bläserorchester / nach Texten von Bert Brecht. / Dedication: Dem Frankfurter Sender gewidmet.
 2. First edition (FE) of "Marterl", arranged for voice and piano, in the Weill Song-Album, Universal Edition, Wien, nr. 9787, publ. 1929.
 3. Fragments of a vocal score (VS) made in 1929 by Norbert Gingold, in the Weill estate.

The present text is intended as a practical performing edition. It was therefore necessary to reconcile the conflicting claims of the various versions. Clearly, Weill's decision to remove "Vom Tod im Wald" and "Können einem toten Mann nicht helfen" must be respected; and so must the unchanged and indeed unchangeable order of nos. 3 - 6 from Version A. "Die Legende vom toten Soldaten" is disqualified on two grounds: practically, because it calls for S.A.T.B. chorus, musically because it was written for a different purpose and is not in keeping with the other numbers.

"Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen" presents difficulties. The orchestral material - score and parts - is missing. Even if it were possible to supply a convincing and characteristic orchestration on the basis of the piano score, the piece itself became redundant once Weill removed the preceding "Tote Mann" chorus. As a sequel to the "Unknown Soldier" diptych (which is of course the musical and poetic culmination of the work) it is inappropriate and possibly damaging. The fact that Weill re-wrote the "Potsdam" number and issued it separately seems decisive. The song can survive on its own; and the Requiem is better without it.

This leaves numbers 3 - 7 from Version A. The two pairs - numbers 3 and 4, and numbers 5 and 6 - form the main structure of the work. Formally they require a prelude and a postlude. Number 7, the "Grosser Dankchoral", fulfills either function satisfactorily, as Weill himself appreciated - vide Versions A and B. In the circumstances it seems logical that the chorale should become both prelude and postlude. There is a precedent for this in Weill's and Brecht's school opera, *Der Jasager*.

The present score takes account of the solo/tutti arrangement set out in Weill's letter of 1 December 1931. This may be regarded as a desirable alternative to the original solo version.

Various obvious scribal errors in the MS have been corrected in the present score and need not be listed here. The following emendations and questionable readings should be noted.

Ballade vom ertrunkenen Mädchen

b. 19 and 26: The MS gives no dynamic indications. These have been supplied in accordance with previous verses.

Marterl

An alternative text, beginning "Die rote Rosa schon lang verschwand", has been added to the MS in another hand and is included in the FE. It is omitted here.

Erster Bericht über den unbekanntem Soldaten

Title changed according to Weill's December 1931 list of contents.

b. 45: In the MS, the last note in the tenor part has no accidental.

b. 47: In the MS, the first note in the tenor part has no ♯.

Zweiter Bericht über den unbekanntem Soldaten

b. 35: In the MS the tempo indication is "più andante"; "più mosso" has been substituted here to avoid a possible ambiguity.

b. 39: In the MS the first note in the baritone part has no accidental.

b. 55 - 56: The MS copyist, through lack of space, has omitted the necessary continuation of the horn parts. These have been restored in the present score.

David Drew

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