
Lost in the Stars: A Concert Sequence

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To the Editor:

In his thoughtful review (vol. 6, no. 2, p. 24) of last October's premiere by the American Composers Orchestra of the concert sequence I've devised from *Lost in the Stars*, Glen Becker refers to the previews at the Guggenheim Museum and summarizes some of the comments offered on that occasion during the course of the panel discussion between Betty Allen, Dennis Russell Davies, Peter Wexler, and myself. May I try

to clarify two points in his summary and a third which arises from them?

Having correctly noted that I intended to focus the concert sequence "not on the personal drama ... but on the larger drama of the South African society," he continues:

Thus, he has removed most of the "sentimental and popular" songs from the score, implying that they represented a once necessary compromise between the proper tone of the story and the commercial requirements of the Broadway theater.

Mr. Becker's reasons for placing the words "sentimental and popular" in quotation marks elude me, but their effect is to suggest that the phrase was mine and that it somehow explains my exclusion of these songs. It wasn't; and it doesn't.

Mr. Becker continues in the same vein:

A starting premise for the suite was the desire to excise the numbers Weill had originally penned nearly ten years earlier for his unfinished *Ulysses Africanus* - though strangely, for reasons of "musical balance," Drew has retained "Trouble Man."

I cannot imagine what leads Mr. Becker to suppose that my "starting premise" was anything of the kind. The retention of "Trouble Man" is wholly consistent with my aims from the very start.

One last point concerning the so-called "sentimental and popular" songs (about which, incidentally I neither made nor implied any value judgments). With an impressive air of authority, Mr. Becker reports that "following discussions with the conductor, Drew discarded the odd notion of grouping these numbers together in a prologue." Without going into tedious detail about a purely contingent issue, I can only assure your readers that there was no such notion to be "discarded" and hence no such discussion.

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