

## P R E F A C E

The autograph score bears the date "April-June 1921". This suggests that the symphony whose completion Weill announced to his parents on 10 December 1920 was either unrelated to the present one, or else so remotely related that he did not need to acknowledge it in his 1921 dating. The 'Symphony no. O' has disappeared without trace. Its successor is the first major product of the three years Weill spent as a member of Busoni's Masterclass in Composition at the Prussian Academy of Arts. The work was not written under Busoni's close supervision; nor, when it was completed, did any of it - apart from the fugal and choral ideas in the final section - meet with his approval. Although at least one previous orchestral work of Weill's - the symphonic poem after Rilke's 'Cornet' - had been performed in public before Weill entered the masterclass, he never released the symphony for public performance. However, he did not underrate its importance; as late as 1932 he included it among the representative works of his early years. The score was lost in 1933, but came to light 25 years later. The first performance, from the unedited material, was given in 1957 by the NDR Symphony Orchestra under Wilhelm Schüchter.

The score's title page - removed by well-wishers who hid the score during the second world war - bore an epigraph taken from Johannes R. Becher's *Festspiel Arbeiter, Bauern, Soldaten - Der Aufbruch eines Volkes zu Gott* (Workers, Peasants, Soldiers - A People's Awakening to God, Insel Verlag, Leipzig, 1921). Written in an extreme expressionist idiom derived from Strindberg's religious dramas, the play gives a stylised picture of a world in the throes of war and revolution. It ends with a representation of mankind singing God's praises and advancing towards the promised land of peace and social justice. (Three years later Becher completely re-wrote the text; the religious message was excluded, and the social one re-interpreted on orthodox communist lines). Although a similar note of jubilation is sounded towards the end of Weill's symphony, the work is programmatic only in the general sense that it is concerned with the problems of war and peace, human society and religious faith. Most of Weill's works before 1925, and several of them after 1933, share the symphony's religious preoccupations.

Like Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony op. 9, to which it is clearly indebted, the symphony is in one continuous movement, and is founded, both melodically and harmonically, on the interval of the fourth. In its thematic and motivic aspects, it shows the influence of Liszt and Richard Strauss; in its expression, that of Mahler.

## E D I T O R ' S R E P O R T

### Sources:

1. Autograph full score (FS), in the possession of the Weill estate. Title page missing.
2. Part of autograph piano arrangement (PA) for piano 4-hands, in the possession of the Weill estate. Title page and (presumably) the second of two foldings of manuscript pages missing. *Primo* and *secondo* parts written on facing pages, and complete up to and including bar 217. *Secondo* part (on final *verso* page) continues to bar 239.

FS presents many problems from an editorial point of view. They are exactly what would be expected from a score that was never tried out in performance: a score, moreover, that was written by a young composer whose creative ambitions were in excess of his practical experience, and whose hopes of hearing

the work performed must - in the circumstances of 1921 - have been very slight. Although there are a few minor corrections and one re-orchestrated passage, there is no sign that the composer read the score with a view to consistent and accurate notation. PA, as far as it goes, tends to be more accurate, no doubt because it was written for an actual performance (at one of the private concerts given regularly in Busoni's house). In FS, the number of missing accidentals is very large, that of wrong notes or clefs relatively small. Most of these errors or omissions are musically self-evident, and some can be checked by reference to PA. Doubtful readings are noted below.

In marking the string parts, Weill tends to suggest phrasings rather than bowings, though he is not always consistent in this. Apart from necessary corrections on grounds of clarity, the present text preserves Weill's phrasings and contains no further suggestions for practical bowing procedure.

More problematic from the editorial point of view are what might be considered 'errors' of composition or orchestration. Should one preserve a young composer's 'errors' in a work which is nonetheless sufficiently assured and indeed inspired to merit publication? If not, where is the line to be drawn between such 'errors' and those of older composers, among them, several major geniuses? The unhappy fate of, for instance, Schumann, Bruckner, and Mussorgsky at the hands of those friends or editors who sought to 'improve' their work is a warning that is also applicable to the humbler example of the young Weill. Although there are many things in the harmony, the counterpoint and the orchestration of the first symphony that Weill would have written quite differently even a year or so later, the work must surely be allowed to stand as he left it, except where he asks for the impossible. The eccentric and the idealistic - these are another matter, for they are in the spirit of the work. Hence certain nuances (of expression or even dynamics) which seem purely notional have been retained in the present score. However, those that are confusing or which demonstrably defeat the composer's musical intentions have been modified or omitted.

As in most of Weill's scores, the percussion parts tend to be over-written and need to be carefully handled in relation to the given acoustic. With regard to general orchestral balance, a string section of *at least* 50 players is required; and the editor recommends that the number of horns should be increased from two to four. Other recommendations are specified below, apart from those indicated in the score by square brackets or other means. The parenthesised markings are additions, not substitutions.

*Bar* 11 FS: a single slur on the four trombone and double-bass notes. The double-bass triplet is also marked stacc. In FS the direction '*sehr ruhig*' is written above and below the violins in the second half of the bar, and a dim. wedge is written across the bar-line over the tied notes. In PA '*sehr ruhig*' is written beneath the tied notes, and there is, of course, no dim. wedge.

12 FS: the minim is *f*.

16 FS, PA: *cresc. poco a poco* begins a bar earlier.

21 FS, PA: no flat sign for *d*<sup>'''</sup> in harmony at second semiquaver.

31 FS: violins, violas and cellos begin *f*. No dynamic marking for double-basses.

34 FS: flute *pp*.

49 FS: one bassoon only.

- 50 FS: the first violins' quintuplet is merely marked *f*.
- 54 - 8 FS (PA): the dynamic markings in this passage are inconsistent and incomplete. Wedges are obviously missing from the cello part at 55 (cf. horn part) and from the bassoon and double-bass parts in the first half of 56. The *cresc.* wedge in the clarinet part is not reproduced in the viola doubling, nor do it or its imitative successors in 56 and 57 arrive at a new dynamic. The initial dynamic in all cases is *ff*. Since Weill is extremely sparing with *fff*, and since the contrapuntal entries at 57 are marked with a *cresc.* wedge that leads (!) from *ff* to *ff* it seems reasonable to mark the initial dynamic down to *f*. The second half of 58 is marked *ff* in all parts, though that marking is only needed for the first flute and the first violins.
- 61 FS has what appears to be an A natural for the trombone; PA has no A here. Changed to B natural by the editor.
- 71 FS: the main body of cellos and double-basses is required to play *am Frosch*, which is not practical in this situation.
- 140 FS: solo viola *p*.
- 141 - 60 The bass drum is arguably a miscalculation. If it is included, the drum should certainly be of a smaller kind; if it is omitted (as the editor recommends), the corresponding timpani part at 208 - 16 - though somewhat less problematic - should also be omitted.
- 179 FS has *cresc. poco a poco* a bar earlier, PA in this bar.
- 202 FS: first violins *f*. Dim wedges in strings added by editor; also the optional horn doubling (small notes).
- 210 FS: viola solo, second note, *d'* natural; PA, same note, *d'* sharp. cf. 143, where FS and PA agree.
- 228 The present reading of the third note in the second clarinet part follows FS and PA. FS wrongly omits the flat sign before the last note in the cello part. But cf. 270 and 272, and editorial observations thereon.
- 233 The harmony of the *f* chord is problematic. FS gives no accidental for the *d''* in the violas and the second clarinet; and PA *secondo* has no *d''*. The possibility that Weill intended *d'' flat* seems to be excluded by the nature of the comparable part-writing at 228. The further possibility that he intended the *e* in the lower strings to be flat conflicts with FS and PA, where the semiquaver figure ends on a clearly-marked *e* natural (semiquaver); this is confirmed by the same marking (FS only) in the parallel 287 bar.
- 237 FS: no accidental for the *c''* in the oboes and third violins. PA *secondo* does not include this voice, but it does present the following variant of the two-part figure scored for horns, second violas, and first cellos:



Since bars 238 - 9 in PA (*primo* part missing) are musically consistent with FS, the awkward continuity of 237 - 8 in FS suggests the possibility that there was an inserted page on which Weill revised and re-scored 237. But of that page there is no trace.

- 238 FS: no dim. wedge for bass clarinet, bassoons, and lower strings.
- 263 - 7 FS: no dim. wedges for tremolo chords.

- 263 - 4 after the *sf* in the woodwind, violas, and cellos, at 263, the *p* at 264 is odd, but seems intentional.
- 267 FS: last horn note is (written) *c*" natural. Changed to *c*" sharp by the editor.
- 270 The clash on the first beat reflects the situation at 228 but is even harsher because the 'offending' part is now on the horn, and moves in a different direction. Again there is an obvious scribal error in FS - this time in the bass cl. part, whose second note has acquired a flat sign - and again a *d*' flat (sounding) instead of a *d*' natural would be easier on the ear. However, the same, or rather a precisely analogous, dissonance occurs at 272, where no such conjectural solution suggests itself. One must surely conclude that all three situations - that is, at 228, 270, and 272 - were intentional, however open to question.
- 289 the idea beginning here was used again in Weill's string quartet op. 8 (UE Vienna, 1924). If the two passages were intended to have the same character, the present one should be marked thus:

The image shows a musical score for strings, consisting of four staves: Violins I (Vla.), Violins II (Vcl.), Violas (Vla.), and Cellos (Vcl.). The music is in 4/4 time. The first staff (Vla.) has a dynamic marking of *p deciso e marc.* and the second staff (Vcl.) has a dynamic marking of *pespr. marc.*. The score shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, and some slurs.

However, the quartet version is re-notated in terms of a quaver pulse, and marked *andante non troppo*. In view of this, and of the distinction between 'Ruhig, ohne Leidenschaft' and 'deciso', it seems that Weill did not regard the two passages as identical. Therefore the FS phrasing - curious though it is - has been retained in principle.

- 291 FS phrased thus:

The image shows a musical score for Cello (Vcl. (Cb.)) in 4/4 time. The music consists of a series of sixteenth notes, some beamed together, and some slurred. The phrasing is indicated by a slur over the first four notes and another slur over the last four notes.

Phrasing changed by the editor in accordance with 330.

- 292 FS: double-bass, last three notes, has slur only. Changed by the editor in accordance with first cellos; likewise at every recurrence.
- 301 slurs added by the editor.
- 302 - 17 the chorale theme was used again in Weill's op. 8. By analogy, the first *cresc.* wedge should begin at the second beat of 305, and the first *dim.* wedge at the first beat of 308; similarly, the *cresc.* mark at 314 should lead to *mf*, and there should be no *cresc.* wedge at 316.
- 303 FS: the bassoon notes are tied. In op. 8 their equivalents are separate. Stacc. dots added by the editor in accordance with FS bassoon part at 342.
- 310 - 13 FS phrases woodwind and horns thus:

Phrasing changed by the editor in accordance with FS at 349 - 53.

315 - 17 FS phrased thus:

Phrasing changed by the editor in accordance with FS at 354 - 6.

- 318 FS: the first three notes in cellos have slur only; likewise the first three notes in double-basses at 319.
- 375 FS: the first-flute part has been incompletely and illegibly corrected by the composer. Both minims appear to be *f''* flat with a trill to *g''* flat. The present reading seems preferable.
- 388 FS: bassoons, trombone, cellos and double-basses have a single slur extending from the first note to the first note of the next bar. Strokes added by the editor.
- 395 tie added by the editor to snare-drum figure, and likewise to snare-drum and bass drum in next bar.
- 410 FS: in the first chord, the upper double-bass note appears to be A (natural).
- 411 FS: the violas' minims are tied. In view of the notation, this is probably an error.
- 417 - 9 since Weill forgot to change the clef for the horns, he may also have forgotten to order the removal of mutes from horns and trumpet. The muted effect, though not inconceivable, is at odds with the marking of the violins.

David Drew - May 1968