Kurt Weill did not, strictly speaking, compose popular songs. Granted, a handful of individual pieces extracted from his compositions for European musical stages had modest commercial success in live and recorded performance; a somewhat larger number of songs written for the American theater enjoyed short-term success in the commodity forms of sheet music and phonograph records; a still larger number of songs from both arenas have posthumously become standards or “evergreens,” performed throughout the world and recorded for generations unborn at the time they were written. But virtually all of his songs were originally intended for performance in the theater. Of the 118 pieces included in the two-volume Kurt Weill Songs: A Centennial Anthology, only four—“Berlin im Licht-Song,” “Complainte de la Seine,” “Je ne t’aime pas,” “The Song of the Free”—were not written for dramatic presentation on stage or in film. Weill obviously needed a dramatic context to create a song; otherwise he simply couldn’t, or wouldn’t, write one.

“I need poetry to set my imagination into motion; and my imagination is not a bird, it’s an airplane,” he told his brother Hans already in 1919. A few months later he announced to his sister that his life’s work would probably turn out to be the musical theater, where “music best expresses what cannot be said in mere words.” But it doesn’t follow that all of his songs make musical and dramatic sense only in the context of the stage works for which they were written. Quite the contrary; many songs, including such standards as “September Song,” “Speak Low,” “Surabaya-Johnny,” and above all “Mack the Knife,” have been sung, played, and heard by millions of people with little or no knowledge of the stage works for which they were written.

Weill made it his business to become familiar with the popular musics of his day from the early 1920s until his death in 1950, and virtually all of his works for the musical stage written after 1925 evince to some degree his acquaintance with popular styles and genres. It is, however, not easy to define “popular music”: the term has been used over the years as a label for many different musical styles and genres, and the literature on the subject has ranged from positivist historical narrative and analysis of musical styles to ideologically charged arguments over cultural meaning. In September 1983, for example, at the second biennial meeting of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM), an entire week of discussion addressed the question “What is popular music?” without reaching any consensus about a definition.4

Such terms as musique populaire and musica popolare were probably first applied to the orally disseminated music of the “people,” that is, peasant classes and urban poor, but by the late nineteenth century this repertory had come to be known as “folk” or “traditional” music. At about the same time a quite different repertory, created and performed in an urban setting and marketed as a commodity for the bourgeois and the upwardly mobile working classes, took over the label of “popular music.” Social and economic changes in the nineteenth century brought a steady increase in the number of households in Europe, North America, and the European colonies with enough surplus cash to purchase musical instruments and instruction in music. More and more people enjoyed both the leisure time and cultural motivation to engage in recreational music making and dancing. Musical literacy had earlier been limited to professional musicians and the moneyed and educated classes, but the introduction of musical instruction into elementary and secondary education and the proliferation of local and regional amateur bands, choral groups, and musical societies throughout Europe and North America brought a dramatic increase in the number of people competent to read musical notation. The music industry tapped into this new market by publishing pieces designed specifically for amateurs who lacked the technical and interpretive skills to do justice to the classical repertory but nevertheless wanted to play and sing for their own pleasure and that of their family and friends.

This new repertory, in the form of songs with keyboard accompaniment and compositions for keyboard or small instrumental ensembles, targeted the bourgeois household. Marketed at first as individual pieces of sheet music, this growing repertory also appeared in small collections of such pieces published as albums (or folios) and sometimes even in larger and more expensive hardcover anthologies. Much nineteenth-century popular vocal music consisted of pieces written in a style generally similar in melodic and harmonic content to classical music of the era, but shaped into shorter, simpler formal structures, with fewer technical and expressive demands on the performer. Such “high-class ballads,” or “parlor songs,” as they were often called—works by Franz Abt, Henry Bishop, Virginia Gamba, Carl Friedlander, Franz Kick, Arthur Ebert, Karl Eckert, Henry Russell, and hundreds of other songwriters—were published and performed throughout Europe and North America. In addition to being sung and played in the homes of middle-class amateurs, they were sometimes written for or interpolated into works for the popular musical theater. Publishers also addressed simplified arrangements of arias and songs from operas and operettas to the same amateurs who bought these parlor songs.5 And there were collections of “folk” tunes arranged for voice and keyboard in the tonal and triadic style of early-nineteenth-century classical music; typical of these were C. F. Peters’ often reprinted Volks- und Studentenlieder für Pianoforte, containing 120 German songs in simple arrangements by Victor Felix; Chansons Anciennes Harmonisées, published in Paris by Les Editions Ouvrières; Thomas Moore’s Irish Mélodies; and the songs of Robert Burns.

Another sub-genre of popular music evolved in cabarets and other intimate venues, where patrons could enjoy food and drink as well as entertainment. Though most often associated with Paris (where the famous Chat Noir opened in 1881) and Berlin, cabarets could in fact be found all over Western and Eastern Europe and in major cities of North America.6 The environment for which such songs were written shaped their style and substance. In the words of Klaus Wachsmann, “Cabaret provided an atmosphere in which innovation could flourish.…[It was] a place where painters, poets, composers and performing musicians could not only meet one another but confront the public, the bourgeoisie; and an element of provocative artistic statement was the essence of cabaret during its heyday.”7 Cabaret songs, sometimes the work of classically trained composers, tended to be more sophisticated and more “modern” in musical style than were the popular songs performed in beer gardens, music halls, vaudeville, and the Victorian parlor.
Popular keybord music of the time derived at least in part from classical models. Henri Herz, Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Theodor Kullak, and other classically trained musicians wrote short character pieces, etudes, nocturnes, and sets of variations for amateur performance, as well as keyboard arrangements of excerpts from operas and other classical works. Another subset of the nineteenth-century popular repertory consisted of instrumental music to accompany social dancing, either arranged for small groups of instruments or published as a single melodic line to be played by violin (fiddle), flute, trumpet, bagpipes, or any other available melodic instrument. With such an assortment of genre, style, and medium, popular music of the nineteenth century can be defined less aptly by its musical style than by its function of serving the bourgeoisie’s needs for music to be performed in the home, as theatrical entertainment, or for social dancing.

Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth (and perhaps even the twenty-first), a class-based distinction between classical and popular art held that the former was, by definition, intellectually, morally, and socially superior. “Democrats as we must be in government,” wrote Philip H. Goeppe in 1897, “there is no doubt that the bursts of popular will throughout the nineteenth century have had a sinister effect on art. The lower instincts with the lower classes have broken away from the higher. Within the right meaning, the true democrat in government not only can, but must be the true aristocrat in art.”3 Similar judgments persisted well into the twentieth century, as articulated in 1931 by the composer and critic Daniel Gregory Mason: “A fundamental axiom [holds] that majority taste is always comparatively crude and undeveloped, and that where it is allowed to dominate, art languishes and dies. Art survives and grows only where majority taste undergoes that winnowing and progressive refining whereby minority standards emerge from it.”4 Dwight Macdonald drew a distinction between the people, “a group of individuals linked to each other by common interests, work, traditions, values, and sentiments,” and the masses, “a large quantity of people unable to express themselves as human beings because they are related to one another neither as individuals nor as members of communities.” A society of the latter sort “tend[s] to cohere only along the line of the least common denominator; its morality sinks to that of the most brutal and primitive members, its taste to that of the least sensitive and most ignorant.” Macdonald also argued that “mass culture is imposed from above. It is fabricated by technicians hired by businessmen; its audiences are passive consumers, their participation limited to the choice between buying and not buying.”5

In practice, however, distinctions between popular and classical music in the nineteenth century have always been more elusive than such pronouncements might suggest. Certain types of popular music—parlor songs and piano music, and particularly cabaret songs/shared stylistic features with the classical repertory, and conversely many composers of classical music (including, among others, Haydn and Beethoven) made settings of folk songs for voice and piano. Popular songs and piano pieces were often included on recitals and concerts otherwise devoted to classical music, just as "art" songs appeared in vaudeville acts and revues. Snippets of classical compositions were often reworked into popular dance pieces, and many published song anthologies contained parlor songs and operatic arias interspersed with songs from the minstrel show and the music hall.6

Popular music has always been "performers’ music," characterized by its flexible mode of presentation. Because composers of symphonies, chamber music, oratorios, and art songs attempted to “freeze” their compositions as “texts” by means of increasingly precise musical notation (which specified not only pitch and rhythm but dynamics, tempo, timbre, phrasing, and even articulation), usually only slight variations of tempo, dynamics, and phrasing differentiated one performance “event” of a given piece from others. Christopher Small has nearly summarized this ideology of autonomy and authority: Each work gets to be thought of as a Platonic entity . . . to which all possible performances are only approximations, ephemeral and contingent to the existence of the work itself, [which] flows through history, untouched by time and change, waiting for listeners to draw out its meaning, by a process which Immanuel Kant called disinterested contemplation. That meaning is permanent, possibly in cases of extreme greatness even eternal . . . [Performers] are merely the medium, the necessarily imperfect medium, through which the work has to pass.12

By contrast, popular music usually circulated in arrangements made by musicians other than the composer, hired for that purpose by publishing houses. Once a piece of popular music had entered the public realm (sometimes initially in performance rather than in print), the relationship of performers to the printed score was much more flexible than in the case of classical music. Though it was possible for a piece of popular sheet music to be sung or played precisely as the staff arranger had written it down, it was much more in the nature of the genre for the performer to adjust the tempo, dynamics, melody, harmony, instrumentation, and even structure to bring the piece more within his or her range of technical expertise and expression. An anonymous contributor to the Albany State Register, writing in 1852 of Stephen Foster’s “Old Folks at Home,” testified to the radically different modes of performance to which a popular song might be subjected:

By the time a piece of popular music reaches the listener, then, it usually has been doubly mediated, first by an arranger and then by its performers. It could be argued, therefore, that the primary source for a given piece of popular music is not the written score, or "text," but a performance based on this score or a recording of such a performance, that is, an "event." Two important corollaries follow from this. First, there is no *Urtext* for a piece of popular music but rather a succession of “events,” each of equal validity though not necessarily of equal quality.13 Second, in order to retain its identity when subjected to various arrangements and performances, a successful piece of popular music must have a "core" essence, a hard kernel of uniqueness, a "hook," that makes it recognizable as one and the same piece when heard in widely divergent arrangements and performances.

Virtually all nineteenth-century popular musics have certain features in common: they are, in comparison to most classical compositions, brief in duration; they were composed or arranged so as to be performable by amateurs; and they utilize the musical language of the common-practice repertory—that is, they are predominantly triadic and shaped in simple, symmetrical binary, ternary, strophic, or variation forms. Compared to classical music, they struck some people as nothing more than "mere bits and scraps of sentiment and melodrama in story song, asinine sighings over home and mother and lost sweethearts," as the novelist Theodore Dreiser wrote in 1918 of the songs of his own brother, Paul Dresser.15 But after studying in Europe to be a classical composer, the American George W. Root turned to the writing of "people's songs" and observed that "[although] it is easy to write correctly a simple song, to use the material of which such a song must be made that it will be received and live in the hearts of the people is quite another matter. . . . It was much easier to write when the resources were greater."16

The invention and refinement of sound recording around the turn of the twentieth century effected dramatic changes to the musical life of Europe and the Americas. The new commodity forms of the phonograph disc and cylinder made it unnecessary for the consumer to be musically literate or to go to a public venue to hear music. Early versions of the phonograph were clumsy and expensive, but by the first decades of the twentieth century, when less expensive and better models became available, the number of homes with "talking machines" approached and then quickly surpassed the number of households in which one or more members were capable of performing from printed music. By the 1920s the phonograph disc had equalled and then surpassed sheet music as the most important medium for the dissemination of
popular music. By the end of that decade, radio networks and sound films offered popular song yet additional means of mass circulation.

At precisely the same time many of the leading composers of classical music were abandoning some or all elements of the common-practice repertory in favor of ever increasing harmonic, melodic, rhythmic, and structural complexity. Though some classical compositions of this time—arias by Puccini and instrumental pieces by Rachmaninoff, Debussy, and Ravel, for instance—were still acceptable to mass audiences in concert or recorded form, most “modern” music was unintelligible to and unperformable by amateurs. One would search the popular repertory of the twentieth century in vain for pieces written by, or arranged from, Richard Strauss, Alban Berg, Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, Béla Bartók, Paul Hindemith, Benjamin Britten, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Elliott Carter, or even Aaron Copland.

But composers of operettas, musical comedies, and nonbook stage entertainments (the music hall, vaudeville, cabaret, and burlesque) continued to write in a familiar musical language. Pieces excerpted from the stage works of Victor Herbert, Paul Lincke, Franz Lehár, Oscar Strauss, Leo Fall, George M. Cohan, Emmerich Kálmán, Sigmund Romberg, Irving Berlin, and a host of younger composers made up a large percentage of the popular music of the first decades of the twentieth century. Although the music of each of these composers featured distinctive turns of melody, harmony, and rhythm, one can by the 1920s speak of an international popular style that, in its relative simplicity, differed fundamentally from the music of most “serious” composers of the day.

The situation when Weill began composing in Germany in the second and third decades of the twentieth century can be summarized as follows:

- “Popular music” had become the label for a product disseminated for profit as printed music or sound recordings, performed live as public entertainment, or used to accompany social dancing.
- Popular music continued to use the common-practice musical language of the nineteenth century, though with some modifications, and was thus more accessible to performers and audiences of a wider range of musical training, taste, and listening habits than was the more complex “modern” music of the time.
- Classical music was almost always performed as notated by the composer, whereas two or three layers of mediation, which were not necessarily under the control of the composer—arrangement and a highly flexible mode of performance—occurred before a piece of popular music reached its audience.
- Most composers, performers, teachers, and critics of classical music still regarded their repertory as being intellectually, artistically, morally, and socially superior to popular music.

II

By 1927 Weill had begun questioning the elitist position that classical music occupied in Western culture and the implications of this attitude for his own work as a composer, as he wrote in a Berlin newspaper article:

A clear split is becoming apparent between, on the one hand, those musicians who, full of disdain for their audience, continue as it were by shutting out the public sphere to work on the solution to aesthetic problems and, on the other, those who enter into contact with some sort of audience, integrating their work into some sort of larger concern, because they see that above the artistic there is also a common human attitude that springs from some sense of communal belonging and which has to be the determining factor behind the genesis of a work of art.17

In 1929 he expanded on that thought in another newspaper article: “[T]oday a process of regrouping that is concerned with the elimination of the ‘socially exclusive’ character of art and that stresses the socially creative power of art is being accomplished in all artistic domains.”18

Weill believed that dance music functioned as a “socially inclusive” genre. “Unlike art music,” he had already written in a 1926 essay, “[it] does not reflect the sense of towering personalities who stand above time, but rather it reflects the instincts of the masses.” He was particularly drawn to jazz, which “so completely expresses the spirit of our times that it has even been able to achieve a temporary influence over a certain part of serious art music. The rhythm of our time is jazz.”19 Three years later he proclaimed, “In the midst of a time of heightened artistry, jazz appeared as a piece of nature—as the healthiest, most vigorous expression of art whose popular origins allowed it to rise instantly to an international folk music of the broadest consequence. Why should art music barricade itself against such an influence?” Weill asserted that for some composers, including himself, “jazz [had] a significant role in the rhythmic, harmonic, and formal relaxation that we have now attained and, above all, in the constantly increasing simplicity and comprehensibility of our music.”20

In Berlin Weill heard the dance bands of Erno Rapée, Julian Fuhs, and Marek Weber in hotels, cafés, and restaurants, as well on the radio. “No large radio station operates without jazz bands of the most modern type,” he observed in 1926; “every evening London offers jazz music from the Hotel Savoy, Rome from the Hotel di Russia.”21 But little if any of the “jazz” that Weill heard at this time came directly from its country of origin, the United States. He did, however, hear the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in 1928, and he may have encountered an occasional black jazz player in a Berlin bar or restaurant; both Weill and Lenya recalled owning in those years a number of recordings of such American performers as the Revelers and Louis Armstrong.22

J. Bradford Robinson has noted:

Two misconceptions haunt all discussions of the impact of jazz on the musicians of Weimar Germany. One is that the music they confronted was legitimate jazz; the other, that it was specifically American. Neither was the case... The rare and isolated appearances of legitimate jazz in Weimar culture were overwhelmed by the great mass of commercial syncopated dance music, especially Germany’s home-grown product... [Jazz] to Weimar Germany was an all-embracing cultural label attached to any music from the American side of the Atlantic, or indeed anything new and exciting.”23

Jazz influences began to appear in Weill’s compositions in the early 1920s. Echoes of the “Algi-Song,” a fox-trot written around 1921, resonate in his first time in his one-act opera Royal Palace (1925–26), which features a fox-trot to accompany the dancing of hotel guests and concludes with a lengthy tango finale. We also know that the now lost two-act opera Na und!, which occupied Weill for most of 1926, included a “Shimmy trio.”24 Although Weill made no attempt to write Schlager or hit tunes per se in the new jazz style for the popular market, his incorporating aspects of this idiom in his stage works allowed excerpts to be “popularized” to various degrees and with mixed results.

For Weill’s evolving theatrical language, popular music served as both a crucial stylistic component of creation and, ironically, a yardstick by which to measure his music’s reception and dissemination outside the theater.

The first of Weill’s compositions to be targeted for popular exploitation in the German marketplace was the “Alabama-Song,” whose English-language text and title have been credited to Bertolt Brecht but were almost certainly authored principally by Brecht’s assistant Elisabeth Hauptmann. Shortly before getting a commission in March 1927 from the Deutsche Kammermusikfest in Baden-Baden to compose a one-act chamber opera, Weill had read Brecht’s Hauspostille, which included five poems grouped as the “Mahagonnygesänge”; two of these were written entirely in primitive English and generically titled with the word “Song”—the only poems in the volume to be so labeled. Weill later recalled that “as early as my first meeting with Brecht in Spring 1927 the word ‘Mahagonny’ emerged in a conversation about the possibilities of opera and with it the conception of a ‘Paradise City.’ In order to pursue further this idea, which had seized me immediately, and to test the musical style that I envisioned for it, I first composed the five Mahagonny Gesänge from Brecht’s Hauspostille and linked them into a small dramatic form, a ‘Singspiel,’ which was performed in Baden-Baden during the summer of 1927.”25 The subtitle that Weill coined—Ein Singspiel, rather than Singspiel—evoked the stylistic, linguistic, and generic clash implicit in the provocative juxtaposition of the English-language song and the German Spiel.
Although both Brecht and Weill had used the term Song prior to their collaboration, Weill suggested in an interview in New York in 1935 that they had jointly coined the label to describe their new genre of theatrical singing and differentiate it from both the Schlager and the more elevated genres of Lied and Arie: “Bert Brecht, who did several librettos for me, and I coined a German word, ‘Song’ just that way. The term became very popular and was used extensively throughout Germany. It was quite different from ‘Lied.’ It corresponded, I suppose, to the better type of American popular song. And while it consisted of four or five verses and a refrain, it did not conform to a specific number of verses your popular songs do here.”26 But to the ears of the American Marc Blitzstein in 1930, Weill’s Songs differed markedly from their English-language cognates: “[Weill’s] idea of a ‘sonk’ is an outlandish mixture of German beer-drinking ditty and American ballad, accompanied à la marcia by jazz-band instruments betrayed into a Sousa formula.”27 Like the mythical “America” imagined from afar in the American Marc Blitzstein in 1930, Weill’s Songs differed markedly from their English-language cognates: “[Weill’s] idea of a ‘sonk’ is an outlandish mixture of German beer-drinking ditty and American ballad, accompanied à la marcia by jazz-band instruments betrayed into a Sousa formula.”27 Like the mythical “America” imagined from afar in the American Marc Blitzstein in 1930, Weill’s Songs differed markedly from their English-language cognates: “[Weill’s] idea of a ‘sonk’ is an outlandish mixture of German beer-drinking ditty and American ballad, accompanied à la marcia by jazz-band instruments betrayed into a Sousa formula.”27

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Footnote 26:

Feiner, p. 91. In addition to the “Alabama-Song,” the first issues included “Leb’ wohl mein Schatz (Blues),” from Krenék’s Jonny spielt auf, Erwin Schulhoff’s 5 Études de Jazz, and Vier Tänze by Alois Haba; Weill’s piece was the only one to carry the generic label Song.

Footnote 28:

In the Songspiel the two female members of the cast, Jessie and Bessie, sing the “Alabama-Song” as a duet in three strophes: first a solo for Jessie with four phrases of the refrain calling forth Sprechstimme echoes by Bessie; then a solo for Bessie; and finally a duet with a unison verse but canonic (at the interval of two measures) refrain. Each strophe of the song contains a sharply contrasted verse and refrain:

Verse: vmp(2) x4 y4 x7 y8

Refrain: vmp(2) A8 B8 A8 B8

Weill noted the vocal line of the verses as Sprechstimme, a device used to great effect by Schoenberg in Pierrot Lunaire (1912) and Humperdinck in Königskinder (1897), but the melody of the refrain is conventionally notated. The asymmetrical phrase structure of the verse (4 + 4 + 7 + 8) contrasts with the symmetrical one (8 + 8 + 8 + 8) of the refrain (although the second phrase of the refrain, “We’ve lost our good old mamma,” might be interpreted as merely a variant of the first phrase, with similar melodic contour and almost identical rhythm). The anchorless vocal line of the verse is compressed into a tritone, comprising little more than chromatically embellished descending minor thirds (G–A, A–F). The pervasive but nonsystematic dissonance of the accompaniment offers little additional tonal stability, even at cadences. The two measures of the opening vamp contain eleven of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale, lacking only a G# (or A♭) and the “harmony” thereafter features nontriadic clusters of eight to ten notes of the chromatic scale. In contrast, the refrain, despite persistent dissonances in the accompaniment, has a clear tonal center of G major and dominant-tonic cadences concluding the second and fourth phrases. The refrain’s expansive melodic contour creates maximal contrast, its range of a ninth exceeding that of the verses by a major third above and below.

When UE’s Ernst Loewy-Hartmann sent Weill a draft of Blaser’s arrangement of “Alabama-Song,” he pointed out a few problematic spots: “We feel that the first part (up to the refrain) needs to be simplified further, especially in the left hand, as the interval of a second on the first and third beats throughout sounds very bad. We would suggest that these sharp dissonances on the first and third beat in all these measures be omitted. . . . The remaining harmonies will still express the grotesque nature of this passage, and the whole thing will sound much better on the piano. . . . We also wonder how you would like to handle the vocal line in the first part, because the original version has Sprechstimme.”27 Weill suggested that the Sprechstimme of the verses be replaced with a conventionally notated vocal line taken from the draft’s violin part (of what was then still to be an arrangement for voice, violin, and piano). Instead of C–D–G and B–C, Weill opted for open fifths in the left hand. He inquired, “Will you print only one stanzas? Would you consider incorporating the trill variation of the second stanza’s refrain, ad libitum, into the violin part?”28 By the time UE sent galley proofs on 6 October, the arrangement included the text for all three strophes, but the idea of a violin part had been dropped.
A comparison of Weill's original setting with the sheet music version shows that the new accompaniment, intended for mass consumption by amateurs, was geared to keyboard players with limited technical skills. Accordingly, the "harmony" was simplified; the original 2/4 meter of the verse changed to C; and the rhythm present in literally every measure of the original verse—an eighth note followed by two sixteenth, then two eighths—replaced by rhythmic patterns using only quarter notes. Further, the two measures of the vamp contain only five notes of the chromatic scale rather than the original eleven, and these five are arranged so that they can be heard as an incomplete C-minor eleventh chord (C–E–G–B–D–F), or a C-minor triad with added second and fourth.

UE issued the "Alabama-Song" as a piece of sheet music for voice and piano, the customary format for popular songs, but without the usual colorful or eye-catching cover depicting some aspect of the song or of the stage show for which it was written. Instead, UE's all-purpose black and white cover and, conspicuously, the presence of a title page, conformed to the conventions of classical music publishing.39

So does the song itself. Although "Alabama-Song" draws textual images and rhythmic elements from popular music, a comparison with contemporary songs written for mass consumption in the 1920s—German Schlager, British music hall songs, French chansons, American Tin Pan Alley songs—shows that in musical style it does not conform at all. It shares the verse-refrain structure and thirty-two-measure refrain characteristic of American popular songs, but in its harmonic language it has almost nothing in common with such songs, which tend to be solidly tonal throughout, using triads or their extensions for vertical sonorities, with chromaticism limited chiefly to secondary dominant chords and dissonances resolving in conventional common-practice ways.

There are expressive differences as well. Lyrics of both American and German popular songs of the day tended to deal with such personal emotions as love, jealousy, and nostalgia. The pidgin English text of "Alabama-Song," sung by representatives of a corrupt, capitalist society obsessed with whiskey, money, and sex, is anything but escapist fantasy, and it makes little sense without the dramatic context.40

In publishing format, musical style, and expressive content, therefore, the "Alabama-Song" qualifies neither as a Schlager nor as an American popular song. Even with the harmonic simplifications introduced in the sheet music version, the verse remains harmonically ambiguous. On the one hand, the verse's melody, especially in the first four measures, suggests the key of A minor, and the verse's closing vocal pitches (A–G–F–D–C) even imply a V7–I cadence in that key. The accompaniment of the verse, on the other hand, emphasizes the C–G fifth throughout much of the left hand, and the E–G interval in the right hand at the word "die" contradicts the A-minor implications of the melodic closing gesture. Even the refrain, with its symmetrical, four-phrase, thirty-two-measure melody in G major, exhibits such elements of musical modernism as the pedal points on G and C throughout, out-of-harmony notes in virtually every vertical sonority, pervasive dissonant chromaticism, and harmonies chosen for sheer sound rather than tonal function. For example, the striking diminished-seventh chord C#–E–G–Bb (with an added D) that appears in mm. 9–10 of the refrain does not resolve to its V7 goal (D–F#–A–C) directly, but only at mm. 15–16. Well will further attenuates the leading-tone effect of this diminished-seventh chord by passing chromatically through the half-diminished seventh chord A–C–E–G at mm. 13–14. Functionally, to be sure, mm. 9–14 make sense as a prolonged dominant preparation in the key of G, with the diminished-seventh chord on C# understood as V7 of V and the half-diminished seventh chord on A understood as a II7 chord altered through modal mixture (Mischung). Nevertheless, it would have been more conventional for the more intense diminished-seventh chord to follow the more diatonic pre-dominant one. This way of undercutting leading-tone chromaticism was to prove a hallmark of Well's song style.

"Mahagonny: Ein Songspiel" was conceived and written as a piece of classical music, precisely notated to ensure that all performances would be essentially the same and intended for performance in a concert setting before an audience receptive to musical modernism and avant-garde theater. And despite Blaser's attempts to simplify the duet, the sheet music version of "Alabama-Song" retained too many elements of modernism to pass for a popular song. UE sold fewer than 700 copies during Well's lifetime.

However, a recording of the piece by Marek Weber's orchestra might well qualify as a piece of popular music: disseminated by one of the mass media, this performance smoothed over the eccentricities of Well's style and drew sufficiently on the instrumentation and rhythm of "jazz" to be heard as a piece of popular dance music.41 Unlike most pieces of Kunstjazz by other composers, Weber's rendition of the "Alabama-Song" could be danced to, and, in fact, it was. The flip side of Weber's record presented Well's "Tango Angèle," a piece that proved to be even trickier to adapt for a wider audience.42 Although "Tango Angèle" uses rhythms associated with the popular dance of its title, its irregular phrase lengths, skips to distant tonal centers, and jagged dissonances distance the piece stylistically from popular dance music. Well had written this instrumental tango for his one-act opera Der Zar lässt sich fotografieren (1927, libretto by Georg Kaiser), where it was to be played, at a climactic moment, by an onstage phonograph to accompany a duet between the Zar and a would-be assassin pretending to be the famous French photographer Angèle. "I myself made the arrangement for dance orchestra after a careful study of phonograph recordings," Well reported to UE on 7 January 1928.43 Otto Dobrinis's Saxophon-Orchester Dobrini recorded the piece on 11 January, with Well present and perhaps conducting, and it was released commercially in time for the premiere of the opera in Leipzig on 18 February of that year.44 In the wake of the opera's immediate success—by August 1928 thirty opera houses had announced plans to mount it—Well and UE discussed the possibility of publishing the tango in a transcription for piano. "I sent you the particell of the 'Tango Angèle' and the beginning of the piano arrangement. Perhaps you could check the piano version for pianistic aspects. It would be wonderful if you could use the same charming cover design that was used for 'Alabama-Song.'" Well wrote on 23 February (less than a week after he had received the "Alabama-Song" as sheet music).45 Even though two advertisements listed "Tango Angèle" as forthcoming, there is no evidence that the project was ever realized.

Marek Weber's experienced musicians took a slightly more liberal and relaxed approach to Well's score, so the recording from early April seems more danceable than the one Well himself supervised.46 Despite his personal involvement with the first recording, Well preferred Weber's version over that one, and on 26 May 1928 he advised UE, "The Marek Weber recording of 'Tango Angèle' and 'Alabama-Song' will be released on 1 June. Perhaps you could, on your own accord, tell the theaters to use this recording for 'Zar' and create publicity for it."47 Plans for a salon orchestra arrangement, which UE and Well had discussed in April, fizzled. But the subject came up again in November, when UE reported that radio stations wanted to broadcast live performances of the "Tango Angèle," to be played from the parts created for the original recording. However, Lindström AG had not returned those musical manuscripts to Vienna, and ultimately nothing came of the radio project.48 Soon, of course, the sensational success of Die Dreigroschenoper would dwarf such previous attempts at popular exploitation of Well's works.
the entire world whose bearing is so unashamedly engendered by the establish-
ment.” 100

Though hastily written and nearly withdrawn after a disastrous dress re-
hearsal, the piece achieved instantaneous and historic success, succinctly sum-
morized by Kim Kowalke:

Within one year Die Dreigroschenoper had been performed more than 4200
times. Within a month of its premiere in Berlin, productions were announced
for Vienna, Budapest, Munich, Frankfurt, Leipzig, and Hamburg. The cap-
tion of Universal’s advertisement, “Der Triumph eines neuen Stils,” applied
to fifty cities in Italy, France, Russia, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Austria,
and Scandinavia, as well as Germany. It was translated into eighteen languages
for more than ten thousand performances within five years of its premiere.106

Eager to cash in on the overwhelming onstage success, UE commissioned
the composer-conductor Norbert Gingold to proofread and emend Weill’s
piano-vocal score of Dreigroschenoper for publication.107 “They were in an
awful hurry,” Gingold remembered, “and I had only a few days to do it. . . .
When I found little mistakes here and there, I would immediately write little
notes [to Weill], asking for clarification. He answered my questions quickly,
because neither of us wanted mistakes, in spite of the rush.” 108 As Heinsehimer
later recalled, this piano-vocal score, published on 24 October, sold “many
more copies in the first few months of its existence than all other works by
Weill had.” 109 Not only singers, conductors, and rehearsal pianists but even
critics, who at that time were expected to be familiar with new pieces before
reviewing them, needed scores for their professional involvement with
Dreigroschenoper. But UE persuaded Weill that the publication of a full or-
chestral score was unnecessary, as conductors could work from the cued
piano-conductor score provided with the rental performance materials.

Already on 21 August, just ten days before the first performance, Weill
suggested to UE that “several numbers have the possibility to become popular
very quickly,” and the Viennese publisher issued two pieces from Die Dreig-

Frakimile 2: “Tango-Ballade”

...grochenoper in sheet music form within a month of the premiere.

“Tango-Ballade” (see p. 97) appeared as a solo piano arrangement
of Macheath’s and Jenny’s “Zuhälterballade,” which UE decided to pub-
lish purely in instrumental format because “without the context of the stage
and the world as a number [the lyrical] might be unrecognizable.” 109 Weill
argued without success that the lyrics should be included: “The appeal of the
piece lies precisely in the fact that a somewhat risqué text (which, by the way,
isn’t as offensive as many operetta texts) is composed in a tender, pleasant
way.”110 The front cover, as with all the Dreigroschenoper songs, is again
Hauser’s black-and-white stock design—an attempt to create a show-specific
cover failed—whereas the back cover catalogues UE’s series “Moderne Klavier-
ausgaben” no. 19 or (this would be very effective) the beginning of the Third Fi-

Frakimile 7: “Barbara-Song,” in Berliner Tageblatt

.. lore.”114 However, three months later, on 15 December 1928, Neue Woche Musik printed a version of “Barbarasong”
consisting of the piano part of the first strophe of UE’s edition, with text
overlaid but no vocal part (see p. 123); the layout also included pho-
tographs of Weill, the Theo Mackeben Band, principals from the show,
and several scenes from the Berlin production.

A highly respected and successful publisher of contemporary music, UE
had little or no experience in the publication, promotion, and sale of popular
sheet music. Marketing strategies for generating mass sales were not in place,
and the firm was certainly at least partly to blame for the poor sales figures
of the single-issue Dreigroschenoper numbers. Decades later Heinsehimer recalled
the distress caused at UE by the unexpected success of Die Dreigroschenoper:

Until eight o’clock on that last night of August 1928, the world premiere of The Three Penny Opera, we had been the prototype of what Broadway from Berlin to New York calls, if not with contempt so surely with pity, a Standard Pub-
lisher. . . . Backstage, minutes after the final curtain, while we were pushed
around by hysterical actors, happy musicians, stagehands who couldn’t have
cared less, falling props, and well-wishers who only a few hours earlier had
been prophets of doom, a man who looked like the personification of His
Master’s Voice and turned out to be just that had cleared his way towards
Hertzka and had offered him money if he would let him record a show album
of Dreigroschenoper. He did not ask for money to record one of our publica-
tions—he offered it. . . . [Now we were] A Popular Publisher. . . . It was a de-

licious disgrace.

We were, of course, completely unprepared for our new station in life. The
only song we had ever published was Mahler’s ‘Song of the Earth.’ Everything
we were now expected to do we had to learn from scratch. . . . We subscribed
to trade magazines whose enormous formats and outlandish, incompreh-
sible language we were unable to master, as we tried to grasp the meaning of an entirely new vocabulary. Screenings, lead sheets, slick showcase demos, packaging concepts, record exploitation, A&R men, show albums, performance campaigns, disk jockey drives, folios, payola, song books, jingles, bridges, theme songs, teen pops, standards, international tuners, blues, country, western, folk, evergreens, charts, global blockbusters.\textsuperscript{65}

UE’s inadequate response notwithstanding, however, it cannot be denied that Weill’s songs, despite their effectiveness on stage, were, in fact, not particularly prone to popularization. The vocal numbers in \textit{Die Dreigroschenoper} were written in what Weill called his “song style,” which he described as “a very light, singable style, since the songs must be performed by actors.”\textsuperscript{66} Examination of two songs from \textit{Dreigroschenoper} may illustrate some characteristics of this so-called song style, which proved resistant to mass-market popularization. The first, “Seeräuberjenny,” unfolds in three strophes, each of which exhibits the following structure:

\begin{verbatim}
vamp2/|A4 A’6+2/|B4 B’4/|C5
\end{verbatim}

This structure, which is, in fact, even more complex than this diagram suggests, has nothing in common with the conventions of a \textit{Schlager}. For one thing, the piece is actually a strophic variation. Whereas the identified A and B share the same tempo, accompaniment figuration, and harmonic instability, the C section contrasts in all of these respects. Each of the three strophes also has a different instrumental accompaniment (this is, in fact, not reflected in the sheet music version, which uses the same accompaniment for each strophe). Nor does Weill’s harmonic language have much in common with that of the typical \textit{Schlager} of the day. Weill’s chords may be commonplace enough, extended beyond triads to seventh and ninth chords, but they use to which Weill put such traditional harmonic materials:

\begin{itemize}
  \item [F]–G, the third a minor seventh chord on E
  \item [A]–C, diminished seventh chord on G
  \item [F]–[C]–E, the third a minor seventh chord on E (E–G–B–D)
  \item [F]–[A]–[C]–E, the third a minor seventh chord on F (F–A–C–E)
\end{itemize}

Theodor W. Adorno was quick to point out the effect of the “surrealistic” use to which Weill put such traditional harmonic materials:

\begin{quote}
[This] music is allowed to employ triads because it doesn’t believe in them; rather, it destroys them through the very manner in which they are used. . . . The harmonic design corresponds here, it barely recognizes the principle of progression anymore, or the tension of a leading tone, or the function of a cadence, but instead lets go of the last trace of communication between the chords.\textsuperscript{67}
\end{quote}

Though phrase lengths coincide with harmonic rhythm in the B section, the bass moves harmonically out of phase with the triads above it; for example, in m. 1 the D\textsubscript{♭} in the bass moves harmonically out of phase with the triads above it; for example, in m. 1 the D\textsubscript{♭} and A\textsubscript{♭} in the bass contradict the E\textsubscript{♭}–minor triad. And in yet another departure from common-practice harmonic procedures, the final section of the song jumps abruptly to, and ends in, F\textsubscript{♯} minor, a tritone removed from the C–minor triad with which the piece had begun. Rhythmically the “shimmery figure” of the “Alabama-Song” permeates sections A and B. This, combined with the saxophone, trumpet, banjo, and drum called for in Weill’s orchestration, gives the piece the unmistakable flavor of Weimar “jazz.”

On stage, “Kanon-Song” (p. 102) is a duet in three strophes for Macheath and Tiger Brown, a rousing celebration/indictment of the brutality and insensitivity of European imperialism in Asia and Africa:

- **introduction**: 6 mm. (2+2+2)
- **vamp**: 2 mm.
- **verse**: ||: 8 mm. (4+4)
- **refrain**: 20 mm. (4+4+4+4+4+4): ||
  - [first ending, 8 mm. (2+2+2+2)]
  - [second ending, 2 mm.]

The last beat of the first and second refrains overlaps with the first beat of the first ending, which repeats the introduction (six measures) and the vamp (two measures) to introduce strophes two and three; the second ending, used for only the third strophe, serves as a brief coda. The song shares its verse-refrain structure with most popular songs, but the refrain consists of five phrases rather than the four usually found in such pieces. The two singers alternate two-measure phrases in the “Charleston Tempo” in the verse and the middle section of the refrain; they sing in unison for the first eight and last four measures of the refrain. As was Weill’s custom in multistanza songs, the relatively light orchestration of the first strophe becomes increasingly complex in the second and third, an effect that Weill and Gingold did their best to retain in the piano-vocal score. But Thaler’s arrangement of the sheet music version of “Kanon-Song” adheres to the model of the reworked “Alabama-Song” for voice and piano: the two vocal lines are collapsed into one, and the piano accompaniment remains the same for each of the three verses and three refrains; thus a strophic variation is reduced to a purely strophic song, eliminating both variety and momentum.

The melody moves in clear tonal directions: the introduction begins in A minor and cadences on its dominant, E major; the verse starts in B minor and moves to its minor dominant, F\textsubscript{♯} minor; and the refrain continues in this key before cadencing in the home tonality of A minor. The accompaniment, however, contains quartal harmonies and other combinations of notes that contradict the harmony implied by the melody, as at the beginning of the verse, where the melody is solidly in B minor but the bass line outlines tonic-subdominant progressions in E. The way Weill sets up this B minor/E minor dualism is typical of the way in which he gradually turns nonharmonic tones into something that sounds more structural. In the two-measure vamp that precedes the vocal entrance, the offbeat F\textsubscript{♯}–C\textsubscript{♭} fifth sounds like decorative neighbor notes to the accented E–B, especially since Weill has just tonicized its high point on D, the F\textsubscript{♯} and C\textsubscript{♭} sound more like a dominant of B minor than a neighboring chord to E minor.

Songs such as “Kanon-Song” and “Seeräuberjenny” thus could hardly be expected to top the charts. Written at the same time that Weill and Brecht were formulating the concept of “epic theater” (characterized by “new forms and content emphasizing the contemporary and the technological, a new style of acting and directing that de-emphasized emotion, and a new spectator expected to both enjoy and be instructed by what happened on stage”), the music of \textit{Dreigroschenoper} demanded a style of presentation that Weill described as “gotic.”\textsuperscript{68} This manner of “epic singing” was less “personalyzed” than the singing in traditional modes of opera or orperetta, more a matter of “reporting” than “expressing” situations and emotions. Above all, in its direct address to the audience, it was self-conscious of its “performative” function. The lyrics of most of the \textit{Dreigroschenoper} songs were not intended to convey personal emotions but were in effect slogans, instructing the audience in the correct response to the events taking place on stage. “Seeräuberjenny,” whose lyrics dispassionately address the plight of the Lumpenproletariat in a capitalistic society, was assigned to the role of Polly, who was to sing it to entertain the guests in the wedding scene in the stable.\textsuperscript{69} (Because the song had no real plot function, Lotte Lenya, who recapped her signature role of Jenny in the film version, could sing it there without any change whatsoever.) Somehow, however, whether sung by Polly or Jenny, at the wedding in the stable or prior to a coupling in the brothel, Weill’s music transformed the words into an emphatically personal statement. This can be heard even on the earliest recordings.\textsuperscript{70} Bob Dylan recalls his first encounter with this “wild song” at the Theatre de Lys: “It’s a nasty song, sung by an evil fiend . . . . It leaves you breathless. In the small theater when the performance reached its climactic end the entire audience was stunned, sat back and clutched their collective solar plexus.”\textsuperscript{71}
available to amateur musicians in the form of piano transcriptions of operas, operettas, and other classical and semiclassical pieces, devoted one issue to 

Die Dreigroschenoper. Issue number 274 (1929) featured eleven numbers from the work, including the overture, most of the principal songs, and excerpts from two of the finales; the issue also contained a brief essay about the work and several photographs of the Berlin production. As was the practice with Musik für Alle, the music appeared on just two staves, with texts of vocal numbers placed above the right hand of the piano accompaniment, allowing for performance either by voice and piano or by piano alone. This format enabled the arrangement of “Kanonensong” to fit on a single page (see p. 109). In comparison with UE’s sales figures of Dreigroschenoper material, those of the Dreigroschenoper issue of Musik für Alle, published by the large Ullstein publishing house, proved far more successful: as Hertzka told Weill, Ullstein based its guaranteed minimum royalty payment to UE on a projected sale of 20,000 copies.72

Some pieces from Dreigroschenoper were also arranged for concert and recital performance by professional musicians. Weill himself rerecorded eleven pieces from the show into a concert suite of eight movements for seventeen wind instruments, which he named Kleine Dreigroschenoper für Bläserorchester. After its February 1929 premiere, conducted by Otto Klemperer, this “suite”—a term that Weill deliberately avoided for the title—found its way into concert halls very quickly. By 1933 more than one hundred ensembles had performed it, and performances were often broadcast because the arrangement for wind instruments was particularly suitable for early broadcast technology. That same year, 1929, the virtuoso violinist Stefan Frenkel, a champion of Weill’s Concerto for Violin and Wind Orchestra, op. 12, arranged Sieben Stücke nach der Dreigroschenoper for violin and piano. These virtuosic showpieces featured difficult passagework, octaves, and double- and triple-stops for the violinist, as may be seen in the first and third strophes of “Kanonensong” from this set (see p. 112). Weill had originally notated the piece without key signature, as he did most songs in the work, but Frenkel added key signatures to several sections of his arrangement to reduce the number of accidentals. Weill preferred Frenkel’s arrangement over the more volkstümlich version of “Tango-Ballade” for violin and piano submitted by Rolf Agap, an aspiring conductor who was studying with Hans Pfitzner at the time in Munich. For the reprint of Frenkel’s arrangement in 1932, UE asked him to provide an optional, simplified violin part, “because the original version can be performed only by a very few virtuosos.”73

Weill’s use of contemporary dance idioms made his songs obvious candidates for dance arrangements. In 1926 UE had initiated a series of arrangements for salon orchestra and small orchestra, titled “Vindobona Collection,” which featured music by composers ranging from Anton Bruckner to Leo Blech that could also serve as accompaniment for silent films. For Weill’s new jazz style, however, the publisher felt the need to establish a new sub-series, the “Vindobona-Collection Jazz-Serie.”74 With no expert arranger on staff, or jazz style, however, the publisher felt the need to establish a new sub-series, Blech that could also serve as accompaniment for silent films. For Weill’s new arrangements—which appeared in the smaller paper format—Weill could report that these and other instrumental arrangements of music from Die Dreigroschenoper were “performed in the programs of countless restaurants, cinemas, radio broadcasts, etc.”75

The burgeoning phonograph industry scrambled to acquire recording rights for the Dreigroschenoper songs, which appeared between 1928 and 1932 on more than forty shellac discs on twenty different labels in vocal, instrumental, and dance arrangements.76 Many recordings featured singers from the first production, including Harold Paulsen, Lotte Lenya, Kurt Gerron, and Carola Neher. Recordings by French orchestras and the chanteuses Lys Gaury, Odette Florelle, and Marianne Oswald followed, and soon discs sung in Danish or Czech and even in Japanese appeared. But Weill later noted with regret that, with very few exceptions, the songs “are played in ‘arrangements’ that have nothing to do with my instrumentation.”77

The audience for Dreigroschenoper and its songs expanded in 1931 with the release of a Tobis-Wärner-Produktion film version, directed by Georg Wilhelm Pabst. Although both Weill and Brecht had filed suit against the producers to stop its production, once it was released Weill urged UE to capitalize on the film by “concentrat[ing] on one or at most two numbers and to make real popular numbers of them, like the Berlin popular publishers with their film hits.”78 But UE, insisting that “experts in the film business don’t make real popular numbers of them, like the Berlin popular publishers with their film hits,”79 was unable to induce them to do so. In an attempt to capitalize on the “Tango-Ballade,” which had been one of the most popular numbers from the stage work. In addition to the four released songs, the film featured “Barbara-Song” and “Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens” as sung numbers.80 But the film offered no opportunity to capitalize on the “Tango-Ballade,” which had been one of the most popular numbers from the stage work. By then the “Moritat” had been recorded a number of times, so UE commissioned Isko Thaler to arrange that number for jazz and salon orchestra, and published the stock arrangement as “Moritat von Mackie Messer.”

A French-language version of the film, made at the same time as the German but with a different cast under the title L’opéra de 4 sous, prompted Editions Max Eschig of Paris to publish six songs from the show in arrangements for voice and piano, with lyrics translated by André Mauprey. These were the first songs by Weill to be issued in a genuinely “popular” context, in a series titled “Les succès de films.” Eschig also published these songs for voice alone—a common format in France—thus making them accessible to anyone with even a minimal competence in singing from musical notation.81

As may be seen from “Chant des canons,” the second of “Kanonensong” published in this series (see p. 119), the front covers for these songs featured a photograph of two stars from the French film, Albert Préjean and Florelle; the back covers offered incipits of hit songs from other popular films, rather than lists of Weill’s “serious” works such as those found on the back covers of UE’s editions. Initially Eschig had intended to print all
seven songs that UE had published as Einzelausgaben. However, “Chant d’amour” (“Liebeslied”), though listed on the front covers of the six chant soul versions, never appeared, possibly because of its limited appeal as a popular song. “Tango-Ballade,” on the other hand, reclaimed its lyrics and original title, “Zahäuterballade,” which now became the subtitle, “Ballade du souteneur.”

Because the sub-publishing contract between UE and Eschig, signed on 24 July 1930, had been in the works since April, the French publishing house probably initially intended to release the sheet music on the occasion of the French stage premiere of Die Dreigroschenoper in October 1930 at the Théâtre Montparnasse. But when that production flopped, Eschig stopped the press. When the film was released a year later, in November 1931, and generated strong box office demand, Eschig resumed publication. On 9 December 1931 Weill reported to UE that “friends of mine are just getting back from Paris and confirm once again the spontaneous success of my music in Paris. The whole world wants my music and recordings, and the Mackie Messer song is sung in the streets.” In an attempt to capitalize on the fact that the film gave such prominence to “Unanité de l’effort humain” (“Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens”)—all four stanzas were sung—Eschig published this number in piano-vocal format in July 1932, some eight months after the release of the French film.

Weill had high hopes that Die Dreigroschenoper would make a successful Atlantic crossing. The work was first introduced in the United States in Pabst’s film version which opened at the Warner Theater in Manhattan in May 1931, still in German and with only an inaccurate English synopsis printed in the program. The film found neither critical nor popular acceptance. But the Broadway production of the stage work in April 1933 provided a more promising opportunity. Weill wrote to UE in February 1933: “As to the situation abroad, I firmly intend . . . to go to New York for the Dreigroschenoper premiere. If the music is done well and my name properly promoted there, after six months I could have the same position in New York that I have in Paris. He hoped that UE’s sub-publishing agreement with Max Dreyfus, the head of Harms, Inc., would result in his giving The 3-Penny Opera “the same care he devotes to the Gershwin works.” But the production was misconceived, and by April 1933 Weill had fled Germany to Paris and abandoned his plans to attend the first night and the other musicals. UE reported to Weill in Paris that “The 3-Penny Opera had to close after just 10 days. To be sure, this is especially unfortunate and catastrophic news.” Despite the Broadway failure, Harms, even one year after Die Dreigroschenoper had folded, was still toying with the idea of trying to turn “Moritat” into a hit. In May 1934 Alfred Kalmus reported to Weill that “the publisher Harms-Dreyfus has approached us for permission to turn ‘Moritat’—equipped with a new English lyric—into a popular song, ‘something that, in our terminology, corresponds to a Schlager.” Weill was quick to respond:

Regarding the popular edition of “Moritat,” nothing speaks against it, provided my music isn’t distorted beyond recognition (because that would do me more harm than the whole affair might be of service to me). Since there are many excellent arrangers over there, I’m convinced that we can find someone who could turn “Moritat” into a hit without substantial changes to the character of my music. As a verse, one could use “Der Mensch lebt durch den Kopf,” leading straight into the “Moritat,” just as I did in no. 2 of the Suite [Kleine Dreigroschenmusik]. Could you kindly tell me what my share would be in the case of such a popular edition of “Moritat,” especially with regard to the small rights, which I consider most important in such a case.32

Although an addendum to the general sub-publishing contract from April 1933 was signed on 10 July 1934, the project was never consummated. The stage work would not be produced professionally again in the United States until 1954, and Weill would not live to see “Mack the Knife” lead the American hit parade.

Meanwhile, in Central Europe selected songs from Die Dreigroschenoper were appearing in a number of popular serial publications and collections.33 UE’s own anthology, Von Zwölf bis Zwölf fand Wien, comprised forty songs, grouped into collections such as might be broadcast in a series of time slots on a radio program running from noon to midnight. “Ballade vom angenehmen Leben” appeared in the last slot, entitled “10–12 Uhr: Jazzband-Überraschung.” In this anthology Gustav Bläser received credit for his slightly simplified piano arrangement with text overlay. Released in October 1929, the anthology sold all of UE’s individual sheet music publications of Dreigroschenoper songs, and the first print run of 6,000 copies sold out in less than a year, prompting UE to print another 4,000 copies.

The most successful publishers of popular music in Germany and Austria (such as the aforementioned Dreimaskenverlag, Bohème-Verlag, Anton J. Benjamin) favored the anthology format. Anthologies of Schlager were mostly issued in series with titles such as 1000 Takte Tanz, Bühne und Tanz, or Zum 5 Uhr Tre, and always featuring eye-catching covers with fashionable art deco designs in full color. Another type of anthology, equally popular and with equivalent print runs, concentrated on popular classical numbers and excerpts from operettas, which were collected in sturdy hardcover editions of 150 pages or more and with conservative cover designs. Anton J. Benjamin’s Musikalisches Edelsteine, for example, contained piano versions of operas, operettas, salon pieces, songs, dances, and marches. Volume 14 of that series, published in 1931, opens with a potpourri of nine pieces from Die Dreigroschenoper in simplified arrangement for piano by Leo Minor (see p. 125). Remarkably, Minor retained all the original keys except for a brief excerpt from the “Zweites Dreigroschenfinale,” which he transposed down a whole step. Because the numbers do not appear in the order in which they occur in the play, and given that the penultimate reprise of “Kanonon-Song” precedes a coda that recalls the overture with which the potpourri begins, the collection is less a condensed version of Die Dreigroschenoper than a piano cycle. About two years earlier the publisher Neufeld und Henius had issued the twelfth volume of a series of anthologies titled Sang und Klang, which contained both “Kanonon-Song” and “Tango-Ballade”; correspondence between the series editor, Leo Blech, and Hertzka indicates that it enjoyed an astonishingly high print run of 60,000 copies.34

Overall then, Die Dreigroschenoper achieved considerable popular and commercial success: it attained an unprecedented number of performances on stage; the piano-vocal score sold many thousands of copies; phonograph discs of its music circulated in large numbers in continental Europe; a film adaptation was widely shown in Germany and France; and individual pieces from the show were published, performed, and recorded in a variety of arrangements. Weill was pleased with all of this, writing to UE on 14 October 1929 that “the fact that my Dreigroschenoper music has been commercialized doesn’t speak against it, but for it, and we would be falling back into our old mistakes if we were to deny certain music its importance and artistic value simply because it found its way to the masses.”

But Weill also felt that “true popularization . . . could result only from sheet music sales,” and individual songs from the show did not achieve mass distribution in sheet music format, at least not during his lifetime.35 Despite their use of rhythms and instruments associated with popular dance music, the numbers contained too many traces of musical modernism: the absence of key signatures; the use of nontriadic vertical sonorities and nonfunctional sequences of chords; and newly arranged piano accompaniments that were, as Weill put it, “bad and much too hard.” These features, not to mention Brecht’s idiosyncratic lyrics, prevented successful mass marketing of the Dreigroschenoper songs in sheet music form.

After the premiere of Die Dreigroschenoper in late August 1928, Weill continued to work with Brecht on the libretto of the full-length Mahagonny, but the composer participated in several other projects as well. He was commissioned, as were Max Butting and Heinz Tessen, two former colleagues in the Novemb ergruppe, to write a song for “Berlin im Licht,” a festival held 13–16 October 1928 “to show that [though] Berlin had been cloaked in a shroud, both figuratively and literally, [it] was now emerging as a new ‘city of light.’”36 The four-day event featured illumination of Berlin’s architectural landmarks, his-
toric avenues, stores, and factories. It drew two million residents into the streets, and the spectacle attracted twenty special trainloads of visitors from other German cities. Weill’s “Berlin im Licht-Song,” which he labeled a “Slow-Fox,” was first performed at a promenade concert by a military band (in Weill’s setting); later it was sung in a cabaret performance by Paul Graetz. Based on an internal UE review undertaken by Erwin Stein, who considered Buttigis’s and Tiessen’s contributions harmonically and melodically too radical for Gebrauchs Jazz, UE rejected both of their compositions for lack of popular appeal but published a version of Weill’s song for voice and piano and also an arrangement for dance band by Otto Lindenmann.77 Advertising “Berlin im Licht-Song” as a continuation of the successful songs begun with Mahagonny and Dreigroschenoper, UE proudly proclaimed that Weill had created “an entirely new genre of chansons with social significance.”78

Other projects included incidental music for two plays that opened in Berlin around this time, Leo Lania’s Konjunktur (April 1928) and Lion Feuchtwanger’s Die Petroleuminseln (November 1928); both plays attacked the greed of the international oil industry and the attendant negative impact on the environment and local populations.79 Weill also wrote two works specifically for radio broadcast in 1929: Das Berliner Requiem, a setting of antiwar texts by Brecht, and Der Lindberghflug, also to a text by Brecht, a distinctly nonheroic ode to the American aviator whose solo flight across the Atlantic was seen by some as the outstanding technological and human achievement of the age.80 These works reveal Weill’s populist politics, which prompted him to use the modern media to reach a larger and less “elitist” audience than he had addressed in his earliest compositions. “The radio audience” in particular, he noted, “is composed of all classes of people: It is impossible to apply the assumptions of the concert hall to [it]. For its conception, music was meant for a definite and limited circle of cultured and affluent classes. For the first time radio poses for the serious musician of the present the task of creating works which can be taken up by as large a circle of listeners as possible. . . . [T]he musical expression must not cause any difficulty for the untrained listener.”80

With the exception of the “Berlin im Licht-Song” and Der Lindberghflug, none of these occasional works was published;81 to make some of this music available, however, in 1929 UE brought out a folio, titled Song-Album, which contains five pieces drawn from the works, in arrangements for voice and piano, as well as “Ballade von der sexuellen Hörigkeit,” a number from Dreigroschenoper that had been cut from the original production and not included in the published piano-vocal score out of fear that the text would be considered scandalous. All six pieces in the Song-Album are in Weill’s song style; they all adhere to simple verse-refrain or strophic form and draw on the rhythms of popular social dances or marches; and several have suggestions of German folk music.

The version in this album of the slow fox “Das Lied von den braunen Inseln” (see p. 139) from Die Petroleuminseln is a good example of Weill’s use of pure strophic form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Time in Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>introduction</td>
<td>4 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verse</td>
<td>[4 mm. (8+8)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refrain</td>
<td>16 mm. (8+8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|             | [first ending, 2 mm.]
|             | [second ending, 2 mm.]|

Despite its regular phrasing, this song too is harmonically more complex than most popular music at the time, and Weill dispensed with a key signature, even though the refrain clearly suggests D major. Compared to songs from Die Dreigroschenoper, however, the piano accompaniment is simple enough to allow performance by amateur pianists. In Feuchtwanger’s three-act drama the song had been prominently placed at the opening; as the curtain rises, a gramophone aboard an ocean liner is playing the song; this generates a heated argument among the passengers, which ends in a scuffle and the destruction of the record. At various moments throughout the play, some of the characters sing the song or snatch of it, though in an off-hand remark, the ship’s cap-

tain refers to it as “a bad song, not worth a gramophone disc.”82 A noncommercial record of the song had been produced for use in the stage production, but even after its publication in the Song-Album “Das Lied von den braunen Inseln” did not generate further interest. This is understandable: Feuchtwanger had tailored the lyric to the play, and the song made little sense when removed from the dramatic context; the lyric itself is strangely heavy-handed and repetitive, and not easily memorized.83

Two other songs in the Song-Album, “Muschel von Margate” and “Vorstellung des Fliegens Lindbergh,” were commercially recorded in 1931 for the Austrian Paloma label by the tenor Otto Pasetti.84 Paloma released the record as part of a small sub-series entitled “Exzentrische Musik.”85 Given the politically and socially engaged lyrics and the eccentricities of Weill’s harmonic language, none of the Song-Album’s six numbers could reasonably have aspired to a mass audience. The Song-Album sold fewer than 700 copies during Weill’s lifetime. Around the time the Song-Album went to press in September 1929 Weill reported to UE that he was working on two workers’ choruses with texts by Brecht, an original composition entitled “Die Legende vom toten Soldaten” and a new adaptation of “Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen” from his Berliner Requiem, which had been included in the Song-Album in an arrangement for voice and piano by Norbert Gingold. UE promised to publish both in its “rote Reihe” (red series). When Weill submitted his manuscripts in mid-December he reported that several workers’ choruses were already planning to sing the works, and that the Arbeitsmensingerbund, an umbrella organization for such choruses, had inquired about the availability of materials. Weill gave directions for publishing “Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen”: “[T]he piano part needs to be added just as in the Song-Album. In the last stanza only, the section which quotes the Lied ‘Ub immer Treu und Redlichkeit’ should be notated two octaves higher and a note ‘(like Glockenspiel)’ should appear.”86 The idea of the piano accompaniment was quickly dropped, though, and the song was published on 7 April 1930 in a cappella format (see p. 145). The song as Weill had composed it for Das Berliner Requiem called for three male solo voices (tenor, baritone, bass) that pass the vocal line back and forth; Weill composed only sixteen measures of piano accompaniment, which the tenor carries the melody. Weill’s cappella arrangement is more complex: the melody migrates through all voice parts, there are different dynamic levels, and polyphonic passages create intricate harmonic subtleties. In this arrangement the song was probably not suitable for most amateur choruses, and this may well account for the remarkably low sales figures. UE had printed just 200 copies of the score and 300 copies of two part-books, but when the Gestapo raided UE’s offices on 9 April 1940, they confiscated 181 copies of the score and 200 copies of each part.87

A letter from Erwin Stein to Weill of 17 November 1931 outlines what Stein thought was suitable for workers’ choruses at the time:

> I am very pleased to hear from Dr. Heinsheimer that you like the idea of a “single-voice chorus.” I think this is an extremely important matter since the question of repertoire has become a big problem for the workers’ singing organization. Almost everything written for modern workers’ chorus can be mastered only by the best choruses. But practically the only things that choruses with average ability can master, musically or technically, are in the old choral society editions. So we lack and what we need is choral music that is good and yet easy to perform; the texts must not necessarily be tendentious, but at least they should not be foreign to the intellectual and emotional sphere of the worker.

> Therefore, the “single voice” idea is intended as a simplification. Experience has taught us that in just about every chorus there are at least a few talented singers (usually among the basses) who can also sing difficult intervals and rhythms. With a good lead singer the others then sing correctly as well. It is rare in workers’ choruses to find musical people in the middle voices of the mixed choruses, especially in the tenors. This is the reason, relatively speaking, why rehearsing multipart works presents so many difficulties. . . . As for the accompaniment, the main consideration for choirs is cost. I'd actually prefer not to consider piano at all. The most practical solution might be a small wind ensemble whose parts are kept simple so that they can be...
played by the musicians from the bands of the workers' organizations. A small orchestra of plucked instruments might also sound good. But might it be possible to have a union chorus without any accompaniment or with percussion for a mass event?110

Although Weill showed some interest in Stein's idea, projects for the stage—always Weill's principal occupation—kept him from adapting or composing choral works along these lines. He did consider rearranging the entire Berliner Requiem as a short cantata for workers' choruses, but this project came to nothing.111

The 1929 stage work Happy End, with music by Weill, lyrics by Brecht, and a book by Elisabeth Hauptmann under the pseudonym "Dorothy Lane," was an obvious attempt to replicate the success of Die Dreigroschenoper and enlisted the same director (Erich Engels), scenic designers (Caspar Nehet), musical director (Theo Mackeben), and pit orchestra (the Lewis Ruth Band) from that production. As well as many of the cast members and the same venue, the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm. The assorted petty criminals and social misfits in Happy End, who hang out in Bill's Dance Hall in Chicago, eventually join forces with the Salvation Army, and the show's clowns comes when everyone joins in singing "Hosiannah Rockefeller," a paean to the gods of capitalism. The initial reception and subsequent fate of the show were altogether different from those of Die Dreigroschenoper, however. On opening night, 2 September 1929, Weill telephoned Lenya (who was not in the cast) during intermission to tell her that the show was a huge hit.112 But near the end of the play, Brecht's wife, Helene Weigel, apparently stopped out of her stage role as the Lady in Grey (or "Die Fliege") to read from a Communist brochure. A near riot ensued, the next day's reviews were poor, and the show closed after one month. Happy End was not staged again during Weill's lifetime.

With little prospect for other productions, UE chose not to publish either a full or a piano-vocal score of Happy End but did excerpt three songs as sheet music for voice and piano: "Surabaya-Johnny," released nine days before the premiere, and "Was die Herren Matrosen sagen" and "Bilbao-Song" one month after the show had closed (the latter also in a dance band arrangement).113 The publication history of these adaptations reflects the compositional process of the show. Because the songs were urgently needed as rehearsal materials, Weill did not have time to customize the copies sent to UE by sending notes. It therefore seems to me better to print . . . only one strophe."121 Accordingly, both songs were published with the lyrics of only their first strophes, and thus, as in the case of "Alabama-Song" and "Kanonen-Song," pieces written in strophic variation form were in popular publication condensed to a single strophe, compromising the narrative progression of their lyrics as well as the subtitles of Weill's changing accompaniment.

Despite their brief stage exposure, the three Happy End pieces enjoyed considerable success in live and recorded performances. In fact "Surabaya-Johnny" quickly became something of a standard or "evergreen," and it has been sung, played, and recorded by a variety of performers from 1929 to the present.122 Weill's setting of Brecht's text—a first-person narrative of a woman who was only sixteen when she was lured away by a man and then abandoned when her youth faded—transforms the text into a deeply expressive song.
Weill subtitled the song “Blues,” and though there is no trace of that genre’s traditional twelve-measure harmonic structure, the content of the lyrics justify the label. “Surabaya-Johnny” was sung in the show by Carola Neher, and it was first recorded in 1929 by Lotte Lenya, who made it into one of her signature songs, performing it frequently throughout her career.

The three strophes share identical structure:

verse vamp 2 x 4 x’4 x”4 x”4
bridge 8 mm.
refrain A4 A’ A’ A"8

In the verses the narrator tells her story in a matter-of-fact manner; the bridge changes meter to convey an angry outburst against the man; and the refrain laments and reflects (“You have no heart, Johnny, but I love you so”); the refrain, incidentally, begins with the same melodic figure as the one that opens the “Moritat” from Die Dreigroschenoper.

A key signature of three flats fits the E major of verse and refrain; the bridge begins with a suggestion of F minor as the local tonic and then moves to the E♭-key of the refrain via a straightforward bass sequence of descending fifths (C–F–B♭–E♭–A♭). The A♭ then supports the refrain’s off-tonic opening harmony, a diminished F♯ chord. Seventh and ninth chords predominate, dominant chords are in fact minor seventh chords on the second degree of added sixths (and include an out-of-harmony F in the bass) and the “submediant with added sixth, but in this situation the sonorous effect of the bass and partly because the G♭ of the penultimate chord can be heard harmonically as an F♯, combining with the B♭ in the bass to suggest an augmented fifth chord on the dominant. Such elided resolutions of six-four chords at cadences were by no means unusual in art music of the nineteenth century (consider, for instance, Chopin’s Prelude, op. 28 no. 14, mm. 16–17), but they were rather more so in popular songs. The most striking chord in “Surabaya-Johnny,” occurring just before the end of the refrain, is also one of Weill’s most characteristic sonorities, a half-diminished chord (E♭–G♭–A♭–C♭) that doesn’t resolve in any of the ways usual for a chord of this class; it could be interpreted as an altered subdominant seventh or as a flattened submediant with added sixth, but in this situation the sonorous effect of the chord effectively trumps any functional reading.

As is true of all standards, “Surabaya-Johnny” retains its effectiveness and special quality regardless of performance style. This is apparent in the wide range of styles on offer in the numerous recordings that have been made over the years. Because of the time limitations imposed by a 78 RPM phonograph disc, Lenya, in her 1929 recording, sang only the first and third strophes. She maintained a brisk, steady, dance-like tempo throughout, except in the bridge, which she delivered in a free, semi-spoken manner. This is a “cool,” Brechtian, performance; Lenya distances herself from the song’s protagonist by delivering the text in a straightforward, almost detached fashion, allowing the words and music to speak for themselves.

An instrumental recording by the Lewis Ruth Band moves along at a steady, moderately fast tempo from beginning to end, with jaunty, staccato articulation by the instruments emphasizing the “jazzy” character of the piece. Weill had written the bridge in 3/4, in contrast to the 4/4 meter of the verse and refrain, but specified in his piano-vocal holograph that salon orchestra arrangements should score the entire song in 4/4 to enable it to be danced as a fox-trot. In a footnote Weill had even noted how the bridge should be changed. The Lewis Ruth Band performance, which essentially follows Weill’s footnote notation, doubles the value of the first note in every measure of the bridge to keep the piece in 4/4 throughout. It was in performances of this sort that “Surabaya-Johnny” was played in bars, dance halls, and other public venues.

The French music publisher Salabert had obtained the sub-publishing rights for “Surabaya-Johnny” and “Bilbao-Song” and issued both songs in September 1952. The chanteuse Marianne Oswald recorded “Surabaya-Johnny” in January 1933, and around the time that Oswald’s recording became available, the publishing house reissued the song with a cover featuring the artist. Oswald’s performance included a string-dominated saloon (as opposed to “jazz”) orchestra, which showed little trace of Weill’s original instrumentation. In Oswald’s version a solo violin plays the melody throughout, and Oswald mostly speaks the text, though now and then she sings a phrase an octave lower than notated. Each verse and each refrain starts with a steady beat, but frequent fluctuations of tempo initiated by the singer prevent a dance-like character from becoming established at any point, and in the bridge the piece loses all sense of metric regularity. As a result the song takes on the character of a French popular chanson, a genre with which Weill would soon become quite familiar. But Weill and Lenya were not fans of “La Oswald.” After listening to Oswald’s recording of “Surabaya-Johnny” in 1938, Lenya suggested to Weill that “the police should ban it.”

Lenya recorded “Surabaya-Johnny” again in 1943, this time accompanied by piano alone, as one of a set of “Six Songs by Kurt Weill” released by Bost Records. This version is similar in many ways to her recording of 1929. This performance maintains a dance-like character, though the tempo is slightly slower, but Lenya makes more use of expressive ritardandi at phrase endings, and in general this rendition is less “cool” than the earlier one. This recorded version, with the pianist unidentified, shows similarities with an arrangement for voice and piano that Weill prepared, either for Lenya or some other performer (see p. 155). The piano writing of Weill’s arrangement is fuller and more idiomatic, as well as technically more difficult, than that of the published version. Weill also eliminated several traces of musical modernism present in the printed music (in the first eight measures of the verse, for example, he replaces the out-of-key F in the bass with an E♭), and he retained 4/4 for the bridge rather than switching to 3/4 and in the refrain insinuated hints of a Latin rhythm into the left hand of the piano part. The connection between Weill’s arrangement and the Bost recording is not clear. Certainly the second strophe of Lenya’s performance incorporates much of what is new in Weill’s arrangement, including a series of parallel fourths and fifths in the right hand at the beginning of the verse; yet other new features are not included in the recorded performance. Weill may, in fact, have made this arrangement for his own use as an accompanist for Lenya; much of it is technically more difficult than the original; it certainly would not have been a suitable arrangement for publication in a popular edition.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century “Surabaya-Johnny” continued to be performed and recorded by singers in various styles. In 1971, for example, the Italian pop star Milva recorded it in an arrangement by Enrico Riccardi; she sings in a full-throated, almost operatic manner and often lingers on high notes. She takes the verses at a much brisker pace than Weill’s tempo indication of Sehr ruhig would suggest, then sings the refrains almost twice as slowly, so that rhythmic continuity between verse and refrain is lost; there is no hint of a dance idiom anywhere. Her interpretation is overly and aggressively emotional and thus quite at odds with the aesthetic of epic theater. Bette Midler, with the aid of her pianist-arranger Barry Manilow, also performs the piece hyper-expressively. She follows the contour of the melody only in the most generalized fashion, with every phrase lapsing into a semispeaking, almost monotone, delivery; she projects pathos and submission, never anger or defiance, to the point of almost weeping in the final bridge. She sings the last strophe more slowly and softly than the first two
and ends on a minor tonic chord, which is contrary to what Weill had written. Ute Lemper, by contrast, approaches "Surabaya-Johnny" almost as if it were a classical Lied, with the composer'snotated score as an authoritative text.135

Lemper is accompanied by a band playing from Weill's original score, so the orchestration changes from strophe to strophe, and one can really hear the countermelodies, inner voices, and other details of the masterful orchestration. Taking the tempo indication Sehr rubrig literally, her rendition moves at a much slower tempo than any recordings made in the 1920s and '30s.

For more than seventy years, then, "Surabaya-Johnny" has been performed as a "cool" song with a dance-like beat, an instrumental dance piece, a cabaret song, a highly-personalized subjective performance, and a "canonic" reading of an "authentic" text. But, like most of Weill's other pieces in "song style," it is neither an art song nor a Schlager but rather a theater song par excellence.

It didn't immediately find its way into the concert or recital hall, nor was it ever played, sung, or listened to by the "masses." Instead it found a niche among intellectuals, musicians, and patrons of the theater and cabaret—an audience that, like Weill himself, was uncomfortable with both the socially exclusive world of classical music and the limited stylistic and expressive range of much popular music.

Hans Heinheimer, the head of UE's stage division, had little interest in popular music. Though pleased with the commercial success of Die Dreigroschenoper, he was not at all sympathetic with the direction that Weill's music was taking. Upon hearing that after Happy End the composer intended to write songs for a "Berlin folk play" by Stefan Großmann, he chided Weill, in a letter of 10 October 1929, for undertaking "another work restricted to morsels, to popular little songs, put together by a few literary people":

The style established in Die Dreigroschenoper and Happy End, and which is also continued in Mahagonny, whose most significant portions stem from the very period in which this style emerged... . cannot be copied indefinitely. If I assess its place in your development correctly, it is, as it were, the breakthrough to a popular, simple musical style that radically liberated you... . But in the long run this song style can serve only as a springboard for you to find your way back to more profound and substantial musical creations... . You should and must free yourself once and for all from the kind of commercialized artistic activity practiced in Berlin, and now that your latest successes have secured for you not only material but also artistic independence... . you must once again create works of lasting value that aren't written just for the moment to accompany plays, but which once again adhere to the grand path which I have always perceived in your works.136

Weill, who was then expanding Mahagonny: Ein Songspiel into a full-length opera, took this advice to heart, even though he disagreed with some of Heinheimer's assertions. He withdrew from Großmann's play and assured Heinheimer that his music was in fact undergoing yet another stylistic transformation. "By far the greatest part of Mahagonny [the revised and expanded version in progress] is already entirely independent of the song style and reveals this new style, which in seriousness, 'stature' and expressive power surpasses everything I have written to date," he reassured Heinheimer in a letter of 14 October 1929. "Almost everything that has been added to the Baden-Baden version [of Mahagonny] is written in a completely pure, thoroughly responsible style."137

In 1930 Weill described his new opera Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny as "the purest form of epic theater... . which is also the purest form of musical theater. It is a series of twenty-one separate musical forms. Each of these forms is a self-contained scene, and each is introduced by a headline in narrative form. The music here no longer advances the plot; it enters at the point where certain [dramatic] conditions are reached. Therefore, from the beginning the libretto has been planned so that it represents a series of conditions yielding a dramatic form only in its musically determined course."138 Elsewhere Weill explained that "epic theater" involved "the renunciation of the illustrative function of music, the elimination of false pathos, the division of action into closed musical numbers, and the dramatic utilization of absolute musical form."139

Aufstieg und Fall has sometimes been misidentified as a Zeitung, a genre that flourished during the time of the Weimar Republic; the most successful work of this sort was Ernst Krenek's Jonny spielt auf (1927), which was set in the present and made use of the "jazz" idiom of the day.140 Weill took an uncharitable view of the Zeitstücke of his contemporaries, in that they merely "moved superficial manifestations of life in our time onto center stage. People took the 'tempo of the twentieth century,' combined it with the much praised 'rhythm of our time' and for the rest, limited themselves to the representation of sentiments of past generations,"141 Weill felt that a true Zeitung would be a work "[based] upon great, comprehensive, generally valid themes which no longer deal with private ideas and emotions but with the overall scheme of things."142

As Weill was now writing again for the opera house and its audience, his music reverted to a more appropriate modernist style, leavened occasionally by the rhythms of popular social dances. He abandoned key signatures, though much of the music revolves around clear tonal centers; triads are sometimes present, but they are usually overlaid with added notes and chromatic alterations, and other vertical sonorities derive from quartal harmonies. Weill scored the full-length Mahagonny not for a dance band but for a large pit orchestra of strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. These stylistic features, combined with the fact that most of the twenty-one numbers take the form of lengthy and complex ensemble pieces, made virtually all of the music of Aufstieg und Fall unsuitable for popular dissemination in the form of sheet music and phonograph discs.

Hoping that the work would be a big success as an opera, UE planned to publish a piano-vocal score well in advance of the first performance, as they had done with Royal Palace and Der Zar lässt sich photographieren. Weill completed the full score by August 1929, and Norbert Gingold again undertook the piano-vocal reduction, which was finished by the end of the month, though discussions between Weill and UE led to revisions that delayed publication of the reduction until late November and actual distribution until January 1930; but that was still two months in advance of the premiere in Leipzig.143 As a result of this chronology a number of cuts, revisions, and additions made during rehearsals and early performances do not appear in the published score.144 The piano-vocal score of Aufstieg und Fall comprised the opera's preproduction "text," which underwent significant revision as the work was produced on stage as an "event." A "script" of Aufstieg und Fall (a revised or annotated piano-vocal score, for instance), which would have recorded the form in which the "event" actually took place on stage, has not survived intact.145

Aufstieg und Fall premiered in Leipzig on 9 March 1930 and then opened three days later in both Braunschweig and Kassel simultaneously. The National Socialists mounted a campaign against the work. They targeted Weill because he was a Jew, because his music showed the influence of jazz, because his works enjoyed favor among the artistic and intellectual elite of the Weimar Republic—many of whom opposed the Nazis—and because he was associated with Brecht, who had publicly embraced Marxist ideology. The premiere in Leipzig precipitated Nazi demonstrations by "black-white-red rabble-rousers who had been paid to come as a kind of claque by instigators with plenty of capital."146 Weill made some revisions after the first performances that were intended to counter objections to its perceived political stance.147 But local political pressure forced the cancellation of performances already scheduled for Oldenburg, Essen, and Dortmund; disruptions in Braunschweig caused the withdrawal of the opera there after only two performances; Otto Klemperer and the Krolloper reneged on their commitment to mount the opera in Berlin; and a projected performance at Berlin's Deutsches Theater failed to materialize as well.148 Despite the political opposition and subsequent cancellations of production plans, UE nevertheless began to prepare three numbers for sheet music editions ("Auf nach Mahagonny," "Lied der Jenny" ["Denn wie man sich bessert, so liegt man"], and "Können einem toten Mann nicht helfen") and commissioned Richard Einleger to arrange two songs ("Alabama-
Song” and “Lied der Jenny”) for jazz and salon orchestra. Weill was asked to indicate, in a copy of the published piano reduction, which numbers and passages might be suitable for a Salonorchester-Fantasie, which a “Kapellmeister Bauer” was supposed to create. When UE sent piano-vocal versions of “Auf nach Mahagonny” and “Lied der Jenny” to Weill on 21 March 1930, the firm expressed concern over the technically demanding adaptations and the suitability of “Auf nach Mahagonny” for the popular market. Weill agreed on both counts. He also suggested simplifying the Vorstrrophe (verse) of “Lied der Jenny” and matching the sheet music version to Etlinger’s band arrangement, which was not yet available.¹⁹⁹

UE ultimately dropped the plans for sheet music editions and the salon orchestra potpourri but did publish Etlinger’s two “Sonderarrangements” für Salonorchester mit Jazzstimmen” in late spring 1930. Etlinger’s arrangement comprises two strophes, each with a verse and refrain. Following a brief introduction and a single verse in G minor, Etlinger’s version unfolds as a chain of four refrains: the first two are in C major, after which a modulatory transition leads to a refrain in Eb major before another brief modulatory transition takes the piece back to a refrain in C major that ends in a six-measure codetta, also in C major. This pattern—introductory material followed by a string of refrains, each scored differently and some of them modulating to other keys—was common to dance band arrangements, both in Europe and the United States.

UE postponed several times its plans to publish a revised piano-vocal score. On 6 August 1930 the composer proposed an abbreviated piano-vocal score, a “heavily cut selection of the most important pieces from the opera. It should be neither a potpourri nor be suggestive of a shortened new version.”¹⁹⁹ Negotiations between Weill and UE reduced the number of pieces to be included from twelve to nine, and finally to six, five of which were taken unaltered from Gingold’s piano-vocal reductions.¹⁹⁹ The album (or folio) appeared in December 1931, in coordination with the long anticipated Berlin premiere of Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm, as Sechs ausgewählte Stücke aus der Oper Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny.

Weill hoped that the premiere would present yet another opportunity to popularize some of the numbers from the opera. His letter of 1 December 1931 suggests that UE had left him in the dark:

> Are there band arrangements for Mahagonny yet? In the event of a big success we would need materials for café and dance bands very quickly. In this case, I would prefer it if we would concentrate all efforts on a single number that will be pushed in a big campaign. The most suitable number (musically and textually) would be “Wie man sich bettet,” which a first-rate arranger could turn into an interesting and easily performable number (only the verse needs to be simplified slightly). Perhaps you can prepare everything so that it could be available on short notice in case of a success, but also so that you don’t suffer unnecessary losses in case of a failure or a ban.¹⁹⁹

UE responded the following day, sending Weill Etlinger’s two band arrangements, which had been available for some eighteen months by then, and promising to launch a special advertising campaign in Berlin. The decision to reduce the “kleine Klavierauszug” to six numbers allowed UE to sell that album for just 2.50 marks; Heinsheimer, in an express letter of 3 December, called this “a crucial step to facilitate sales,” but he raised the issue of an effective cover design and asked Weill to have Caspar Neher submit a drawing called this “a crucial step to facilitate sales,” but he raised the issue of an effective cover design and asked Weill to have Caspar Neher submit a drawing.¹⁹⁹

Thanks to all these efforts, the number variously titled “Lied der Jenny,” “Jennys Lied,” or “Denn wie man sich bettet, so liegt man” managed to enjoy at least modest popular dissemination. The song (see p. 165) is a virtual twin to the original Songspiel’s “Alabama-Song”: both carry a “Blues-Tempo” designation (though tango rhythms undergird the entire re-

frain of the “Lied der Jenny”); irregular phrase lengths in the verse (4 + 5 + 4 + 7) contrast with the symmetry of the ABAB phrases (8 + 8 + 8 + 8) of the refrain; and a dissonant and tonally ambiguous verse precedes a refrain solidly in D major. Technically, “Lied der Jenny” is well within the grasp of amateur performers: the accompaniment lies easily if unimaginatively under the hands of the accompanist, and the vocal line remains within the range of an octative—except for a climactic high note (A5) in the last measures of the verse, which, in performances outside the theater, could be taken down an octave or even spoken, as Lotte Lenya did on her several recordings of the piece.¹⁹⁵

Weill wrote that “all songs [of Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny] are an expression of the masses, even where they are performed by the individual as spokesman of the masses.”¹⁹⁴ This aesthetic position dictates that these songs are most effective when performed on stage as didactic statements directed by the performers to the audience. In rejecting the “illustrative function of music” and “false pathos” in favor of the “completely pure, thoroughly responsible” style of epic theater, and in moving away from the “morsels” and “popular little songs” that Heinsheimer so disdained, Weill was again writing music that proved unsuitable for dissemination outside the theater. Aufstieg und Fall is a striking, stunning, and highly original stage work, and had the political climate in Germany been different it might well have become one of the most widely performed operas of its day. But the Sechs ausgewählte Stücke did not align sufficiently with popular taste or draw substantially enough on popular styles to achieve mass sales; rather, UE intended to make some of the music of Mahagonny available at an affordable price to composers, professional musicians, scholars, and skilled amateurs.

Weill had been trying to straddle two worlds that many, including his publisher, deemed irreconcilable. The popular success of Die Dreigroschenoper and the attempt to popularize several songs from Happy End and Aufstieg und Fall had prompted a number of critics to question Weill’s “seriousness of purpose.” In January 1929 Weill had been nominated for election to the venerable Preußische Akademie der Künste, but the academy, whose most prominent composer member at the time was Schoenberg, instead elected Max Steiner, Julius Weissmann, and Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari. Possibly this would have contributed to Weill’s decision to embrace opera once again as potentially the most elevated form of theater. “Our era conceals within itself an abundance of great ideas,” he wrote in 1932, “and if one resolves to free opera from the sphere of the naturalistic theater and to see in it that heightened form of theater best suited to translate great ideas of the time into timeless humanistic form, then a new belief in the future of opera emerges by itself.”¹⁹⁵ Weill conceived Der Jasager (1930) as a Schuloper (didactic opera), to be performed by and for high school students, thereby expanding the traditional venues and audiences for opera. In the three years before Weill was forced to flee Germany, the work received hundreds of performances. The three-act Die Bürgschaft (1932; libretto by Neher and Weill), on the other hand, was a much more traditional opera, which Weill described as a return to “real music making,” intended for performance in state-subsidized German opera houses. Premiered on 10 March 1932 at Berlin’s Städtische Oper, the work was highly praised by some critics and managed eleven performances by the end of the season; however, National Socialist opposition forced cancellation of all but two other productions. Neither Der Jasager nor Die Bürgschaft contained individual numbers that would have been appropriate for publication as sheet music or in stock arrangements for dance band.

Weill next considered a collaboration with Erik Charell, the famed revue impresario and coauthor of the most successful operetta/protomusical in Weimar Germany, Im weißen Rössl (1930; produced as White Horse Inn on Broadway in 1936). But after two meetings with Charell, Weill confided in a letter to Heinsheimer on 11 June 1932, “[Charell] is dead set on doing a big theater project with me and expects to get a huge international success out of a collaboration with me. But so far it seems impossible to find a subject matter that reaches the intended audience and at the same time upholds a
certain standard that I consider indispensable."¹⁶⁰ Heinsheimer tried to dispel Weill's doubts by pointing out that the composer had by now established a track record with a series of works demonstrating a "general attitude and artistic standpoint" that left his integrity beyond reproach.¹⁷³ Further meetings with Charell eventually included Georg Kaiser, and it was Kaiser who ultimately collaborated with Weill on a *Zwischengattungs-Stück* (literally, a work between genres, a hybrid).¹⁴⁸ Weill informed UE on 2 August 1932 that his latest piece for the musical theater, Der Silbersee, was taking shape "[not as] an opera at all, but as a play with well integrated musical numbers, spoken dialogue, melodrama, and sixteen solo, instrumental, and ensemble numbers.

Simultaneous premieres took place on 18 February 1933 in Leipzig, Erfurt, and Magdeburg. "Every performance . . . in Leipzig sold out, and it was the most unequivocal critical success that Weill had ever experienced—even the now legendary Die Dreigroschenoper had received mixed reviews. Kaiser's play was perceived as 'a unique creation of rare poetic beauty,' and Weill's music hailed as 'a virtuoso piece of masterful craft tying the action together like a huge painting.'¹⁶⁰ But only three days after the premieres, Nazi officials in Magdeburg began attacking the "degradation of art to the one-sided, un-German propaganda of Bolshevist theories that has taken hold of the Magdeburg Stadttheater" and accusing the show of "preaching the idea of class hate and containing innumerable open and veiled invitations to violence."¹⁶¹

In February 1933, despite the rapidly deteriorating conditions in Germany, UE published Erwin Stein's piano-vocal reduction of *Der Silbersee*, as well as an album containing six individual numbers, *Sechs Stücke aus der Musik zum Schauspiel Der Silbersee*. The front cover of the album featured Max Oppenheimer's drawing of the work's leading character, Severin, tied symbolically to a stake, an image suggested by his aria "Wie Odysseus an den Mast des Schiffs." The first five pieces in the album were printed from the plates of the piano-vocal score; the sixth differs from the score in only a few details.¹⁶² Heinsheimer was initially reluctant to include "Cäsars Tod," perhaps because of its thinly veiled reference to Hitler; he relented only after Weill insisted that it would be "absolutely incredible if [this number] were not included. In all our conversations we were quite clear that this is the most accessible, well-rounded, and effective number."¹⁶³ The decision to include the song was postponed until the last possible moment, and as a result the printer, using the plates of the piano-vocal score (as he had done for all other numbers), did not have time even to remove its rehearsal numbers, extraneous within the album (see p. 177). Weill's fondness for "Cäsars Tod" makes it an appropriate piece from *Der Silbersee* to examine in some detail. The character of Fennimore uses the song—as unlikely banquet entertainment—to tell the story of Caesar's rise to power, corruption, downfall, and death. She pantomimes playing a harp as she sings, and at first this instrument figures prominently in Weill's orchestration, but as the piece develops into a strident march, strings and winds increasingly overpower it. The harmonic language parallels that of "Surabaya-Johnny" in being mostly triadic, with frequent seventh and eleventh chords, as well as further spice from appoggiaturas and added notes. The song begins and ends in G minor, a tonality that, according to Ian Kemp, is associated in *Der Silbersee* with "anxiety and expressed anger"; there are digressions into the equally dark key of F minor.¹⁶⁴ After a four-measure introduction the song unfolds in thirty-four two-measure phrases, each a setting of one line of Kaiser's text and each following the same rhythmic pattern almost exactly. Weill avoids the potential monotony of this scheme by layering more complex structures over this framework. To begin with, he shapes Kaiser's text into three strophes:

\[
\begin{array}{llllll}
(A) & 12 & mm. & (B) & refrain, & 8 & mm. \\
(A') & 20 & mm. & (B) & refrain, & 8 & mm.
\end{array}
\]

The last strophe, A', moves toward new tonal territory and builds to a climax with a gradual ascent in pitch in the vocal line and an inexorable increase in dynamic level from the "almost whispered" pianissimo of the beginning to a concluding fortissimo. On another level of structure, Weill fashioned a refrain, though none is called for in the poem, by repeating the music accompanying the last line of Kaiser's second, fourth, and seventh stanzas.

In a masterful dramatic touch the strophic introduction returns as a counter-melody to the second "d" of each refrain (the motivic parsing of the refrain as "cdd" follows the accompaniment; the vocal melody passes more normatively into two parallel four-measure groups).

Unlike many earlier piano-vocal versions of Weill's stage music, Stein's reduction of *Silbersee* is idiomatic, and playing the notes as they appear on the page would render a satisfactory performance. However, the general musical style of "Cäsars Tod," its tight structure, vocal range (an octave and a sixth), and expressive content, have more in common with an art song or opera aria than with a popular song; an unstaged performance of "Cäsars Tod," makes more sense in a recital hall than in a bar or a restaurant. It is impossible to say how *Der Silbersee* would have fared had it not been forced off the stage after only a few performances, or whether individual pieces from *Der Silbersee* could have achieved any measure of genuine popularity. Ernst Busch recorded two excerpts soon after the premiere with an orchestra conducted by Maurice Abravanel, and Electrola scheduled a recording session with Lenya and an orchestra conducted by Gustav Brecher (who had conducted the premiere in Leipzig), though this session apparently had to be canceled.¹⁶⁵ Several numbers in the work draw on dance rhythms, among them the refrain in "Wir sind zwei Mädelchen" (marked "Flotter Walzer," or brisk waltz) and the Lottery Agent's tango ("Was zahlen Sie für einen Rat"); but Weill and UE never got beyond a preliminary discussion of arranging these for dance band.¹⁶⁶ Here, too, no one expected that the *Sechs Stücke* from *Der Silbersee* would enjoy mass sales. The album was intended, rather, to make some of the music from the show available, at an affordable price, to those who, despite the dire political and economic circumstances, might be interested in acquiring what would be Weill's final work in Germany. Alfred Kalmus would inform Weill on 21 September 1933 that "performance of your works in Germany . . . has been made impossible"; soon the Nazi regime would proscribethe music of many "Jewish cultural Bolshevists" and seize and destroy printed music and records in shops, schools, and even private homes.¹⁶⁷

III

On 21 March 1933 Weill fled Germany. He arrived in Paris two days later. Weill's music was best known there from the French version of the *Dreigroschenoper* film, which had been released in November 1931, concert performances of *Mahagonny* and *Der Jasager* the following month, and the publication and recording of some songs in French translation. In Paris, uprooted from his own culture, uncertain of the future, and unable to access any of his bank accounts in Germany (he had been allowed to leave with only 500 marks), Weill scrambled to earn a living. Almost immediately upon his arrival Les Ballets 1933 commissioned him to compose a "sung ballet," what would be the last collaboration of Weill and Brecht. *Die sieben Todtändern*, with choreography by Georges Balanchine, premiered (in German) at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées on 7 June 1933. Although Weill was still contractually bound to UE, neither a score of the ballet nor any excerpts from it were published until after his death. Weill next turned his attentions back to the symphony he had sketched during his last months in Germany; what is now known as Symphony no. 2 was premiered by the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam under Bruno Walter on 11 October 1934. Also completed at this time was a "ballad for radio," titled *La grande complainte de Fantômas*, now lost, which was broadcast by Radio Paris on 3 November 1933.
1933. Weill also began work on a dramatic oratorio depicting the history and fate of the Jewish people, *Der Weg der Verheisung*, with a text by Franz Werfel.168

The French were far more comfortable with popular culture than were Germans and Austrians. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, Paris in particular had been a center of popular entertainment, much of it revolving around the café concert, the music hall, and the cabaret. Café concerts, in particular, allowed a new genre of popular song to flourish, the *chanson réaliste*:

a musico-poetic form rooted in the low-life experience of the bottom rungs of Parisian society. . . . At the beginning of the Third Republic the city could boast a hundred or so café-concerts, where musical entertainment was in constant demand, a demand so handsonely met that it is estimated that well over a million chansons of a popular type have been composed in France since the 1870s, some individual authors credited with having produced five or six songs in a single day, four or five thousand in a career.169

After UE terminated his contract in autumn 1933 Weill signed with Editions Heugel of Paris, a publisher with a branch devoted to popular music, Editions Coda. His first compositions of this bearing to be written in France were two chansons with lyrics by Maurice Magre—"Complainte de la Seine" and "Je ne t’aime pas"—which were published in this series, recorded by the popular chanteuse Lys Gauty, and performed publicly by Gauty and other French singers. Weill approached the *chanson réaliste* as he would later approach the American Tin Pan Alley and Broadway song, first as a keen observer of the genre and milieu in which it flourished, then as a composer of such pieces—but on his own terms.

*Marie Galante*, a play adapted by Jacques Deval from his novel of the same name and with incidental music and songs by Weill, opened at the Théâtre de Paris on 22 December 1934. Weill had conceived the songs for performance by actors rather than classically trained singers, and he addressed a French audience that might not necessarily be au courant with the musical language of opera or Central European modernism. The show closed after a disappointing three-week run, and plans for productions in London and New York never materialized. Heugel, however, had prepared for a box-office hit. In time for the premiere Heugel released two of these numbers in an arrangement for dance band by Paul Saegel (a third followed later). One week before the premiere, on 15 December 1934, the play’s female star, Odette Florelle, recorded four songs for Polydor, and Heugel issued these titles to an unaccompanied voice. The 28 December 1934 issue of *Le ménestrel*, a weekly music magazine on music and theater released by Heugel since 1839, contained as a supplement “Le grand Lustucru,” the final song in Heugel’s *Marie Galante* album.

Although these songs long remained largely unknown outside France and even now have received scant scholarly attention, they represent a critical stage in Weill’s development.170 Unlike the songs he wrote with Brecht, whose texts tended toward the polemical and ironic, the *Marie Galante* songs reflect the emotions of the seamen, prostitutes, slaves, and other victims of social injustices who make up the play’s cast of characters.171 The verses of “Les filles de Bordeaux,” for instance, narrate the grim tale of a prostitute who is abducted, taken to sea, and eventually killed; the refrain advises women in such a situation to drown themselves to avoid being taken to the “four corners of the world” and brutalized by “all the bastards” who await them. Sung in the first scene, the song presages the fate of the play’s central character, Marie: abducted in Bordeaux and taken to Central America, she escapes from her captor and makes her way to Panama, where she becomes a prostitute to make enough money for passage back to France.172 She is killed on the eve of her departure. In the songs for *Marie Galante* Weill abandoned most vestiges of musical modernism. All have key signatures, formal structures are simple and transparent, and vertical sonorities consist entirely of triads (and their extensions to seventh and ninth chords), which usually resolve according to common-practice harmonic usage. As a result these songs resemble the contemporaneous French chanson more than Weill’s German songs, even those in “song style,” resemble German *Schlager*.

"Le Roi d’Aquitaine" (see p. 185), a lullaby sung by Marie to a dying laborer whom she has befriended, is an “English waltz” in D major in two strophes, each consisting of a verse and a refrain, framed by an instrumental passage functioning as a ritornello:

The first eight measures of the verse, moving at a harmonic rhythm of one chord per measure, can easily be analyzed (and heard) as I – V of ii – ii – V – ii – V – I. But, as we have seen in other songs by Weill, there is a contrast in harmonic usage between one section and another, in this case between the ritornello and the strophe. The ritornello’s eight measures consist of the following chords:

2. D♭ – F – A♭
4. D♭ – F – A♭
5. B♭ – D♭ – F – A♭
6. D♭ – F – A♭
8. D♭ – F – A♭

Despite the apparent harmonic complexity of some of these chords, the ear tends to hear mm. 1 and 5 as substitute dominant chords and mm. 3 and 7 as substitute dominants.

The French mezzo-soprano Madeleine Grey made “Le Roi d’Aquitaine” a staple in her repertoire, proudly reporting to Weill in 1937 that “in the three years that I have been singing it, it has become almost as popular in Naples as ‘Sole mio.’” 173 “J’attends un navire” enjoyed even greater popular success. This song was one of the four recorded by Florelle, and though she sang an unabridged version, Polydor managed to fit it on one side of a shellac disc, where it ran for almost three and a half minutes (3’27”). When the well-known French chanteuse Lys Gauty recorded the song on 5 May 1936, also for Polydor, Heugel reissued the voice-only sheet music in an “Édition Spéciale Music-Hall” with a new cover promoting the recording (p. 189).174 Gauty’s interpretation, which is more expressive than Florelle’s, exceeded the limit for a single side of a disc, thus her version—expanded by a thirty-two-measure instrumental interlude culled in equal parts from verse and refrain—filled both sides of the disc. Both Florelle’s and Gauty’s recording sessions were led by the same conductor, Wal-Berg, who presumably also created the arrangements.175 “J’attends un navire” had an unusual resurgence in the early 1940s when, according to press reports, even members of the *Résistance* sang it while awaiting the Allied landing.176

One of the seven numbers from *Marie Galante* published in sheet music format appears to have been a last-minute substitution. The place occupied by “Seine au dancing” (plate no. H. 30,927) was in all likelihood intended for an arrangement for solo piano of an instrumental dance number simply entitled “Tango” and engraved as H. 30,915 (see p. 192). Early printings of the sheet music from *Marie Galante* show “Tango” among the titles listed on the front and back cover: the back cover also provided incipits (compare, for example, the first and last pages of facsimile 18). Despite the printed copyright notice, “Tango” was not registered with the Li-
Although Weill often worked simultaneously on several projects, never was his stylistic and generic range as great as it was in 1934 when he worked alternately on Marie Galante, Der Kuhhandel, and Der Weg der Verheißung. Marie Galante had interrupted Weill's work on the satirical operetta, Der Kuhhandel, to a libretto in German by the Hungarian-born Robert Vambery, who had been a dramaturg in Berlin at Ernst Josef Aufricht's Theater am Schiffbauerdamm.178 Weill had long admired Offenbach's operettas, particularly their use of dance idioms in the service of satirical plots with contemporary political resonance. The plot of Kuhhandel revolves around an attempt by an American munitions manufacturer to stir up a war between two neighboring Latin American countries and the tragic impact of this scheme on the inhabitants of the shared island. The music consists mostly of lengthy ensemble pieces for solo voices and chorus and requires legitimate voices and a large orchestra. Many numbers recall Offenbach or Donizetti, and the trio “Leise, nur leise, so leise wie Mäuse” in the first act is strongly reminiscent of sections of Rossini's La Cenerentola. David Drew describes the music of Kuhhandel as “firmly diatonic, with the major mode predominating and the relative minor as the favored contrasting area. All the numbers in medium and fast tempo are based on popular rhythms: traditional (Offenbachian) waltzes, marches, and cancans are balanced by Latin American rhythms appropriate to the milieu.”179

Work on the piece in its German form came to a halt when the opportunity arose for a performance in London, where operetta and musical comedy were much in vogue at the time: Rudolf Friml's Rose Marie and The Vagabond King, Noel Coward's Bitter-Sweet and Conversation Piece, and Sigmund Romberg's The New Moon had enjoyed recent successful runs there. Reginald Arkell rewrote the book of Der Kuhhandel in English, Desmond Carter penned new English lyrics, and the show opened as A Kingdom for a Cow on 28 June 1935 at London's Savoy Theatre for a disappointing run of just three weeks.180 Although neither the German nor the English incarnations of the operetta contained material particularly conducive to commercial exploitation, Chappell issued two songs in sheet music format, “Two Hearts” and “As Long As I Love”—the only music from the operetta to be published during Weill's lifetime.181 Visually the two publications resemble other operetta numbers issued in Britain: the front cover, designed to catch the eye of a potential buyer, bears a cartoon of a ridiculously attired military figure astride a cow rid- dled by artillery fire; incipits of two songs from another work—in this case Ivor Novello's operetta Glamorous Night—appear on the inside covers; and, as was the British custom, solmization symbols appear above the vocal line.

The sheet music version of “Two Hearts” (see p. 200) the two vocal lines of the opening duet of the operetta have been condensed into a single voice. The core of the song, two strophes each consisting of a verse and a refrain, is virtually identical with “Le Roi d'Aquitaine,” though transposed from D major to the more amateur-friendly key of F major. The ritornello has disappeared, replaced at the beginning by an eight-measure intro- duction drawn from the first measures of the refrain; a sixteen-measure piano interlude between the two strophes, drawn from melodic material found in the stage version of Marie Galante (but not in “Le Roi d’Aquitaine”); and a third refrain carrying the vocal line up to the climax on a high B.

These two songs from Der Kuhhandel, and for that matter the show itself, had little or no impact on the British musical scene (though excerpts from the show were broadcast by the BBC in 1935). This is hardly surprising, given that Weill's music was virtually unknown in England before the brief June 1935 run of A Kingdom for a Cow and that he had little familiarity with British musical styles and tastes. Nevertheless, Kuhhandel/Kingdom represents an important milestone in Weill's always evolving development. The music of Kuhhandel, like that of Marie Galante, moves decisively toward the largely tonal and triadic style that had begun to emerge in his “song style” but was abandoned in his last three works for the German musical stage. Seen retrospec- tively, Kuhhandel/Kingdom points ahead to America, not back to Ger- many, and this not only because Weill would borrow tunes and entire sections from the work for re-use in Johnny Johnson, Keckiehober’s Holiday, and Lady in the Dark.182

Also begun but not completed in German was Der Weg der Verheißung; adapted into English as The Eternal Road when the possibility of a production in New York arose, the work, like Der Kuhhandel, never acquired a definitive form. Against the backdrop of the worsening plight of European Jews late in 1933 the Polish-born American Meyer Weisgal had conceived the idea of a grand musical pageant, a “biblical mystery play,” to celebrate the history of the Jewish people. Max Reinhardt, who agreed to direct the pageant, enlisted Franz Werfel to write the text and Kurt Weill the music. Weill recalled:

I began by putting to paper all the Hebraic melodies I had learned from childhood. . . . In several days memory seeking, I had written about two hundred songs, and then I began work at the Bibliothèque Nationale to trace their sources as far as possible. Many, I discovered, had been composed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. . . . Those I dismissed, retaining only the old music, and with that as my guide, I attempted to create music of the same mood that would communicate naturally and inevitably the stories of the Old Testament.183

Weill arrived in the United States on 10 September 1935 to assist with the production of the biblical pageant, but the premiere was delayed for more than a year, in part because the set, designed by Norman Bel Geddes, was so enormous that the theater in which the show was to be performed, the Manhattan Opera House, had to be structurally altered, which necessitated raising additional money. After numerous postponements The Eternal Road finally opened to critical and public acclaim on 7 January 1937, running for 153 performances and closing only because the “benefit” production had no profit margin, even when playing to capacity audiences.

Although The Eternal Road was billed as “a play by Franz Werfel,” it contains more than two hours of music. The work resembles a scenic oratorio, containing passages of recitative leading to choruses, ensemble numbers, and vocal solos. Because the enormous set swallowed up the orchestral pit, Weill's score for large orchestra was prerecorded and then played back during performances, with the cast singing mostly to the recording; a few sections were, however, accompanied by a small live orchestra. Like Weill's other compositions of this period, The Eternal Road is mostly triadic and tonal. The combination of a Western harmonic sensibility with traditional Jewish melodies and the persistent use of minor key results in a sound that at times alludes to the Klezmer tradition, but there is little in the work to suggest either Euro- pean or American popular music of the day. The one exception is “Song of Ruth” (see p. 207), where Weill insinuated Latin dance rhythms into the orchestration, but this is not reflected in the sheet music.

Heugel published neither a full score nor a piano-vocal reduction, but made English-language performance materials available for the original pro-
duction on a rental basis. When he agreed to compose *The Eternal Road* Weill focused any concern with "popularity" on the show as a whole, not on individual numbers. The composer had been in the United States for just two months when he suggested to Heugel that *The Eternal Road* should be promoted with a small album of selected numbers. In light of his experiences with *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* and *Der Silbersee*, Weill emphasized that these selections should not be printed as they appear in the piano reduction:

Rather, one needs to simplify the piano part and write a new vocal line for all numbers that appear in the original as choruses or ensembles. This work, i.e., the adaptation of the piano reduction for this publication, needs to be done by a specialist in collaboration with me. First, one has to choose the numbers that have the best chance of becoming popular and then adapt them intelligently, making them easily playable without changing the character of the music. . . . I believe that such a selection should contain six or seven of the most important numbers, i.e., 20 to 25 pages. Mr. Dreyfus told me that one could do a folio of 20 pages that could be sold for 50 to 75 cents.

Heugel granted Chappell permission to publish a sixteen-page folio containing six brief musical excerpts from the show, arranged for voice and piano. Although David Drew suggests that this album was "intended primarily to be sold to theatregoers," these few morsels give very little sense of the scope, scale, or intensity of the stage production.

There were no other productions of *The Eternal Road* during Weill's lifetime and no commercial recordings of any of the music.

**IV**

Although Weill initially intended to return to Paris after the premiere of *The Eternal Road*, its successive postponements caused him to remain in the United States indefinitely. He quickly improved his English, observed American life and culture at first hand, and in particular familiarized himself with the American musical theater and American popular song. As J. Bradford Robinson has observed, "Early in his New York exile [Weill] seems to have relearned American life and culture at first hand, and in particular familiarized himself with the supposedly 'American' roots of his European scores," and he "set about relearning parlando or arioso style; there followed a more lyrical thirty-two-measure chorus. . . . I believe that such a selection should contain six or seven of the most important numbers, i.e., 20 to 25 pages. Mr. Dreyfus told me that one could do a folio of 20 pages that could be sold for 50 to 75 cents."181

Heugel granted Chappell permission to publish a sixteen-page folio containing six brief musical excerpts from the show, arranged for voice and piano. Although David Drew suggests that this album was "intended primarily to be sold to theatregoers," these few morsels give very little sense of the scope, scale, or intensity of the stage production. There were no other productions of *The Eternal Road* during Weill's lifetime and no commercial recordings of any of the music.

Most of the songwriters who dominated American popular music in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, including Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, and Cole Porter, and who were at the peak of their careers at this time, wrote songs in firmly established styles and forms. The vast majority of these songs took the verse-chorus form: the text of the verse usually sketched a situation, the chorus provided the response. Among songs of this sort published in 1935, the year of Weill's arrival in America, were Irving Berlin's "Cheek to Cheek," Cole Porter's "Just One of Those Things," "Alone" by Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown, "I'm in the Mood for Love" by Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh, "My Romance" by Lorenz Hart and Richard Rodgers, and "Lullaby of Broadway" by Al Dubin and Harry Warren.

The decade of the 1930s is now recognized to have been a period of transition for American popular song, not so much in musical style as in means of dissemination and consumption. Whereas most popular songs of the first three decades of the twentieth century were written for the popular musical stage (variety shows, revues, musical comedies, or operettas) and disseminated through the media of sheet music and phonograph records, by 1935 many of the top hits were written for sound films made in Hollywood. In addition, radio assumed a more determinant role in American popular music, with live broadcasts from ballrooms, restaurants, night clubs, and studios, and with the introduction of such made-for-radio programs as "Your Hit Parade." Performance styles were changing as well. The much more sensitive electric microphone, used in the recording studio, for radio broadcast, and in live performance, brought an end to the vocal style epitomized by Al Jolson, where the singer had to "belt" his or her voice to be heard throughout a venue. The new microphones allowed a more intimate and nuanced singing style and led to the emergence of the kind of "crooning" pioneered by "Whispering Jack" Smith and Bing Crosby. At the same time the sweet but bouncy sound of the dance bands of Paul Whiteman, Vincent Lopez, and Roger Wolfe Kahn—which had been emulated by most European bands—lost ground to the more vigorous and sonorous swing bands that would dominate American popular music for the next decade. Paul Whiteman released his last two commercially successful recordings, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and "Wagon Wheels," in 1934, the year before Weill's arrival in America, and that same year Benny Goodman enjoyed his first hit record with "Moonglow."

While Weill waited for *The Eternal Road* to go back into production, Crawford introduced him to members of The Group Theatre, an offshoot of the Theatre Guild formed specifically to produce politically informed plays by young American dramatists. Group members counted themselves among the few Americans who knew of Weill's work at the time; Harold Clurman, the group's founder, wrote in his memoirs that "there had arrived from abroad the composer whose Three-Penny Opera (or reco[g]ners) might have been described as a Group pastime. We befriended Kurt Weill, and Stella Adler insisted that he must do a musical play for us along lines he had made known in Germany."195 Early in 1936 Crawford took the lead in developing a Group Theatre project with Weill: "Kurt wanted a very American subject," she recalled. "The most American playwright I could think of was Paul Green, who also wrote poetry and might be able to do the lyrics."191 Crawford took Weill to Green's home in North Carolina, where the three of them worked together for some weeks on a sketch of a show. It was important to Weill's ongoing Americanization that he spent this time in close contact and collaboration with Green, whose writing drew on the culture and vernacular speech of rural Americans, and with Crawford, who was from the Midwest; as Weill wrote to Lenya, this period made him "realize for the first time what America is really like and how unimportant New York is for this country."192 According to Crawford, the three found that "the material that seemed most promising was on the subject of World War I, in which Paul had served, believing with Woodrow Wilson, whom he admired, that it would be the war to end all wars and make the world safe for democracy."193

The show is something akin to an American version of *The Good Soldier Schweik*.195 Johnny, an idealistic young Southerner who enlists in the army, leaves behind his family, sweetheart, and community to "fight for democracy" in France. Disillusioned by the "relationship between authority and violence," he tries to disrupt an Allied offensive and ends up in an insane asylum. By the time he is set free, another war appears imminent, and the play ends as he wanders from town to town to sell wooden toys and sing of peace. After opening on 19 November 1936 at the 44th Street Theatre, Johnny Johnson ran for sixty-eight performances; it was revived by the Federal Theatre Project in 1937, when for several weeks it ran in parallel productions in Los Angeles.
and Boston, and a further half dozen productions took place before 1939. Despite being the work of an author who had never before written for the musical stage and a composer who had been in America for less than a year, *Johnny Johnson* proved to be an effective and moving stage piece; it garnered many good reviews and came in second to Maxwell Anderson's *High Tor* for the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. None of the music was recorded by the original cast, as original cast albums of Broadway shows were not yet customary.198

Thanks in part to almost verbatim appropriation of material from *Happy End*, *Marie Galante*, and *A Kingdom for a Cow*, *Johnny Johnson* still reflects aspects of Weill's European style.179 "Wrong-note" dissonances color several instrumental sections, the instrumentation is more dependent on woodwinds and brass than was usual in American musicals, and "Captain Valentine's Tango" and "Mon ami, My Friend" have a decidedly Continental flavor. But Weill also introduced a wide range of American popular styles into the show. "Farewell, Goodbye" (this number was eventually cut from the production) uses swing rhythms and instrumentation; "The Laughing Generals" is a Charleston; "Oh, Heart of Love" has more in common with popular American waltz-ballads than with its European counterparts; and "Asylum Chorus" includes echoes of southern folk hymnody.

When the American branch of Chappell, now working directly with Weill (rather than as Heugel’s sub-publisher), issued four selections from *Johnny Johnson* as sheet music arrangements for voice and piano, owner Max Dreyfus participated in the selection process, which usually included an audition by the composer. Hans Heinsheimer described the ritual: "There the great composers and the great writers paraded, not at all great in his presence, ready to accept the verdict of the little man in the linen jacket."200 John F. Wharton stated, perhaps with a touch of professional jealousy, that "when [Dreyfus] heard a new score, he readily pontificated as to which songs would become standard in the repertoire." The compositions, perhaps with a touch of professional jealousy, that "when [Dreyfus] heard a new score, he readily pontificated as to which songs would become standard in the repertoire.

The subtle dramatic climax of the song occurs when the text of the last phrase of the first refrain—"and one shadow runs beside"—becomes in the second refrain "and my gal rides at my side."201 There are other idiosyncrasies in this song that look back to Weill's European song style. The verse in B minor is tonally unstable, closing in E minor, whereas the refrain, though chromatic, is solidly in G major. There are also striking harmonic moments that set this song apart from a typical cowboy song; in the first measure of the verse, for example, a half-diminished seventh chord, F#–A–C–E, with an implied root of D, resolves irregularly to B minor, and the penultimate measure of the second refrain consists of a series of chromatic chords that touch on the dominant only in passing.

According to Weill, "Johnny's Song" functioned as the "theme song" of the show, summing up "the whole philosophy of this play":204

And we’ll never lose
Our faith and hope
And trust in all mankind
While we’re alive
That better way to find.

This song, heard in the orchestra several times before it brings the show to its conclusion, takes the rondo-like shape of A8 A’8 B8 C8 A8 D12 A’8+2 (D and the final A’, which accompany Johnny’s exit, are instrumental).205 The A sections are all in D major, the B section shifts momentarily to F# minor, the C section modulates away from D major and then back to the home key, and the D section, tonally more unstable, ends on one of Weill’s trademark chords, an inverted augmented-sixth chord (G#–B–D–F#) that resolves irregularly to the D major of the final A section. No matter how effective "Johnny's Song" was in bringing the show to its conclusion, Weill’s publisher decided that the piece would not be commercially viable as sheet music without considerable doctoring. The song was transposed a half step up to E½ major; a new introduction and a two-measure vamp were added to lead into the refrain; section D and the final A were eliminated, which resulted in a simpler structure (A8 A’8 B8 C8 A’8), though the unusual "double release" was retained; optional pitches were added for some of the highest notes of the piano part in order to make the song more singable by amateurs; the entire refrain is repeated.206 The song’s moralizing text was also changed, as its generalized plea for political idealism was perceived to be a problem. Chappell commissioned the journeyman Tin Pan Alley lyricist Edward Heyman to write a new text that had little to do with the show. With new words and a new title—"To Love You and To Lose You”—the piece became a generic love song (see p. 219). It was not until 1945, when Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote "You’ll Never Walk Alone" for *Carousel*, that another Broadway song ventured as far into exhortatory territory as did the original "Johnny's Song."

Weill had often complained that the piano parts of the sheet music versions of his German songs were "bad and much too hard" for amateurs. According to Albert Sirmay, Chappell’s principal house editor, American arrangers had developed a style of piano accompaniment for popular songs that was "playable and enjoyable to the great mass of amateurs" who possessed average pianistic technique."202 It is instructive to compare the piano accompaniment for "To Love You and To Lose You" with, for example, those of "Alabama-Song" or "Kanonen-Song." The German arrangements attempted merely to reduce Weill’s orchestral accompaniments to manageable keyboard parts, whereas American practice worked in reverse: to devise an idiomatic piano part based on the skeletal harmonic progressions of the song. George Gershwin once complained that the piano parts of published American popular songs were written for "little girls with little hands, who have not progressed very far in their study of the piano," but without question the simple piano accompaniments found in American sheet music played a key part in the mass appeal of the genre.206

Given the many good notices garnered by the *Johnny Johnson* songs, and the fact that sheet music selections were available, Weill thought that one or two numbers from the show might well become popular hits. But he noticed

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**Facsimile 23:** "Oh the Rio Grande"

**Facsimile 24:** "To Love You and To Lose You"

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that Chappell was not promoting the songs and wrote to Max Dreyfus on 20 December 1936, about a week after “To Love You and To Lose You” was published as sheet music:

From Weill’s letter it is unclear whether Chappell prepared a stock band published as sheet music: December 1936, about a week after “To Love You and To Lose You” was published as sheet music.211 How- ever, none of the four published versions of other hits, why don’t you play those?”—Frankly, things of this kind never happened to me before.

There is no doubt, that Johnny Johnson has a great chance to run through the whole season, if Chappell would finally start to push this one song—before it is too late. There is another danger. We have a very good chance to sell the sheet music version, depicting the film’s starring couple on the cover, was shortened to a verse-refrain structure much more in keeping with the conventions of American popular song:

| Refrain 1 | A8 A8 B8 A’8 |
| Verse | x4 x’8 y4 x’4 x6 (-C) |
| Refrain 2 | A’8 D16 A’8 |

Nevertheless, the published version retained several idiosyncrasies of the original film version: there are five rather than four sections in the verse, which is harmonically unstable, with a key signature of three flats suggesting either C minor or E♭ major, though neither key is firmly tonicized. By contrast, the refrain is symmetrical, with four eight-measure phrases, and in an unambiguous though chromatic G major, which includes several of Weill’s favorite diminished seventh chords. “The Right Guy for Me” was never recorded commercially, nor was it widely performed, though Lenya introduced it into her nightclub act in New York before it was published in the United States. International distribution of the film led to publications of the song in England, as well as France, where Coslow’s lyric appeared in French translation.

Although Weill continued to hope that he would someday be able to compose a real “musical film” or even a “film opera,” he had no starry-eyed illusions about his chances. He told Lenya that he didn’t want “to become a pose a real “musical film” or even a “film opera,” he had no starry-eyed illusions about his chances. He told Lenya that he didn’t want “to become a

Facsimile 25: “The Right Guy for Me”
Well's second Broadway show was his first collaboration with the playwright Maxwell Anderson, whom he had met in 1936 through the Group Theatre. Anderson would become Well's “American Brecht,” his most frequent, successful, and influential collaborator in his new home.217 Anderson's successful career had begun in 1924 with the play *What Price Glory?*; after winning the Pulitzer Prize for drama in 1933 with *Both Your Houses* he was widely heralded as America's foremost playwright. *Knickerbocker Holiday* was Anderson's first attempt to write for the musical stage, and it was Well's first unequivocally successful Broadway project. After tryouts in Hartford, Boston, and Washington the show opened on 19 October 1938 and enjoyed a run of 168 performances at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre; it was then taken on the road for nine weeks.219 Critical reception was enthusiastic. Elliott Norton wrote in the *Boston Post* on 2 October that “Mr. Kurt Well's songs are not added, not hammered on. They are woven into the pattern of the piece. They serve to point the play, to amplify the action, to characterize the people.” Brooks Atkinson reviewed the Broadway opening in the *New York Times* on 20 October: “[Well] writes dance tunes with modern gusto, romantic duets, comic pieces . . . superior to Broadway song-writing without settling in the academic groove.” Anderson himself called Well's music “the best score in the history of our theatre.”220

Based loosely on Washington Irving's *Diedrich Knickerbocker's A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty* (1809), the show deals with conflict between the individual and the state, a recurrent theme in Well's works for the musical stage. Peter Stuyvesant, sent from Holland to govern New Amsterdam, tries to stifle the independent spirit growing among the Dutch colonists but eventually agrees to govern in a more democratic way. Anderson was quoted in the *New York Times* on 13 November 1938 as having said that “the gravest and most constant danger to a man's life, liberty, and happiness is the government under which he lives.” Some interpreted his script about the repressive rule Stuyvesant tried to impose on New Amsterdam as an indictment of the fascist dictatorships in Germany and Italy, but others saw in it a critique of President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal.

The music from *Knickerbocker Holiday* was published by Crawford Music Corporation, one of several satellite firms controlled by Louis and Max Dreyfus, the owners of Chappell.221 It is not clear why the music for *Knickerbocker Holiday* appeared under the Crawford Music imprint, whereas *Holiday* was published by Crawford Music Corporation, one of several satellite firms controlled by Louis and Max Dreyfus, the owners of Chappell.221 It is not clear why the music for *Knickerbocker Holiday* appeared under the Crawford Music imprint, whereas *Holiday* was published under the Chappell imprint. A trade paper voiced skepticism about the publication: “Crawford Music Co. goes a bit more longhair than usual publishing the songs from the Maxwell Anderson–Kurt Well musical show, *Knickerbocker Holiday*. . . . Numbers, three already printed in sheet-music form, with five more to follow next week, have little commercial value, and Crawford is not even bothering with releasing professional copies. Songs will also probably be air-restricted.”222 The contract between Well and Max Dreyfus, signed on 12 September 1938, required Crawford to issue the songs in three of the four formats in which music from the show eventually appeared:223

* Four songs thought most likely to sell well—“It Never Was Anywhere You,” “Will You Remember Me?” “September Song,” and “There’s Nowhere to Go But Up”—were published in sheet music form in 1938.
* Stock arrangements for dance band of “It Never Was Anywhere You,” “September Song,” and “There’s Nowhere to Go But Up” were brought out in 1938.
* Thirteen selections from the show, arranged for voice and piano, came out in a two-volume set of “Vocal Gems” in 1938.
* A piano-vocal score of the entire show was published only in 1951.

It is instructive to compare one of the separately published songs that never achieved much popularity with one that did. “Will You Remember Me?” was cut from the show during the first week of the New York run, and it was never recorded commercially; sheet music sales of this number were negligible. The piece is a love duet, a strophic variation sung by Brom, the character who is sentenced to death for his opposition to Stuyvesant's rule, and Tina, his sweetheart:

The vocal range of the first and third refrains, D4–G5, is appropriate for the soprano role of Tina, whereas the second refrain is transposed down a fourth into Brom's baritone range. The two sing together for most of the third refrain, with Tina carrying the melody and soaring up to a G5 at the song's climax, while Brom's harmonizing stays within a comfortable baritone range.

In the sheet music version (see p. 235) the song has been transposed to F major, resulting in a more accessible (though still somewhat extreme) vocal range of C4–F5. The two voices have been condensed into a single vocal line, and the piece has been simplified structurally:

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Facsimile 26: “Will You Remember Me?”
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Without a verse to establish the dramatic situation, the lyrics of the refrains do not convey an easily grasped scenario, and taken out of dramatic context such lines as “Though they dismember you, I shall remember you” seem puzzling if not ridiculous. Others, such as “When the worms on my corpse have dined/in the dark of the sunken clay,” are hardly the material of a hit song. Well and Anderson probably intended the clash of lyrics and music to be heard as a parody of an old-fashioned operetta love duet—Well perhaps recalling his concept of “Tango-Ballade”—but the number was not effective once disconnected from the plot.224

By contrast, “September Song,” sung by Stuyvesant to the girl who had been promised to him in marriage, became Well's first American song to enjoy true mass popularity. Stuyvesant was nominally the “heavy” of the show, but Walter Huston brought such charm and humor to the role, particularly in this song, that within a week of the New York opening it had become customary for Huston to encore “September Song,” singing a new refrain written by Anderson for the purpose.225 The poetic structure of the initial draft of the lyric would not have allowed a musical setting in popular song form, so, probably following a suggestion from Well or the show’s director, Joshua Logan, Anderson changed the lyrics. When Well set the revised lyric to music, he borrowed some memorable musical material from Juan's arietta “Since First I Left My Home” from *A Kingdom for a Crown*; the first six measures of the refrain for “September Song” are melodically identical with the beginning of the arietta. Well changed the rhythm of the accompaniment from the Latin-infused pattern (suitable to the operetta's tropical setting on a fictitious island named Santa Maria) to a fox-trot and transposed the melody down a major third to accommodate Huston’s voice. On stage, “September Song” was presented in two verse-refrain strophes, with the refrains (each with its own text) taking the conventional shape of A8 A8 B8 A’8.

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Refrain 1 in stage version
But it's a long, long while from May to December
And the days grow short when you reach September,
And I have lost one tooth and I walk a little lame,
And I haven't got time for the waiting game,
For the days turn to gold as they grow few,
September, November,
And these few golden days I'd spend with you.
These golden days I'd spend with you.
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Refain 2 in stage version
And it's a long, long while from May to December
Will a clover ring last till you reach September?
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Facsimile 26: "Will You Remember Me?"
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I'm not quite equipped for the waiting game,
But I have a little money and I have a little fame,
And the days dwindle down to a precious few,
September, November,
And these few precious days I'd spend with you,
These precious days I'd spend with you.

The text of the single refrain of the sheet music version combines the first four lines of refrain 1 with the last four from refrain 2:

refrain in sheet music version 1938 (1st edition) (see p. 241)
But it's a long, long while From May to December,
And the days grow short, When you reach September,
And I haven't got time for the waiting game,
For the days dwindle down to a precious few - September, November,
And these few precious days I'd spend with you,
These precious days I'd spend with you.

refrain in sheet music version 1944 (2nd edition)
But it's a long, long while From May to December,
And the days grow short, When you reach September,
And I haven't got time for the waiting game,
For the days dwindle down to a precious few - September, November,
And these few precious days I'd spend with you,
These golden days I'd spend with you.

refrain in sheet music version 1946 (3rd edition)
Oh, it's a long, long while From May to December,
But the days grow short, When you reach September,
When the autumn weather turns the leaves to flame,
One hasn't got time for the waiting game,
Oh, the days dwindle down to a precious few - September, November!
And these few precious days I'll spend with you,
These precious days I'll spend with you.

Even when sung without the verse, as it was on many recordings and in live performances, the revised versions of the refrain may be heard as a generic love song, with no links to any particular dramatic situation. The 1946 printing appears to derive from a recording made by Bing Crosby in December 1943, for the printed lyric follows his version of the refrain verbatim.

Musically both verse and refrain remain solidly in C major, with the eight-measure bridge (B) of the refrain leaning toward F minor, though this key is never firmly tonicized. The verse is harmonized almost exclusively with seven- and ninth chords, many of them incomplete and most of them resolving according to the conventions of common-practice harmony. Typical Weillian touches are the irregularly phrased verse contrasting with the thirty-two-measure (4 × 8) refrain and, at the end of the bridge, a prominently placed diminished seventh chord (F♯–A–C–E♭). A small but telling detail links “September Song” with two of Weill’s most popular German songs: in the first full measure of the refrain, the vocal part has several repeated notes on scale degree six—here an A against a C minor chord—just as in the “Moritat” and “Surabaya-Johnny.”

The reception of “September Song” during Weill’s lifetime underwent four distinct phases, neatly documented by the various editions or printings of sheet music. During the run of Knickerbocker Holiday on Broadway, the song achieved only a modest measure of popular success. Walter Huston’s drawing power as a major star of stage and screen inspired four different recordings. Besides Huston himself, the song was recorded in 1938 by Eddy Duchin and Ray Herbeck, both pairing it with “It Never Was You.”

A reviewer for Billboard commented on the three recordings in typically nonchalant industry fashion: “As a singer, Walter Huston is undoubtedly a much better actor. Maybe he was only paying off a bet to Brunswick for his recitative attempts with ‘September Song’ and the class-conscious marching song, ‘The Scars,’ both from his starring Knickerbocker Holiday production. The song lacks in popular appeal, ‘September Song’ and ‘It Never Was You’ make acceptable dance fare for pseudo-intellects as played by Eddy Duchin on Brunswick and Ray Herbeck on Vocalion.” On 14 March 1939—Knickerbocker Holiday had just begun its road tour—TonyMartin chose “September Song” for the B-side of his record featuring Cole Porter’s “Begin the Beguine.”

In 1944 United Artists released a film version of Knickerbocker Holiday that starred Nelson Eddy and Constance Dowling, with Charles Coburn portraying Governor Stuyvesant. Although Coburn sang “September Song” on screen, he did not record the number, presumably because his voice was deemed unsuitable. On 29 December 1943, in preparation for the film’s release in March 1944—it opened in New York City on 19 April 1944—Bing Crosby recorded the song for Decca, but his recording was not released until the following May. Weill proudly mentioned Crosby’s recording in letters to family members.

Anticipating a strong boost from the film, Crawford Music reissued “September Song” with a new cover and also reprinted Jack Mason’s 1938 stock band arrangement with an updated cover, but neither the sheet music nor Crosby’s record tallied particularly high numbers. The same was true for a recording by Artie Shaw in May 1945, for which Weill had had high hopes, as he wrote to Lenya: “Billboard” announces this week that Artie Shaw has made a record of ‘September-song’ which has a chance to become a best seller [sic] (His recording of ‘Surabaya-Johnny’ started out well and sold 2 million copies). They write: ‘K.W.’s classical September-song, a beauty of a tune which has been a favorite for [a] long time.”

“September Song” did not become a “standard” until the following year, when at least a dozen different performers recorded it for ten different labels. The surge is somewhat inexplicable, because the film had faded from public memory, and neither Crosby nor Shaw had secured a real presence for the song in public consciousness. Even more surprising, the first recording of the song to enter Billboard’s various weekly charts was that of the relatively unknown pianist, vibraphone player, and singer Dardanelle and her trio. The fact that a young woman could present the lyric convincingly proved that Weill’s song had become successfully disassociated from its theatrical context. The Dardanelle Trio was not the first small combo to record the song—that distinction goes to the Phil Moore Four—but her version, released on RCA Victor in November 1946, appeared in eleventh place on the chart “Records Most-Played on the Air” on 14 December 1946.

A week later Frank Sinatra joined the chart with his version, recorded on 30 July 1946 for Columbia but not released until late November. Beginning in September 1946, Billboard listed “September Song” among the “Songs with Greatest Radio Audiences” and continued to list it every week until February 1947. Crawford Music, finally recognizing the song’s belated popularity, printed a third piano-vocal edition with a new cover, designed by Ben Jorj Harris, that capitalized on the song’s autumn metaphor—a strategy adopted by many designers in countries where the song was subsequently published (e.g., England, Denmark, France). By late November 1946, Billboard could list the song in its “Best-Selling Sheet Music” chart, where it stayed for several weeks, peaking on 28 December 1946 in tenth place.

On 10 October 1946 Crawford Music also issued a version for men’s chorus, arranged by William Stickles.
Weill did not live to see the completion of the fourth stage of reception, but he was aware of its beginnings. The Paramount film *September Affair*, directed by William Dieterle and starring Joan Fontaine and Joseph Cotten, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival on 25 August 1950, used "September Song," in the words of a *New York Times* critic, "as thematic inspiration and as the sound-track leitmotif." Much of the filming had taken place in 1949, and in the final production stages Walter Huston was asked to record "September Song" for the third time (he had made his second recording, for Decca, in 1944). Huston complied, but he too did not live to see the film's premiere, as he died unexpectedly on 5 April 1950, just two days after Weill. Unlike the film version of *Knickerbocker Holiday*, which was released during World War II, *September Affair* enjoyed full international distribution and triggered a new round of recordings by various artists, most notably Stan Kenton, and additional sheet music publications.237 Crawford Music reissued its third edition of the song with a new cover (see p. 261), but contrary to the printed statement—"As Sung by Walter Huston in *September Affair*"—the plates were the same as those used for the 1946 printing and do not match what Huston sang, either in the film or on his previous two recordings. By the end of 1951 new sheet music issues had appeared in England, Australia, France, Italy, and Argentina. In England the song had appeared in two previous editions, but it was with the third edition that "September Song" gained genuine popularity and enjoyed mass sales. It entered *Billboard*‘s chart for best-selling sheet music in "England's Top Twenty" on 10 February 1951, peaking seven weeks later in fourth place.236 The Italian publisher Accordi, having acquired the rights from ChapPELL S.A., France, also issued a voice-and-piano and a voice-only version: the latter, unlike the French edition, included chord symbols. The only 1951 printing that made no reference to the film was the one published by Hans Sikorski’s Pageno-Verlag, which introduced Weill’s song in print to a German-language public a few months after the film had successfully played in Germany as *Liebertraum auf Cäpiti*. The new German lyrics, by Werner Cypris, about fear of parting and loneliness had little in common with any of the English versions, and the text is often metrically at odds with the music. It was perhaps not surprising that "Der schönste Liebestraum" failed to inspire a single recording.237

Just how popular was "September Song" compared with Weill’s other songs and with songs by other composers?239 To answer this question, one must distinguish between the two types of popularity that a popular song may enjoy—short-term and long-term. In the 1930s the American music industry measured short-term popularity by the units of sheet music and record sales, and the text is often metrically at odds with the music. It was perhaps not surprising that "Der schönste Liebestraum" failed to inspire a single recording.237

*Billboard* listed "September Song" in its charts on several occasions, but the song was not among the 1,251 songs aired on "Your Hit Parade" between 1935 and 1958. By comparison, another song of the same period, Bing Crosby’s recording of "Only Forever," written by Johnny Burke and James V. Monaco for the film *Rhythm on the River*, appeared on the *Billboard* charts for twenty weeks in 1940, nine times as the number-one song of the week, and was performed for thirteen consecutive weeks on "Your Hit Parade," three times as the top song of the week. But "Only Forever" quickly faded from memory, whereas "September Song" became a standard—or an "evergreen" in European terminology. In a national survey of disc jockeys conducted by *Variety* in 1951, "September Song" ranked tenth for all time, but it was with the third edition that "September Song" enjoyed modest short-term but exceptional long-term success, whereas "Will You Remember Me?" ended up a dud and "Only Forever" ran its course so quickly! There is no more difficult a task for a music historian or critic than to try to account for the success of a given piece of music by analyzing or describing it, and I have no illusions that I can pinpoint the precise factors that made "September Song" such a hit. I’ll merely offer several observations:

- Its lyrics sketch a generalized and easily grasped scenario.

- Its structure, verse-refrain (AABA), is familiar to anyone with any acquaintance with popular music.

- Its musical language is tonal and triadic, and the frequent use of seventh and ninth chords is in keeping with the harmonic style of popular songs of the era.

- Its refrain has a “hook”: the first three of the four short phrases making up the A section begin with a similar, though not identical, melodic contour. By the time the refrain has concluded, this motive will have been heard nine times and has thus become familiar to even a first-time listener.

- The song, in its sheet music version, is easy for amateurs to perform. Its vocal range barely exceeds an octave, and the keyboard accompaniment lies comfortably and idiomatically under the hands.

Such factors alone, of course, cannot account for the popularity of "September Song." After all, thousands of mediocre and even defective songs exhibit most of these traits. The point, rather, is that "September Song" conforms sufficiently to the stylistic norms for songs achieving mass popularity that it became eligible for success.

As a case in point, Jack Mason’s dance band arrangement of "September Song" (p. 247) follows the conventions of that genre. The repertory of American dance bands of the 1930s and 40s consisted chiefly of arrangements of current popular songs. While the top professional bands played versions of popular tunes prepared by their own arrangers, hundreds of professional and amateur bands depended on published stock arrangements. The bulk of these were created by a mere handful of arrangers who worked as independent contractors for the most prominent publishers; Jack Mason claimed the lion’s share of the work.240 Scored for
the standard dance band instrumentation of the day, stock arrangements were published as sets of parts without a master score, but one of the parts was intended for use by the band leader, usually the pianist, and this part contained cues for the other instruments. Since the personnel of a given band might vary from standard forces, a good stock arrangement had to sound complete and convincing even when performed with one or more of the parts missing, doubled, or played by an instrument other than the one specified. Most stock arrangements omitted the verse of the song and offered only a string of three or four refrains, each scored differently, along with an introduction, transitions between refrains, and possibly a coda written by the arranger. Jack Mason was the chief arranger for Famous Music 1930–33 before he opted to freelance. His arrangement of “September Song” calls for four saxophones (two altos and two tenors), three trumpets, two trombones, three violins, a cello, and a rhythm section of piano, bass, guitar, and drums. In his version the song takes the following shape:

- a 4-mm. introduction establishing the key of C major
- a first full refrain, in C major
- a second refrain also in C major but much more lightly scored; if the band includes a singer, this is the refrain usually sung by the vocalist
- a 5-mm. modulating transition leading to a third full refrain in G major
- a 4-mm. modulating transition leading to a final half refrain in D major

The melody passes from one part to another, giving a number of instruments the chance to play it. The keys of successive refrains impart tonal variety to the arrangement (though not tonal coherence) and allow instruments to play in keys in which they sound best, flat keys being the most natural and brilliant for saxophones, trumpets, and trombones. There are no openings for improvisation, but it would be a simple matter to repeat a refrain, say the lightly scored second refrain, to back an improvised solo.

Crawford Music reissued the band arrangement of “September Song” for the release of the 1948 film, but the publisher declined to take Weill’s suggestion to do so as well for “There’s Nowhere to Go But Up,” one of three songs from Knickerbocker Holiday to have made it into the film. The composer reported from Los Angeles, “United Artists executives seem to think that ‘Nowhere to go but up’ will become a big hit. Nelson Eddy has made quite a success of it in army camps and it is just the kind of song that they like in ‘Nowhere to go but up’ will become a big hit. Nelson Eddy has made quite a success of it in army camps and it is just the kind of song that they like in

One of the most intriguing popular spinoffs of “September Song” was an arrangement for piano solo by Trude Rittman, which Crawford published in May 1948 (see p. 255). In the United States Rittman, a German refugee who, like Weill, had studied composition with Philipp Jarnach, had started out working as a concert pianist for Lincoln Kirstein, but she soon established herself as one of the most prolific dance arrangers on Broadway.244 In 1943, when she served as a rehearsal pianist for One Touch of Venus, Weill replaced her dummy arrangements for Agnes de Mille’s ballets with his own music. Her arrangement of “September Song” targeted moderately skilled amateur pianists as well as professional entertainers who could not flesh out, at least not ad hoc, the skeletal accompaniments provided in sheet music. Rittman transposed “September Song” from C to E major and transformed Weill’s fourteen-measure verse into a conventional sixteen-measure structure. The entire arrangement, particularly the first two measures, seems to suggest that Rittman tried to evoke, tongue-in-cheek, Thékla Badarzewska’s “La prière d’une vierge” (“The Maiden’s Prayer,” originally also in E major), which Weill had lampooned as “die ewige Kunst” in the first act of Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny. Rittman’s piano arrangement, published without Anderson’s lyric, roughly corresponds to Isko Thaler’s version of “Tango-Ballade,” but whereas Thaler had underlined the song’s dance rhythm, Rittman chose to abandon all traces of the fox-trot and to lend her arrangement more than a whiff of nineteenth-century parlor music. Although the heyday of the player piano had passed with the Depression and the advent of affordable radios, for all those amateur musicians who had no pianistic skills but owned a player piano, the company Q.R.S. issued, apparently in the fall of 1946, a piano roll with “September Song” played by Frank Milne.245

With Knickerbocker Holiday Weill achieved something that had eluded him throughout his European years: not only was the show itself deemed a modest commercial success, but one of its songs achieved genuine mass popularity through the medium of sheet music, dance band arrangements, and phonograph recordings. The song’s success can be attributed to the fact that it conformed more closely to the norms of popular music of the day than had any of his earlier pieces, and because the published sheet music and dance band arrangements, as well as the recorded versions, were the work of first-rate professional musicians familiar with the conventions of the day.

The Eastern Railroad Presidents’ Conference commissioned Weill to compose music for Railroads on Parade, a pageant written by Edward Hungerford for the New York World’s Fair of 1939. For the event Weill composed an elaborate seventy-minute score for orchestra, mixed chorus, vocal soloists, narrators, a ballet corps of thirty-two, and a theater ensemble of 130 actors.246 In drawing much of his melodic material for Railroads on Parade from American folk and popular music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the composer once again demonstrated his ability to assimilate American idioms to profound dramatic effect in a stage work. Only one number from Railroads on Parade was published, and that in a heavily mediated form. “This Train Is Bound for Glory,” sung in the pageant by a black chorus, was fitted with new lyrics by Buddy Bernier and Charles Alan, arranged as a verse-refrain piece, and published by Crawford Music in sheet music form as “Mile after Mile.” Elements of African-American music that Weill incorporated in the original have disappeared from the song, which its arranger and lyricists transformed into a quite unremarkable Tin Pan Alley ballad. Crawford Music also published a stock arrangement for dance band.247

Weill’s next completed work for the musical stage, Lady in the Dark, enjoyed a much longer run on Broadway than Knickerbocker Holiday had. The show, which opened at the Alvin Theatre on 23 January 1941 to immediate popular and critical success, catapulted Weill into the Broadway mainstream: Moss Hart, who had won a Pulitzer Prize for You Can’t Take It with You in 1937, wrote the book; Ira Gershwin, who was writing for the stage for the first time since the death of his brother, George, contributed the lyrics; Gertrude Lawrence, one of the most dynamic stage performers of the day, headed the cast, which also included the newcomer Danny Kaye and film stars Victor Mature and MacDonald Carey. After 462 performances at the Alvin, the production went on a lengthy road tour, returned to Broadway for a re-engagement, and tallied a grand total of 777 performances (including sixteen tryout performances), all with Lawrence playing the title role. Hart wrote in the preface to the published piano-vocal score that the “tight little formula of the musical comedy held no interest” for either Weill or himself. Accordingly, the two sets out to create “a new musical and lyrical pattern in the American theatre,” one in which “the music carried forward the essential story and was not imposed on the architecture of the play as a rather melodious but useless addendum.”248 Spoken dialogue and music are present in approximately equal proportions, but the two are segregated; the sections of the show taking place in “real life” are spoken, whereas three dream sequences, prompted by the psychoanalysis that the central character, Liza, is undergoing, are through-composed (i.e., they have continuous music). Weill called these his three “little one-act operas,” but Gershwin was less concerned about such conceptual matters; he told Weill at the outset of their collaboration: “I want to do it in turn out one hell of a score with at least four or five publishable numbers.”249

242 Max Dreyfus, how-
Just in time for the opening Chappell did indeed publish four songs from the show in sheet music format, which were soon followed by three other songs, then three stock arrangements by Jack Mason, and finally by a pianovocal score prepared by Albert Sirmay in close collaboration with Weill. Except for the addition of a guitar tablature above the vocal line and some minor tinkering—piano introductions were added to some of the songs, passages sung on stage by two or more voices were reduced to a single vocal line, and a new verse was added to the sheet music version of “Tischaiowsky (And Other Russians)”—the seven separately published songs are almost identical with Sirmay’s piano-vocal score, thus suggesting that, though his name doesn’t appear, he was also the arranger of the songs.

Letters from Weill to Gershwin in Hollywood report on attempts to translate the stage success of Lady in the Dark into mass sales of phonograph records.206 On 8 March Weill wrote that “all the record shops have big signs in the windows [advertising] ‘The song hits from Lady in the Dark,’ and in a letter of 11 April he listed a number of well-known performers who had recorded one or more songs from the show: Hildegarde, cast members Gertrude Lawrence and Danny Kaye, Benny Goodman, Eddy Duchin, Sammy Kaye, Mitchell Ayres, Bob Chester, Mildred Bailey, Leo Reisman, and Cy Walter. Weill had varied reactions to these recordings: Mitchell Ayres was “musically very bad,” Sammy Kaye also “not so good,” but Benny Goodman’s recording was “excellent” and Reisman’s “good.” Although—or perhaps because—Gertrude Lawrence recorded “My Ship” in the original key of F major, Weill found her voice “pretty shaky” and wished that she would “stop singing those high notes”207. Hildegarde, on the other hand, sang the song transposed down a fourth, and Weill approved of her laid-back approach: “I like very much the way Hildegarde sings the songs. She takes them very relaxed and that is good for the music and the lyrics.”208 The comments show that Weill was acutely aware of the difference between what works on stage and what works for a recording being played in someone’s living room.

Weill was also pleased to tell Ira that “all the small independent [radio] stations are playing ‘My Ship’ and ‘Jenny’ all day long and there is no doubt that both songs would be on the Hit Parade when as and if.” The “when and if” referred to a serious problem with air play of songs from Lady in the Dark. Because of a contract dispute between ASCAP and the major radio networks in 1940 it had ended in a stalemate, no live or recorded version of any piece written by an ASCAP composer or published by an ASCAP firm could be broadcast over any of the American radio networks; only independent stations could broadcast the songs from Lady in the Dark. And the attempt to popularize “Jenny,” which had been written as an “eleven o’clock showstopper” for Gertrude Lawrence, fell victim to “decency codes” of the day. Gershwin later recalled Lawrence’s performance on opening night of the Boston tryout: “She hadn’t been singing more than a few lines when I realized an in-.§ment had paid a considerable sum to replace it with “Suddenly It’s Spring” of “My Ship”; the former song had been cut from the film version, and Paramount had paid a considerable sum to replace it with “Suddenly It’s Spring” by Johnny Burke and Jimmy van Heusen.209

Certainly the ban that prevented performance of Lady in the Dark songs on the major radio networks had a negative impact on sales of both recordings and sheet music and kept these pieces from enjoying the success that Weill and Gershwin had hoped for. Weill’s publisher may have done a less than exemplary job of promoting them, too. But there were other factors. Each of the three dream sequences of Lady in the Dark combines solo voices, passages for chorus, and instrumental sections in an extended, complex, but unified section that in an opera or operetta would be called an ensemble scene.210 Customarily the treatment of such large-scale “production numbers” in Broadway musicals differs from their operatic counterparts in two ways: they are built around repetitions and expansions of a single song; and they are tailored by arrangers and orchestrators rather than by the composer of the song. Weill was one of the few composers for Broadway musicals who could compose (and orchestrate) an ensemble scene himself. The first dream (“Glamour”), for instance, comprises four extended sections:

1. “Oh Fabulous One” C major – A major – C major
2. “Huxley” moves towards E major
3. “One Life To Live” Eb major
4. “Girl of the Moment” C major

This “little one-act opera,” then, is in the key of C major, with an excursion to the flat sixth in the first part balanced later by a section in the key of the flat mediant. While there is no exact recapitulation of earlier material in the final (fourth) section, certain melodic and rhythmic motives reappear throughout; for instance, a melodic figure associated with Liza is first heard when she makes her entrance in “Oh Fabulous One,” transformed into a fox-trot sequence connecting the third and fourth sections, and then sung by the chorus near the end of the last section.

Apart from an instrumental introduction and several brief interjections and transitions, the fourth section of this first dream—the ten-minute-long “Girl of the Moment”—is constructed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>section</th>
<th>key</th>
<th>performance forces</th>
<th>tempo indicative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>C major</td>
<td>unison male chorus</td>
<td>Allegro giocoso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>modulatory</td>
<td>male chorus</td>
<td>Moderato assai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>F major</td>
<td>mixed chorus</td>
<td>Larghetto religioso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>modulatory</td>
<td>unison chorus</td>
<td>Allegro non troppo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>C major</td>
<td>unison chorus</td>
<td>Rhumba, molto agitato</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The B section, which modulates to F major for the second refrain and then back to C major for the fifth, is a melodic and rhythmic variation of A; the entire sequence is an ensemble scene unfolding from a single melodic idea, developed through a succession of different tempos and keys.

Because there are no numbers for solo voice anywhere in this section, Sirmay arranged section A for voice and piano as one of the separately published songs (see p. 267). There is no verse, only a refrain in the quintessential Tin Pan Alley shape of AABA, though each section is sixteen measures in length rather than the usual eight. The piece is almost entirely diatonic; with the exception of a G4 lower neighbor note in the second measure and an augmented fifth in the dominant chord of the final cadence, the only chromatic passages in the entire song occur in the transitional measures leading into and away from the B section, which briefly tonizes D♭ major. Equally remarkable (for Weill) is the abundance of undaunted tonic, subdominant, and dominant chords, though a countermelody in an
inner voice and some overlapping harmonies often create diatonic dissonances. Weill didn't write the piece to be a stand-alone song but rather to state melodic and motivic material from which he would develop the much longer ensemble number. The piece enjoyed no commercial success as a separate song, in part because the text lacks dramatic focus when taken out of context. And the numbers in the Circus Dream written to take advantage of the talents of a specific performer—"The Saga of Jenny," geared toward Gertrude Lawrence's image and delivery, and "Tschaikowsky (And Other Russians)," which depended on Danny Kaye's ability to spit out the names of fifty-seven Russian composers at breakneck speed—were not easily performed as solos by amateurs.

The dramatic climax of Lady in the Dark comes near the end when the central character, Liza, is found to have been suppressing the memory of a song she knew as a child. Bits of this tune had appeared in one form or another in each of her dreams, but the complete song "My Ship" is heard in its entirety only when Liza remembers its words, at which point her psychoanalyst pronounces her cured.263 "My Ship" (see p. 273) is cast in an A8 A8 B8 A'8+6 form, and the melody of the A section is essentially pentatonic, with the fourth and seventh degrees of the scale touched on only in passing.264 With the exception of the second part of the release, which briefly teases towards the dominant, the song remains firmly in F major. Triads and seventh chords dominate, cadences are conventionally tonal, chromaticism is limited to a few passing notes, and secondary dominants.265 This simplicity gives the song an almost folklike quality, appropriate for a bedtime song remembered from the heroine's childhood.

"Jenny" enjoyed modest short-term popularity, but "My Ship" was the only song from Lady in the Dark to achieve some degree of enduring commercial success. The internet site All Media Guide lists 216 recordings of the song by performers whose names read like a Who's Who of the most distinguished vocalists of the second half of the twentieth century: Lena Horne, Sarah Vaughan, Doris Day, Ella Fitzgerald, Hildegard, Rosemary Clooney, June Christy, Dawn Upshaw, Jessye Norman, Cassandra Wilson, and Tony Bennett, to name only a handful.266 Especially influential proved to be Miles Davis's 1957 recording of the song, which was included on the album Miles Ahead in an arrangement by Gil Evans. The internet index of fake books finds "My Ship" in seventeen of these collections, just one shy of the number containing "September Song.

In the summer of 1942 Weill began discussing with Cheryl Crawford the possibility of a musical comedy based on The Tinted Venus, a novel by Thomas Anstey Guthrie published in 1885. The working title was "One Man's Venus," Sam and Bella Spewack were to write the book, and Marlene Dietrich was to take the lead role, but in the end the title evolved into One Touch of Venus, a dynamic leading lady of the American standards. Initially it was recorded by dozens of singers as disparate in style as Mary Martin and Billie Holiday; and it was in the repertory of many swing bands, including those of Glenn Miller, Jimmie Dorsey, Count Basie, and Lena Horne. Over the years it became a standard sung by virtually every famous vocalist of the second half of the twentieth century (including Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Tony Bennett, and Barbra Streisand) and recorded by such jazz musicians as Coleman Hawkins, John Coltrane, and Bill
Evans. In 2003 the All Media Guide internet site listed 390 different recordings of “Speak Low,” and the song appears in twenty-one of the most popular fake books, more than any of Weill’s other songs.

In the stage version of One Touch of Venus, the characters Venus and Rodney sing “Speak Low” as a duet:

- refrain 1 A16 A’16 B8 A’16 Venus C major
- refrain 2 A16 A’16 B8 Rodney Ab major

A’16 Rodney and Venus Ab major

Practical considerations dictated the change of key for the second refrain: Mary Martin’s comfortable vocal range extended from G3 to B♭4, but Kenny Baker (Rodney), a classically trained tenor, would have found this range too low; hence his refrain was transposed up a minor sixth. When the two sing together briefly at the end of the second refrain, he continued with the melody in his range while she sang in harmony in a comfortable part of her range.272

The sheet music version of “Speak Low” contains only a single, repeated, refrain, reduced to one voice with piano accompaniment and transposed to F major, a key that puts the melody in the most comfortable range for amateurs (this key, however, also appeared in one of Weill’s early sketches). The song had barely been published when Chappell slightly altered the plates, providing an ossia F4 for the final D5 in both first and second endings (see p. 279). Chappell had also responded to Weill’s request to change the cover credits; but when he received a copy of the new printing, he was embarrassed to see his name twice as large as Ogden Nash’s. Weill asked Max Dreyfus to rectify what looked to him like a gaffe; a correction was, however, never made (see Gallery, image no. 114, for the cover of the first printing).273 Wartime restrictions may account for the separate Canadian imprint of “Speak Low,” as normally the sheet music printed in the United States would have been sold in both the United States and Canada. The Canadian edition, published by the Canadian Music Sales Corporation in Toronto, carried the cover of the second printing, but the plates for the music were the same as those for Chappell’s first printing.274

Both editions of the sheet music, as well as all subsequent printings, contained an error in punctuation, which turns out to be a mistake of some consequence. The opening line of “Speak Low” in all of Nash’s holograph and typed lyric sheets, Weill’s manuscripts, the stage manager’s script, and the published libretro of One Touch of Venus reads “Speak low when you speak love.” Nash had taken the line, possibly at Weill’s suggestion, almost verbatim from Much Ado about Nothing, with “when” replacing Shakespeare’s “if.”275 Neither Sirmay nor Weill, both nonnative speakers, had caught an erroneous comma that was inserted, presumably by an engraver, before the word “love.” The errant comma distorts the meaning of the phrase by turning “love” into a direct object. “Speak low when you speak love” makes no sense in the context of Nash’s lyric or with the way Weill set the line to music, where no “air” is left in the melodic line with which to set off the comma.

Harmonically, “Speak Low” manifests pervasive use of subdominant, dominant, and tonic chords, almost all of them seventh or ninth chords and many of them chromatically altered or with added notes. The first chord of the refrain is a ninth chord on the second degree of the scale (G–B–D–F–A), which, as elsewhere in Weill’s songs, functions as a substitute subdominant; the first subdominant harmony in root position, beginning in m. 9, includes a flatted third, an added sixth (B♭–D–F–E–G–A–C), and a suspended ninth; the dominant chord of the final cadence is a ninth with an augmented fifth (C–E–G–B♭–D). The ear accepts these altered harmonies in the tonal context of the song, but the persistent deviations from simple triads give the song a distinctive Weillian flavor.

As in so many of Weill’s songs, a lyrical melody is underpinned by the rhythms of a popular dance, in this case the rhumba. The pentatonic melody of “Speak Low” touches on the fourth and seventh degrees of the scale only in passing and rarely rests on one of the primary notes of the triad with which it is harmonized, falling more often on the second, sixth, seventh or ninth degree of the chord; the melody thus floats gently over its accompaniment rather than being tied to it. The initial two-measure motive, a sustained note followed by three quarter-note triplets, functions as a hook, an easily grasped figure heard five times in the first A section and fourteen times in the complete refrain. The vocal range of just over an octave is manageable for amateur singers, and the accompaniment lies easily under the hands of a pianist of even modest abilities; thus the song is eminently suitable for amateurs who want to experience it by playing or singing it at home. Though Ogden Nash was best known as a writer of comic verse, the lyrics here introduce and then develop in simple but elegant fashion an easily grasped scenario that is not dependent on the dramatic situation in which it is sung on stage. Even Alec Wilder, who proudly confessed “not to be a Kurt Weill fan,” decided that “Speak Low” was “a very good song.” In fact, it was the only song by Weill to be included in Wilder’s highly influential American Popular Song: The Great Innovators 1900–1958.276

Weill wrote the song as a monologue intended for a particular moment in the drama; he filled it with eccentricities to suggest that Venus is out of step with the American culture in which she finds herself. But the sheet music version omits or camouflages virtually all of the most provocative moments of the stage version. The only other number from the show that enjoyed notable attention as a specialty number was “That’s Him”; Dreyfus reported “some calls . . . from lady singers because it is great material for them and the song is being used.”277 But Weill’s suggestion that the song be transformed into a “rhythm” number went unheeded.278

“Speak Low” was one of two pieces from One Touch of Venus to be published in stock arrangements for dance band (the other being “Foolish Heart”) arranged by Paul Weirick). Jack Mason scored it for four saxophones, five brass (three trumpets, two trombones), three violins, and the usual rhythm section. There is a four-measure introduction, which is little more than a vamp, two refrains in the original key of F major, a modulating transition, and a final brilliant refrain in Ab major.

When a Danish theater staged One Touch of Venus in January 1948 under the title Adam og Venus (Adam and Venus), the publisher Wilhelm Hansen brought out four of Chappell’s five separately published songs, declining to print only “That’s Him.”279 The Danish editions omit the vocal line, thereby cutting the page count in half, and three of the editions place the English lyric between the staves and the Danish translation by Mogens Dam on top. “The Trouble with Women” remained untranslated, as the song’s four stanzas could not be accommodated in the available space. Hansen also reissued the stock arrangements by Jack Mason and Paul Weirick with a new cover.

In 1943, while in Hollywood in connection with projected film versions of Knickerbocker Holiday and Lady in the Dark, Weill was commissioned to write music for an original musical film titled Where Do We Go from Here? With a screenplay by Morrie Ryskind, the film was to be directed by Gregory Ratoff, and the cast to include Joan Leslie, Fred MacMurray, June Havner, and Anthony Quinn. Ira Gershwin had signed on to write the lyrics. After completing ten sections of music by the end of January 1944, Weill had little further input into the film. He wrote to Lenya on 9 August 1944 that the film producer’s secretary “called in the last minute to ask if we wanted to come over for the recording [of the soundtrack], but we were right in the middle of
working on The Firebrand of Florence, so I said no . . . [since] they will do anyhow what they want with the picture score.”273 When Weill visited the studio a few days later, though, he was pleased with what he heard, as he reported to Lenya:

Yesterday I spent 6 hours at the studio. They were recording “It happened to happen to me” (”It Could Have Happened to Anyone”) (with Joan Leslie who will be lovely in the part) . . . It looks terrific, real big production scenes, done with great taste and gusto, and the music comes out beautifully. If it works out the way it looks now, it will be a very important picture and a great thing for me.281

Other music by David Raksin, David Buttolph, and Edgar Fairchild was integrated into the score, as were bits of such traditional and popular songs as “Yankee Doodle,” “You’re in the Army Now,” “Ach du lieber Augustin,” Harry Warren’s “Chattanooga Choo-Choo,” Guy Massey’s “The Prisoner’s Song,” and Ray Noble’s “Good Night Sweetheart.”281 In the final soundtrack put together by studio orchestrators everything flows together with no demarcation between what was written by Weill and what was written by others. Weill was pleased with the end product, however; he wrote to Lenya on 1 May 1945 that “the picture is excellent and comes over as something very fresh and completely original and utterly different from any musical they’ve made so far.”282

Although a total of three songs from the film eventually appeared as sheet music, Chappell focused its campaign on a single song, just as Weill had hoped UE would do for the release of G. W. Pabst’s Dreigroschenoper film back in 1931. Weill and Dreyfus had great expectations for “All at Once,” the film’s prominent romantic ballad, and the composer wrote his wife on 8 May 1945 that “from Chappell’s I hear that [it] will be the most played song by the prominent romantic ballad, and the composer wrote his wife on 8 May 1945 

“All at Once” (Ira Gershwin)

“All at Once” (Ira Gershwin)

The good earth is bearing grain in China,
And her cherry trees are blooming in Japan.
The good earth bestows her simple blessings
With a kind of blind belief in man.

She has seen her fields aflame and bleeding
Where the torch of war has come to mar her plan.
But the good patient earth keeps on feeding and forgiving us
For she can’t help believing in man.

“All at Once” (Ira Gershwin)

All at once my lucky star was glowing
All at once I knew I’d met my once for all
For I found when I heard you helloing
That my heart somehow was answering your call

Once or twice I thought I’d met that someone
But I soon found that that someone never would do.
Felt I never would fall, I’d given up my hoping, when
All at once, my once for all was you.

Guy Lombardo was again the first to record the number, for Decca on 23 February 1945—three months before the film’s release—followed by Cab Calloway’s recording for Columbia in April. On 1 June Weill complained to Lenya about Chappell’s efforts: “All at once’ doesn’t seem to go as well as we hoped. I have a strong suspicion that some dirty game is going on at Chappell’s again.”284 But Weill’s skepticism was premature. Billboard listed the song in the category “Publishers’ Plug Tunes” from early June until early August.285 For three weeks in June “All at Once” appeared in the chart “Songs with Most Radio Plugs,” as well as in “Top Air Shots (Coast to Coast Consensus),” which appeared in the monthly trade journal Tune-Des Digest.286 However, the song never made it to “Your Hit Parade.” Chappell’s campaign for “All at Once” also included a stock dance band arrangement by Jack Mason, utilizing the same forces as “Speak Low.”

“All at Once” is one of four Weill songs that exist in two different stock arrangements, which Chappell may have published concurrently in each case and which were apparently part of special promotional campaigns (the other three songs receiving such treatment were “September Song,” “My Ship,” and “Speak Low”). Whereas Jack Mason scored the songs for a dance band consisting of four saxes, three trumpets, three violins, and a rhythm section, Bob Noeltner arranged them for a larger ensemble but a smaller sound.287 Noeltner’s arrangements feature four saxophone parts—but the players play clarinet exclusively (the fourth player bass clarinet)—three trumpets, two trombones, four violins, viola, cello, and rhythm section. Another difference is that Noeltner’s arrangements of the four numbers are always in the original key, a fact expressly stated on each part (which also gives the vocal range). Furthermore, Noeltner scores only a four-measure introduction and two choruses, labeled “Vocal Background” and “Ensemble” respectively. The fact that no cover survives for any of Noeltner’s four arrangements suggests that they were offered for sale but only for promotional purposes and were intended to utilize vocalists. Though recorded by several other artists, “All at Once” had little impact and was soon forgotten.

The other sheet music editions of songs from Where Do We Go from Here? appeared several weeks after the film’s official release and fared even less well. “If Love Remains” is a clumsy reduction of a duet from the film; “Song of the Rhinelander” is a surprisingly benign and jolly drinking song for Hessian mercenaries at Valley Forge. Weill’s most ambitious sequence in the film is a nine-minute-long ensemble scene set aboard Columbus’s flagship en route to the New World, involving four solo voices and an ensemble of sailors. Weill wrote to Lenya on 1 May 1945 that “the Columbus opera is really sensational and shows that it would be possible to do a film-opera.” Its length and complexity precluded publication in sheet music form, Chappell did not offer it for stage performances, and Weill did not follow up on the idea of writing a “film-opera.”288

The film versions of Knickerbocker Holiday and Lady in the Dark, both released in spring 1944, disappointed and disillusioned Weill. When United Artists had first inquired about the film rights to Knickerbocker Holiday in 1939, Weill had suggested to the studio that the show’s implied anti-Nazi satire be brought into sharper relief. But as was usual in Hollywood the film’s producers did what they pleased with the material they had paid for, and except for including several sections of Weill’s music (among them Charles Coburn singing “September Song”), the film has little resemblance to the musical play.291 The screen credits sum things up accurately: the soundtrack has “original music” by Werner R. Heymann, Theodore Passon, and Kurt Weill, with “additional music” by Forman Brown, Franz Steininger, Sammy Cahn, and Julie Styne. Lady in the Dark, starring Ginger Rogers and Ray Miland, fared even worse. Film rights had been sold to Paramount for $285,000, the highest amount yet paid for the rights to a Broadway musical. Yet, apart from the basic story line and one song, “The Saga of Jenny,” which is sung by Rogers, the film of Lady in the Dark owes virtually nothing to the stage play or its originators, Weill, Gershwin, and Hart. The film score of Lady in the Dark received an Academy Award (Oscar) nomination, but the composer named was Robert Emmett Dolan, not Weill; the featured song in the film, “Suddenly It’s Spring,” was written by Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen, not Ira Gershwin and Weill.291

Weill returned to Hollywood again in April 1945 for work on a film version of One Touch of Venus. According to David Drew, Weill “managed to negotiate a contract ensuring, for the first time in his American career, that no music other than his own would be included or interpolated.”291 Weill wrote
to Lenya in early May that “we are working on the score, at last” and added that “we are keeping ‘Speak low,’ ‘That’s him’ and ‘Foolish Heart,’ and I am trying also to get the Barbershop quartet [sic] ‘[The Trouble with Women] in [the film],’”292 On 26 May he wrote that “I have now finished 3 [new] songs for Venus (2 good ones) and have one more to write.”290 But work on the film was delayed when the rights were sold to Universal-International. It was finally released in October 1948, but the film musical that Weill had been hoping for had by then turned into a comedy with incidental music, with Ann Ronell credited for “Musical Score and New Lyrics.”

Although the film is virtually unwatchable today because of the way the original plot has been trivialized and the interpolation of inane sight gags and mugging that are common to so many Hollywood comedies of that era, Weill’s music figures prominently and effectively in several places. The opening credits unfold against a patchwork of the important tunes to follow, creating in effect a potpourri overture (arranged and orchestrated by Ronell), and the unobtrusive background “Sound track makes effective use of fragments from several of Weill’s songs, particularly “Speak Low.” There are also three extended musical sequences:

• “Speak Low” is sung as a duet in a version quite close to the stage version of the song, Ava Gardner (or rather Eileen Wilson, whose voice was over-dubbed) sings a first refrain (AA’BA’), Dick Haymes takes the AA’ of a second refrain, the orchestra plays the bridge, and Gardner (Wilson) and Haymes sing the final AA’ together. Because both Wilson and Haymes were pop singers, the entire sequence remains in the same key.

• “That’s Him,” sung by Venus in the stage version, is reworked into a lively production number for the three principal women of the cast.

• “Don’t Look Now (But My Heart Is Showing),” an adaptation of the graceful waltz song “Foolish Heart,” which Weill and Ronell had reworked for the film, is developed into an extended production number involving the principals and a large chorus.

To coincide with the film’s release, Chappell published “Speak Low,” “My Week,” and “Don’t Look Now” in sheet music form with a front cover featuring Ava Gardner.294 “Speak Low” was printed from the 1943 plates; only the front and back covers were new. Chappell also issued three choral versions of the song, arranged by William Stickles; such saturation of the amateur marketplace indicates that “Speak Low” was already well on its way to becoming a standard.295 In the version for male chorus (see p. 285), a setting suitable for glee clubs, high school choirs, and similar amateur groups, Stickles left the piano accompaniment of the piano-vocal sheet music unchanged and arranged the song homorhythmically without any harmonic intricacies. The setting is a perfect example of simple yet effective scoring for amateur groups—unlike Weill’s own 1930 setting of “Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen” for workers’ chorus.

Explaining to Lenya that “it is safer to work in the movies. But how dull, how uninspiring!” Weill had already turned his attention back to Broadway for an operetta based on Edwin Justus Mayer’s 1924 play “Firebrand,” and Weill had been involved with other projects, and Weill, in letters to Lenya, constantly complained about the difficulty of getting his collaborators to deliver book and lyrics. “I must say that so far I have done about 95% of the work on the show,” he wrote to Lenya on 20 July. “Last night again I had a long session with two tired old men.”296 And on 12 August, “This will be more my show than anything I have done so far—even though I don’t get credit for anything but the music.”290 Weill insisted that Lenya be cast in one of the leading roles, for which she was unsuited, and his first choices for the other roles proved to be unavailable; in the end the show featured performers who were either relatively undistinguished or miscast. Weill and Gershwin wanted Hassard Short to direct, but neither he nor Moss Hart was available, so what was to have been an “intimate operetta” ended up being staged by a master of the big spectacle, John Murray Anderson.291 After a tryout in Boston as Much Ado about Love, the show opened on Broadway on 22 March 1945 at the Alvin Theatre as The Firebrand of Florence. Critical reaction was mixed, at best; initial curiosity about a new Weill/Gershwin show quickly waned; Firebrand closed after only forty-three performances, the shortest run of any of Weill’s works for the American stage.

Chappell declined to publish a piano-vocal score but brought out four numbers in sheet music format and two numbers arranged for dance band.292 A considerable amount of mediation by Chappell’s staff musicians was required to convert sections from the show into brief pieces for voice and piano that would be suitable as sheet music. In the original score, for instance, the duet “You’re Far Too Near Me” takes the following shape:

orchestral introduction C major
recitative, Cellini and Angela C major – A♯ major
verse (arioso), Cellini and Angela A♯ major – B♭ major
refrain 1, Angela A8 B8 A♯ A♯ A’
refrain 2, Cellini A8 B8 A♯ A♯ A’
refrain 3, orchestra A8 B8 A♯ A♯ A’
refrain 4, Angela and Cellini C major
verse (arioso), Cellini and Angela A♯ major – B♭ major
refrain 1, Angela A8 B8 A♯ A’
refrain 2, Cellini A8 B8 A♯ A’
refrain 3, orchestra A8 B8 A♯ A’
refrain 4, Angela and Cellini C major
verse (arioso), Cellini and Angela A♯ major – B♭ major
refrain 1, Angela A8 B8 A♯ A’
refrain 2, Cellini A8 B8 A♯ A’
refrain 3, orchestra A8 B8 A♯ A’
refrain 4, Angela and Cellini C major
verse (arioso), Cellini and Angela A♯ major – B♭ major
refrain 1, Angela A8 B8 A♯ A’
refrain 2, Cellini A8 B8 A♯ A’
refrain 3, orchestra A8 B8 A♯ A’
refrain 4, Angela and Cellini C major

The sheet music arrangement (see p. 294) retains the introduction, recitative, and verse more or less intact, though the last seven measures of the verse are transposed down a major second to land in A♯ major, the new key chosen for this version. There is only a single refrain, repeated, with first and second endings; the lyrics of the first two refrains in the stage version are stacked. Even in this abbreviated version, the freshness of invention and sheer musicality is immediately obvious. Melodic and harmonic sequences create a smooth forward flow, the upward leap of a major seventh in the first measure of the refrain gives the tune an effective and attractive hook, and the piano accompaniment is more idiomatic and graceful than in many of Weill’s earlier songs. At the same time we can still observe some of the idiosyncrasies that set his earlier songs apart: the verse is more harmonically complex than the refrain; the refrain is made up of five rather than four-eight-measure phrases; virtually every stressed note of the vocal line falls on the seventh or ninth note of the accompanying triad; and the functional harmonic flow of the refrain is occasionally spiced by unexpected and irregularly resolving chords.

None of the four separately published songs from Firebrand made it onto the charts, none appeared on commercial recordings at the time, and none became standards.291 The commercial failure can probably be explained by the hybrid nature both of Firebrand and of the songs extracted from it. Weill seemed to take the failure in stride; in a later interview he explained why he kept “coming back to the theatre”: “It’s small, for one thing. It’s not an industry. The rest [movies, radio, and television] are industries, and the creative artist has to adapt himself to the requirements of that industry. There’s no use fighting it. There are enormous amounts of money involved and the industries want certain rules followed to protect those investments . . . Since the theater is smaller, the investments are smaller so one is much freer.”294

During the war years Weill had paid close attention to political and mil-
itary events in Europe, and he had been involved in many initiatives intended to raise awareness of the plight of the Jewish people and to support the Allied forces. He wrote music for _Fun to be Free_, a pageant performed on 5 October 1941 in New York's Madison Square Garden under the sponsorship of Fight for Freedom Inc., an anti-isolationist group. After the United States entered the war, he and Maxwell Anderson were commissioned by the NBC network to write _Your Navy_, a half-hour program broadcast on 28 February 1942. During the winter and spring of 1942 he composed a number of songs, some of which were included in _Three Day Pass_, a Soldier Shows production; others were sung in the _Lunch Hour Follies_, a series of patriotic morale-boosting shows mounted by the American Theatre Wing and performed for factory workers during lunch breaks. Weill also wrote the music for _We Will Never Die_, a pageant with a text by Ben Hecht, dedicated to the "Two Million Jewish Dead of Europe," first performed at Madison Square Garden on 9 March 1943, and for _Salute to France_ (1944), a propaganda film produced by the Office of War Information. Lotte Lenya sang "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weh?" with lyrics by Brecht, in an anti-Nazi cabaret at Hunter College on 3 April 1943 and later recorded it for broadcast to Germany.

Weill made no attempt to publish or promote the music he contributed to these initiatives and occasions, with just one exception, "The Song of the Free," composed early in 1942 on a text by the Pulitzer Prize winner Archibald MacLeish, who was then serving as Librarian of Congress. Reversing the procedure for popularizing a song from one of his stage works, Weill mounted a campaign to find a suitable platform, if not stage, from which to launch this single, stand-alone number, which, in musical style if not in textual content, resembles some of the "mass songs" published in the two volumes of the _Workers Song Book_ in the mid-1930s. March-like in tempo, with dissonant fanfares framing its several sections, the song has a broad, completely diatonic melody that reaches a climax on a triumphant, sustained high note. The song's expressive content—defiant patriotism—may be unusual for Weill, but stylistically the work contains such common "fingerprints" as the double-release structure (ABABCB') and inevitable half-diminished seventh chords, including diminished seventh chords in the second and fourth measures of the B section. Chappell published the song for voice and piano on 14 May, and within the fortnight Weill reported to Lenya: "All afternoon I worked at Chappells on the MacLeish song. I want to do everything to give it a big start. So I went over to the Rosy Theatre and played for the director. He was crazy about the song and said: this is what we've been waiting for. They will do it as a big hit."

Despite all this politically engaged activity, the three major pieces Weill wrote for the musical theater during the war years are the least overtly political of his stage works. Many Tin Pan Alley songwriters and Broadway producers believed that during the war popular songs and stage works should provide escapist entertainment. As Richard Rodgers put it, "Somehow, political chaos was less unsettling if you hummed through its storms. And Armageddon couldn't threaten us if we kept whistling 'Bye Bye Blackbird.'" Not all American songwriters agreed. Though only a handful of Tin Pan Alley songs and no Broadway musicals written during the war years dealt explicitly with warfare, many popular songs of the era spoke to the pain of separation and loss experienced by so many people: "I'll Be Seeing You," "I'll Walk Alone," and "It's Been a Long, Long Time" by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne; "Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year" by Frank Loesser; "Long Time No See, Baby," by Jack Lathrop and Sunny Skylar; and, above all, Irving Berlin's "White Christmas." Perhaps the relative lack of success of _The Firebrand of Florence_, and of the songs extracted from it, may have had something to do with the fact that spring 1945 was hardly a propitious time for a frothy costume piece set in Italy, with which the United States was still at war and where some of the most deadly fighting had taken place.

As the war ended Weill was already at work on several new and ambitious projects, including a pilot radio opera based on the folk song "Down in the Valley" and his long-held plan to adapt Elmer Rice's Pulitzer-Prize-winning _Street Scene_ (1929) as a Broadway opera. Weill wrote to his brother Hans that _Street Scene_ would be "without doubt the most important piece I have written since Bürgschaft, and it might turn out to be the best of all my works." Rice and Weill worked together on the book and invited the Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes to write the lyrics. Directed by Charles Friedman (because Weill's first choice, Rouben Mamoulian, was unavailable) and produced by the Playwrights Producing Company (which had recently elected Weill its only nonplaywright member), the show, billed not as an opera but as a "dramatic musical," opened on 9 January 1947 at the Adelphi Theatre for a run of 148 performances—more than the 124 performances of the first production of Gershwin's _Porgy and Bess_, a work with which it has a great deal in common. Financially _Street Scene_ was a "flop," but critically it was a triumph for Weill. Olin Downes, the chief music critic of the _New York Times_, called it "the most important step toward significantly American opera," and Broadway recognized Weill's achievement with a Special "Tony" Award—the very first for "outstanding score of a musical."

Both acts of _Street Scene_ take place in front of an apartment house in a tenement block in New York inhabited by a veritable "salad bowl" (rather than "melting pot") of ethnic families: Italian, Irish, African American, German, Swedish, and Jewish. Many of the immigrant and first-generation songwriters and performers who contributed so much to American popular culture in the first decades of the twentieth century had lived in precisely this type of neighborhood. Because Weill had come to the United States under different circumstances, Hughes took him on a tour of Harlem cabarets and various neighborhoods in Manhattan so that he could absorb the atmosphere and idioms. The melodramatic plot of _Street Scene_ climaxes with the murder of a woman by her jealous husband and their daughter's decision to make a new life for herself elsewhere. The tragedies that unfold are personal. Given the post-Holocaust and emerging Cold War climate, Rice and Weill softened much of the anti-Semitic and socialist rhetoric of the original play, but _Street Scene_ was still not the material of a typical musical, certainly not a long-running one.

Weill had long "dreamed of a special brand of musical theater which would completely integrate drama and music, spoken word, song and movement," and he felt that with _Street Scene_ he had achieved "a real blending of drama and music, in which the singing continues naturally where the speaking stops and the spoken word as well as the dramatic action are embedded in overall musical structure." The work is an alternating sequence of recitatives, ensembles, set pieces for one or more solo voices, and spoken dialogue, which is often underscored by instrumental music. In this the work is not unlike Gershwin's _Porgy and Bess_ and other "Broadway operas" that came after, but, more important, it also resembles Weill's own _Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny_. Larry Stempel has observed, not uncritically, that _Street Scene_'s dramatic core, which involves only the four chief characters—the Irish Catholic husband, wife, daughter, and the daughter's Jewish boyfriend—is operatic in concept and in its vocal demands and musical style, whereas the music for the secondary characters who are peripheral to the main plot draws more on popular styles.

"I Got a Marble and a Star," sung by Henry Davis, the African-American janitor, uses a slightly modified twelve-measure blues structure, and its vocal line incorporates "blue" notes—minor thirds and sevenths—in the tonal context of a major key. "Wouldn't You Like to Be on Broadway?" suggests some of the clichés of a seductive vaudeville "soft-shoe" from earlier in the century. These two numbers, however, were not among the five that Chappell issued as independent sheet music editions. "What Good Would the Moon Be?" and "Lonely House," "We'll Go Away Together," "Moon-faced, Starry-eyed," and "A Boy Like You" appeared within a span of two months in 1947. Discrepancies in appearance suggest that they may have been the work of several different arrangers. In three of them, for instance, the customary chord symbols appear above the vocal line, but in the other two ("Lonely House" and "A
Boy Like You”) they are omitted. Three have newly arranged piano accom-
paniments, but that of "Lonely House,” though transposed down a minor third, is virtually identical with Well’s rehearsal score. The accompaniment for the verse of “I’ll Go Away Together” is merely a simplified version of Well’s, whereas that for the refrain is new. For the second printing, some of the lyrics were slightly altered. For instance, in the refrain of “What Good Would the Moon Be?”

Should it be the primrose path for me,
Should it be the moon in my hand,
Or could it some day be
Someone who’ll love me, . . .

became

No it won’t be a primrose path for me,
No it won’t be diamonds and gold,
But maybe it will be
Someone who’ll love me, . . .

This change required some re-engraving, and the new lyric may well have re-
lected changes made in rehearsal, because the lyric included in the complete piano-vocal score of Street Scene, which was published a year later, matched that of the second edition of the sheet music. A smaller change in “Moon-

This and danced by two youthful minor characters, “Moon-faced, Starry-
-eyed” appropriates the harmonic and rhythmic style of Big Band swing. Following the orchestral introduction to the opera, Well introduces the song as an instrumental “contemporary hit” coming from an on-stage radio, a device similar to Jazzy Brown’s on-stage piano solo at the opening of Porgy and Bess. When performed in its entirety near the end of act 1, “Moon-faced, Starry-
-eyed” begins with a thirty-two-measure refrain for Dick in B major in the conventional pattern of A8 A8 B8 A’8, followed by thirty-nine measures of underscoped spoken dialogue and a second refrain in G major for Mae, after which they dance a “jitterbug” to the accompaniment of seventy-five measures of music in swing style, with a brief interlude of “Blues dancing.” In the sheet music arrangement (see p. 301) this number was simplified to the following form:

introduction 4
refrain ||: A8 A8 B8 A’8 :||

Also published as a stock arrangement by Paul Weirick, “Moon-faced, Starry-
-eyed” became the most commercially successful number from Street Scene. The Teddy Wilson Quartet recorded an instrumental version of the song on 19 November 1946 for Musicafts. Benny Goodman and His Or-
chestra recorded it with a singer—one of Tin Pan Alley’s foremost lyricists, Johnny Mercer—on 30 January 1947 for Capitol, which released the disc on 10 March. Both recordings appeared on Billboard’s “Most-Played Juke Box Records” chart on 3 May 1947 in fourteenth place. Bing Crosby and Freddy Martin sang the number on radio programs, and in later years the song be-
came something of a minor standard in performances by Max Roach, Betty Carter, and others.

Unlike “Moon-faced, Starry-eyed,” “Somehow I Never Could Believe,” which was sung by Anna Maura, is fully operatic in concept and style, moving through accompanied recitative and arioso to a full-blown aria and requiring a singer with extended vocal range and the ability to sustain notes near the top of the soprano register. There are no rhythmic or melodic sug-
gestions of popular music in this piece, and Well’s orchestration shows no trace of the Big Band sound of “Moon-faced, Starry-eyed.” The two numbers represent opposite poles of the stylistic spectrum in Street Scene, with other numbers in the show falling somewhere between.

The two sections of “Lonely House,” for example, are more in the nature of a recitative-aria sequence than of a verse-refrain song: the ostinato figure over a low pedal point, which underlies the entire first section, is a composi-
tional technique more common to classical than popular music; the vocal range of an octave and a fourth is extreme; and the climactic high notes must be sustained in operatic style. The refrain of “Lonely House,” on the other hand, is shaped in the ubiquitous AABA pattern of popular song and moves at the pace of a slow swing dance, with the melodic line making repeated ex-
pressive use of “blue” notes, particularly the minor third in a major key.

Labeled “Arioso” in the piano-vocal score, “Lonely House” is, like the notion of Broadway opera itself, Janus-like. No surprise, then, that it makes but one appearance in the most popular fake books, and the song has been only oc-
casionally performed and recorded by “pop artists.” Operatic tenors, on the other hand, have made the song/aria standard recital fare. The advertising found on the inside and back cover of the sheet music edition of “Lonely House” highlighted two other “crossover” compositions making a bid for the “classical” market, Warsau Concerto and London Fantasia, each featured in a major Hollywood film and both immensely popular at the time.

In a letter asking Langston Hughes to agree to a forty percent royalty cut to keep Street Scene running on Broadway, Well confided to him that “Chap-
pell’s have been working for weeks on our songs and have succeeded in getting quite a number of plugs, but it is no use fooling ourselves that the songs we have written are hit-parade material, because they are not. I think they might slowly catch on and live a life of their own.” In closing his letter to Hughes, Well mentioned a “Columbia album” as forthcoming with the encourage-
ment of Goddard Lieberson, vice president of Columbia Records, Weill had prepared a shortened version of Street Scene that preserved “the variety of mu-
cical forms” found in the original score, including “songs, arias, duets, en-
sembles, orchestral interludes and even dialogue” and making it possible to “follow the action and the emotional up-and-down of this play.” The recording of this shortened version, featuring members of the original cast conducted by the production’s musical director, Maurice Abravanel, and re-
leased in May 1947, was probably more commercially successful than any of the separately published numbers from the show. It was hoped that the first of Well’s Broadway shows to be preserved, albeit only in part, on an original Broadway cast album (Last in the Starr would be the only other one).

Although it was not routinely the composer’s job to oversee the production of mediated versions of pieces intended for commercial dissemination, Well monitored all of Chappell’s activities closely. Three months into the run of Street Scene he grew dissatisfied with the way the publisher was handling the popular exploitation of individual songs (what Weill called “song plugging”) and with Chappell’s promotional efforts for the opera as a whole (what he called “exploitation of its standard values”). The angry composer wrote Max Dreyfus a stern letter:

[The more I think about the conversation we had the other day, the less I am satisfied with its outcome. It is the same old story. In the end, the song pluggers are always right, and the songwriters are wrong. Being a polite man, of course, you blame it again on the lyric writer, just as in the case of “Knickerbocker Holiday,” “One Touch of Venus” and the picture songs I wrote with Ira. But what it really means is: since Charlie Goldberg is a good song pluggers, I must be a bad songwriter.

I suppose in your position you have to take that stand at the side of your professional department. But you will also understand that I cannot accept this verdict. I still think I gave you two excellent commercial tunes to work on, and the lyric are by no means worse than the ones you hear every day and night at the radio. I also remember too well that only 2 months ago everybody up at Chappell’s told me that I had a sure fire hit song. But, having watched this plugging business for the last few years, I know more about it today than I used to. You are right when you say that the different plugging outfits of Chappell’s, Crawford’s, Harms etc. are working quite independently from each other. The trouble is that the “spade work” of song plugging, the setting up of recordings and the contract with the important performers, is done by the same man for all the different outfits. And that’s where “Street Scene” has
been greatly neglected. If Larry Spier would have placed the song with a few important singers, Charlie Goldberg would have much less difficulty getting plugs, and you would sell many more copies. But Larry Spier knows very well that he can sell Bing Crosby only one song at a time, and why, in God’s name should he sell him my song if he can sell him a song from a show in which he has, for reasons known to you as well as to me, a much stronger interest than in “Street Scene.”

But all that, I am afraid, is water down the river, and I must admit that it really doesn’t seem important in the case of a work like “Street Scene.” What is really important is the question: what kind of exploitation can Chappell give to a score like “Street Scene.” You remember how worried I was about this question before I decided, after long hesitation, to have this score published by Chappell’s. At that time, you insisted that you wanted to be the publisher of “Street Scene,” and you promised me that by the time “Street Scene” would open, you would have built up a strong and efficient standard department, under a young, energetic personality with the necessary contacts and experience in this particular field.

This, obviously, has not been done. The result is that today there is nobody at Chappell’s who could concentrate on the exploitation of the rich standard values in a score like “Street Scene,” who would know how to place it into the hands of concert singers, conductors, managers etc. Believe me, I would never have become mixed up with song-plugging in connection with a work of the musical importance of “Street Scene” if Chappell’s would have been in a position to offer me the kind of exploitation which I had expected for a work of this type. So I find myself in a position where neither the popular nor the standard values of my score are being properly exploited, and this worries me, not only for “Street Scene” but also because it is closely connected with my own personal problem: what kind of work to do next.323

Weill clearly and, as it turned out, rightly thought of Street Scene as an operatic work rather than a musical comedy or musical play. Hailed by the majority of critics as the first “real” American opera, Street Scene challenged Chappell’s resources just as Die Dreigroschenoper had challenged UE’s two decades earlier—but inversely so: UE had been unprepared to capitalize on a commercial hit, whereas Chappell was unable to promote a “serious” operatic piece. In keeping with the practice that publishers issued complete piano-vocal scores for successful operatic or operetta-like stage works but not for musical comedies, Chappell published the piano-vocal score of Street Scene on 4 February 1948. Edited by William Tartasch, the score was a reduction of the full score that attempted to suggest as much of Weill’s orchestration as possible and included the entire spoken text. Unlike Sirmay’s vocal score of Lady in the Dark, this score includes instrumental cues, and at times three or even four staves are used to convey the content of the accompaniment. Because the piano reduction would be used to market Street Scene for future performances in opera houses, at Weill’s suggestion the work was now subtitled “An American Opera” instead of “A Dramatic Musical.” Individual titles of the most operatic numbers, including “What Good Would the Moon Be?” and “Lonely House,” were suppressed in favor of such generic labels as “Gavatina and Scene” and “Arioso,” respectively.

When Weill learned in October 1947 that Max Dreyfus was attempting to place the British stage rights for Gian Carlo Menotti’s operas with G. Schirmer, a prominent U.S. publisher of classical music, he viewed this as an admission that the firm was unable to promote works in the world of opera. Still displeased with Chappell’s handling of Street Scene—the vocal score was yet to be published—Weill expressed his frustration and sense of betrayal to Dreyfus: “I have been faithful to you for twelve years, in spite of many disappointments. But now I am convinced that I cannot continue my present publisher situation without doing serious harm to my work. That’s why I have just accepted an offer from Schirmer’s to publish a school opera which I have written this summer.”324

The school opera was Down in the Valley, a project that Weill had initially created with the librettist Arnold Sundgaard as a pilot project for a series of folk operas for radio in 1945. When the project failed to attract sufficient commercial sponsorship, Weill shelved the work. But he retrieved it on a suggestion by Hans Heinsheimer, who had been forced to leave UE after the 1938 “Anschluss” and was, by 1947, working for G. Schirmer (in fact, it is likely that he was Weill’s source for the information about Chappell’s negotiations on Menotti’s behalf). Recalling their experiences with Der Jasager, Heinsheimer encouraged Weill to create a short opera for performance by high schools and amateur groups, and he succeeded in overcoming some house resistance at Schirmer’s: “The sales manager laughed and said what do you want an opera for? Opera is foreign stuff. American kids are doing fine with Gilbert and Sullivan, we sold a thousand copies of H.M.S. Pinafore last year and we won’t sell ten copies of this thing here . . . Later, he sold forty-five thousand vocal scores and eighty-five thousand chorus parts of this thing.”325

Following its successful premiere at Indiana University on 15 July 1948, Down in the Valley was produced 250 times by the time of Weill’s death; it celebrated its 3,000th performance in 1953.326 Schirmer had published the vocal score in April 1948, in time for the premiere, and because of its brevity it was possible to market the work as if it were a piece of sheet music or vocal gems. For the sum of one hundred dollars and a page of a Weill music holograph, Heinsheimer obtained permission to reproduce a painting by the American folk artist Grandma Moses on the cover, which Schirmer printed in full color. Nevertheless, in addition to the complete piano-vocal score, Schirmer published a sheet music edition of Weill’s reworking of one of the five folk songs that constituted the kernel of the opera. On 16 February 1949 Heinsheimer reminded Weill, “you wanted to give us a song version of the ‘Lonesome Dove’ for publication. We have already secured permission from Silver Burdett to go ahead with this.”327 However, the sheet music did not come off the press until late November of that year. Because Weill had not composed but only arranged the song, credit for authorship had to be ambiguously worded on the first page of the edition: “The Lonesome Dove / American Folksong from / Down in the Valley / Arnold Sundgaard / Kurt Weill.” But the facing inside cover carried a lengthy copyright notice in large type:

“The Lonesome Dove” originally appeared in “The Singin’ Gatherin’,” copyright 1939, by Silver Burdett Company, and with the permission of the copyright proprietor and the authors Jean Thomas (The Traipsin’ Woman) and Joseph A. Leeder furnished the basis of the version used in the folk opera “Down in the Valley.”

Schirmer supplied no chord symbols in the sheet music, but as a comparison with the published vocal score reveals, the piano accompaniment was simplified, note values were doubled for easier reading (resulting in a higher measure count), and the entire piece was transposed down a step from F to E♭ major; the new vocal range is given on the cover: B♭3–E♭5. Surviving royalty statements show that sales of the sheet music lagged far behind those of the vocal score and the chorus parts: in 1950, for example, “The Lonesome Dove” sold just 713 copies, whereas the vocal score tallied 2,651 and the chorus part 6,425.

In fact, there was little potential or need for “popular exploitation” of excerpts from Down in the Valley; the wide “distribution” of Weill’s 35-minute opera as a complete entity had no precedent in his career. Within three weeks of the premiere, NBC broadcast nationwide a complete performance from the University of Michigan. Down in the Valley was the only theater work of Weill’s to be recorded in its entirety during his lifetime, and not once but twice, both with current Broadway stars: on Decca with Alfred Drake, and on RCA Victor with Marion Bell. With its series of flashbacks and foreground/background crossfades, the work also proved attractive for television: NBC’s three-camera production—supervised by Weill—was telecast in January 1950, making it the second opera ever to be televised on a national network (the first, Carmen, had aired three weeks earlier on CBS). The success of Down in the Valley prompted Weill and Sundgaard to consider writing another school opera, and Weill also discussed a similar venture with Alan Jay Lerner.

But the commission to convert Down in the Valley from a radio “folk opera” into a “school opera” had, in fact, interrupted Weill’s work with Lerner on Love Life, which they had begun in July 1947. In concept, dramaturgy, and structure, Love Life is the most experimental stage piece of Weill’s American years, more so even than Johnny Johnson and Lady in the Dark. “What made
writing *Love Life* so much fun," Lerner recalled, "was discarding a lot of old rules and making up our own rules as we went along. We knew what we wanted to say. The problem was finding a way to tell our story." Lerner recalled such risk-taking as the basis for his collaboration with Weill:

Kurt wanted desperately to succeed in American terms and yet could never be satisfied with the purely commercial idea. Time after time he rejected ideas that he knew could be successful but were not for him. . . . At times Kurt seemed obsessed with the hope of having a Rodgers-and-Hammerstein-type show, and yet he would always reject the type of show that would have given it to him—like *The King and I*, which I suggested and Kurt said, "Leave that to somebody else." . . . No matter how daring or unconventional an idea was, Kurt was determined to find a way for the public to accept it."

Produced by Weill’s frequent collaborator, Cheryl Crawford, and directed by Elia Kazan (who postponed *Death of a Salesman* to stage the Weill/Lerner work), *Love Life* opened on Broadway on 7 October 1948 at the 46th Street Theatre to mixed reviews, and then ran for 252 performances. Despite this modest success, *Love Life* did not tour after its Broadway closing. A union action known as the second “Pettrillo Ban” prevented the recording of an original cast album; and another ASCAP embargo denied the music of *Love Life* national exposure on radio during much of its run. Neither a piano-vocal score nor the libretto was published; and the show was never released for stock and amateur performances. In fact, *Love Life* was not performed professionally again until it was staged, with a revised book, by the American Music Theatre Festival in Philadelphia in 1990.

Subtitled “a vaudeville,” *Love Life* comprises a series of vignettes about Sam and Susan Cooper and their two children. The story of the family, who do not age over the course of 150 years of American history, plays out against the backdrop of changes in American society, and each scene is prefaced by a vaudeville act that comments in a subtle way on the situation to follow (eighteen years later *Cabaret* would adopt this format almost verbatim). The original program carried a note of explanation for the audience:

> *Love Life* is presented in two parts, each consisting of a series of acts. The sketches, which start in 1791 and come up to the present day, are presented in the physical style of the various periods. The four main characters, Susan and Sam Cooper, and their children, Johnny and Elizabeth, who present the story, do not change in appearance as time moves on. The vaudeville acts which come between each sketch are presented before a vaudeville drop and are styled and costumed in a set vaudeville pattern.

Weill often invokes the popular music of the historical period in which a particular vignette is set. For instance, he gives the opening number of the first “book scene,” titled “Who Is Samuel Cooper/My Name Is Samuel Cooper,” a sturdy, foursquare, mostly pentatonic melody that suggests the music of William Billings, Francis Hopkinson, and their contemporaries. Elsewhere Weill invokes popular dance rhythms, but they don’t always match the time period of the scene in which they are heard. The second book scene, for instance, set in 1821, ends with a polka (“Green-Up Time”), even though that dance was not then known in the United States, and the vaudeville number prefacing the third vignette, which takes place in the early 1880s, uses fox-trot rhythms though it would be several decades before that dance became popular. But Weill was a composer, not a musicologist, and he did not wish merely to imitate the musical style of earlier times; even those pieces that suggest period musical styles bear his own trademarks. Nevertheless, *Love Life* presents a panorama of American popular music as a commentary on the corruption of the American dream. It is hardly surprising that Stephen Sondheim, the composer of *Follies* and *Assassins*, has said that he found the example of *Love Life* “a useful influence on my own work.”

In an attempt to ease the strained relationship between Weill and Chappell in the aftermath of *Street Scene*, Dreyfus appears to have tried to make amends by offering Weill and Lerner control of his Marlo Music Corporation, whose distribution would continue to be handled by Chappell. A contract signed on 5 January 1948, nine months before the show’s opening, stipulated that five unnamed numbers from *Love Life* would be published and distributed as sheet music and dance orchestrations. At Weill’s insistence, Dreyfus expressly agreed to plug those songs for at least six weeks prior to the premiere and for sixteen consecutive weeks thereafter. The contract also prohibited Chappell’s professional department from handling any other show or film while promoting the songs from *Love Life*, thereby forestalling possible conflicts of interest on the part of the firm’s song plugger.

In the end not five but eight numbers from the show were published as sheet music, an unusually large number of selections. Taken as a whole, these numbers provide a good overview of the variety of idioms and scope of the music, which runs to almost a thousand pages in Weill’s full orchestral score. For the cover design Ben Jorj Harris—one of the most prolific sheet music illustrators in the 1930s and ’40s—again created a strong link to the stage work by depicting several of the vaudeville acts that comment on the action: tight rope walker, trapeze artists, minstrel quartet in blackface, ventriloquist, and, at center, the central character Susan—sawed in half. As in *Street Scene* the musical numbers range over a wide stylistic gamut. "This Is the Life," for instance, is nothing less than an extended operatic scena for solo voice, sung by Sam (originally played by the Juilliard-trained baritone Ray Middleton) when he is separated from Susan and staying alone in a hotel room. The piece moves through sections of recitative, arioso, and aria that contrast in key, tempo, and expression according to Sam’s shifting moods. The vocal line of the sheet music version, fourteen pages in length, ranges over an octave and a fourth, and the piano accompaniment, which follows Weill’s autograph rehearsal score exactly, requires a formidable degree of dexterity. An outline of the multi-sectional structure of “This Is the Life" reveals how markedly this number strays from the formal conventions of contemporary popular song:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tempo</th>
<th>time signature</th>
<th>key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allegro assai</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Sam exults at being “free”]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andante cantabile</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[He admits to missing his children]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo primo</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Back to “I’m free”]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegro giocoso</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>D major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[He orders a meal from room service]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molto meno mosso</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>modulatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[“What’s so bizarre about a man alone?”]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andante cantabile</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[He thinks of his wife]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piu mosso</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>modulatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[“Go out and have a whirl!”]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderato assai</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>C major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[He remembers a nightmare in which his family drowns]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tempo primo</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>modulatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[He cancels his room service order]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Tempo primo]</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[“This is the life! I’m free!”]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the other end of the stylistic spectrum in *Love Life* is the ballad “Here I’ll Stay,” which Marlo/Chappell singled out for special promotion, including a stock arrangement for dance band by Jack Mason prior to the show’s opening. This number enjoyed a considerable degree of commercial success, curtailed only by circumstances beyond anyone’s control. After the AFM recording strike ended on 14 December 1948, the song was heard on “Your Hit Parade” for three weeks in early 1949, and Jo Stafford’s recording of the piece on Capitol 15319 was briefly charted in *Billboard*. In a 31 March 1949 broadcast of NBC television’s *The Swift Show*, a variety program hosted by Lanny Ross, Weill accompanied the soprano Martha Wright in a duet performance of the song with the show’s host. Two surviving financial statements about sheet music sales confirm that “Here I’ll Stay” was the hit number of...
the show.336 At the close of the third quarter on 30 September 1948—four songs were already available but the show had yet to open—"Here I’ll Stay" had sold 2,084 copies, "Green-Up Time" 1,970, "Economics" 518, and "Susan’s Dream" (which would be cut for the show before opening), 481. The fourth quarter tallied 13,013 copies for "Here I’ll Stay," 6,011 for "Green-up Time," 702 for "Economics," 308 for "Susan’s Dream," 266 for "Mr. Right," 208 for "Is It Him or Is It Me?" 127 for "Love Song," and 51 for "This Is Life." (Of course, these statistics are misleading because the last two songs had become available only days before the quarter ended.)

In its stage version, "Here I’ll Stay" is a verse-refrain duet sung in the first scene by Sam and Susan after they’ve settled in Mayville; the song invokes the innocence of the time, 1791, and place. Sam sings in the initial verse:

Susan, this is all I’m searching for:
A place to live with you forever more;
A sign that says it’s Samuel Cooper’s store . . .
My heaven is not higher than that tree.

A first refrain follows, sung by Sam: Susan then sings a second verse and the second refrain; Sam joins her for the second half. The sheet music version (see p. 307) condenses the piece into a single verse and a repeated refrain, transposes it down a step from C to B♭ major, and, because the content of the verses was specific to the show, substitutes a new verse that transforms the piece into a generic love song:

If I’ve no will to go from home;
Or have no urge the seas to roam;
Or turn my back on a distant star . . .
It’s because my goal is clear.

David Kilroy, who offers an exhaustive analysis and deconstruction of the song, calls this version "a well-crafted, but perfectly straightforward love ballad of the late 1940s."337 However, Weill’s distinctive songwriting style is still very much in evidence, including structural contrasts between the verse and the refrain, a five-phrase refrain (A8 A’8 A8 B8 A”8), and pervasive use of seventh and ninth chords in the accompaniment.338

Some of the other separately published songs from Love Life are also well-crafted ballads of the late 1940s, at least in their arrangements for sheet music publication, but others—including "This Is the Life," as well as "Susan’s Dream" and "Love Song"—are lengthier and more complex dramatic numbers that could not possibly be forced into the musical or expressive patterns of Tin Pan Alley standards. "Love Song," the vaudeville number prefacing the third scene, takes the form of a rambling soliloquy of a hobo, with a fifty-six-measure refrain (A8 B8 A8 B8 C8 A8 B8) replete with "blue" notes and with lyrics that suggest Woody Guthrie:339

New York, Tennessee, Oregon, Maine,
Wichita, Little Rock, Butte and Spokane,
I’ve seen ’em all Mister,
I’ve heard their noisy hum.
You know ’em all, Mister,
When you’re a bum . . .

This “theme song” of Love Life ends with a bitter twist on "Johnny’s Song" from Johnny Johnson:

[I] sing of how empty hearts forever long,
But nobody listens to my song.

Love Life is a difficult work. Weill and Lerner struggled with it, making cuts, sometimes of entire scenes, adding, rewriting, and discarding material even between the final Boston tryout and the New York opening. The show presented problems for the audience, as well; according to the choreographer Michael Kidd, they were "confused by it."340 The work remains unknown to most theater audiences today, but its audacity and innovation were not lost on the next generation of writers for the musical stage. Foster Hirsch, who chose the title "Before Sondheim" for a chapter dealing with Love Life, argues that "this courageous, unjustly neglected work has had a major influence on some of the most innovative musicals of the past fifty years."341 In fact, its very obscurity may have encouraged emulation; Lerner himself recycled a lyric from Love Life in the film Gigi, where "I Remember It Well" acquired a new setting by Frederick Loewe and achieved the popularity that Weill’s original never had. Ironically (considering the show’s legacy), the souvenir program book for Love Life quoted Lerner and Weill as saying "in unison": "We dare not rest on our oars. Today’s invention is tomorrow’s cliché. We must continue to invent and improvise."342

Lerner and Weill did indeed plan to continue their collaboration, both for stage and film, but the composer, who never established a permanent collaborative relationship with any one lyricist or dramatist in America, turned again to his neighbor and good friend Maxwell Anderson. For some months in 1939 Weill and Anderson had worked intensively on a musical, intended to be performed by a predominantly black cast and tentatively titled Ulysses Africanus. Based on a popular novel by Harry Stillwell Edwards, Ulysses Africanus (1919), the musical chronicles the adventures of an ex-slave wandering through the American South during and after the Civil War. After Paul Robeson declined the title role, the show was reconceived for Bill Robinson; work on the project ceased when he became unavailable and the Edwards estate insisted on an exorbitant share of royalties.343 In 1943 Lenya recorded for Bost Records two songs that had been written for the show, "Lost in the Stars" and "Lover Man."344 Both were filed for copyright on 21 April 1944, though neither had been published at the time. Walter Huston recorded "Lost in the Stars" for the flip side of his Decca record of "September Song" in October 1944. Frank Sinatra, too, in July–August 1946, recorded it together with "September Song," but only "September Song" appeared on disc in November; his version of "Lost in the Stars" was not released until 1949, when the "musical tragedy" with that title was running on Broadway.345 Presumably in preparation for an anticipated tandem release of Sinatra’s recordings, Crawford Music published a sheet music edition of "Lost in the Stars" on 26 September 1946, using the same cover design for a reissue of "September Song."

In March 1948, inspired by his reading of the South African novelist Alan Paton’s Cry, the Beloved Country, Anderson proposed to Weill that they undertake a show based on that book.346 The resulting "musical tragedy," Lost in the Stars, which made considerable use of material written or sketched for Ulysses Africanus, opened on 30 October 1949 at the Music Box Theatre. Reviews were mostly favorable, and the show ran for 281 performances before touring for an additional fourteen weeks. Directed by Rouben Mamoulian, the show was cast chiefly with classically trained African-American singers, including Todd Duncan (the original Porgy of Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess), Inez Matthews, and Warren Coleman.347 Anderson’s play follows Paton’s novel in general outline: Stephen Kumalo, a black clergyman, travels to Johannesburg to search for his son, Absalom, only to find that he has been sentenced to death for killing a white man during a failed robbery. Ironically, Absalom’s victim was a young lawyer who had been fighting for justice for South Africa’s nonwhite population. Stephen and the victim’s father meet at Absalom’s trial, and the bond that develops between the two grieving fathers, one white and the other black, suggests some hope that the country’s racial wounds might eventually be healed.

Lost in the Stars may have been the first Broadway musical to confront a contemporaneous, controversial sociopolitical issue in a forthright, serious manner. Paton’s novel and the Weill/Anderson show based on it were written at a time when the outside world was largely unaware of the dramatically worsening situation of apartheid in South Africa, where the whites-only elections of 26 May 1948 had given the National Party a mandate for even more radical separation of the country’s several racial populations. It would be several decades before the ensuing forced relocation and mandated inferior education of millions of nonwhites, police-state security measures, and other
strategies of "grand apartheid" would be recognized and condemned by the international community. Anderson and Weill also viewed Paton's novel as a perfect vehicle to comment, indirectly, on the moral depravity of "separate but equal" in the United States at that time.

The term "musical tragedy" also suggests a piece unbound by the stylistic and expressive conventions of the Broadway musical, let alone by those of a "musical comedy." Anderson explained in a letter to Paton that "to keep the plot and the dialogue in the form you gave them would only be possible if a chorus—a sort of Greek chorus—were used to tie together the scenes and to comment on the action as you comment in the philosophical and descriptive passages." Accordingly, the chorus plays a dramatic and structural role in Lost in the Stars on a scale approaching that in Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov and Weill's own Die Bürgschaft. Present in virtually every scene, from the opening "The Hills of Ixopo" to the show's finale, the chorus sometimes comments on the unfolding drama, sometimes takes part in the action itself, and sometimes accompanies solo voices. A fluid mosaic of choral sections, set pieces for individual characters, melodrama, pantomime, and spoken dialogue, Lost in the Stars is another of Weill's generic hybrids, as much a staged oratorio as it is a musical or an opera.

In South Africa at mid-century a number of distinctive styles of traditional and contemporary choral music, popular urban song, and jazz had developed, but virtually none of this music was known outside the country. Having obtained recordings of several types of traditional South African music from the ethnomusicologist Hugh Tracey, founder of the International Library of African Music, Weill claimed to have studied Zulu music closely in preparation for composing Lost in the Stars. But ultimately he decided to avoid obvious "Africanisms" and to join a long line of composers who have used pentatonic melodies and harmonies to characterize "exotic," "primitive," or "unspoiled" non-Western locales and peoples.

The melody of the first extended section of the opening chorus of the show, "The Hills of Ixopo," depends on the pentatonic scale A–C–D–E–G, with the closing measures transposed to D–F–G–A–C. Virtually the whole of "Thousands of Miles" invokes another five-note scale, A–B–C–E–G. Weill's score also makes occasional use of whole-tone scales for "exotic" flavoring. Ostinatos in such scenes as "The Search" and "Murder in Parkwold?" Feat remind us of the three-tone motif frequently used by modern composers to suggest the "primitive," most famously in Stravinsky's Le sacre du printemps and Les Noces and in Carl Orff's Carmina Burana. Though not utilizing authentic call-and-response patterns found in African or African-American music, Weill also often pits the solo voice of "The Leader" against the rest of the chorus. The shadow of Porgy and Bess hovers over Lost in the Stars, as it had over Street Scene; as in the Gershwin's work, only black characters sing, and whites are restricted to speech; specific echoes of Gershwin's music turn up as well, as in the bridge section of "The Little Gray House."

The score of Lost in the Stars comprises three layers: vocal solos (sometimes accompanied by chorus) for the principal characters, several of which had originally been written for Ulysses Africana; choral and ensemble numbers; and songs for secondary characters. As in Street Scene, the pieces for secondary characters, such as Linda's jazz, erotic tease, "Who'll Buy?" with its swing orchestration and "red-hot-Mamma" vocal style, and Anderson's childlike and playful "Big Mole," lighten the mood temporarily, whereas numbers such as "Thousands of Miles" invoke another five-note scale, A–B–C–E–G. Weill's score also makes occasional use of whole-tone scales for "exotic" flavoring. Ostinatos in such scenes as "The Search" and "Murder in Parkwold?" Feat remind us of the three-tone motif frequently used by modern composers to suggest the "primitive," most famously in Stravinsky's Le sacre du printemps and Les Noces and in Carl Orff's Carmina Burana. Though not utilizing authentic call-and-response patterns found in African or African-American music, Weill also often pits the solo voice of "The Leader" against the rest of the chorus. The shadow of Porgy and Bess hovers over Lost in the Stars, as it had over Street Scene; as in the Gershwin's work, only black characters sing, and whites are restricted to speech; specific echoes of Gershwin's music turn up as well, as in the bridge section of "The Little Gray House."

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Paton, who came to New York for the show's final rehearsals and opening, liked Weill's music but was not so pleased with Anderson's book and lyrics. He was particularly unhappy with the final scene of the first act, in which Kumalo and the chorus sing "Lost in the Stars" (with lyrics written by Anderson a decade earlier for Ulysses Africana). Paton found this piece too intellectual and agnostic for the character of Kumalo. Ironically, this was the only number from Lost in the Stars to enjoy any kind of commercial success as an independent song; it has been performed and recorded over the years by Abbey Lincoln, Lena Horne, Tom Jones, Sarah Vaughan, Judy Garland, Vic Damone, Frank Sinatra, and Tony Bennett, among many others. Its inclusion in seven standard fake books also attests to its long-standing popularity, even if it falls a bit short of "evergreen" status. As with most of Weill's songs that became standards, "Lost in the Stars" adopts one of the classic Tin Pan Alley patterns, in this case A8 B8 B8+1, though, as is also typical for Weill, the piece expands into what amounts to a fifth phrase.

"Trouble Man," a more complicated number, also has a more complicated history. Like "Lost in the Stars," it was originally written for Ulysses Africana, where it bore the title "Lover Man." A comparison of a fair copy of that version, dating from 1943, with the sheet music version of "Trouble Man" published in 1949 (see p. 313) reveals how much of the song's musical and textual essence was retained when it was incorporated into Lost in the Stars. But the differences between the two versions, though minor, are instructive. To situate "Trouble Man" in its new dramatic context, Weill and Anderson added a new verse. In early sketches of this and other pieces written for Ulysses Africana, Anderson used "Negro" dialect in his lyrics. Most of the dialect has disappeared in the fair copy of "Lover Man," except for "Reaching and finding you there where you stan' / Askin'; ain't you coming home, lover man." In "Trouble Man" these lines become "Finding the footprints out where you ran / Askin', aren't you coming home, trouble man?" Musically "Lover Man" made persuasive use of eighth-note triplets—so much so that, despite a metric signature of C, it sounds as if it is in 12/8. In "Trouble Man" many of these triplets are replaced with binary groupings of eighths and sixteenths.

The publication and promotion of Weill's music for Lost in the Stars evinces some new elements. After performing the music for Max Dreyfus on 7 July 1949 Weill spent the months of August and September working out a contract with the publisher that roughly followed the models Dreyfus had conceded to George Gershwin and, later, to Rodgers and Hammerstein's Williamson Music. Weill and Anderson set up their own music publishing entity, High Tor Music Corporation, which was initially planned also to include among its principals Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe. When the papers were finalized on 21 September 1949, however, Weill and Anderson were the sole partners. On 1 October 1949 High Tor Music entered into an agreement with Chappell specifying that five songs were to be published "on or before the New York opening"; an additional clause stipulated that a complete vocal score would be published in case of "a continuous first class run in New York City of at least four months."

Chappell published six numbers in sheet music format, with accompaniments idiomatically arranged for the piano and with the right hand doubling the vocal line throughout. Several songs were transposed to bring them into a more comfortable vocal range for amateur singers. There are fewer dynamic, phrasing, and articulation markings than in the piano-vocal score; chord symbols and tablature for guitar or ukulele appear above the voice part; and in some cases formal structures have been simplified. Jack Mason also arranged two of these songs, "The Little Gray House" and "Stay Well," for dance band. These two numbers had been earmarked for plugging, and Bing Crosby recorded them on 16 November 1949 for Decca 24824, but that record did not become a hit. Neither did Frank Sinatra's version of "Lost in the Stars," which was finally released commercially on Columbia 38650. When it became clear that marketing was not yielding the hoped-for results, Weill addressed the situation with Chappell's senior strategist Larry Spier:[7]"The more I think about your idea to put another number with the outfit which is supposed to work on my score exclusively, the more I'm worried about it...You have told me many times yourself how wrong it is to have one outfit work on other material while they are working on an important score—and now you are planning to do exactly that with "Lost in the Stars" which certainly is big enough a hit to deserve an out-and-out effort on part of the publisher. Of course, it is possible that in this particular case, as you explained it to me, and with the kind of material you have picked, it might work out alright (although it is hard for me to believe, knowing the psychol-
ogy of song pluggers, that their work on my score would not be affected by the new job you would give them). But if it doesn’t work out, if, for instance, “Third Man Theme” is not as easy as you think, or the flexibility of the boys not as great as you expect, then the damage to my score is done and is irreparable.

The fact is, Larry, that the only time in all my years with Chappell that I got a real full fledged exploitation of a score, was on “Love Life”—and that was because I had it in my contract that no other song could be handled by the organisation that would work on my score. I had hoped that this time I would get this courtesy, at least for a reasonable length of time, without putting it in my contract—but unfortunately it doesn’t seem to work that way.356

A single surviving statement of sheet music sales for Lost in the Stars gives an odd and probably distorted picture. Dated 17 November 1950, it lists the following sales figures for an unspecified time period—possibly the third quarter of 1950—during which a total of 187 copies of songs from Lost in the Stars were sold: “Big Mole” (76), “Thousands of Miles” (37), “Stay Well” (35), “Lost in the Stars” (18), “Trouble Man” (14), and “The Little Gray House” (7).

Popular exploitation had long been as much an artistic issue as a financial one for Weill. While Lost in the Stars was still playing to capacity audiences in January 1950, Weill wrote to the critic Douglas Watt, who had recently reviewed Decca’s original cast album very favorably: “I was surprised to find that somebody at last, after much nonsense that had been written about that score, knows enough about theatre music and popular music to point out the real values of this score[,] its complete integration of music and drama, [and] its attempt to write popular songs without that constant eye on the hit parade” (emphasis added).357 Watt, who had been a sympathetic reviewer of Weill’s music over the years, had expressed no reservations about the inclusion of popular songs in musical theater. In contrast, Olin Downes, the chief music critic for the New York Times, who also admired Weill’s work, especially Street Scene but also Lost in the Stars, questioned Weill’s use of popular material in that “musical tragedy”: “I am still waiting for the day when you get exactly the subject which you can treat without the faintest consideration of public taste or expediency of any sort.” Weill’s much-quoted response aptly summarizes his broader views on the issue: “Personally, I don’t feel that this [the use of popular song forms and idioms] represents a compromise because it seems to me that the American popular song, growing out of the American folk music, is the basis of an American musical theatre.”358

“The Little Gray House” is just one of many examples in Weill’s oeuvre, beginning with “Alabama-Song,” of ensembles and extended solo pieces for voice and keyboard, which was also made into a piece for dance band by a second arranger particularly skilled in that medium.

It is my opinion that none [of Weill’s compositions] can be considered ‘popular’ music in the sense that they have been or will be widely played; furthermore, I cannot foresee any widespread market for any such musical compositions,” Max Dreyfus wrote in 1951 in the affidavit appraising Weill’s estate for tax purposes. Because Weill had received no money from either his publishers or Brecht for scattered performances in Europe after the war, Dreyfus claimed that even the “Moritat von Mackie Messer” and Die Dreigroschenoper were, from a publishing perspective, without monetary value:

From my personal familiarity with the decedent’s compositions published abroad and based on my knowledge of, and familiarity with, foreign music markets and the value of foreign copyrights, I would state that such foreign works have no present value at all as they carry a very limited appeal. The remainder of the compositions, which were published or written for the American market, are basically show tunes designed particularly for specific scores of musical plays. Again, these compositions can be considered as having a limited appeal as all the plays for which they were written have already been produced and closed their runs; there is, in my opinion, very little likelihood that these compositions will ever again bring in anything more than a nominal amount, if that.359

Using Kern, Porter, Gershwin, and Rodgers as the standards against which to measure the value of Weill’s legacy, Dreyfus concluded that only “September Song” and Duen in the Valley could be counted on to generate significant future income. He estimated the “fair market value” of the publishing and performance rights for Weill’s entire oeuvre to be $25,000, exclusive of future ASCAP income, which he also projected at that amount. (In 1945, by comparison, Dreyfus had appraised Kern’s musical legacy at $183,500.) Undoubtedly Lenya’s attorneys had encouraged Dreyfus to keep the figures as low as could reasonably be expected to be credible with the Internal Revenue Service, but certainly the appraisal also reflected the reality of prospects for future exploitation of Weill’s music.

Indeed, during Weill’s last decade, 1941–1950, royalties received from Chappell and Crawford for sales of sheet music and performance and recordings of his individual songs amounted to $39,530, approximately one-sixth of his total income. Over the same period ASCAP paid Weill a total of $38,325, including approximately $3,000 in foreign income from 1947 to 1950.360 There was, of course, considerable fluctuation from year to year; income from Chappell and Crawford peaked in 1947, when Weill collected $10,262 from the two firms. But in most years the music publishers paid Weill less than $3,000 in royalties for the popular exploitation of his songs, and he did not live to see his annual ASCAP income exceed $6,000. Thus, so-called small music publishing rights of single songs (sales of printed music, mechanical royalties for recordings, fees for jukebox play, compensation for radio broadcast and live performances, synchronization rights for film and television) amounted, on average, to less than $8,000 per year.

Weill had depended for the most part on income generated from so-called grand rights, the production of complete shows on stage and their subsequent purchase for film adaptation. Once Weill’s musicals had closed on Broadway, secondary performances by stock and amateur theaters brought him only negligible additional income. Therefore, to support himself, his wife, and their respective families in Palestine and Austria (to whom Weill was sending regular stipends), as well as maintain a standard of living that included a house in Rockland County and an apartment in Manhattan, he needed to have one show running on Broadway every season. Even the short-lived The Firebrand of Florence brought him $5,352 in royalties in 1945. The previous year, when One Touch of Venus was a bona fide Broadway hit, Weill earned $64,445. His total income ranged from a low of $15,962 in 1946, when he had no show running on Broadway, to a high of $107,832 in 1944, thus averaging $46,291 per year during his last decade.361 The six Broadway productions accounted for nearly half of his total income during that period. His share of the sale of film rights for Lady in the Dark and One Touch of Venus amounted to an additional $75,230, and salaries collected for work on various motion pictures...
uses substitute chords in place of the basic tonic–subdominant–dominant though triads appear more frequently, these often merely move from one to another in ways that are not musically significant. His earliest theater songs were notated without key signatures, and the structure of his operettas, Der Kuhhandel (A Kingdom for a Cow) and the operatic opera The Firebrand of Florence and the "Broadway opera" Street Scene, followed on the heels of the experimental concept musical Love Life.

Because Weill's works on both continents continually shifted or collapsed between genres, he was working with texts that were outside the orbit of theater songs of his time. He resolved in any number of different ways. But a Kurt Weill song is distinguished by much more than these musical details. Weill made it his business to collaborate with only the most talented and successful dramatists and poets of the day, including Bertolt Brecht and Georg Kaiser in Germany and a succession of Pulitzer Prize winners after he came to the United States: Paul Green, Maxwell Anderson, Moss Hart, Ira Gershwin, and Elmer Rice. With the exception of Gershwin and Lerner, none, including his two most frequent collaborators, Brecht and Anderson, was a professional lyricist in the sense of regularly furnishing texts for popular songs. Weill's songs are more varied in expression and structure than those of his contemporaneous songwriters. First, their texts usually do not follow the formulaic structures and expressive content of a popular song lyric; second, and without raising the vexed issue of *gestus*, Weill was exceptionally sensitive to the structure and emotional content of whatever lyrics he was setting. Rarely did he begin composition of a theatrical score without a complete libretto at hand, and usually he had collaborated on that libretto. Most of his songs are therefore so securely integrated within their dramatic contexts and so reflective of the characters who sing them that they resist detachment as independent songs outside the theater.

Though Weill paid lip service to Brecht's concept of epic theater, in which the performer is supposed to disassociate from the character portrayed on stage, his music often transformed Brecht's lyrics into more personal and expressive songs than was intended by the playwright. Not incidentally, some of his least successful American songs—for example, "All at Once," with lyrics by Ira Gershwin, from the film *Where Do We Go from Here?*—bore texts by professional lyricists. In setting songs by Bertolt Brecht, Paul Green, Maxwell Anderson, Ogden Nash, and Langston Hughes, on the other hand, lyricists who had little or no experience in producing lyrics for popular songs, Weill was working with texts that were outside the orbit of theater songs of the day in form and expressive content; he responded by writing music which, in being sensitive to the unorthodoxy of the texts, was likewise unorthodox.

Not surprisingly, among Weill's American songs those that achieved the greatest immediate popular success (as measured by radio play and sales of sheet music and phonograph records) were the ones that conformed most closely to the formulaic patterns of the Tin Pan Alley song. Only someone who "knew" Weill exclusively through these popularly exploited versions rather than from having experienced complete performances in the theater, in Weill's own arrangements and orchestrations, would have been tempted to believe that the songs used substitute chords in place of the basic tonic–subdominant–dominant progressions that form the backbone of tonal harmony. He first reverted to key signatures in his Marie Galante songs, though pervasive seventh and ninth chords and substitute chords tend to weaken the tonality implied by the key signature of these pieces. His first operetta, *A Kingdom for a Cow*, is more thoroughly tonal and triadic than anything he had written before. His first American stage work, Johnny Johnson, combined elements of his European style with the conventions of American popular song, and most of his subsequent works for the American stage conformed, at least in general style, to the conventions of Tin Pan Alley and Broadway songs, using verse-chorus form and being triadic and tonal, with frequent use of seventh and ninth chords and added seconds and sixths.

Even then, however, idiosyncrasies of harmony, melodic line, structure, and instrumentation that were carried over from his European works set Weill apart from the work of his American contemporaries. Weillian idiosyncrasies include irregular phrase lengths and structures (five rather than four large sections in a refrain, for instance, or three- or five-measure phrases within a section); contrasts of key, phrase structure, or harmonic style between verse and refrain, or between other sections of a song; the use of unexpected chords at such important structural points as the beginning of a refrain, at points of climax, or as part of the final cadential pattern; the use of substitute chords for tonic, subdominant, or dominant chords, and the practice of resolving chords in unexpected ways; and the persistent practice of placing key notes in a melody on nonchord notes, that is, notes not belonging to the underlying harmony. It is difficult to find a Kurt Weill song written at any stage of his career that does not include at least one half-diminished seventh chord, which he resolved in any number of different ways.

Total royalties from the popular exploitation of single songs may have provided a relatively reliable annual income stream, but its flow was far too weak to meet the Weills' financial needs. In retrospect, then, despite changing locales, languages, audiences, and publishers several times during his career, Weill's principal concern remained constant: the fate of each stage work as a whole rather than with popular exploitation of the individual pieces contained therein. And that agenda derived as much from practical exigencies as from aesthetic priorities. Although he often criticized his publishers for not doing a better job of marketing his songs, he himself tended to be indifferent to what he, as the composer, needed to be doing to create songs that would appeal to a mass audience. Part of this dilemma reflected his conflicted view of opera. On the one hand, Weill criticized opera as being "an artistic genre of the aristocracy," a "socially exclusive" form of art, "toilsomely preserved" in musical museums. But repeatedly, after achieving popular success with a work for the musical stage, he would return to writing operatic works or hybrid pieces "between genres." Thus, his German works in "song style" were interspersed with Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Die Bürgschaft, and Der Silberner Marie Galante, with its songs in the manner of the French chanson, was followed by an out-and-out operetta, Der Kuhhandel (A Kingdom for a Cow) and an oratorio-like biblical pageant of grand opera proportions. In the United States Weill followed three relatively successful "musicals" with the "Broadway operetta" The Firebrand of Florence and the "Broadway opera" Street Scene; another work sui generis, Lost in the Stars, followed on the heels of the experimental concept musical Love Life.

A chronological overview of Weill's single songs, from "Alabama-Song" to "The Little Gray House," shows that his music traversed considerable stylistic and expressive ground in the three decades in which these songs were written. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that he wrote for the musical stage in four different countries—Germany, France, Britain, and the United States—and that he wrote in so many genres. But certain characteristics of his songs remained constant throughout his entire career, and a Kurt Weill song is recognizable as a Kurt Weill song, at and for whatever stage it was written. The progression of Weill's musical style over these three decades ran counter to the dominant trajectory of music in the first half of the twentieth century, which, in "serious" music most obviously, but to a lesser degree also in "popular" music, grew more complex in harmony, tonality, rhythm, and formal structure. Weill's music, on the other hand, moved from complexity to relative simplicity. His earliest theater songs were notated without key signatures, and though tonal centers are usually discernible, he makes free use of both diatonic and chromatic dissonance. In his pieces in "song style," tonal centers become more overt, dissonance tends to be diatonic rather than chromatic, and though triangles appear more frequently, these often merely move from one to another in ways that are not musically significant. He first reverted to key signatures in his Marie Galante songs, though pervasive seventh and ninth chords and substitute chords tend to weaken the tonality implied by the key signature of these pieces. His first operetta, *A Kingdom for a Cow*, is more thoroughly tonal and triadic than anything he had written before. His first American stage work, Johnny Johnson, combined elements of his European style with the conventions of American popular song, and most of his subsequent works for the American stage conformed, at least in general style, to the conventions of Tin Pan Alley and Broadway songs, using verse-chorus form and being triadic and tonal, with frequent use of seventh and ninth chords and added seconds and sixths.
to agree with Adorno’s obituary assessment of the Broadway works: “[W]ith a shy and crafty innocence that was disarming, he became a Broadway composer modeled on Cole Porter and made himself believe that concession to the commercial field was no concession, but only a pure test for the ‘expert’ who could accomplish anything even within standardized boundaries.”365 In fact, however, the apparent conformity of such hits as “September Song” and “Speak Low” cannot account for their popularity but merely for their eligibility for commercial success, for the popular song was a genre in which both performers and audiences, whether or not they were aware of it, had definite musical and lyrical expectations. Though popularity and quality often go hand in hand, this is not always the case with Weill’s songs. Many of the songs that failed to garner popular success—“Les filles de Bordeaux” from Marie Galante, for instance, “Cäsars Tod” from Der Silbersee, or “Oh, Heart of Love” from Johnny Johnson—were equal in quality to his hits but fell too far outside the stylistic norms for popular song of the day.

Weill’s greatest popular success occurred posthumously, and that song conformed neither musically nor lyrically to any of the patterns and conventions of Schlager, chanson, or American popular song. In fact, it is difficult to imagine a more unlikely candidate for megasuccess as a popular song in America than the “Moritat von Mackie Messer,” a sixteen-measure strophic setting of seven stanzas, originally a German-language “list song,” which describes in escalating grisly detail the crimes of an eighteenth-century criminal named Macheath. Max Dreyfus had apparently sensed the song’s hit potential in 1934, and, if Lenya’s recollection is accurate, at least one other astute showman recognized early on the popular potential of the song’s three-note hook:

One evening, long before “Mack the Knife” became so famous, Kurt and I had been invited to dinner at Billy Rose’s in New York. We had not been in the country very long and didn’t have much money. At one point in the evening Billy says, “Kurt, you know there is one song which I would like to buy from you, and I’ll pay you all the money you want.” Kurt, suspicious, stood back and said, “What song is it?” Billy replied, “I want to buy the ‘Mori-tat.’” Kurt remained silent for a few moments and then said, “Billy, I’ll sell you the whole Threepenny Opera if you want to buy it, but I won’t sell you that song.”366

After Weill’s death Lenya refused Rose’s offer to option the production rights for Marc Blitzstein’s new American adaptation of Die Dreigroschenoper, because he insisted that the show would need to be rewritten and rescored. Eventually produced off-Broadway in 1954 in Blitzstein’s relatively faithful adaptation, The Threepenny Opera ran for six-and-a-half years and 2,611 consecutive performances at the Theater de Lys to become the longest-running musical in history at that point.

The show’s prologue, the “Ballad of Mack the Knife,” would spin off to enjoy the kind of worldwide mass success that had eluded Weill during his lifetime. Between 1956 and 1960 recordings of the song by Louis Armstrong, Dick Hyman, Les Paul and Mary Ford, Bobby Darin, Lawrence Welk, Ella Fitzgerald (who, ironically, recorded it live in concert in West Berlin), and Sarah Vaughan all appeared on the Billboard charts at some point. It was also performed and recorded by Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Eartha Kitt, Peggy Lee, and a host of other leading singers and instrumentalists.367 “Your Hit Parade” featured it for nine weeks. Most remarkably, the version by Bobby Darin made the first of its fifty-nine appearances on the Billboard charts in October 1959 and held the number 1 spot for nine of those weeks. To see this in perspective, note that two of Elvis Presley’s hits, “Don’t Be Cruel” (1956) and “All Shook Up” (1957), held the top position for nine weeks; Presley’s “Hound Dog” (1956) and the Beatles’ “I Want to Hold Your Hand” (1964) held the number 1 spot for only seven weeks, and only one of the Beatles’ songs, “Hey Jude” (1968), managed to remain in first place for nine weeks.368 Darin’s recording of “Mack the Knife” sold more than two million copies in the first two months of its release.369 A decade after Weill’s death one estimate put the total record sales for the song at the ten-million mark.

The recordings of Louis Armstrong and Bobby Darin were subsequently inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame, and Rolling Stone magazine included Bobby Darin’s version among its 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. The Recording Industry Association of America and the National Endowment for the Arts selected “Mack the Knife” as one of the “Songs of the Century,” and National Public Radio designated it as one of the 100 “most important musical works of the 20th century.” The song has made an appearance in the soundtrack of dozens of television programs and major motion pictures, and it has been used as a commercial jingle to sell both beer and burgers. One wonders what Weill would have made of such success in exploiting one of his songs in the popular arena. Lenya had no doubt: “You hear it coming out of bars, juke boxes, taxis, wherever you go. Kurt would have loved that. A taxi driver whistling his tunes would have pleased him more than winning the Pulitzer Prize.”370
39. At one point Weill suggested a drawing by Caspar Neher for the cover, but the plan came to nothing. See his letters of 29 September and 10 October 1927 to UE; photocopies in WLRG, Series 41, Box 1.

40. Produced for the bourgeoisie, who were susceptible to the "blatantly commercial nature" of the genre, Schlagern may be viewed, as Brian Card and does, from a post-Marxist critical perspective as "one of the most powerful [instruments] of a manipulative distraction in the late Weimar period, which encouraged the German population to ignore economic hardships and to lose themselves in escapist fantasy." As such, they "play[ed] a central role in the establishment of the fascist state." See Brian Card, "A Song Goes Round the World: The German Schlager as an Organ of Experience," Popular Music 19, no. 2 (April 2000): 157–48. Other recent literature on the Schlager includes Dietrich Kayer, Schlager – Das Lied aus Vaterland. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der Massenmusik (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1975); and Christian Schar, Der Schlager und seine Töne in Deutschland der 20er Jahre: Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte zum Wandel in der Musik- und Tanzkultur während der Weimarer Republik (Zürich: Chronos, 1991). By contrast, David Drew (Inner notes to Kurt Weill / Berlin Lith.-U. (Large LC 8343, 1990), 32) argues that a "central truth" about Weill's music up to the outbreak of World War II was its "concern with the uses, abuses and power of all in its social, political, and economic forms."

41. Electro E.G. 853 (mx. 8-40279), recorded on 3 April 1928, released on 1 June 1928.

42. Electro E.G. 853 (mx. 8-40278).

43. "Ich habe nach sorgfältigem Grammophonstudien das Arrangement für Tanzorchester selbst ausgeführt." W-UE, 103.

44. As Parlophon (Ludwigtör Corp.), Beka B 6313 (mx. 34538).

45. "The Partiturskizze des Tango Angèle und den Anfang der Klavierbearbeitung habe ich


52. "Erst Dir. Hertzka fragen. Bin nicht


54. The Lindström materials have not been found to this day. "Darum ist es ihr [der Musik] erlaubt, Dreiklänge zu schreiben, weil sie sich selber die


56. "Die Partiturskizze des Tango Angèle und den Anfang der Klavierbearbeitung habe ich

57. By contrast, David Drew (Inner notes to Kurt Weill / Berlin Lith.-U. (Large LC 8343, 1990), 32) argues that a "central truth" about Weill's music up to the outbreak of World War II was its "concern with the uses, abuses and power of all in its social, political, and economic forms."
77. "Barnabas von Ge[z]zy macht ein Tanzpotpourri aus der
57. "…men Resten er spielte med 'Arrangementer', som intet har med min Instrumentation
78. "[…] das Publikum des Rundfunks [setzt] sich aus allen Schichten der Bevölkerung zu sam-
81. "[…] der Mensch lebt durch den Kopf nehmen, das dann direkt in die
83. "…eine jetzt ganz besonders traurige und katastrophale Mitteilung." W-UE, 483; letter of 25 May 1934.
84. "…eine ganz neue Stilgarantie des sozialen Chansons." Musikblätter des Anbruch 10, no. 8 (October 1928), 304. For detailed information about the musical aspects of the Berlin im Licht festival, see Nils Grosch, Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1999), 80–99.
85. "…eine ganz neue Stilgarantie des sozialen Chansons." Musikblätter des Anbruch 10, no. 8 (October 1928), 304. For detailed information about the musical aspects of the Berlin im Licht festival, see Nils Grosch, Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1999), 80–99.
86. "…die einzige Möglichkeit, die Berliner Debatte unterhalten zu können. In einer der größten" in the Licht festival, see Nils Grosch, Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1999), 80–99.
87. "…die einzige Möglichkeit, die Berliner Debatte unterhalten zu können. In einer der größten" in the Licht festival, see Nils Grosch, Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1999), 80–99.
88. "…die einzige Möglichkeit, die Berliner Debatte unterhalten zu können. In einer der größten" in the Licht festival, see Nils Grosch, Die Musik der Neuen Sachlichkeit (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 1999), 80–99.
10. See letters from Weill to UE, 1 December 1931, and to Weill, 3 December 1931. W. UE, 349–51.

110. “noch immer nicht ganz feststeht, ob er in Happy end hineingenommen wird. [… ] Es
111. “Das müßte die Polizei verbieten.”

112. “der Verzicht auf die illustrative Wirkung der Musik, die Beseitigung des falschen Pathos,

114. “noch immer nicht ganz feststeht, ob er in Happy end hineingenommen wird […] Es
115. “noch immer nicht ganz feststeht, ob er in Happy end hineingenommen wird […] Es
116. “noch immer nicht ganz feststeht, ob er in Happy end hineingenommen wird […] Es
117. “noch immer nicht ganz feststeht, ob er in Happy end hineingenommen wird […] Es


119. “noch immer nicht ganz feststeht, ob er in Happy end hineingenommen wird […] Es
148. It wasn't staged in Berlin until 21 December 1931, at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm. 149. Weill, letter to UE, 14 April 1934; photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 2. Although he received Baur's potpourri for salon orchestra, Weill's comments have not survived. Many uscrites of the piano-voical adaptations, made by Isko Thaler, are in WLRC, Series 18, Box 8, Folder 23 ("Lied der Jenny") and Box 27, Folder 135 ("Auf nach Mahagonny").


151. The exception was "Alabama-Song," which Weill had expanded from the duet version in Mahagonny. Ein Songspiel into an ensemble number for Jenny and a small women's chorus in Aufzug und Fall, but which was nevertheless reprinted from the plates of the clumsy arrangement for voice and piano dating from 1927 (see discussion of Facsimile 1). 152. "Existieren eigentlich von Mahagonny schon Schlagerausgaben? Im Falle eines grossen Erfolges müsste man doch sehr rasch Material für Café- und Tanzkapellen haben. Ich würde es in diesem Falle am besten finden, wenn man alles auf eine Nummer konzentrieren und die gross aufziehen würde. Dazu eignet sich am besten (textlich und musikalisch) wie man sich bettet, das von einem erstklassigen Bearbeiter (der lediglich die Vorstrophe etwas vereinfachen müsste) zu einer interessanten und leicht spielbaren Nummer gemacht werden kann. Vielleicht können Sie das schon so weit vorbereiten, dass es im Erfolg falle recht da sein kann, dass Sie aber im Falle eines Durchfalls oder Verbotes keine unnötigen Kosten haben." W-UE, 349.

153. Lenya recorded it for the first time on 24 February 1930, with Theo Mackeben and his jazz orchestra, on Ultraphon A 371 (mx. 10711); about six weeks later she recorded it on Homochord 3671 (mx. H-62612) with an unidentified "Ensemble und Orchester." 154. See note 28.

155. "Unsere Zeit verbirgt in sich eine Fülle von großen Ideen . . . und wenn man sich dazu entschließt, die Oper aus dem Bereich des naturalistischen Theaters herauszulösen und gerade in ihr jene gesteigerte Form des Theaters zu erblicken, die am besten geeignet, die Vorstrophe etwas vereinfachen müsste) zu einer interessanten und leicht spielbaren Nummer gemacht werden kann. Vielleicht können Sie das schon so weit vorbereiten, dass es im Erfolg falle recht da sein kann, dass Sie aber im Falle eines Durchfalls oder Verbotes keine unnötigen Kosten haben." W-UE, 349.

156. "Das Caesars Tod nicht in dem Album enthalten sein soll, ist für mich einfach unfassbar. "Dass Caesars Tod nicht in dem Album enthalten sein soll, ist für mich einfach unfassbar. . . . Und wenn man sich dazu entschließt, die Oper aus dem Bereich des naturalistischen Theaters herauszulösen und gerade in ihr jene gesteigerte Form des Theaters zu erblicken, die am besten geeignet, die Vorstrophe etwas vereinfachen müsste) zu einer interessanten und leicht spielbaren Nummer gemacht werden kann. Vielleicht können Sie das schon so weit vorbereiten, dass es im Erfolg falle recht da sein kann, dass Sie aber im Falle eines Durchfalls oder Verbotes keine unnötigen Kosten haben." W-UE, 349.


158. ""il est devenu, à Naples, depuis trois ans que je leur chante, presque aussi populaire que 'Sole mio.'" WLA, Box 48, Folder 36, letter of 29 June 1937, translated in WPD(e), 182.

159. The "Tango" was also intended for publication in Le ménestrel. The journal's 14 December issue announced "Tango" as forthcoming in the next issue, but the 21 December issue instead contained Henry Février's "Prière de Blanchefleur" and announced Weill's "Le grand Lautrec" as forthcoming in the 28 December issue.

160. "Because the piece was never finished, performed, or published in its German version during Weill's lifetime, it was not possible to gain much sense of it until Weill's score was reconstructed for performances in Düsseldorf (1990), Bautzen (1994), London (2000), and Bregenz (2004). It was recorded in 1992 on Capriccio 60 813-1. The Juilliard School of Music presented the first stage performance in the United States in 2000.


163. Drew, "Reflections on the Lost Years: The Eternal Road. . . ." WPD(e), 27, 262.


165. "Das Caesars Tod nicht in dem Album enthalten sein soll, ist für mich einfach unfassbar. "Dass Caesars Tod nicht in dem Album enthalten sein soll, ist für mich einfach unfassbar. . . . Und wenn man sich dazu entschließt, die Oper aus dem Bereich des naturalistischen Theaters herauszulösen und gerade in ihr jene gesteigerte Form des Theaters zu erw...
186. The work was not revived until 1999, in a coproduction of Theater Chemnitz, Brooklyn Academy of Music, New Israeli Opera of Tel Aviv, and Opera Krakow, which presented the German-language version, titled Der Weg der Verheißung (the production was also televised in Germany). About seventy minutes of the music for The Eternal Road were recorded in 2001 and released as "highlight"s on Naxos 8.559402.


190. The term "chorus" rather than "refrain" was commonly used in America at this time.


193. Freeman, The Fervent Years, 58.

194. "Wagon Wheels" (1934), written remarks on an empty sheet inserted into the part, "(#41) / 'To Love You' / Stock," indicating that a stock arrangement may have been played as exit music, after "Johnny's Land." W-LL(g), 557.

195. Most film music can be categorized as either diegetic (the source of the music is seen on film and heard by the actors) or nondiegetic (the source of the sound is neither seen on screen nor heard by the cast).

196. For a discussion of this "noise symphony" see Hamm, "The Theatre Guild Production," 508–09.

197. Letter of 5 March 1937; quoted in Crawford, One Naked Individual, 99.

198. For a full account of the professional and personal interaction between the two, see Elmar Juchem, Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson: Neue Wege zu einem amerikanischen Musiktheater, 1938–1950 (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2000).

199. Juchem (Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson, 97–125) gives a detailed account of the genesis and composition of the show and its performance history and reception.


201. In November 1936, Louis Dreyfus, who was based in London, had bought Crawford Music from its founder, Bobby Crawford. The Dreyfus brothers moved Larry Spier from T. B. Harms, where Max Dreyfus held a significant stake, to Crawford as general manager (see Varsity, 4 November 1936, 45–46). By January 1938, however, Spier had left Crawford Music Corporation to work as an independent music publisher.


203. A copy of the contract is in WLRG. Weill and Max Dreyfus signed the contract as "Composer" and "Publisher," respectively; the contract does not specify a publishing house. However, as early as August 1938 it was clear that Crawford would publish the music from Kickerbocker Holiday, as specified in an agreement between the Playwrights’ Company and Crawford Music Corporation (signed by Victor Samrock and Max Dreyfus). Section 11 of Weill’s contract with Dreyfus addresses the fact that Weill was not an ASCAP member at the time.

204. Weill cared enough about “Will You Remember Me?” to include it in the piano-vocal score. Although he did not live to see the 1951 publication of that score, he added a choral arrangement to the song when he prepared it for publication in early 1950; see Juchem, Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson, 122.

205. For a detailed discussion of this song, see ibid., 266–73.

206. These changes were already implemented in the printing of Jack Mason’s stock arrangement in 1938 (see Facsimile 28). Recordings by Eddy Duchin on Brunswick 8287 from December 1938 and Tony Martin on Decca 2357B from March 1939 used this version as well.

207. According to Joel Whitcomb, Huston’s 1938 recording on Brunswick 8272 (mx. B 23732-1) entered (unnamed) charts on 28 January 1939 and stayed there for five weeks, peaking in position no. 12; Joel Whitcomb, Pop Memories, 1890–1954: The History of American Popular Music Compiled from America’s Popular Music Charts (Menomonee Falls, Wisc.: Record Research, 1986), 221. This chart has not been verified.


209. Weill to his sister-in-law Rita Weill on 12 January 1944, and to his parents on 18 January 1944. W-Fam, 391, 394.


211. Billboard stated, “Records listed here in numerical order are those played over the greatest number of record shows. List is based on replies from weekly survey among 1,359 disk jockeys throughout the country.”

212. Billboard stated, “Tunes have the greatest audiences on programs heard on network stations in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. List is based upon John G. Peatman’s Audience Coverage Index. The index is projected upon radio logs made available to Peatman’s ACI by the Accurate Reporting Service in New York, Radio Checking Service in Chicago, Radio Checking Service in Los Angeles. Listed are the top 30 (more in the case of two ties) tunes alphabetically. The music checked is preponderantly (over 60 per cent) alive [sic].”

213. Crawford Music used the design also for the publication of "Last in the Stars," which appeared with a different color scheme on 26 September 1946. Because the design has both falling leaves and stars, Harris probably conceived it for both songs; his color scheme differentiated between orange/brown for fall and a sky-blue background for stars (see Gallery of Covers, nss. 74, 149).


215. Crawford Music used the design also for the publication of “Lost in the Stars,” which appeared with a different color scheme on 26 September 1946. Because the design has both falling leaves and stars, Harris probably conceived it for both songs; his color scheme differentiated between orange/brown for fall and a sky-blue background for stars (see Gallery of Covers, nss. 74, 149).

216. Billboard stated "List is based on reports received each week from all the nation’s sheet music jobbers. Songs are listed according to greatest number of sales.”


218. On 3 May 1947 Billboard listed “September Song” on the British sheet music charts for two weeks in nineteenth place.
237. In 1956 the East German band Gerd Natschinski und sein Orchester recorded “Der schönste Liebesträum” with vocals by Fred Frohberg for the Amiga label (A 1.070), and Gerhard Bronner completely overhauled Cyrić's lyric.

238. Max Dreyfus appraised the composer’s estate and predicted that only “September Song” and “Down in the Valley” would generate more than nominal income in the future. See Wharton, Life among the Playwrights, 193.


241. The other prominent arrangers at the time were Paul Weirick, Fud Livingston, and Vic Schoen; cf. “Arrangers on Big Dogmawagon,” Billboard, 20 May 1944, 14.

242. Letter to Max Dreyfus, 31 December 1943; WLA, Box 47, Folder 3.

243. Weill, letter to Gershwin, 26 January 1944; WLA, Box 48, Folder 5.

244. While still in Germany Rittman had won the approval of T. W. Adorno, with whom she had a friendly relationship, although apparently he admonished her for her tonal inclinations. Rittman in an interview with Austin Clarkson, 9 November 1983. See On the Music of Stefan Witte: Essays and Recollections, ed. Austin Clarkson (Hilliard, N.Y.: Pen-dragon Press, 2003).

245. The date is an approximation based on the roll’s serial number (QRS 8176). Two songs with a slightly higher or lower serial number were also big hits in late 1946: Hoagy Carmichael’s “ implication of the Sky” (QRS 8175) and Nat Simon/Charles Tobias’s “The Old Lamp-Lighter” (QRS 8177).

246. For more details see Drew, Handbook, 300–04. When the Fair was extended for another year’s run in 1948 Weill extensively revised his score. A recording of Paul Weirick’s arrangement by the Palast Orchester, conducted by HK Grauber, can be found on the CD Kurt Weill: Life, Love and Lustre: Dance Arrangements, 1927–1950 (2001; RCA Red Seal 09026-63513-2); the recording was released in Continental Europe as Charming Weill.


248. Ira Gershwin, letter to Weill, 18 March 1940; WLA, Box 48, Folder 33.

249. The five longest-running shows of this fabulous decade for the American musical comedy were Oklahoma! (1,070), and that’s what you told me too after the opening. I don’t know what the proceeding is him. I hope that the mistake of having my name twice as large as Ogden Nash’s has been corrected.” WLA, Box 47, Folder 3. The full scope of the cover discussion is unlikely, but it is clear that Weill wanted to have his credit changed, as a letter of 20 September 1943 from Sirmay to Weill indicates: “I have already taken up the matter of changing the printing of your name on the title page and it is feasible. Naturally it will take a little time but this correction will be carried out for the new edition.” WLA, Box 50, Folder 66. As the acknowledged driving force behind the creation of “Your Hit Parade” Weill had requested and received top billing among the three authors in all announcements, advertisements, and official documents related to the show, but all three names were supposed to appear in the same font size.

250. The back cover advertises a "Mutt Kenny Song Folio," containing eighteen songs, all of which had all been filed for copyright prior to 1943; thus a printing date in winter 1943/44 seems likely. In dealings with American music publishers, the company usually served only as a distributor.

251. Weill, letter to Gershwin, 11 April 1941.

252. Weill, letter to Gershwin, 8 March 1941. See also Elmar Juchem, "Kurt Weill's Musical Thebes: Efforts to Build a Song into the Standard Class, but Again, I Feel We Are Throwing Away a Great Idea," in WLA, Box 48, Folder 24.


254. Photocopies of all letters quoted from the Weill-Ira Gershwin correspondence are in WLRG, Series 40.

255. Weill, letter to Gershwin, 11 April 1941.

256. Lyrics from “Your Hit Parade.”

257. In WLA, Box 48, Folder 24.

258. Weill to Max Dreyfus, 31 December 1943; WLA, Box 48, Folder 24.

259. "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" from Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Oklahoma! had been published by Williamson Music, a newly established firm registered in the name of Rodgers and Hammerstein whose distribution was exclusively handled by Crawford Music, which was controlled by Max Dreyfus, the owner of Chappell.

260. 1956 the East German band Gerd Natschinski und sein Orchester recorded "Der schönste Liebesträum" with vocals by Fred Frohberg for the Amiga label (Am 1 50 294).

261. For a lengthy anecdotal account of the show see Crawford, One Naked Individual, 176. The only way to build a song into the standard class—but again, I feel we are throwing away a great chance if we don’t try."
information supplied direct from publishers themselves. Only tunes of publishers voluntarily supplying information are listed.”


287. Robert H. Noethner (1908–1994) received his bachelor's degree in music from Dartmouth in 1930 and began working as an arranger in the 1930s. He worked on Broadway and for Chappell, where he prepared such vocal scores as Kiss Me, Kate, Cabaret, and Folks. According to a telephone conversation with Noethner's son on 22 August 2007, Noethner was drafted into the Navy during World War II but continued to work as an arranger.

288. W.L.L(e), 455. After Weill's death Chappell did publish an abbreviated version of the piece, titled “The Nina, the Pinta, the Santa Maria.” The complete text of the Weill/ Gershwin “Columbus opera” may be found in Robert Kimball, The Complete Lyrics of Ira Gershwin (New York: A. Knopf, 1994), 315–21.


290. Recordings of this song by Glen Gray and Hildegarde made the charts.


292. Helen Goes to Troy

293. After his college years at the Utica Conservatory and Syracuse University, Stickles (1882–W-L(e) W-L(e) 1932) had spent many years in Europe, where he worked as a repetiteur, for a time at Munich's Hofoper under Felix Mottl. Returning to the United States because of World War I, Stickles worked as a voice teacher, composer, and arranger.

294. W.L.L(e), 458.

295. W.L.L(e), 462.

296. Weill and Rosett wrote “My Week,” with new lyrics set to the melody of “Westwind,” for the film, but it was cut from the final version.

297. After his college years at the Utica Conservatory and Syracuse University, Stickles (1882–1971) had spent many years in Europe, where he worked as a repetiteur, for a time at Munich's Hofoper under Felix Mottl. Returning to the United States because of World War I, Stickles worked as a voice teacher, composer, and arranger.

298. W.L.L(e), 451, letter of 18 April 1945.


300. W.L.L(e), 388.

301. W.L.L(e), 396.

302. W.L.L(e), 417.

303. For additional information, see Galand's introduction to Weill, The Firebrand of Florence (KWE 1, 18), 15–34.

304. Published a month before the New York opening, the first printings of the sheet music have front covers identifying the show as Much Ado about Love.

305. Three songs from the show, sung by Dorothy Kirsten and Thomas L. Thomas with an orchestra conducted by Maurice Abravanel, were recorded for RCA Victor but not released. Weill and Gershwin themselves recorded excerpts from Firebrand privately, issued in 1975 on the Mark 56 album Ira Gershwin Lyrics to Rhythm.

306. Weill wrote to Max Dreyfus, 3 April 1947; WLA, Box 47, Folder 3.

307. Weill, letter to Max Dreyfus, 9 October 1947; WLA, Box 47, Folder 3.

308. Heinsheimer, Best Regards to Aida, 143–44.


310. Heinsheimer, letter to Weill, 28 November 1949; WLRG, Series 40. By this time there was also discussion of a band arrangement for Down in the Valley. It is unclear whether this would have been some sort of a portmanteau of the stage work or an alternative accompaniment to the opera for the use of high school wind bands. In any event, it did not come to fruition.

311. WLRG, Arnold Sundgaard Collection, Series 30, Box 10, Folder 2.

312. PM, 14 November 1949.

313. Geoge Davis, notes taken during an interview with Alan Jay Lerner; WLRG, Series 37, Box 2, Folder 17.


315. Publications by the Marlo Music Corporation indicate that the company was founded in 1938 and may in fact have been involved with the company from its beginnings. In 1943 Marlo Music published the songs from Oklahoma! before Dreyfus allowed Rodgers and Hammerstein to set up Williamson Music. Although Dreyfus offered to sell Marlo Music to Weill and Lerner in 1948, an office memo by Norman Zelenko of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, dated 24 April 1951, indicates that the deal was never completed: “Had a conversation today with A.M. Wattenberg regarding the Marlo Corporation. . . . At the time Chappell agreed to sell the corporation to Weill and Lerner and all papers were held in escrow by Wattenberg. However, neither Weill nor Lerner were ever interested in completing the purchase . . . Weill was neither a subscriber, director, officer or stockholder of Marlo.” WLRG, Series 30, Box 3, Folder 6.

316. A photocopy of the contract is among the business papers of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music.


338. Of the first sixteen measures of the refrain, for instance, fourteen have a seventh or ninth chord on the first beat of the measure.

339. It is unlikely that either Weill or Lerner knew Guthrie’s songs, not even “This Land Is Your Land,” which was first recorded in 1944. See Mark Allan Jackson, “Is This Song Your Song Anymore? Revisiting Woody Guthrie’s ‘This Land Is Your Land’,” American Music 20, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 249–76.


341. Ibid., 209.


343. For the most complete and detailed study of this project see Juchem, Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson, particularly 130–45; for a detailed account of the genesis, composition, and reception of Lost in the Stars see 157–222.

344. “Six Songs by Kurt Weill” (Boot Records BA 8, 1943).

345. Sinatra recorded “Lost in the Stars” on 8 August 1946, nine days after “September Song.” The latter appeared on Columbia 37161 (mx. HCO 1932) combined with “Among My Souvenirs” (mx. HCO 1930), with music by Edgar Leslie and lyrics by Horatio Nicholls. “Lost in the Stars” (mx. HCO 1940) appeared on Columbia 38650 combined with “The Old Master Painter” (mx. RHCO 3937), with music by Beasley Smith and lyrics by Hagen Gillespie.

346. The book had been published in the United States by Charles Scribner’s Sons in February of 1948.

347. In addition to Porgy and Bess, Mamoulian had directed Oklahoma! (1943) and Carousel (1945) on Broadway. His equally successful Hollywood career had begun with Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in 1931 and included Love Me Tonight (1932), The Mark of Zorro (1940), and Blood and Sand (1941), among other films.

348. Letter from Anderson to Paton, 15 March 1948, in Maxwell Anderson Papers. High T or is a mountain near New City, in Rockland County, New York, where both Weill and Anderson lived. Anderson had written a highly successful play about the mountain in 1937, which he and Weill had discussed at various times for a musical adaptation.

349. Most subsequent performances were by opera companies rather than amateur or community groups.

350. On this point see Juchem, Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson, 201.

351. In both versions, the refrain has a structure that is unusual for a popular song: A4 B4 C4 A8 D8 E4 A4 B4 C4. Juchem argues convincingly that the structure of the song was dictated by Anderson’s lyrics; see Kurt Weill and Maxwell Anderson, 289.

352. The title change was crucial because a song with the title “Lover Man,” written by Roger Waller, became well known in the meantime.

353. As can be heard in Lotte Lenya’s recording of the piece.

354. All dates according to Anderson’s diary; Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Maxwell Anderson Papers. High T or is a mountain near New City, in Rockland County, New York, where both Weill and Anderson lived. Anderson had written a highly successful play about the mountain in 1937, which he and Weill had discussed at various times for a musical adaptation.

355. Copy of agreement in business papers of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music. Weill himself prepared the vocal score, complete with instrumental cues, and Chappell engraved and printed the score in England. Weill read proofs in the hospital, just days before he died; the score was not released until six months after his death, on 6 October 1950.


357. Weill, letter to Doug Warr, [13 January 1950]; WLA, Box 47, Folder 15.


359. Dated 20 May 1951, the notarized affidavit was commissioned by the attorneys for Weill’s estate, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison; carbon copy in WLRC, Series 30, Box 3, Folder 5.

360. In fact, Weill had received no income from his European publishers since before the outbreak of World War II and very little after his emigration to the United States. Shortly before his death in April 1950, Weill received a letter from the new director of UE, Alfred Schlee, demanding that Weill pay back the balance of the uncollected prewar advances paid him by UE, a total of 14,607 Austrian schillings. Weill did not respond, so UE eventually deducted that amount from royalties that were due Weill’s estate. See Kim H. Kowalk, “Dancing with the Devil: Publishing Modern Music in the Third Reich,” Modernism/Modernity 8, no. 1 (January 2001): 13.

361. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the national average family income in 1948 was less than $4,000 per year—less than $30,000 in 2008 dollars.

362. This figure includes approximately $5,000 that Lenya earned as a performer during the decade.

363. These one-time lump-sum payments resulted in very high tax liabilities during that calendar year, but the sale of the film rights of Lady in the Dark allowed Weill and Lenya to purchase Brook House in 1941.


366. Adorno owned copies of the sheet music arrangements of “The Trouble with Women” and “Speak Low,” and the latter alone may have been sufficient to bring Cole Porter to mind. Adorno’s sheet music from One Touch of Venus is preserved in the Theodor W. Adorno Archiv, Frankfurt am Main, NB Adorno 4727 and 4728. No documentary evidence has come to light that suggests Adorno saw a performance of Weill’s works in the United States.

367. George Tabori interviews Lotte Lenya. Transcript, date unknown (WLA, Box 73, Folder 5); quoted in Lenya, the Legend: A Pictorial Autobiography, ed. David Farneth (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook Press, 1998), 150.

368. For detailed information on these recordings, see Friedwald, Stardust Melodies, 76–103.

369. These figures are taken from Joel Whitburn’s Record Research: Top Pop Records 1955–1972 (Menomonee Falls, Wisc.: Record Research, 1973) and John R. Williams, Stardust Melodies, 76–103.


371. Lenya, letter to Mary Daniel, 6 January 1956; photocopy in WLRC, Series 43. Quoted here after the edited text reprinted in Lenya, the Legend, ed. Farneth, 150.