

INTRODUCTION

Elmar Juchem

When *Der Silbersee* opened on 18 February 1933 in three independent productions in Germany—in Leipzig, Magdeburg, and Erfurt—it garnered positive reviews in the mainstream press, even though the country was mired in political turmoil. Less than three weeks had passed since Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany, yet the effects of this transfer of power were already becoming clear, or at least easy enough to predict. Weill and his artistic output had long been a target of reactionary, nationalist, and anti-Semitic cliques. These now formed an extremist amalgam in positions of power and posed an existential threat not only to his livelihood but also to his life. As a result of the repressive circumstances, further fueled by the Reichstag fire on 27 February, all three productions of *Der Silbersee* closed under duress. The last performance appears to have taken place in Leipzig on 2 March, the composer's thirty-third birthday. Weill would leave Germany on 21 March, never to return.

As far as the genesis of *Der Silbersee* is concerned, the work's original "text" preceded the calamitous events of 1933. The idea for the project appears to have been developed in the summer of 1932, when Weill and playwright Georg Kaiser renewed their collaboration, which had yielded two successful one-act operas (*Der Protagonist* in 1926; *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren* in 1928). By mid-January 1933, rental materials for *Der Silbersee* were available, and the three theaters had committed to the triple premiere date of 18 February. The Nazis' rise to power on 30 January 1933 did, however, impinge on the "scripts" of these productions, as at least two looked for ways to tone down the work's political elements through last-minute self-censorship, mainly in the form of cuts.

Textual excisions would have been necessary regardless of politics. Already during the compositional process it had become clear to virtually everyone involved that Kaiser's book was too long, even though the playwright found himself unable to respond. Time pressure then prevented Weill and Kaiser from altering the work prior to production, leaving the task to stage directors and dramaturgs. This accounts for a crucial difference from most of Weill's other stage works, be it *Der Protagonist* or *Die Bürgschaft* or the many productions preceded by tryouts in the United States. Weill and Kaiser never had a chance to revisit and fine-tune *Der Silbersee* after seeing it on stage.¹ While the overlong book does not present an editorial problem as such, it does pose questions for anyone wishing to stage the work.

I. Genesis

In 1955, Lotte Lenya and her second husband, George Davis, interviewed Weill's longtime collaborator and friend Caspar Neher, who had designed the sets and occasionally also the costumes for several of Weill's stage works, including the sets for the Leipzig production of *Der Silbersee*. Neher had also created (in collaboration with Weill) the libretto for *Die Bürgschaft*, which had had its premiere in Berlin on 10 March 1932. Although the interview was not taped, Davis took notes. Speaking about *Der Silbersee*, Neher recalled how he and Weill had witnessed the drastic effects of the staggering unemployment crisis, homelessness in particular, during a trip to Hamburg, and "Kurt was determined to write something that would reflect all this."² (Unemployment figures in Germany were to reach a record high in 1932 with 5.6 million, up from 1.9 million in 1929.) Neher noted that Weill did not want to treat the subject "like [Erwin] Piscator, for ex-

ample, just using current events; Kurt always tried to give it parable form, to get at some essence." Neither a date nor a reason for the trip to Hamburg has been transmitted; it may have been occasioned by the crumbling negotiations with the city's opera house over *Die Bürgschaft* in May 1932.³

Increasing apprehension about Weill's latest opera, despite favorable reviews and successful productions in Wiesbaden and Dusseldorf, represented a serious setback for the composer. Reports from opera officials were alarming in that they confirmed from another angle that Weill had become a target of right-wing parties. As these parties continued to make gains in local elections, theaters grew ever more reluctant to schedule *Die Bürgschaft*. Even Gustav Brecher, who had conducted the world premieres of *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren* and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at Leipzig's opera, reported that he could not program Weill's new work in the near future; a variety of reasons forced him to present "mainly sure-fire operettas, along with some musical masterworks, preferably of German origin"; he mentioned Hans Pfitzner and Richard Strauss by name.⁴

With opera houses no longer an option, Weill was forced to look at other production outlets and genres. For a brief period he considered writing an unspecified orchestral piece as well as some cantatas in collaboration with Neher.⁵ The two met several times in late May–early June, when they also discussed the idea of amateur operas, something akin to Weill's school opera *Der Jasager*, but now sung by adults. This, Weill hoped, could be tied in with the workers' chorus movement that had developed a sizeable impact and participation.⁶ None of these plans appears to have yielded any tangible results.

Around the same time, Weill had begun discussing a variety of ideas with Erik Charell, famed producer-director of the spectacularly successful revue-operetta *Im weißen Rössl* (it would also open in 1936 for a profitable run on Broadway as *The White Horse Inn*). Because privately operated theaters were independent of government subsidies and thus beyond the easy reach of city-council politics, Weill hoped that he could launch with Charell's help something like a *Volksoper*, a term that could be variously translated as "popular opera," "people's opera," or even "folk opera." In a long letter of 15 June 1932 to his Vienna-based publisher, Universal Edition (hereafter UE), in which he swore his correspondent to secrecy, Weill shared four ideas that he intended to propose to Charell. The first two were "Volksopern" based on *Romeo and Juliet* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* respectively; the third, a play with music based on an episode during the 1922 peace conference in Genoa ("a rather amusing story; background: the clash of Russian and Western-European world views"); and lastly, an opera based on Georg Kaiser's *Die jüdische Witwe*.⁷ Charell, however, had an entirely different project in mind. He wanted to create a musical theater adaptation of Robert Wiene's internationally acclaimed 1920 horror film *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*. In a letter of 29 June to UE, Weill expressed his concerns about diverging artistic approaches:

Yesterday, I attended a private screening of the film together with Charell and Neher. From my perspective, the film offers nothing that could be transferred to a stage version aside from the title. Charell focuses purely on atmosphere. He sees the town fair, hypnosis, somnambulism, mysticism—all personal, abnormal, and bourgeois phenomena that I couldn't possibly choose all of a sudden as a topic for a stage work, after having taken a rather strong stand for years that the theater needs to devote itself to the big, fundamental ideas of our time.⁸

Weill went on to report that a long discussion ensued, at the end of which it was agreed that he would approach Georg Kaiser to see whether the playwright might be interested in becoming the project's literary collaborator. With that decision it seemed that Neher had retreated from a possible role as author of the text. Weill, for his part, hoped that he could spin things a bit regarding division of labor, so that he would write with Kaiser a "Caligari play," which subsequently could be enriched with Charell's ideas and theatrical stunts (*Regieeinfälle*). Although Weill expressed some doubt that such a workflow might be feasible, he met with Kaiser and Neher for three days in early July to discuss the project, "turning the Caligari subject inside out," as Weill reported in a letter to UE.

A remark at the end of that letter, dated 7 July 1932, indicates the beginnings of *Der Silbersee*: "By the way, the collaboration Kaiser-Neher-Weill is off to such a good start that I fully believe it will bear precious fruit beyond the Charell matter. It would be the perfect team for creating *Volksstücke* that, in terms of genre, ought to be situated between opera and straight play."⁹ By the end of the month, a project had emerged:

Kaiser wants to write with me a *musikalisches Volksstück*. He has come up with a wonderful, truly Kaiserian idea, and we have been working on it for several days now. . . . It is not supposed to be an opera but a *Zwischengattungs-Stück*. I am to decide whether I will turn it into a "play with music," meaning the use of very simple songs that can be sung by genuine actors, or whether I will raise musical demands slightly and write a score with the scope and on the level of an Offenbach *musiquette*. The latter I find more tempting, as I could go beyond the type that I have created with *Die Dreigroschenoper*.¹⁰

On 2 August Weill reported that he and Kaiser had completed an outline for the piece—it would be "a type of modern fairy tale," he wrote, pointing to the subtitle eventually adopted, *Ein Wintermärchen* (a winter's fairy tale)—and that Kaiser planned to offer the premiere to the privately operated Deutsches Theater in Berlin, ideally in time for Christmas.¹¹

Kaiser's career in the years following his collaboration with Weill on *Der Zar* had yielded two rather successful new plays: the revue-infused *Zwei Krawatten* with music by Mischa Spoliansky, which opened in the fall of 1929, starring Hans Albers and the Comedian Harmonists along with a pre-*Blue Angel* Marlene Dietrich (a film version followed in 1930), and *Mississippi*, a straight play first staged in 1930 that pitted Christian fundamentalists and fundamentalist capitalists against one another in the face of a flood that threatened New Orleans (reflecting some true events during the Great Flood of 1927). In the first half of 1932, newspapers were announcing the premiere of a new play by Kaiser at the Deutsches Theater to take place early in the 1932/33 season with the title "Schwanengesang."¹² Nothing is known about its theme, however, and there is no evidence that Kaiser had begun writing. Being able to offer *Der Silbersee* to the Deutsches Theater may well have come as a relief.¹³ Kaiser was supported in these efforts by Felix Bloch Erben (hereafter FBE), the licensing and rental agency that had begun to represent the stage rights for his entire dramatic catalog in April 1929, while Gustav Kiepenheuer remained his principal publisher. FBE lost no time in contacting UE. Because the agency also handled Bertolt Brecht's and Elisabeth Hauptmann's work, the two firms were regularly in touch about matters related to *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Happy End*. The correspondence appears to have survived largely intact.¹⁴ On 2 August 1932, FBE made a first proposal to arrange contractual matters between the two publishers for the new Weill-Kaiser collaboration. The authors had already agreed on a fifty-fifty split of their royalties for play (including lyrics) and music.¹⁵

Just what the outline contained remains a matter of speculation. Although Weill kept his publisher abreast of progress on the work, he does not seem to have conveyed anything about its scope or content, at least not in writing. Aside from Neher's 1955 recollection cited above, little is known about discussions of the current events that would inform *Der Silbersee*: the rapidly deteriorating economic and societal conditions in Germany. Because the political parties in power were unable to contain the

crisis of mass unemployment, radical parties experienced unprecedented growth. The federal elections held on 31 July 1932—at the very moment when Weill and Kaiser were meeting—brought stunning results for the Reichstag: Hitler's Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) won 37.3% of the vote, more than the two parties on the left combined (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands [KPD], 14.3%; Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands [SPD], 21.6%).¹⁶ Furthermore, these two parties were hardly on harmonious terms. Aside from fundamental political differences, the atmosphere had been poisoned by two deadly crackdowns on the Communists. Both had taken place in Berlin, and on both occasions the official in charge had been a Social Democrat: in 1919, Gustav Noske as minister of defense, and in 1929, Karl Friedrich Zörgiebel as police commissioner. In response to these gains on the extreme right, voices calling for the left-wing parties to overcome their differences and present a united front against the Nazis grew louder. Kaiser and Weill would join those voices with *Der Silbersee*, albeit more allegorically than literally.

Germany's unemployment crisis had been one of the devastating effects of the Great Depression. By 1932, mass poverty and rampant homelessness were impossible to ignore. The press reported that at the outskirts of Berlin alone, some thirty to forty thousand people lived in tent colonies on lakesides during the summer.¹⁷ The camps had semi-official status, with most dwellers having been registered with Germany's still functioning bureaucracy. But the press also reported on a small number of unofficial sites that appear to have housed the occasional "shady character." As these rogue camps tended to be located in places of uncertain jurisdiction, questions arose about oversight. "Who is responsible?" a news report asked, listing no fewer than five not readily translatable government agencies as possible candidates: *Wasserpolizei*, *Landpolizei*, *Förster*, *Schupo* or *Landjäger*?¹⁸ Various aspects of these dire conditions and their ramifications would be reflected in *Der Silbersee*.

As one might expect, the problem of unemployment had already been addressed by other artists in a variety of formats. Kaiser and Weill, too, had previously approached the subject independently. Kaiser had considered writing an "Arbeitslosenroman"—it would have been his first novel—at some point in 1931. He received an advance payment from a publishing house that he had specifically selected for this new genre, but then appears to have given up on the project.¹⁹ In the fall of 1931, a newly formed group of young left-wing actors had launched a series called "Red Revue." Its first program, *Wir sind ja sooo zufrieden* ("We are so perfectly content"), dealt with a fictitious family struggling with job loss. Well-known authors, some of them card-carrying Communists, had created the program's script as a series of vignettes. They included Bertolt Brecht, Ernst Ottwalt, Erich Weinert, and Günther Weisenborn. Musical contributions came from Hanns Eisler, Friedrich Hollaender, and also Weill, who composed a song that Lenya performed.²⁰ Involving some of the same talent pool and created just a few months earlier, Slatan Dudow's film *Kuhle Wampe, oder: Wem gehört die Welt?* had represented a bona fide agitprop work with a screenplay by Brecht, Ottwalt, and Dudow, with music by Eisler. "Kuhle Wampe" was the actual name of a lakeside camp of unemployed on the fringes of Berlin: the question in the subtitle asked "To whom does the world belong?" The film achieved instant notoriety as censors blocked its release multiple times. After a series of small revisions, theaters were at last allowed to screen the film in late May 1932. Aware of the situation, Weill saw it as a good omen when the ban was finally lifted.²¹

A prominent figure who had been asked to submit a report on the film and participate in a censorship hearing was Harry Graf Kessler, who favored the release.²² The film's protagonists were realistic but fictitious. Just two weeks after the film's release, however, Kessler happened to encounter someone who actually lived in such a camp. His diary entry is interesting enough by itself, but it is striking in light of *Der Silbersee*, as it seems to deliver a blueprint for one of the characters that Kaiser and Weill would create, though perhaps a little younger than in Kessler's case (which involves a World War I veteran):

A former uhlan from my squadron approached me in the street. Had served during the war in the trenches (Second Battle of Artois), unemployed for a year and a half, now also homeless, has found refuge in a tent colony at some lake, a Communist. I have rarely encountered such intense bitterness as in his case: toward the Nazis, toward Schleicher, toward the SPD. Even so, he repeatedly muttered that the united front (of the workers against the Nazis) would happen, it would definitely happen, bypassing the leaders. . . . If Hitler sets up a dictatorship, then one day he and Goebbels would experience bombs underneath their cars that would go up their asses. I gave him a stern warning regarding violent activities. Why, he replied in astonishment, why, if such ruffians illegally set up a dictatorship? . . . He reflects the mood perhaps a little more hotheaded than it actually is among workers in general; but his sentiments and the bitterness of his remarks are probably symptoms of the way large parts of the workforce think. He claims that during the past eight days 250 former SPD members, longtime committed Social Democrats, went over to his Communist cell.²³

There is no indication that Kessler shared this story with the authors of *Der Silbersee*, which merely shows that the character who would be named Severin came close to representing a slice of life, as it were.

Whereas *Kuhle Wampe* and other projects had addressed the issue of unemployment in a post-verismo, documentary fashion—recalling Neher's quip about Piscator "just using current events"—Weill and Kaiser wanted to adopt a different approach by mixing reality and fantasy, creating their modern type of fairy tale. On the one hand, large parts of *Der Silbersee* would be plausible representations of life in Germany in 1932 so that contemporary audiences could not fail to recognize them: a group of unemployed young men living in an illegal camp near a lake, a robbery of a nearby grocery store with subsequent police activity, the young men reminiscent of Communists, the pivotal police officer plausibly a Social Democrat, disempowered aristocrats plotting for ways to regain wealth and power. On the other hand, Kaiser and Weill would choose not to identify time and place (customary elements in a play but not in a fairy tale), thereby creating a tongue-in-cheek distancing effect, perhaps the opposite of agitprop. A newspaper report eventually summed it up: "The play is set in a wistful here and now and deals with contemporary issues of the day."²⁴ The "wonderful, truly Kaiserian idea" mentioned by Weill presumably referred to the two genuine fairy-tale moments in *Der Silbersee* that allow for fantastic plot twists: the police officer winning the lottery jackpot, and a lake freezing over in short order though it is not even winter. Music would adopt a dual role, diegetic and non-diegetic, supporting both the realistic and the fantastic elements.

With an outline in hand, contractual matters agreed upon, and a prestigious premiere venue on the horizon, Weill and Kaiser went to work. By 15 August 1932, Weill had received from Kaiser the first scene ("1. Bild"), and the playwright was close to finishing the second one. Placement and character of the musical numbers having been established, Weill could report that their collaboration had inspired Kaiser to "come up with a very distinctive, truly poetic style for the texts of these numbers."²⁵ Meetings appear to have occurred several times a week, but finding a convenient workplace was something of a challenge. Kaiser lived in Grünheide, a small municipality about twenty miles southeast of Berlin; Weill had moved in March 1932 to a house in the suburb of Kleinmachnow, about twelve miles southwest of Berlin. Hopes to go on a two-week working vacation were dashed by Kaiser's notorious shortage of funds. Instead, they set up shop, at least for a time, in the Café Eden in Berlin's Charlottenburg district, close to the city's Zoo.²⁶ On 20 August, Weill began unspecified preparations for the music, and by 26 August he had composed three numbers that pleased him. On 7 September, Weill reported to UE that Kaiser had finished the first act, "no doubt the most gorgeous material he has ever written," while he himself had completed three additional numbers.²⁷ Four weeks later, Weill had received the script of Act II, and Kaiser had completed the first scene of Act III (i.e., the "12. Bild").²⁸

As the weeks progressed, the publishers began to stir, eager to learn details about the emerging musico-dramatic property. Fritz Wreede, FBE's

owner, informed UE on 10 October that the next day Weill would play for him all musical numbers completed so far. On 26 October, Hans Heinsheimer, head of UE's stage division, traveled to Berlin for a six-day visit, which allowed him to meet at length with Weill and with FBE. At the end of his trip, Heinsheimer took back a script that still lacked the last three scenes of Act III. Even though Kaiser had not yet completed the play, it had become clear during these meetings that the script was too long and cuts would be needed. Upon his return to Vienna, Heinsheimer sent a summary of their discussions to FBE (with a carbon copy to Weill), including the most pressing issues that needed to be addressed: arrangement of the premiere and cutting the play to a manageable length. As it turned out, planning the former would suffer from several false leads and detours, whereas the latter would never be implemented.

The Deutsches Theater must have had second thoughts about scheduling *Der Silbersee*, as can be inferred from Heinsheimer's letter: "Regarding the premiere, we agreed that, unless something extraordinary happens, it would be desirable to place the work with a number of theaters."²⁹ Those already contacted or identified as possible candidates included Stuttgart, Dusseldorf, Breslau (today Wrocław), Leipzig, and Magdeburg. Ten days later, the list had grown, with Dresden, Darmstadt, and Mannheim having expressed interest; in addition, it was suggested that Stettin (Szczecin), Hannover, and Munich's Kammerspiele should be approached because of their past general interest in Weill.³⁰ The composer supported these negotiations as best as he could, meeting with several theater professionals who happened to pass through Berlin. He played the music for Dusseldorf's intendant, Walter Bruno Iltz (6 November) and for its music director, Jascha Horenstein (8 November). A few days later, when he did so for Dresden's intendant, Alfred Reucker, the two already began to make plans regarding casting and personnel: Erich Ponto, who had created the role of Mr. Peachum in *Die Dreigroschenoper*, should play Olim, and Luis Rainer—not to be confused with Luise Rainer, who would be considered for the role of Fennimore in Berlin—should play the role of Severin. Fritz Busch and Josef Gielen, respectively, were proposed to conduct and stage the work, as they had done for the premiere of Weill's *Der Protagonist*; and Caspar Neher would design the sets. Weill commented that such a production might outshine anything that a Berlin stage could muster. But by 23 November Dresden had dropped all plans with the explanation that the piece would be too harsh for its conservative subscription audience.³¹ Similar concerns about *Der Silbersee* had already been voiced by Berlin's Staatliches Schauspielhaus, which FBE and Weill had apparently approached in late October or early November. The theater rejected their offer because of "political considerations" rather than artistic ones, as Weill learned confidentially.³² The fears he expressed earlier in the year—namely, that the large publicly-funded institutions would be likely to shy away from producing a new work of his—were becoming a harsh reality.³³

Another factor that limited acceptance of the work may have been Kaiser's overly long book. The publishers were nervous. On 8 November, Wreede wrote to Heinsheimer about the need for substantial edits (*Einrichtung*) that would free up space for Weill's music; he said that he had conveyed the same concern to Kaiser. He also informed Heinsheimer that, in the interim, Weill had had a long meeting with Neher, who was enthusiastic about the work; it was Wreede's hope that Kaiser, Weill, and Neher would soon meet to solve the problem so that definitive perusal materials could be generated. At nearly the same time, Heinsheimer received the final three scenes. After reading the completed script, he warned Weill in a letter of 11 November that it would be a grave mistake to circulate the book in its current form. The sheer length would irritate people and prevent a clear impression as to what ought to be the actual performing version. Weill was aware of the issue. He finally met with the playwright (apparently without Neher's participation) and reported back to UE on 14 November:

A certain complication arises from the fact that Kaiser, even though I kept on about it for an entire afternoon, declares himself unable to make cuts

for the time being. To a certain degree it is understandable to those who know him, as he never works on his plays in such a way, and he takes the position that the play is much shorter than any play by Shakespeare, and it would be a mere practical matter to cut those few lines. He himself does not think it is too long. At least he has agreed, as soon as a theater has been selected for the premiere, to meet with the local stage director and make the necessary cuts, which then could be passed on to other theaters. If needed earlier, Wreede can surely exert some pressure, so that Kaiser does it on his own. Besides, as soon as I see a bit of land with my full score, I will mark up a book myself. The composition is complete, and I am currently working on the orchestration of Act II.³⁴

Neither Weill nor Wreede, it seems, was able to convince Kaiser to make cuts before the premiere. FBE had no choice but to have Kaiser's play typed up as it was for use as a perusal script. Dozens of copies were circulated in the second half of November, but only one is known to survive (Tt1). The title page contains a disclaimer stating that the script is a "working copy" that presents "only a preliminary version of the work."

At least one recipient of the script, Dusseldorf's Jascha Horenstein, voiced substantial criticism of Kaiser's text, as Weill reported in a phone call to UE.³⁵ But the script's length does not seem to have deterred many others. On 23 November, Weill informed UE—in the same letter that contained the news about the rejection from Dresden—that several theaters had reacted with delight. Darmstadt and Leipzig wanted to commit to a production, as did two theaters in Berlin: aside from the Deutsches Theater, FBE and Weill had initiated talks with the Volksbühne, whose artistic director, Heinz Hilpert, lost no time asking for a contract after familiarizing himself with book and music, presumably in the hope to edge out his competitor.

The situation regarding the Deutsches Theater was nebulous. FBE and UE disagreed about whether the theater should still be pursued as an exclusive venue for a flagship production, or whether several smaller stages should mount the work as simultaneous premieres. The theater's new executives, Rudolf Beer and Karl Heinz Martin, had gotten off to a rocky start in their first season, which forced them to keep a close eye on finances.³⁶ The general economic crisis affected theater attendance as well, having caused three privately operated Berlin theaters to fold by early November—more were to follow.³⁷ A first sign of trouble regarding the Deutsches Theater's *Silbersee* plans appears to have been Beer's rejection of the idea that Neher would create the sets, as the theater already had a set designer on its payroll.³⁸ The theater must have hoped for a financial boost from the much anticipated German premiere of Ferenc Molnár's latest play, *Harmonie*, which Max Reinhardt had begun to rehearse around 10 November with a star-studded cast and music by Theo Mackeben. But FBE confidentially alerted UE on 18 November that the theater might soon be in need of a new piece. It turned out to be an accurate forecast: *Harmonie* opened on 2 December but lasted less than three weeks. Whether the theater's executives had similar premonitions remains unclear; they now embraced the idea of producing *Der Silbersee*, as Weill reported to UE on 23 November: "Beer and Martin have read the book and called Wreede right away in the middle of the night. They are totally enthusiastic and definitely want to present it with a stellar cast (Jannings or George) as the next big premiere of the Deutsches Theater. I played the music for them yesterday, and they believe it will be a major event."³⁹

In the following weeks, FBE worked out a contract with the Deutsches Theater, the signing of which was completed by 9 December. Details were trickled to the press.⁴⁰ The Austrian daily *Der Wiener Tag* reported on 4 December that the male leads would probably be Heinrich George and Ernst Busch, Martin would direct, with Weill's former pupil and trusted friend Maurice Abravanel conducting and Neher creating the sets. The female roles were still in the process of being cast. Acting on a request from Martin, Luise Rainer (an ensemble member of the Deutsches Volkstheater in Vienna) auditioned on 2 December for the musically crucial role of Fenimore in the presence of Heinsheimer and UE's Erwin Stein, who found the future two-time Oscar winner "suitable."⁴¹ Rainer was scheduled to

meet with Beer and Martin on 8 December in Berlin, where Weill was supposed to hear her as well, but he was leaving for Paris to attend performances of *Der Jasager* coupled with an expanded version of his Songspiel *Mahagonny*. The distinguished character actress Agnes Straub may have been considered for the role of Frau von Luber.⁴² A premiere date for *Der Silbersee* was in flux, however. When it became clear that Molnár's play would not even last until Christmas, representing a serious financial blow to the Deutsches Theater, Beer and Martin decided to bring in another play (*Gott, Kaiser und Bauer* by Hungarian playwright Julius Hágy) before the Weill-Kaiser work would debut in mid-January.

An oral commitment from the Deutsches Theater on 1 December 1932 had already set off a flurry of activity on UE's part, as rehearsal and performance materials were suddenly and urgently needed. (Details about the creation of these materials are provided in the Critical Report for this Edition, pp. 11–12.) Uncertainties about potential revisions of the book and the number of theaters that were considering participation in the premiere had delayed important decisions. Little had been resolved in terms of musical requirements. Even before completing the composition in early November, Weill had begun orchestrating Act I. He steadily sent installments of his full score to Vienna, where Act I arrived on 5 November and the last section of Act III on 3 December: 218 pages of music in all (excluding the overture, which would follow in January 1933). It showed that Weill had given in to the "temptation" of writing music that went far beyond the scope of "a play with music." This issue also found its way into the press, perhaps on a suggestion from Weill or UE, but the wording seems slightly labored: "Kurt Weill has written the music for Georg Kaiser's new play, to which it is organically connected. The music accompanies large parts of the work and contains a number of large choral sections. As in earlier works by Weill, the choruses also lend Georg Kaiser's play a stylistic unity that characterizes the work as a whole."⁴³ Music, then, was going to play an integral part, exceeding anything that could be described as merely "incidental" or subsumed under the term "play with music."

Indeed, Weill had composed no less than eighty minutes' worth of music: six solo numbers, five duets, four numbers involving chorus, two dances, music covering set changes, and some underscoring. Each act opened with an overture/introduction and ended with a musical number, although these did not quite amount to proper finales for Acts I and II (nor did Weill label them as such). The instrumentation called for six woodwinds, four brass, timpani/percussion, harp, piano, and strings. In terms of the orchestra's size, Weill seems to have envisaged a minimum of twenty-five to thirty players, roughly the number that had been used in the Berlin production of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* a year earlier. This may have been the maximum that a privately operated theater could afford.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, a version for reduced forces was discussed as well, presumably first during Heinsheimer's visit to Berlin; on 5 November he informed Weill that "Herr Stein will consider our different proposals and get back to you early next week about how he imagines an arrangement."⁴⁵ Weill could report in mid-November that the orchestral requirements had not posed a problem in his negotiations with Dresden, Darmstadt, and Dusseldorf. Stein finally responded on 25 November with suggestions about how to address the matter: "It would probably be best to prepare it in such a way that it could be performed by sixteen players or more, up to the original forces. As a minimum I have in mind: 1 flute, 1 clarinet, 2 trumpets, 1 trombone, piano, harmonium, percussion, and strings. The instrumental parts would have to be arranged accordingly, so that, for example, an oboe solo would also appear in cue-size notation in the clarinet (or flute) part, with an indication 'oboe.' Thus, the clarinetist would know to play the part when the oboe is missing."⁴⁶ Stein added that one should hold off work on such an arrangement for reduced forces until after the premiere, simply to avoid offering theaters any alternative to the original. By the time *Der Silbersee* premiered on 18 February, the issue of a reduced version for subsequent performances had become moot because of the Nazi takeover, but it would resurface in the 1950s, after Weill's death.

A thornier issue turned out to be UE's plan to have the piano reduction do double duty as a conductor's score. That idea would serve practical purposes, as Heinsheimer explained to Weill in a letter of 23 November: rental materials could be created much faster when no duplication of the full score was needed. Weill strongly objected the next day:

It is of course utterly impossible to use the piano reduction of this work as a conducting score. We are not dealing with an operetta, where the orchestration does not matter much, but with a fully fleshed-out, meticulously crafted full score. The work is intended for the *Erster Kapellmeister* at every theater, and they will surely and rightfully object to conducting such an extensive, carefully crafted music from a piano reduction. I am reminding you, dear Dr. Heinsheimer, that when you asked me here in Berlin, I expressly rejected having a so-called *Dirigierauszug* [conductor's short score] created for this work. Already in the case of *Dreigroschenoper* (which involved only seven players), the short score did not stand the test, as nobody was able to get a full sense of the sound that is always of particular importance for my work.⁴⁷

In the hierarchy of conductors at a typical German opera house, the *Erster Kapellmeister* ranks between the *Generalmusikdirektor* and the *Zweiter Kapellmeister*. The latter would normally conduct incidental music of any substance; otherwise, assistant conductors would take over. Weill asked Heinsheimer to confirm in writing that the rental materials to be sent to the theaters would indeed include a full score. UE replied that it would not do anything that ran counter to the composer's intentions, but they did not immediately abandon the idea of a short score—as opposed to an enriched piano reduction—and suggested creating a few test pages. As late as 13 January, Weill reiterated his misgivings about any format other than a full score, pointing out that the three theaters that by then were going to participate in the joint premiere had all assigned their *Generalmusikdirektor* to conduct: Gustav Brecher in Leipzig, Walter Beck in Magdeburg, and Franz Jung in Erfurt. “Do you really believe,” he asked UE, “that you can send these people a short score? You cannot correct errors with such a score, or thin out passages, or balance the sound, etc.”⁴⁸ Three days later, UE finally confirmed that it would make the investment and send duplicated full scores to the three theaters.

Aside from such practical matters, the discussion of rental materials also touched on the question of genre and a suitable label or subtitle for the work. Short scores were the standard format for operettas, a category in which *Der Silbersee* could not be made to fit (despite Weill's reference to an Offenbach *musiquette* early on, when he announced that he would write a work “between genres” on the spectrum between opera and straight play). Once he had finished it, he saw his composition as continuing an artistic path that sought the creation of music with full artistic validity (*vollgültige Musik*) in conjunction with a play.⁴⁹ That path had now carried him beyond any incidental music that he had composed so far, and also beyond his plays with music, *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Happy End*. But the intended performance space was still a theater, not an opera house, as can be deduced from the list of venues that FBE and UE had contacted. The envisaged venue is also confirmed by a press report, which described *Der Silbersee* as “a work for playhouses, in which several self-contained musical numbers (lieder, duets, choruses, and orchestral numbers) were organically integrated.”⁵⁰ Use of the term “lieder” in this list is worth noting, as it seems to go hand in hand with Weill's notion of a *musikalisches Volksstück*. In the world of opera, lieder would have been “arias”; in Weill's previous plays with music, the solo numbers would have been referred to as “songs.” Weill himself pointed out differences late in 1929, when he toyed with the idea of setting “four to five little lieder” by lyricist Franz Hessel for Stefan Großmann's “Berliner Volksstück” *Apollo, Brunnenstraße*. Writing to UE at the time, he viewed it as an exciting opportunity to present an entirely different side of his abilities: “these are not songs, not ‘hits,’” there is “no American setting; it is completely outside the context of my most recent stage works.” The lieder, he explained, would have “a truly unaffected [*volkstümlich*] tone, not provocative, but still with a sufficient dose of bitter truths.” He stopped pursuing the plan for a variety

of reasons, though not without remarking that he saw tremendous potential for “such a modern *Volksstück*, which does not exist yet.”⁵¹ *Der Silbersee*, however, clearly transcends a play with “four to five little lieder,” not only, and most obviously, on a musical level, but also in terms of language and plot.⁵² Nothing is known about discussions of a subtitle; Kaiser settled on *Ein Wintermärchen*, which has no apparent musical implications, and all publications and billings of *Der Silbersee* would consistently use it. Only when a recording (R1) with two numbers appeared in February 1933 did its label refer to the parent work as something else, which transformed Weill's impromptu description “Zwischengattung” to a quasi-genre: “Schauspiel-Oper.”

The subtitle chosen by Kaiser had, of course, a number of literary connotations: William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* appeared on German-language stages with either the definite or indefinite article as *Das Wintermärchen* or *Ein Wintermärchen*; and Christoph Martin Wieland's 1776 narrative poem *Das Wintermärchen* (based on two stories from the *Arabian Nights*) prominently featured a lake with magic qualities. Heinrich Heine's epic poem *Deutschland: Ein Wintermärchen* probably also had some influence on the subtitle. His scathing satire, written during his French exile after a trip back to Germany in 1843, is likely to have been on Kaiser's and Weill's minds when they looked at deplorable conditions in the Germany of 1932. In 1844, Heine's work was censored and confiscated, with an arrest warrant to follow. In hindsight, one wonders whether the authors of *Der Silbersee* may have sensed that such a fate could be a distinct possibility for them and their own work. As for the main title, “Silbersee” was not an uncommon name for small lakes in Germany (Kaiser's house abutted one, although his was called “Peetzsee”), and anything with “silver” could evoke a magic or fairy-tale character. Whether Karl May's 1891 American frontier novel *Der Schatz im Silbersee* was familiar to the authors remains unclear; such an allusion would have added a whiff of (misplaced) exoticism. In mid-November 1932, however, there were concerns that Kaiser would change the title, as he had often done in his career.⁵³ Wreede and Weill were hoping that Kaiser would stick with *Der Silbersee*, but as late as 26 November, a newspaper reported that “the title is not yet definitive, Kaiser wavers between ‘Der Silbersee’ and ‘Die Olimpiade’.”⁵⁴

Preparations commenced for the premiere at the Deutsches Theater. Once Erwin Stein had finished his work on the piano-vocal score, UE had two fair copies created, both of which it sent to Berlin on 16 December 1932. Weill received one, which he was supposed to pass on to Abravanel, while the other went directly to the Deutsches Theater. The theater also received printed chorus parts (SATB, ten copies of each vocal type) and handwritten parts for the soloists: Severin, 1. Verkäuferin, 2. Verkäuferin, Lotterieagent, Olim, Fennimore, and Frau von Luber.⁵⁵ Full score and parts were to follow in early January. Kaiser also inserted himself into casting decisions and resisted the idea of Heinrich George playing Olim.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, negotiations with other theaters about follow-up productions continued. UE approached the Burgtheater and the Deutsches Volkstheater in Vienna, where Weill wanted the role of Fennimore to be performed by Lenya, who had made headlines there in spring 1932 as Jenny in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*.⁵⁷ FBE contacted the Schauspielhaus and the Neues Theater in Frankfurt. Responses from Frankfurt and Vienna, like those of theaters approached earlier, were mixed, as most were still not familiar with the music. Mannheim worried about various aspects of Kaiser's play (“confusion about the underlying idea,” “fuzzy symbolism of the ending,” and “unrealistic language”); others wanted to see reactions to the Berlin premiere before making a commitment.⁵⁸

A general unease seems to have underlain some of these responses. It was not unfounded. When the Deutsches Theater took Molnár's unsuccessful *Harmonie* off the boards, the new play by Julius Háy starring Fritz Kortner experienced an undisturbed, if tepid, premiere on 23 December, but the Catholic Zentrum party chose to take offense, soon to be joined by the Nazis. Both groups orchestrated protests during subsequent performances and instigated a large-scale campaign in the right-wing papers. Having been dragged into an unwanted national limelight, and requiring

police protection to keep the production going, the Deutsches Theater threw in the towel and closed the house on 29 December, adding another—this time crippling—loss to its tally. The management waited until 2 January 1933 to inform FBE that it could not present *Der Silbersee*, and Weill passed on the bad news to UE: “Beer has now officially informed Wreede that he has hit rock bottom financially and that he cannot even think about producing a piece with chorus and orchestra. . . . Regrettably, precious time was lost last week, as everybody was still waiting for a decision from Messrs. Beer and Martin, which had long been made, of course.”⁵⁹ Already on 26 December, Weill had voiced doubts that the Deutsches Theater could continue to operate; now he favored a premiere outside Berlin. Leipzig expressed its willingness to present *Der Silbersee* on 28 January, but both Weill and FBE pushed back the date to 18 February, which allowed more time to find other theaters that might participate in the premiere so that no single theater in the provinces could claim to set a standard for the work. Weill considered traveling to Stuttgart, Mannheim, and Frankfurt and urged UE to expedite printing of the vocal score.⁶⁰ Aside from the simultaneous premieres, FBE and Weill were hoping for a high-profile Berlin production at the Volksbühne (with Emil Jannings as Olim) to follow in mid-March. At the end of his 2 January letter, Weill asked UE to send him a full-score copy of the introduction to Act III (Nr. 18), which he needed for his final compositional task: creating an overture for *Der Silbersee*.

II. Preparing for the Triple Premiere

In early January 1933 it looked as if five or six theaters might participate in the premiere, but by mid-January the number had dwindled to a definite three that had committed: Leipzig’s Städtische Theater, Magdeburg’s Städtische Bühnen, and Erfurt’s Stadttheater. Stuttgart and others were going to wait and see.⁶¹ The three organizations that proceeded to obtain a license were all fully subsidized municipal theaters and classic examples of Germany’s *Dreispartenhäuser*, which offered straight plays, operas/opereettas, and ballet. This affected casting. Unlike the production envisioned for the Deutsches Theater, no auditions would be held for the various roles, as each theater operated with its own regular ensemble and had only limited funds for importing guest artists. Weill had presumably raised the issue of musical requirements for *Der Silbersee* when meeting with conductors, directors, or dramaturgs (a printed vocal score would not be available until early February).⁶² Of the four principals, two need to sing very well (Severin, Fennimore) and two at least moderately so (Olim, Frau von Luber); three of the four secondary characters who sing require excellent voices (Verkäuferinnen, Lotterieagent), while Baron Laur is on par with Frau von Luber; of the four Burschen, the first two must be able to handle challenging material (Nr. 1). Among the actors considered as principals for the canceled Berlin production, only Ernst Busch was known for both acting and singing skills. Not only had he memorably portrayed the “Moritat” singer in the film version of *Die Dreigroschenoper* (released in 1931), he had also made a name for himself as a politically engaged singer, appearing in various left-wing revues and anti-Fascist rallies, aside from plays, recordings, and film work (*Kuhle Wampe* featured him as the young male protagonist).⁶³ All of this made him an almost ideal candidate for the role of Severin. Once the Berlin plans had collapsed, Magdeburg managed to hire Busch for its *Silbersee*, but he remained the only guest performer in any of the three productions. To compensate, all three organizations would draw to varying degrees from their opera departments. Besides orchestra and chorus, some theaters “borrowed” singers for the two Verkäuferinnen, for the Lotterieagent, and in one case for a Zweiter Bursche, with members of the opera roster also helping out by singing Fennimore’s solo in the Finale (Nr. 22)—easily accomplished, as her voice is supposed to come from offstage—and, in Leipzig’s case, also Severin’s tormented “Odysseus” aria (Nr. 19).

Leipzig was by far the biggest and best-funded of the three houses, but it was also exceptional in that it operated two venues: plays appeared in the Altes Theater (1,050 seats), whereas operas were staged in the Neues Thea-

ter (1,635 seats).⁶⁴ Each evening saw performances in both houses, which posed a challenge: how to perform *Der Silbersee* in the Altes Theater when an opera had to be given at the same time? The ninety-five-player Gewandhausorchester, which functioned as the opera’s regular orchestra, could have been split. However, most listings of *Silbersee* performances named the Leipziger Sinfonie-Orchester, an excellent ensemble in its own right that frequently filled in for the opera orchestra (it mainly served as the radio orchestra for the Leipzig-based Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk AG). But the Sinfonie-Orchester was also credited for some opera productions on the same night that *Der Silbersee* was playing. Presumably, then, a smaller group of musicians performed at the Altes Theater, while the larger group presented operas at the Neues (running parallel with the Weill-Kaiser work were *Così fan tutte*, *Der Troubadour*, and *Die Csardasfürstin*).⁶⁵ Although the exact size of Leipzig’s *Silbersee* orchestra is unknown, it was too large for the Altes Theater, as the first two rows and some additional seats had to be removed to accommodate all the players in the pit, but this procedure appears to have been fairly common.⁶⁶ No such complications arose in Magdeburg (1,130 seats; orchestra: 56 players) and Erfurt (1,055 seats; orchestra: 40 players), where operas, plays, and ballets took nightly turns.⁶⁷

The formation of creative teams for the productions appears to have been a straightforward affair. In a nod to the scope of Weill’s music and his stature as a composer, the three Generalmusikdirektoren had already committed. Likewise, the theaters’ top stage directors signed on: Detlef Sierck, who had accepted the play for Leipzig, also wanted to direct it himself (he would flee Nazi Germany in 1937 and become widely known as Douglas Sirk in Hollywood, where he enjoyed an illustrious career). For Magdeburg, intendant Hellmuth Götze also decided to stage the play himself. He had started his tenure at the beginning of the season, having arrived from Oldenburg, where he had tenaciously but unsuccessfully tried to produce *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (Freistaat Oldenburg was the first constituency in which the NSDAP gained the absolute majority during elections in May 1932). In Erfurt, Hermann Pfeiffer, as senior stage director (*Oberspielleiter*), would direct the play; it appears that intendant Paul Legband had previously committed to staging Ferdinand Bruckner’s adaptation *Die Marquise von O.*—another premiere that occurred, on 25 February, simultaneously with other theaters’ productions.⁶⁸ Erfurt and Magdeburg used their own set designers, Walter Schröter and Ernst Rufer, respectively, whereas Leipzig agreed to hire Caspar Neher, who had already begun the design process for the canceled production at the Deutsches Theater.⁶⁹ Twelve of his sketches survive (M).

Weill and UE discussed different formats for advance publicity and publications. In addition to a printed vocal score (Ve), which was intended mainly for use by theaters, they planned to publish an attractive album of selections at a popular price, just as they had done with *Aufstieg*, where, for the Berlin production in 1931, an album of six songs had featured a decorative cover design by Neher (cf. KWE IV/2). The same template was supposed to be applied to *Der Silbersee*, as Heinsheimer had discussed with Weill during another Berlin visit on 17–18 December. When the last engraved pages reached Weill for proofing on 7 January, the composer was astonished to see that Nr. 13 was not included. He urged UE to issue the number separately as “Caesars Tod” in time for the premiere: “In all of our talks we had come to the realization that it was the catchiest, tightest, and most effective number,” adding that the song’s importance is underlined by the fact “that I have placed it at the heart of the overture.”⁷⁰ UE reacted hastily by pulling the plates of Nr. 16 (“Auf jener Straße”) and replacing them with freshly created ones for Nr. 13, which Weill did not get to proof-read. If he had, he may have noticed that the number lacked a tempo mark, matching the circumstance in his own full score (Fh). For the cover design, Weill promised to send UE one of Neher’s sketches, but apparently Neher did not provide it in time. UE then engaged the Austrian artist Max Oppenheimer, widely known as “Mopp,” and the album (Ae) appeared on 10 February.⁷¹ UE also checked to see whether Weill considered any number from *Silbersee* suitable for a stock arrangement that could be issued for salon or jazz orchestras, but he appears not to have thought so.

When exploring possible interest from the recording industry, UE received positive responses, which led to recordings of “Der Bäcker backt um’s Morgenrot” and “Das Lied vom Schlaraffenland” by Ernst Busch, with Maurice Abravanel conducting an unnamed orchestra (R1).⁷² Weill appears to have overseen the project, as UE sent him the necessary portions of Fh as well as parts.⁷³ The recordings were made for the EMI-owned Carl Lindström AG on 8 February in Berlin and appeared on the company’s Gloria label as GO 10713. It is doubtful that discs reached stores in time for the premiere, and no advertising has come to light except for a listing in Lindström’s house journal.⁷⁴ Covering a broad range of repertoire, Lindström seems to have seized other new business opportunities right away, as its next release, GO 10714, featured the “Horst-Wessel-Lied” performed by the SS Musikzug der SS-Standarte 42 (mit Chor). When Heinsheimer received a copy of the *Silbersee* disc at the end of February, he found it “a bit rough, Busch’s voice overpowers the orchestra, but otherwise these recordings are again really good and represent a crucial documentation of this music, especially now. That we are also going to see discs by Lenya is truly wonderful.”⁷⁵ Lenya was booked to record with an orchestra conducted by Gustav Brecher on 2 March for Electrola, but it is doubtful that the recording session took place; if it did, no discs were pressed and the matrices have disappeared.⁷⁶ Both Busch and Lenya were scheduled to appear on a radio program called “Funk-Karussell” to be broadcast from Berlin on 11 February. Although one can assume they intended to sing something from *Der Silbersee*, it remains unclear whether and, if so, how much of “the light programme” was aired, since a speech by the new minister of economics, Alfred Hugenberg, was scheduled on relatively short notice.⁷⁷

All of the above-mentioned projects had been discussed or set in motion no later than January, as were talks about a possible film version of *Der Silbersee*. These appear to have been initiated by Hans Rothe, until 1931 a dramaturg at the Deutsches Theater and now working for the film company UFA in the same capacity. Rothe and Kaiser met several times in January, when they also discussed an unrelated proposal by the playwright.⁷⁸ Whether Weill participated in any of these meetings is unknown.

Paul von Hindenburg’s appointment of Hitler as chancellor took many people by surprise. Germany had operated in crisis mode for much of 1932, with legislation issued mainly in the form of emergency decrees. After the general elections to the Reichstag in July of that year, another round of elections had become necessary in November, when the NSDAP lost four percentage points compared to the earlier vote, and people began to see a silver lining. Weill had sensed a positive trend even earlier, noting in September that Hitler’s prospects of becoming chancellor had dwindled considerably. Weill also opined that “the issue of anti-Semitism no longer plays a role, as now there is only infighting among the ogreish goyim.”⁷⁹ But on 30 January 1933 politics took a different turn, with a new round of elections scheduled for March. Weill (recovering from a bout of the flu) confided to Heinsheimer that he considered the events so pathological that he could not imagine them lasting for more than a few months—then adding a crucial caveat: “But one can be so wrong about this.”⁸⁰ Heinsheimer responded with a deeply pessimistic view and looked ahead to the upcoming premiere:

I believe that we will now pay dearly for underestimating the opponent, that we will now see that these people will do everything better, more decisively, and more ruthlessly than republicans ever dared during the past fifteen years. How will all this affect the case of *Der Silbersee*? I think that attempts to avoid the current situation, for example, a postponement of the premiere until after the elections, will be futile. But the idea should at least be discussed. We probably just have to see what happens, what the new government papers and agencies have to say about Weill in such a non-aggressive environment. In any event, it will be a truly important and instructive test of your current standing in these circles.⁸¹

The “non-aggressive environment” apparently referred to the fact that the National Socialists were now in power and no longer in the role of a clamoring opposition party. It did not apply to Nazi officials and their supporters.

Although the publication of Kaiser’s play had been initiated by Kiepenheuer in November 1932, by the time it appeared in book form (Tp), all three productions had already closed. Contrary to widespread claims in the secondary literature that the volume appeared in mid-January as the last of Kiepenheuer’s publications before Hitler came to power, the book appears to have been released between mid-March and mid-April 1933.⁸² This explains why reviews of the production mentioned UE’s vocal score but not Kiepenheuer’s publication. The dust jacket featured a drawing by Caspar Neher (see Plate 10), possibly the same design Neher had intended for UE’s song album.⁸³

III. Rehearsals, Opening Nights, and Subsequent Performances

i. Leipzig

The authors, publishers, and theater executives seem to have agreed that holding to the envisaged premiere date would be the best of several bad options. Weill had decided early on to attend rehearsals and the premiere in Leipzig, which he deemed the most important of the three productions. His strong ties to the opera division were likely an additional factor. On 6 January, newspapers had announced that not only Weill but also Kaiser would attend the premiere. The latter would have been unusual, as Kaiser was somewhat famous, if not infamous, for never attending premieres of his own works, and he appears to have stuck to his habit in this instance.⁸⁴ But sources are oddly silent on whether he joined Weill during rehearsals or communicated with Detlef Sierck, something he had vaguely promised in November when the need for cuts was being discussed.⁸⁵ The fact remains that during rehearsals large chunks of Weill’s score were cut, whereas Kaiser’s play was largely left intact. Although there is no text source that transmits changes or excisions in the latter, two days after the premiere Fritz Wrede suggested that all the music be reinstated and the play be pruned accordingly. He was going to approach Kaiser and nudge him “to bring out the elements that drive the plot and to give up certain philosophical digressions that slow the action.”⁸⁶

The copyist’s full score (Fm) that UE sent to Brecher shows traces of performance annotations that can be attributed to the Leipzig production. To judge by these markings, about 680 of 2,200 measures were excised in total, including three numbers in their entirety: the Verkäuferinnen duet (Nr. 4), the Lotterieagent’s tango (Nr. 7), and the Introduction to Act III (Nr. 18), which was replaced by the Overture that Leipzig omitted at the beginning.⁸⁷ Both vocal numbers have “audible” political undertones, a possible reason for their omission. (Weill noticed already in mid-January that Brecher had become uneasy about having agreed to conduct the work, and his trepidation had likely increased since then.⁸⁸) Not just Nr. 4, but the entire second scene with the saleswomen’s dialogue and the robbery were cut (the Verkäuferinnen do not appear in any listing of the characters). The thinly disguised rebuke of ethically questionable market mechanisms may have been too provocative: although Weill packaged the text’s biting criticism as a deceptively sweet operetta waltz duet, the underlying subject still echoed that of Eisler/Arendt’s “Ballade von den Säckeschmeißern.” The depiction of a robbery on stage had the potential to incense theatergoers, as an ill-wishing reviewer implied.⁸⁹ The Lotterieagent’s number would have fallen into a similar category with its garish praise of “interest and compound interest” (*Zins und Zinseszins*), but unlike the Verkäuferinnen, the role was not eliminated altogether, and the agent would still hand Olim the big check. The creative team also omitted the concluding chorus of Act II (Nr. 17), which repeated the last stanza of Severin’s revenge aria, “Erst trifft dich die Kugel” (Nr. 15). As a substitute, Leipzig’s audiences were supposed to hear an abridged instrumental version of the last stanza of Nr. 15, but even that may have been cut.⁹⁰ Another case of self-censorship appears to have been the omission of the potentially incendiary third strophe of Kaiser’s lyric for the “Schlaraffenland” complex (Nr. 20–21; see Critical Report for details), which featured such lines as “those down below get crushed / and high above resides the good old rul-

ing class" (*die unten quetscht es breit / und über allem thront die alte Herrlichkeit*). Implementing some of these changes necessitated the creation of some new full-score pages (**Fm-misc**).

Other changes to the score were prompted by casting problems. It appears that none of the four principals was an adequate singer, a fact lamented by many a reviewer. Brecher and Sierck apparently decided to have them deliver the lyrics in "sharply rhythmic declamation," as seasoned music critic Adolf Aber observed.⁹¹ In the case of Alexander Golling's portrayal of Severin, cuts were an additional remedy of choice: the production omitted the second stanza of Nr. 3 ("Der Bäcker backt . . ."); a third of his duet with Olim, Nr. 10 ("Was soll ich essen . . ."); and two of the four stanzas of Nr. 15 ("Erst trifft dich die Kugel"). Rather than cutting Nr. 19 (the aria "Wie Odysseus . . ."), the Leipzig team decided to have an opera singer help out, but it is unclear how this was staged: the tenor Hans Lißmann, who in 1930 had sung the male part of the duet "Sieh jene Kraniche . . ." in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, is credited merely as "Ein Sänger" in the program book (N1). Several reviewers mentioned his unexpected appearance and considered it an unfortunate choice. By contrast, Gretl Berndt's Fennimore appears to have negotiated her musical numbers with some success and even received praise from critics, though perhaps not all of it was fully deserved: the solo in the finale (Nr. 22) was sung by Grete Henschke from the chorus (a member of the first soprano section); her name appeared in all programs printed after opening night. Lina Carstens, playing Frau von Luber, apparently enjoyed some reputation as a chanteuse and had received rather good notices for her performance as Polly in Leipzig's long-running *Dreigroschenoper*, but even she appears to have been unsettled by nerves in the "Schlaraffenland" number.⁹²

The remaining cuts seem to have functioned mainly as time-saving devices.⁹³ Surprisingly, few if any cuts were caused by specific staging requirements: the score contains passages of instrumental music for set changes, several of which do not appear as separate items but as sections either leading into a number or concluding it. Programs announced a brief intermission after the "4. Bild" and a longer one after the "10. Bild," which—because the second scene had been cut—corresponded to the act endings. How much of all this was accepted without protest or even suggested by Weill is unknown. Conceivably he traveled to Leipzig on one or two brief trips before arriving around 14 February to remain there for the last days of rehearsal and to attend the premiere.⁹⁴ In his capacity as set designer, Caspar Neher also attended rehearsals.

In the days leading up to the premiere, there were again press reports that both authors would attend. The *Neue Leipziger Zeitung* created some publicity by printing "a little sample" from *Der Silbersee*, "which is loaded with irony and sly meaning": an excerpt from the lengthy "dialogue" between Der dicke Landjäger and Olim, during which the latter remains completely silent.⁹⁵ On the day of the premiere, there was considerable anxiety over whether the play could indeed open. Neher later recalled that he, together with Weill and Heinsheimer, had watched an assembly of SA troops near the theater and, with gallows humor, jokingly wondered "whether they were planning to attend the premiere en bloc."⁹⁶ Detlef Sierck had received anonymous threats and, so he later said, intimidation from an NSDAP city council member. On the morning of the premiere, Leipzig's mayor, Carl Friedrich Goerdeler, phoned him with an urgent plea to feign illness and postpone the production, for otherwise he would not be able to protect him, but Sierck refused to back down.⁹⁷ Judging by contemporaneous press reports and communication among attendees after the premiere, the performance appears to have unfolded without disruption.

Among the guests were a large number of both drama and music critics from all over Germany, with a substantial contingent from Berlin. There were also many theater professionals from other cities, among them Heinz Hilpert from the Berliner Volksbühne. Leipzig's "literary scene" had also turned out in force; the Chemnitz-based literary historian Albert Soergel even went to a rehearsal. Weill reported that some of his new French benefactors and friends, Charles and Marie-Laure de Noailles, as well as Georges Henri Rivière, had made travel arrangements to attend.⁹⁸ Often quoted

has been Hans Rothe's recollection of the evening, written thirty-one years after the fact: "Everyone who counted in the German theatre met together for the last time. And everyone knew this. The atmosphere there can hardly be described. It was 'the last day of the greatest decade of German culture in the twentieth century'."⁹⁹

Whether people really knew or thought that this would be the "last time" is a matter of conjecture. At least a few more days remained for *Der Silbersee* in Leipzig: excluding the premiere on 18 February, seven additional performances took place (on 21–24, 26 February and on 1–2 March). Brecher conducted on the nights of the 21st and the 23rd, whereas solo coach Alexander Nemeti led the remaining performances except for the one on 2 March. Günter Mayer, a musical assistant, conducted members of the Stadtorchester (i.e., the Gewandhausorchester) for this performance, billed as "Zum letzten Male!" (for the last time) in a number of papers. One wonders whether the Leipziger Sinfonie-Orchester might have traveled to Berlin to participate in the planned recording session. Two additional performances had been scheduled for the Arbeiter-Bildungs-Institut on 13 and 20 March.¹⁰⁰ These, however, appear to have been canceled, and Brecher was dismissed from his post around the same time.¹⁰¹

ii. Magdeburg

Aside from Weill's meeting with intendant Hellmuth Götze at the end of December, there is no evidence of further contacts between Weill or Kaiser and Magdeburg, but Weill would at least have been in touch with Ernst Busch during the recording session on 8 February. UE sent rental materials (galley proofs of the vocal score plus chorus and soloists' parts) on 20 January; a copyist's full score followed on 28 January. None of these appears to have survived. Although music director Walter Beck had committed to conduct the premiere, he withdrew from the production at an unknown point and for unknown reasons. Reviews of the premiere indicate that Georg Winkler, the Zweiter Kapellmeister, took over for Beck.¹⁰²

Unlike the Leipzig production, Magdeburg decided to keep intact most of Weill's score, as can be gleaned from reviews and from a marked-up copy of the play in Busch's possession (**TpB**).¹⁰³ The production retained the "2. Bild" complete with Nr. 4 and the robbery. A member of the opera roster, Franziska Brandstetter, was cast as the Erste Verkäuferin, and she also sang Fennimore's solo at the end. Magdeburg turned out to be the only production that presented the Lotterieagent's tango (Nr. 7), sung by Paul Olmühl, one of four singers that the theater employed specifically for operetta productions. **TpB** suggests that the second of the tango's four stanzas was omitted, as was Severin's feverish dream monologue (Nr. 9). Götze appears to have taken a considerably bolder approach than Sierck and Brecher. All the numbers that Leipzig apparently omitted out of political considerations remained in Magdeburg. And Götze seems to have staged some of these numbers directly to the audience, occasionally using special lighting, as if extending the concept of "Songbeleuchtung" notably employed in *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Happy End*. An emphatic case was the staging of the Act II finale (Nr. 17): rather than follow Weill's instructions to position the male chorus in the pit, he had it sing stage-front to the audience, and a reviewer added dryly that the choristers were "not wearing exactly flattering costumes."¹⁰⁴ Aside from Busch, whose performance received virtually unanimous praise, the other three principals, though excellent actors, were not fully up to the musical demands. All of Kaiser's scenes were retained, but the annotations in **TpB** exhibit both thoughtful pruning and substantial cuts within various scenes. Although there is no conclusive evidence, the production may have saved some time by moving the overture from the start to the beginning of Act III, where it replaced the similar but shorter Nr. 18.

The atmosphere in the theater appears to have been tense when the curtain rose, and a reviewer reported that at one point there was a considerable ruckus.¹⁰⁵ Overall there were no organized disturbances, however, and the applause at the end was described by all reviewers as benevolent and essentially unchallenged. Yet any *succès d'estime* that the production

enjoyed did not shield it from massive vilification through a campaign launched by the new regime's supporters. On 21 February a "declaration" appeared, signed by nine nationalist organizations spearheaded by the Magdeburg faction of the NSDAP and the Stahlhelm, a right-wing veterans' association and paramilitary group originally founded in Magdeburg.¹⁰⁶ The statement denounced the *Silbersee* production (as un-German, Bolshevik, promoting class hatred, etc.) and called for an immediate cancellation of all future performances, with those responsible for mounting the production being held accountable. The city's committee for theater and orchestra affairs met late in the afternoon that same day; among those present were the mayor, Ernst Reuter (later mayor of Berlin during the 1948 airlift), and Götze for the theater, accompanied by his chief manager, Carl Werckshagen. At the end of the meeting, the committee had arrived at four decisions: (1) the group would reconvene on 23 February; (2) the next performance, scheduled for 23 February, would be canceled; (3) several committee members would immediately depart to attend the Leipzig production that night (both Reuter and Götze joined the group); and (4) a decision whether the production would be shut down or merely taken out of the subscription series would be postponed until the members had seen the Leipzig production.

When the meeting resumed two days later, participants shared their views and compared the two productions. Acting as the committee's chairman, the city's building commissioner, Johannes Göderitz, reported that Leipzig

had introduced cuts in consultation with the author, but only for dramaturgical purposes. The sets by the well-known Berlin set designer Caspar Neher are deliberately primitive and probably not to the taste of an audience used to naturalist forms or those of applied commercial art. In Leipzig, too, the intention to address the audience directly could not be missed. The full house went along with the action, and the work was not perceived as confrontational, even though Golling's performance was far more belligerent than Busch's in Magdeburg. Taken as a whole, the local staging is more poetic and basically no more provocative than the Leipzig one. In Erfurt, too, the work is viewed favorably and remains in the repertoire apparently with financial success. Hence Magdeburg appears to be isolated in this case. Immediately after the premiere, the intendant expressed an intention to cut or soften two spots possibly considered objectionable by the audience.¹⁰⁷

This account raises questions. Two days earlier, a prominent Magdeburg paper had reported that the Leipzig production toned down the work's sharp antagonism and weeded out the overly pointed political songs.¹⁰⁸ Was it Göderitz's own assessment, then, that the Leipzig cuts served only dramatic purposes? Did anybody ask him to say so? Or did he word his statement in order not to exert pressure on the Magdeburg team to cut any potentially incendiary passages? (Maneuvering room for possible cuts was provided by the account's concluding sentence.) Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing what considerations or talks with Leipzig's artistic staff played a role here. His report, as captured by the minutes of the meeting, was not supplemented by other council members; the only addition came from someone mentioning that Sierck had received threatening letters in the days before the premiere, but that thus far no incidents had occurred in Leipzig.

The committee concluded that the two productions were artistically on the same high level and that protests from the national organizations were purely politically motivated. Yet these organizations had increased pressure earlier in the day (i.e., on 23 February) by calling for a complete boycott of the theater; some local newspapers were already refusing to run advertisements or provide coverage. Rather than taking down the production altogether, Götze decided to remove it from the subscription series, so that no subscriber would "be forced" to attend a performance of *Der Silbersee*.¹⁰⁹ Weill and Kaiser's work appears to have been presented only one more time, on 27 February, as a private performance (*geschlossene Vorstellung*) for one of the city's visitor organizations, the subscribers to Magdeburg's Volksbühne.¹¹⁰ Two weeks later, the new minister of the interior for

the state of Prussia, Hermann Göring, dismissed Reuter, and in early April the new interim mayor suspended Götze and Beck.¹¹¹

iii. Erfurt

To judge by the changes that were apparently introduced in Erfurt, the artistic staff may have been in contact with Weill and the creative team in Leipzig. As part of the rental material, the theater received Weill's holograph full score (Fh). Compared to the score that was used in Leipzig (Fm), it contains far fewer markings, and fewer still that can be linked to the Erfurt production. Reviews made it clear, however, that the overture was also moved to the beginning of Act III, where it replaced Nr. 18, and although the Lottericagent's tango was cut, the role was retained (played as a cameo appearance by the stage director, Hermann Pfeiffer).¹¹² The program (N2) shows that, unlike in Leipzig, the production kept the "2. Bild" with Nr. 4 and the robbery. The roles of the two Verkäuferinnen were cast with members of the opera division, as was the role of the Zweiter Bursche. Erfurt's principals appear to have handled the musical challenges with some bravura: one critic singled out the fabulous use of *Sprechgesang* by Albert Johannes as Severin, and another observed that the actors played and sang as if they had never done anything else.¹¹³ N2 bills the work as a play "in drei Akten (15 Bildern)" — see Plate 8 — and lists the fifteen scenes. Omitted was a set for the "7. Bild," the castle's hallway in Act II. Because the Alter Arzt, who appears only in this scene, is listed in the cast of characters, and reviews also comment on the actor who portrayed him, it would seem that only the set was eliminated, not the scene (there is often some ambiguity whether the German word "Bild," when used as a theatrical term, signifies scene or set—or both). N2 may also transmit a sample of the pruning that Kaiser's text underwent: spread over five pages is an edited version of the "4. Bild," Olim's recognition scene as he writes the report about the shooting and the arrest.

For unknown reasons, as in Magdeburg, the Generalmusikdirektor, Franz Jung, did not end up conducting the work. His place was taken by the Erster Kapellmeister, Paul Walter. Opening night was by all accounts a success, the audience pleased with what it had seen. A second performance had already been scheduled for 22 February, and it appears to have proceeded as planned. Even though no reports of protests or scandals have come to light, the work was not programmed again, perhaps because the shadows of the Magdeburg smear campaign loomed large (it had received considerable attention in the press), and the Reichstag fire of 27 February accelerated the demise of the Weimar Republic.

IV. Press Coverage of the Triple Premiere

Nine days earlier, when *Der Silbersee* opened, Germany's journalistic landscape might have looked almost normal. More than fifty dailies from all parts of the country carried reviews of the productions. The prestigious papers routinely dispatched both a drama and a music critic, with some critics writing for more than one publication. Any such appearance of normalcy was deceptive, however. The "Decree for the Protection of the German People" issued on 4 February had severely curbed the freedom of the press and allowed officials to shut down papers temporarily, with bans ranging from three days to several months. Although Communist publications bore the brunt, Berlin's *8 Uhr-Abendblatt*, the vivacious *Tempo*, and the Zentrum party's *Germania* were shut down briefly as well. As a result, virtually all publications not in line with the new regime adopted a guarded tone, indicating that editors and journalists were still trying to fathom the magnitude and reach of the political earthquake that had just occurred and were bracing for the aftershocks, which would indeed follow.

Given that Weill and Kaiser were both known targets of the Nazis, praise for their new work, even if not effusive, could trigger repercussions. Reading the surviving reviews of *Der Silbersee*, one gets the impression that, compared to earlier premieres of Weill's works, critics seem to have reacted with caution, at least those who were favorably impressed. This is

hard to pin down, of course, as there is no way of knowing how reviewers might have responded under normal circumstances, but keeping this unanswered question in mind is helpful when assessing press coverage.

Many reviews were not especially thorough or profound, often presenting only the basics: a plot summary, a listing of the performers and creative team with some evaluation of their achievements, and a brief word about the audience's reaction.¹¹⁴ In order to promote more informed reviews, UE had supplied music critics in the three cities with perusal copies of the piano-vocal score, which had finally come off the press on 8 February. The Berlin-based papers and some others were informed that they, too, could request a score; the brief list of those who received that offer, which Heinsheimer shared with Weill, consisted mainly of those critics who had routinely covered the composer's work: Heinrich Strobel (*Berliner Börsen-Courier*), Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt (*B. Z. am Mittag*), Victor Zuckerkandl (also *B. Z.* and other Ullstein papers), and Oscar Bie (freelancer), while Alfred Einstein (*Berliner Tageblatt*) received an unsolicited score.¹¹⁵

When the reviews came in, Weill could not help but note some peculiarities, as he pointed out to UE with a tinge of bitterness: "What do you say to the latest fashion of the Berlin press, reviewing works based on the piano-vocal score, without attending a performance?"—which appears to have been true in Stuckenschmidt's case—"And what do you make of the attitude of the *Börsen-Courier*, which does not cover the music at all, because already at this point Herr Strobel is too spineless even to take a position?"¹¹⁶

Unlike Strobel, whose silence may or may not have been strategic, Alfred Kerr, one of the country's most prominent theater critics, represented a different kind of absentee in that he had already fled the Third Reich.¹¹⁷ In his stead, the liberal *Berliner Tageblatt* ran two reviews, a long one by Erich Burger, who had been dispatched to cover the Magdeburg production, and a short one by veteran critic Ludwig Stettenheim reporting from Leipzig. Both arrived at primarily positive conclusions. Burger's review turned out to be one of the more outspoken:

Georg Kaiser, the playwright with those many faces, shows the theater a new face: he writes a fairy tale—a winter's tale he calls it. It goes without saying that this is no sunny fare for children, . . . no dainty object that, unshackled from all earthly matters, floats in the empty space of a made-up world. The fairy-tale elements settle over the ideas like a veil; but the veil remains as clear as his language and as translucent as his thoughts.

After a detailed plot summary, Burger linked some of the play's elements to current political conditions, but like *Der Silbersee* itself, only hinted at the fragmented opposition on the left:

"He who must head on will be carried by the Silbersee" forms the concluding line of this wonderful fairy tale. An earlier work of Kaiser's once stated: "Progress—it does not matter whither but what is left behind." This very thought now forms the core of a legend . . . that penetrates with poetic vision the disorders of our time. Away from what? Away from lethal separation, which benefits only the lucky third party; away from that wall which like-minded people with a shared identity erect between themselves time and again. The poor soul who led a dog's life in a moss hut by the Silbersee . . . and the poor soul who is abducted by a fairy-tale-like incident into a castle: don't they belong together, must they not march together, do they not know where the danger that faces them is coming from? A sign begins to appear on the horizon, showing the path to be taken. The endpoint is still obscured by fog; but the fog will part, just as the Silbersee froze over in the sunlight. First identify the common enemy and march in unity, hand in hand: recognition and unity will always find a path to the light.

This is "a fairy tale, then," Burger continued in his next paragraph (quite possibly going for a double meaning at that point), "whose propelling force is the idea":

Characters grow into concepts, into symbols, and these in turn come under the alluringly shimmering spell of the theater. A fairy tale built on a steely

base, and illuminated by a glowing heart; a fairy tale that combines intellect and playfulness, mysticism and reality into an elevated form. Has Georg Kaiser not often been accused of writing plays that are cold constructions, modeled on mathematical formulas? Admittedly, this new work, too, cannot be easily unlocked; this work, too, possesses ambiguity of words and thoughts. But the iron that Kaiser has wrought possesses a magical fire.

For Burger, himself no music expert, the elevated form was also shaped by the "sizable score that does not stay on the sideline as mere accompaniment to the play." To his ears, the songs "exhibit the compelling rhythm of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, whose style Kaiser adopts in a thoroughly idiosyncratic way."¹¹⁸

At the other end of the critical spectrum was Paul Renovanz, editor of the arts section for the right-wing *Leipziger Abendpost*, who sensed no "glowing heart" whatsoever and sharply denounced the work as a tendentious fairy tale heavily leaning toward the left. His review appeared in at least four other like-minded papers. Renovanz saw in Kaiser "a malicious worker at the spinning wheel," who has spun "a fantasy web from the harsh fibers of reality," a product suitable to induce class hatred: "One must despise the rich, and the authorities that protect their luxurious lifestyles, as much as one despises an all-consuming cancer." Somewhat surprisingly, he detected and acknowledged merits in Kaiser's technique and, perhaps even more so, in Weill's, but in his opinion both were employed for the wrong cause:

The piece is not without substantial poetic power. There are tensions with far-reaching intellectual implications, and waves of unaccustomed ideas burst like shooting stars out of a demonic firmament. But, and this is crucial, they all miss the target of true national community. This "winter's tale" does not redeem; it confuses. It is negative. It propagates the notion of brotherhood beyond national borders. Speaking in place of a flaming heart is a demagogic mind. Without Weill's music, which has slightly outgrown that for *Die Dreigroschenoper*, . . . the "mastermind" Kaiser would appear rather isolated. The luminous power of the sound, not always dissonantly abstract, envelops the stylistically tattered text in the cloak of a technique handled with extraordinary virtuosity.¹¹⁹

The various printings of Renovanz's review transmit, inexplicably, a few small but significant variants that modify his assessments. For example, one version states merely: "The piece is not without power," dropping "substantial" and "poetic"; and several others assert that Weill's music has not "slightly" (*etwas*) but "far" (*weit*) outgrown that for *Die Dreigroschenoper*.

That famous 1928 play with music formed the only musical point of reference for drama critics.¹²⁰ Reviews that featured contributions from music critics were naturally more informed and detailed in their assessments of Weill's contribution. Writing for the *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, Alfred Baresel considered Weill's score "theater music in the best sense":

It carries the mood, offers room for epic lingering during a number of chansons (which the actors can sing only in the barest of fashion). The dance models of *Dreigroschenoper* appear only sporadically, a funeral march at the beginning impresses, symphonic development occasionally comes to the fore. The introduction to the third act [i.e., the overture replacing Nr. 18] is greeted with special applause.

Compared to earlier theater scores, the orchestral means are richer. Weill still calls for the winds to dominate; the jazz instruments have disappeared. But the employment of sonic means remains pleasantly economical and shows character.

From a purely musical standpoint, Weill solidifies his style, which appears harmonically freer without posing difficulties to the listener. Harmonically he borrows little, more so on a melodic level. Even though many tunes seem familiar—hard to determine whether he employs known material unconsciously or as a parody—the treatment is still delicate and appealing in its rhythm and sound.¹²¹

It is unclear to what the last sentence was referring. Although no contemporary review elaborated on the issue, after World War II critics and schol-

ars began to note similarities and plausible allusions that Baresel may or may not have been hinting at. Echoes of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, a perennial model for Weill, reverberate through much of *Der Silbersee's* overall character and musical design. In the 1950s, the crucial line "Wer weiter muss, den trägt der Silbersee" (Nr. 16 and 22) reminded a critic of Sarastro's "In diesen heil'gen Hallen," walking "with a friend's hand" to "a better land," where the concept of "revenge is unknown."¹²² In 1971, Gary Bertini and David Drew discussed similarities between Weill's choral music and the "Masonic" level in Mozart's score, most strikingly in comparing Mozart's Act I finale, where Tamino seeks to enter the temple of wisdom, with Olim's recognition scene (Nr. 6), in which the chorus leads him to the light.¹²³ Andreas Hauff likewise spotted similarities between Severin's revenge number (Nr. 15) and Eisler's 1929 song "Komintern" that might have fired Weill's imagination and perhaps remained in Baresel's memory.¹²⁴

Musical allusions played no role in Adolf Aber's review for the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, but otherwise he echoed many of his colleague's observations. Aber, who particularly liked the gripping effect of the "conciliatory and transfiguring finale," noted the overall power of the score:

In terms of mood, Weill's music maintains a balance between realism (spiced up with an ample splash of pungent satire) and fairy-tale character, wherein—as in the play itself—the ghostlike and surreal, the demonic and ghastly far outweigh the soothing element that we commonly associate with the notion of a fairy tale. The intensity emanating from Weill's musical language is worthy of wonder. No matter if friend or foe: listening to this music will become an inescapable command for each and every spectator in the audience; it cannot be ignored. This music possesses an extremely powerful, dramatic impulse, which connects it to an earlier work of Weill's that had brought him into contact with Georg Kaiser, his opera *Der Protagonist*.¹²⁵

Weill's former colleague in the Novembergruppe, Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, had become one of Germany's foremost music critics and a prominent champion of the Second Viennese School (he still attended some of Schoenberg's analysis classes in 1931–33). The latter may explain why he had little to say in his contribution to the review for the *B. Z. am Mittag*, but on top of that, he—unlike his drama colleague, Otto Ernst Hesse—does not appear to have attended a performance. With a piano-vocal score in hand, Stuckenschmidt observed that "in the ability to generate an atmosphere, as if evoking the scent of a situation, today no composer comes close to him," immediately summarizing: "That says it all, in terms of what matters." Looking at Weill's previous output, he saw the score reflecting the development from *Dreigroschenoper* to *Bürgschaft*, "without adding a genuinely new trait, notwithstanding perhaps a growing assuredness of characterization, stronger sentiment, and greater harmonic invention."¹²⁶ Other music critics, such as Heinrich Wiegand for the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (20 February) and "Dr. E. L." for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (23 February), reacted with more enthusiasm, praising Weill's score but not expanding on what Baresel and Aber had already observed. Richard Cohn for Erfurt's SPD paper *Tribüne* (20 February) took delight in the diversity of the numbers, pointing out the "revolutionary tension in Severin's revenge song (Allegro agitato)," "the parody in waltz tempo," "the entirely serious funeral march," and "the mighty Stravinskian chords in the finale."¹²⁷ To his ears, a "blending of two Weillian traits" proved especially powerful in "Cäsars Tod," and Cohn proceeded to quote the song's last two lines, which in his opinion would have benefitted from *Sprechgesang*, as they should not go unheard. Possibly prompted by this review, two days later an anonymous reviewer for the NSDAP paper *Erfurter Nachrichten* drew attention to the "incendiary number," which, "in cowardly manner and anonymous form, is likely to stir up rabid hatred against our Führer."¹²⁸

Drama critics looked at the work as a formal and generic whole. For Ludwig Stettenheim (*Dresdner Nachrichten*, 20 February), Kaiser's *Silbersee* was only a few steps shy of becoming an opera by Weill. Opinions here ranged from statements such as "the form of this work represents an ab-

solute novelty" to questions of whether "one hears an opera with too much spoken dialogue or a play with too much music."¹²⁹ Alfred Günther detected a unique style that built on a multitude of formats: "a short scene, a sung verse, chorus and solo song, a meditation, a dramatic outburst, a flicker of social criticism, the view of believers"; and he added that "Weill's music has melted into the work and can no longer be extracted."¹³⁰ Erich Hertzmann also saw a new form, not in the ratio of spoken text to music but in the "combination of elements of expressionist and epic theater," which had "ramifications for the ideology: side by side with scenes focused solely on individuals are those whose dose of social criticism offers enlightenment for society at large."¹³¹ Hertzmann continued that, unlike Brecht, Kaiser does not display his criticism in plain view but through allusive symbolism.

The *Wintermärchen* label prompted some critics to comment on the fairy-tale aspect. For several, it was the guiding principle that also shaped the characters, most obviously Fennimore as the good fairy and Frau von Luber personifying the principle of evil. And yet, for Valerian Tornius of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, all these elements did not manage to evoke a true fairy tale, because for him the key ingredient—naïveté—was missing, which Kaiser tried to replace with a clever, although at times mysteriously blurred intellectual concept. Franz Köppen likewise observed (*Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 20 February) that Kaiser had by no means constructed a naive fairy tale but a very *denkspielerisch* one, the undisputed success of which relied largely on Weill's score. In fact, virtually all reviewers referred to Kaiser as a "Denkspieler," a coolheaded dramatic mastermind of sorts—taking their cue from the title of Bernhard Diebold's influential 1924 monograph, *Der Denkspieler Georg Kaiser*, a label that had stuck. Otto Ernst Hesse pointedly fleshed out this metaphor for the *B. Z. am Mittag*: Kaiser is "a mechanic of plays"; where "other people have a heart," he has "a dialectical engine."¹³² Few critics made associations with literary models. Whereas a handful pointed out that the *Wintermärchen* evoked Shakespeare rather than the Brothers Grimm, only one critic made reference to Heine (observing that Sierck's staging did not tip its hat to the tale of Heinean provenance), and nobody mentioned Karl May.¹³³

The Reichstag had not yet gone up in flames when press clippings made the rounds among Weill, FBE, and UE. There was a general consensus that the reviews were predominantly favorable, even excellent, with Weill's score having received more praise than Kaiser's play. FBE generated promotional material to be sent to theaters.¹³⁴ Weill, who reacted defensively to criticism of Kaiser, still tried to be hopeful: "Although everything that has been written about the play demonstrates limitless stupidity, it is remarkable how positively almost the entire press views my music and the ways it has evolved, and how reserved even the Nazi rags appear to be."¹³⁵ Heinsheimer disagreed about this last aspect and urged Weill to recognize the *ad hominem* attacks:

We don't need to kid ourselves: yes, the Leipzig success is very nice, but the situation is as grave as we always thought and felt it to be. The effective repression of this harmless piece in Magdeburg is not about the work, it is about you as a person. Have you read the review in the *Leipziger Tageszeitung* (Nazi)? Once again, dear friend, I urge you to recall our conversation and ponder the questions . . . and arrive at a decision in this new, unforgiving situation.¹³⁶

The "questions" had included possibilities of a trip to the United States, where *Three Penny Opera* was about to have its premiere on Broadway, and a possible six-month stay in Paris. Weill may not have read the review that had appeared in the *Leipziger Tageszeitung* on 20 February, signed only "F. Z." for the play and "F. A. Hauptmann" for the music, the latter standing for Friedrich August Hauptmann, an early member of the NSDAP and active on Leipzig's city council.¹³⁷ Both delivered anti-Semitic diatribes of the vilest order ("Kaiser, although a non-Jew, belongs to the circle of *Literaturhebräer* [literally, 'literary Hebrews']"), with Hauptmann announcing that this was the very last time a Weill work would be heard in a German theater (he was to become Leipzig's *Kulturdezernent*, the city's

top cultural officer). Roundly condemning the music, he exempted a few moments of harmony or melody, pointing to the overture's trumpet solo as an example, while evidently failing to realize that the passage quotes prominently from "Cäsars Tod."

Heinsheimer's initial curiosity about "what the new government papers and agencies have to say about Weill" had received a clear answer, amplified on 24 February, when the *Völkischer Beobachter* reprinted large portions of the *Leipziger Tageszeitung's* review.¹³⁸ That answer was surely harder to accept for Weill, as it had immediate consequences for him, whereas Heinsheimer was safe in Vienna (if only for another five years). Whether Weill made any attempts to see the second performance in Erfurt or that in Magdeburg is unknown. After the Reichstag fire, he avoided his home in Kleinmachnow, waited until the results of the federal election on 5 March and those of the state elections on 12 March came in, and ordered his affairs as best as he could. Most people, including FBE's Fritz Wreede, were kept in the dark about his plans.¹³⁹ On 21 March, Weill left Berlin for Paris, accompanied by his friends Caspar and Erika Neher.¹⁴⁰ Kaiser would be dismissed from the Prussian Academy of the Arts on 5 May 1933 (along with twelve others, among them Alfred Döblin, Thomas Mann, and Franz Werfel).

V. Editorial Challenges and Solutions

Challenges arise from the fact that neither Weill nor Kaiser, who left for Switzerland in July 1938, ever found an opportunity to re-engage with *Der Silbersee*. Two days after the Leipzig premiere, Wreede expressed hope that the authors would "create a definitive version for regional theaters, which restores the musical material cut in Leipzig and in turn introduces corresponding textual cuts, so that these are not left to the tastes and whims of individual theaters."¹⁴¹ This wish went unfulfilled. The same goes for Weill's intention to proofread the vocal score (Ve) as well as the copyists' full score (Fm); all the composer was able to inspect were five of the six numbers that appeared in UE's album of vocal selections (Ae).

Kiepenheuer's publication of the play (Tp) made no effort to match the lyrics as set by Weill and contained no mention of the composer's name or any reference to the score at all. When interweaving spoken text and musical numbers in the Edition, Tp's printed lyrics can still serve to indicate placement of the sung numbers, an important function in that Fh and Ve exhibit few cues. But the lyrics for Nr. 2 ("Wir tragen den Hunger zu Grabe") and Nr. 17 (a partial reprise of Nr. 15, "Erst trifft dich die Kugel") do not appear at all in Tp, or in Tt1, yet the numbers' placements are clear from a stage direction ("a funeral march commences") and from Weill's cue in Fh for Nr. 17. Slightly more complicated is the placement of purely instrumental numbers. Some are reasonably clear from Weill's titles (e.g., Nr. 5, an interlude that he had labeled "Entr'acte"), while others have directions (e.g., Nr. 9) or cues (e.g., Nr. 20). No source indicates the exact beginning of Nr. 6, which opens with an instrumental passage. But performance annotations in Fm shed light on the situation, as Brecher (or his staff) added warnings and cues. Fm actually shows these for all numbers (except for Nr. 4), thereby confirming the numbers' placement within the play and in some cases providing more refined information (e.g., about music in relation to the theater curtain opening or closing). The critical notes for each number offer more details.

The lyrics in Tp and Weill's settings differ markedly. Weill omitted entire stanzas, presumably because the numbers would have become too long (these stanzas were retained in Tp, however). As a matter of routine, he made lines metrically regular or words more singable, but occasionally his setting altered entire lines. Two examples, from Nr. 12 and Nr. 15, illustrate the issue (substantive differences in Weill's composition, here as transmitted by Ve, are highlighted in italics):

Tp: Ich bin die arme Verwandte
und gehöre zu andern dazu.
Wollte sich doch keiner um mich kümmern.

Aber das tun Onkel und Tante,
und nichts freut sie, was ich tu'.
Das ist kein Leben, das ist nur Verdruß,
den man, was soll denn werden, tragen muß.

Ve: Ich bin *eine* arme Verwandte
und gehöre zu Andern dazu,
Ach, wenn sich doch keiner um mich kümmern wollte!
doch das *tuen* Onkel und Tante
und nichts freut sie, was ich *auch* tu':
Das ist kein Leben, das ist nur Verdruß,
den man, was soll denn werden, *ertragen* muß.

Tp: Erst trifft dich der andre
und du liegst still.
Da war dir der Tod schon nah' —
und ließ gnädig noch einmal von dir.
Du zwinkerst
mit halbem Augenaufschlag —
doch dein erster Atemzug
haucht schon:
es wird nichts vergeben und nichts vergessen.
Auge um Auge.

Ve: Erst trifft dich *die Kugel*
und du liegst *am Boden*,
da war dir der Tod schon nah —
und ließ gnädig noch einmal von dir.
Noch kannst du nicht denken,
noch kannst du nicht sehn,
doch dein erster Atemzug
haucht schon *das Wort*:
es wird *nicht* vergeben, *es wird nicht* vergessen.
Auge um Auge!

Following one of its core principles, the Edition privileges Weill's setting in all cases, always keeping an eye out, of course, for inadvertent errors on the composer's part.

A need for true judgment calls emerges from discrepancies between Fh and other musical sources (mainly Vm, Ve, and Ae). A thorny case is the sung text for Nr. 2, which consists of only a single line. Because there are two authoritative versions—either "Wir tragen den Hunger zu Grabe" or "Wir tragen den Toten zu Grabe"—the Edition presents both, the former in the score, as it seems slightly more plausible in context, and the latter as a footnote to the score (see Critical Report for details). Incremental changes to Kaiser's text occurred in Nr. 20. Compared to Tt1/Tp, Weill made various metric adjustments to Kaiser's stanza in Fh, but Lindström's recording of the number (R1) transmits another, musically plausible change in mm. 73–76. Disconnected from theatrical context, the validity of R1 for the text of the Edition is open to question, of course. Fortunately, there is another source that transmits the plausible variant: the few extra score pages that were created in Leipzig (Fm-misc) happen to contain the revised passage and thereby confirm the change (again, see Critical Report for details). It seems to be one of the few cases where Weill had an opportunity to revisit his score, and the Edition adopts this revision.

UE's tight schedule for the production of rental materials led to countless errors of pitch, rhythm, and text underlay in Ve and Fm, the two sources that would inform all performances after World War II and which only now are replaced by this Edition. Hurried publication also appears to have been the reason that Nr. 13, Fennimore's provocative account of Caesar's death, was printed without a tempo mark. The Edition provides one, "Alla marcia, un poco tenuto," based on character, but also on consideration of a number of ancillary materials as well as circumstantial evidence.¹⁴²

Time constraints may also explain the oddities of the original numbering system. The original “Nr. 7,” for example, closed Act I, whereas “Nr. 7a” opened Act II, even though musically the two items are unrelated. The system seems to reflect compositional process: Weill appears to have composed and numbered items sequentially, but subsequent additions to the score required a number-plus-letter to work within the existing scheme. The Edition numbers all items sequentially, without use of letters. For orientation purposes, a table on p. 47 of the Critical Report shows the old and the new numbering systems side by side.

VI. *Der Silbersee* in Exile

Only bits and pieces of *Der Silbersee* would be performed during Weill’s remaining lifetime. Ernst Busch may have been the first to do so when, on 21 April 1933, he sang Nr. 13 (“Rom hieß eine Stadt”) with organ accompaniment on Radio Hilversum, as part of a program titled “Street Songs and Scary Songs” (*straat- en griezelliederen*). The broadcast, repeated a month later, also featured Weill’s “Moritat von Mackie Messer” and some settings by Walther Gronostay.¹⁴³

Plans for a full production in Paris were discussed around the same time. Harry Graf Kessler met with French art patrons and benefactors on 23 April to explore the possibility of a short season of German operas at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, with the idea of featuring Weill’s *Silbersee* and Berg’s *Wozzeck*.¹⁴⁴ Marie-Laure de Noailles’s name was floated as a candidate to head a steering committee, but no further details are known about the aborted plan (e.g., how it would have fit in with that theater’s short ballet season, already in the works, for which Weill was composing *Die sieben Todsünden*). When autumn approached, the situation for German refugees in France had become more difficult, as a steady influx of exiles caused hostile voices in the host country to grow louder. In October, the patron Jeanne Homberg expressed concerns about Kessler’s suggestion to produce Weill’s *Die Bürgschaft*, as she feared that the work’s revolutionary force might upset public opinion and harm the situation for refugees.¹⁴⁵

Such concerns were well founded, for on 26 November a symphonic concert with mostly classic German repertoire—the only exceptions being *Aquarelles*, three short pieces with harpsichord by Swiss composer Marguerite Roesgen-Champion—caused a scandal when Madeleine Grey sang three numbers from *Der Silbersee* in a French translation created by Madeleine Milhaud: Nr. 4 (“La chanson d’une vendeuse”), Nr. 12 (“La parente pauvre”), and Nr. 13 (“La ballade de César”). Although well received by the audience, the French composer and critic Florent Schmitt jumped up after the last song and shouted “Vive Hitler!,” adding “We have enough bad musicians in France, without all the Jews in Germany being sent to us!”¹⁴⁶ The incident drew enormous press coverage, also from international papers, with Germany’s Nazi publications gleefully recounting and distorting the affair.¹⁴⁷ To Weill’s dismay, many a French paper sided with Schmitt, as Weill complained to Lenya: “Since almost everywhere composers like Schmitt write for the newspapers, they’ve thrashed me wildly, the same papers that hardly a year ago couldn’t contain their enthusiasm.”¹⁴⁸ Adding insult to injury, the seventy-year-old Felix Weingartner, who had conducted Weill’s *Quodlibet* op. 9 in 1927, congratulated Schmitt: “A wholehearted bravo for your courage! You have found the right word to characterize a type of music that is no music at all but, as you put it, filth, or worse.”¹⁴⁹ The scandal diminished not only chances for a production of *Der Silbersee*, but also any possibility of a successful career for Weill in France, where anti-German and anti-Semitic sentiment would continue to escalate. Moreover, Weill’s music had broken away from both modernism and academic tradition, as can be observed not only in Weingartner’s letter, but also in the critical response to *Die sieben Todsünden* and Weill’s *Fantaisie symphonique* (which would have its premiere in 1934).

After arriving in the United States in September 1935, Weill considered a broad range of topics and genres. As unemployment was still a major problem in 1936–37, it is perhaps no surprise that an undated memo from this period with ideas for projects lists *Der Silbersee*. One of the potential

literary adaptors may have been playwright Clifford Odets, who married Luise Rainer, Berlin’s designated Fennimore, in January 1937.¹⁵⁰ But Weill unambiguously identified only Maxwell Anderson as a possible collaborator for such an adaptation; he wrote what may have been a strategic letter in October 1937, praising the handling of reality and fantasy in Anderson’s *The Star-Wagon*.¹⁵¹ In an interview from that same year, Weill is oddly quoted as stating that *Der Silbersee* had opened simultaneously in eleven German cities, a number that he seems to have reiterated from then on.¹⁵² In August 1944, when working with Ira Gershwin on *The Firebrand of Florence* in Hollywood, Weill curiously chose to play excerpts from *Der Silbersee* during a small dinner party hosted by Ira and Leonore (“Lee”) Gershwin and attended by Richard and Alma (“Jo”) Révy.¹⁵³

Weill would have a last brush with *Der Silbersee* after World War II. The playwright’s widow—Georg Kaiser had died in June 1945—contacted him in March 1947 with the news that Karl Heinz Martin, now intendant at Berlin’s Hebbel-Theater, was planning to make amends for the production canceled in 1932 and program the work in the 1947–48 season. Musical materials, however, were incomplete. UE had been able to locate a set of orchestra materials as well as some solo parts, vocal scores, and chorus books.¹⁵⁴ But no full score could be traced—apparently the reason why Margarethe Kaiser reached out to Weill. He could report only distressing news:

I am very happy that Martin wants to do *Silbersee* at the Hebbel Theater. . . . Unfortunately, however, it is very difficult for me to clear up the whole situation with the publisher from here. I received a letter from Universal Edition with the laconic statement that the Gestapo had confiscated and taken away all my full scores. Of course, this is a case of unbelievable neglect of a publisher’s obligation to its authors. I do not possess full scores of any of my European works, and therefore I can’t tell you how to get hold of them at this time.¹⁵⁵

When UE had first contacted Weill after the war, its new *de facto* director, Alfred Schlee, informed him—in the “laconic” letter (of 26 September 1946)—that the full scores were presumed irretrievably lost (“Unfortunately, we could not keep the Gestapo from confiscating and removing certain items”).¹⁵⁶ Although records indicate that UE eventually shipped a not quite complete Fm to Berlin in September 1947, this does not appear to have been communicated to Weill before he died.¹⁵⁷ And the score may have reached the Hebbel-Theater too late as well, for the production did not materialize, even though plans had been announced.¹⁵⁸ Any hopes for a future production are likely to have faded when Martin passed away in January 1948.

VII. Post-1950

UE’s records are inconclusive as to when a complete full score for *Der Silbersee* (it would be Fh) resurfaced; a firm *terminus ante quem* is 3 September 1952, the day UE sent Lenya a list of available materials for her late husband’s stage works.¹⁵⁹ A year earlier, composer Karel Salomon had contacted the publisher from Israel to propose an instrumental *Silbersee* suite, with a radio broadcast in mind.¹⁶⁰ When he approached UE about permission in March 1951, he claimed to have discussed the idea with Weill, which may well be true, given the interest he had taken in Weill’s music and their brief encounter during the composer’s visit to Palestine in spring 1947.¹⁶¹ Conducted by Salomon himself, the “Silbersee-Suite” aired on 24 June 1952 as a live broadcast.¹⁶² Although it received at least one favorable review, it is unclear what prompted Salomon to create another version, which necessitated renewed shipment of Fm to Jerusalem.¹⁶³ The first performance of his reconceived suite aired on 11 May 1954, this time conducted by Heinz Freudenthal.¹⁶⁴ UE added it to its catalogue (rental score U.E. 19255), and then it quickly caught on, with more than thirty broadcast performances throughout Europe by 1960.¹⁶⁵

The first fully staged production after 2 March 1933 occurred in Karlsruhe on 24 November 1953, the eve of what would have been Kaiser’s sev-

enty-fifth birthday. The driving force behind the production appears to have been intendant Paul Rose in his inaugural season at the Badisches Staatstheater.¹⁶⁶ Directed by Carlheinz Caspari, conducted by Christian Stalling, and with sets by Viktor Müller, the *Silbersee* production was billed as the “Westdeutsche Erstaufführung,” which could have meant the first performance in West Germany but more likely indicated the first performance in the western region of Germany (as the term had signified before the war).

Ulrich Seelmann-Eggebert supplied a review for the *Mannheimer Morgen*, which also appeared in several other newspapers. He lauded the theater for “this successful discovery”:

The play unfolds as a series of fifteen succinct, suspenseful, and exquisitely constructed dramatic scenes, accompanied by Weill’s songs, *couplets*, and a rhythmically ingenious interlude. At the end, *Tristan*-like ethereal music for the quasi-mythical apotheosis lifts this modern winter’s tale into the transfigured realm of an oratorio. At times, when Kaiser is in danger of getting lost in an intellectual construct and his language begins to sound curiously stilted and lofty, Weill’s music pleasantly intervenes, be it with hammering intensity or lyrical depth. . . . It would be a bad sign for the German theater if it now fails to “rediscover” this piece.¹⁶⁷

As in 1933, Weill’s music received the lion’s share of critical praise. Considering the music “a mixture of jazz, *chanson*, and true sensitivity,” one critic speculated that “a tiny fraction of Weill’s inventiveness and color” could “boost any contemporary operetta to hit status.”¹⁶⁸

Berlin at long last got to see its *Silbersee* production in the fall of 1955, albeit with a greatly reduced orchestration for the 440-seat Schloßpark-Theater.¹⁶⁹ The program credits Boris Blacher for the *Einrichtung*, which shows no signs of having been informed by Weill’s and Erwin Stein’s original ideas for a reduction. Blacher’s arrangement for ten players—subsequent literature has incorrectly mentioned five—survives and shows that not all numbers are in his hand; it appears that some of his students were involved as well.¹⁷⁰ Eliminating strings altogether, the reduced instrumentation calls for 1 flute, 2 clarinets, 2 trumpets, 1 trombone, percussion/timpani, guitar, piano, and contrabass.

Operated in conjunction with the Schiller-Theater, the Schloßpark-Theater had a prominent ensemble under contract from which the roles had been cast; among them were Wilhelm Borchert of *Murderers Among Us* fame as Olim, and Berta Drews as Frau von Luber. Directed by Hans Lietzau and conducted by Herbert Baumann (a former student of Blacher’s), the production attracted favorable notices from theater critics, who found it exhilarating. Objects of praise were the swift staging in a modernized expressionist style and excellent acting. Only the singing may not have been fully satisfactory. Even though Fennimore was cast with a soubrette, Liane Croon, one critic thought she was not up to the part. Arno Paulsen at least did well as the Lotterieagent (his repertoire had included buffo roles as an operetta tenor, but he had also portrayed sinister characters such as the war criminal in *Murderers Among Us*). Critics also commented on the fact that both Weill and Kaiser had been driven into exile.¹⁷¹

Regarding Weill’s score, the audience and most reviewers did not know exactly what they were missing, as few knew the nature of the original orchestration.¹⁷² Commenting for the *Rheinische Post*, Wolfgang Schimming thought that Weill’s original had called for a fixed number of thirty-six players. He viewed Blacher’s reduction to ten as a necessary evil in light of the limited resources of theaters at the time, but noted with approval that Weill’s music was performed without cuts.¹⁷³ All things considered, the Berlin production was both a critical and a popular success, also thanks to high production values (one newspaper noted there had been one hundred rehearsals, a staggering number).¹⁷⁴

Although critics had encouraged other theaters to program the piece, *Der Silbersee* did not catch on for almost three decades.¹⁷⁵ As happens often in reception history, reasons for a work *not* being performed are elusive. Several factors may have been at play, however. For one, theater companies in Germany that were not part of a *Dreispartenhaus* could not afford even the

ten players that Blacher’s arrangement required; five or six players were usually the maximum, so Weill’s *Dreigroschenoper* and, beginning in 1958, *Happy End*, were pieces that could be, and were, performed with little extra expense (both requiring a minimum of seven players).¹⁷⁶ Another factor may have been the rediscovery of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, which was first performed again in 1957 in Darmstadt. It seems that if a three-tier house was going to perform a prewar Weill work, it preferred to stage a real opera with singers, chorus, and orchestra, rather than a generic hybrid that required the collaboration of its opera and theater divisions. Finally, the system of privately operated theaters (such as the Deutsches Theater as part of the Reinhardt-Bühnen before 1933), which allowed for near-perfect casting, had been abolished by the Nazis and was not reinstalled in the first decades following World War II (it never regained its former importance).¹⁷⁷

In order to circumvent these problems, Weill scholar and Lenya advisor David Drew prepared a concert version. For the Holland Festival in 1971, he enlisted the help of dramaturg Josef Heinzelmann to create a semi-staged version that presented all musical numbers linked by a narration, with Lenya taking on the narrator’s part as well as that of Frau von Luber. Gary Bertini conducted The Hague’s Residentie Orchestra, the chorus of Rotterdam’s conservatory, and an international cast of singers; the all-Weill evening began with a concert version of *Royal Palace* (the lost orchestration for which had been reconstructed by Gunther Schuller). Reviewers came down hard on the effort, placing much of their criticism on what seemed an under-rehearsed presentation, both mannered and lifeless, as the singers wandered with score in hand through the musicians’ risers in the cavernous, only partially filled Nederlands Congresgebouw (known today as the World Forum The Hague).¹⁷⁸ Lenya alone received consistently good notices. Ill-starred as it appears to have been, the Holland Festival’s *Silbersee* production did have a positive impact, less because it was televised than because it was broadcast by Radio Hilversum. Being the first recording that captured all the music and in high quality, the edited audio tape made the rounds, rebroadcast by stations in London, Brussels, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Boston, and Sydney.¹⁷⁹

Drew spotted another chance to devise a concert version of *Der Silbersee* in 1975, when the Berliner Festwochen observed the composer’s seventy-fifth birthday with a series of concerts, most of which Drew helped to program. No doubt recalling the woes of the Dutch production, this time he created a concert suite for soloists, chorus, and orchestra without any narration or dialogue. The sequence of numbers ended up omitting the “Masonic” choral numbers 6 and 8 as well as the duet between Severin and Olim (Nr. 10, “Was soll ich essen in der Morgenfrühe”). Bertini conducted Berlin’s Radio Symphony Orchestra with a cast that starred Anja Silja and Günter Reich (the evening had begun with Weill’s cantata *Der neue Orpheus*, followed by his second symphony). Although Sybill Mahlke (*Der Tagesspiegel*, 12 September 1975), who had familiarized herself with Kaiser’s play, wished the original sequence had been retained, the numbers performed in their original orchestration simply delighted critics: “The music for *Der Silbersee* is one of the most fascinating scores Weill has ever written,” declared Hans Ludger Keuter (*Rheinischer Merkur*, 19 September), and Gerhard Brunner for Austria’s *Kurier* (12 September) agreed: “In terms of both inventiveness and workmanship, this *Silbersee* belongs among the best of Weill’s scores.”¹⁸⁰

By contrast, critical opinions diverged sharply when *Der Silbersee* was first produced in the United States, opening on 20 March 1980 at New York’s City Opera in an adaptation titled *Silverlake*. Directed by Harold Prince and conducted by Julius Rudel, the production featured a revised book by Hugh Wheeler (of *A Little Night Music* and more recent *Sweeney Todd* fame) and lyrics translated by Lys Symonette, who had also selected additional music from earlier, little-known scores of Weill’s: his 1927 incidental music to Strindberg’s *Gustav III* and his 1928 score for Piscator’s production of Leo Lania’s *Konjunktur*. Prince had learned about *Der Silbersee* via the Radio Hilversum tape, having been in touch with Lenya ever since his 1966 production of *Cabaret*, in which she had taken on the role of Fraulein Schneider. As that musical depicted the dying days of the

Weimar Republic, it was only natural to have another *Cabaret* alumnus, Joel Grey, assume the role of Olim. The *Silverlake* production appears to have exuded some Broadway flavor, or that of Broadway Opera, perhaps. Alan Rich, writing for *New York* magazine (7 April), considered the adaptation “a ghastly misreading by Harold Prince and his crew,” so that he left the theater at the end “disgusted and terribly disheartened, because *Silverlake* is a major work in the Weill canon.”¹⁸¹ An appreciative afterthought came from Maurice Abravanel, who had managed to see a performance in Washington, D.C.:

I had heard it didn't get very good reviews, and I was ready to not like it, and I loved it from beginning to end. I think the City Opera did a magnificent production, of which I believe Kurt would have approved. I know it was written for dialogue and so on, [and] there has been change—I think it's for the better, because the dialogue is exalted, it's not realistic dialogue, and spoken as it was, without music, somehow would not be quite right. But with music it puts it on a higher level, you know, on a more unrealistic level. And that form makes it I think legitimate. I loved it. I loved every second of it.¹⁸²

Its achievements (or lack thereof) notwithstanding, the City Opera's production did receive wide dissemination through an original cast album issued by Nonesuch Records, the first commercially available recording of much of the score.¹⁸³

An instrumental suite, a reduced orchestration, a concert presentation with narration plus dialogue and one without, an adaptation using additional music—perhaps all these formats were prerequisites for theater professionals to reacquaint themselves with the work proper. In the first half of the 1980s, *Der Silbersee* was beginning to get staged again: in Manchester and Ystad (1982), in Zurich (1983), in Gera (1984), and in Recklinghausen and Karl-Marx-Stadt (1985). Over the next several decades, the work would find a home in precisely those theaters that Weill had hoped to win over in 1933: regional companies in mid-size cities such as Augsburg, Bremerhaven, Gießen, Pforzheim, and Weimar; and beyond Germany, in Austria, Belgium, England, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, and the United States.

In 1990, a first complete recording of the *Silbersee* music with Kaiser's original German lyrics appeared on the Capriccio label, performed by the Kölner Rundfunkorchester led by Jan Latham-König, with connecting dialogues selected and arranged by Josef Heinzelmann. Some critics were dubious about the recording's merits, though. Writing for the British *Opera* magazine, Rodney Milnes considered the orchestra's playing “a little unwieldy . . . and tempos on the limp side, following the letter rather than the spirit of the metronome marks.”¹⁸⁴ Following “the letter” also extended to some of the more prominent copyist's errors in the rental materials, which nobody seems to have queried with conviction, as can be heard during the Overture's slow trumpet solo.

Apart from fully staged productions, the format of concert or semi-staged versions has found a niche, with dramaturgs developing narrations usually delivered by an actor, not by the singers. Prominent venues have programmed the piece: for example, Berlin's Philharmonie with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester conducted by Ingo Metzmacher in 2007; and its Konzerthaus with its own orchestra conducted by Iván Fischer in 2015. The largest of them all was London's 5,300-seat Royal Albert Hall, where *Der Silbersee* was presented as part of the BBC Proms in 1996, when Markus Stenz conducted the London Sinfonietta. This performance led to another complete recording of the music, released in 1999 on the RCA “Red Seal” label and garnering excellent reviews, such as that of *Opera News's* Joanne Sydney Lessner, who was taken by the orchestra's “uncommon crispness and a sprightly, appropriately arch style.”¹⁸⁵

In the long run, then, the work's performance history seems to have vindicated the opinion of Georg Kaiser, who had reminisced in his Swiss exile: “Back then Weill wrote the music for *Der Silbersee*—it was a marvelous affair. And it is an immortal affair, for art outlives politics of any kind. I am completely undaunted.”¹⁸⁶

VIII. Performance Practice

Weill's score for *Der Silbersee* exhibits a rich multiplicity of styles. Viewed or heard from a distance, one can group them into three realms: operatic, popular, and magical. Their combination has reminded more than one observer of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, the work championed by Weill more than any other.¹⁸⁷ Stephen Hinton, for example, has pointed out that “Mozart's singspiel had an enduring impact on Weill's conception of musical theater, first and foremost as the cornerstone of a philosophy of opera that his teacher [Busoni] promulgated . . . and that Weill then preached and practiced in his own way.”¹⁸⁸ In *Der Silbersee*, the operatic realm is represented by such numbers as the two Burschen's opening duet (Nr. 1) and Severin's arias (Nr. 15 and 19); the popular realm by Severin and the Burschen's “Der Bäcker backt ums Morgenrot” (Nr. 3), the Lotterieagent's tango (Nr. 7), and the nimble fox-trot accompanying the successful second part of Fennimore's dinner entertainment (Nr. 14); and the magical realm by the chorus's probing of Olim's conscience (Nr. 6 and 8), Fennimore's premonition at the end of Nr. 16, and the chorus's reappearance in the Finale (Nr. 22). Kaiser was no Schikaneder, however, and *Der Silbersee* exceeds the acting demands of what is commonly associated with a Singspiel or a Spieloper, as there are far more significant scenes of pure dialogue—“more drama,” simply put. Like the music, the play as a whole also employs different levels: the heroic, the folksy, and the irrational. Thus the term “Schauspiel-Oper” that appeared on Ernst Busch's recording (R1) may be a useful supplement to the work's official subtitle, *Ein Wintermärchen*.

Many a reviewer and probably Weill himself agreed when the music critic of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* lamented in 1933 that “only Berlin offers a sufficient range and quality of appropriate singing actors.”¹⁸⁹ The brief remark identified what may be the biggest challenge for performing the work, then and now: finding a cast of skilled performers who can meet both the acting and the vocal demands. Although Weill initially intended to create the roles of the four principals—Olim, Severin, Frau von Luben, and Fennimore—for actors who could sing, he ended up composing parts that require operatic skills, at least in the case of Severin (dramatic tenor) and Fennimore (lyric soprano). The former sings in six numbers and must be able to handle what seems like endlessly growing intensity in Nr. 15 and a taxing melody in Nr. 19. Fennimore's part also calls for variety—contrast her cavatina, Nr. 12, with the tale of Caesar's assassination in Nr. 13—and for vocal power in the Finale, although here her voice could be replaced by a member of the chorus, if the staging permits. Singing skills also outweigh acting requirements for the small but important roles of the two Verkäuferinnen and the Lotterieagent, and productions in the past have cast these roles with trained singers (two soubrettes and an operetta tenor) who can also act. Virtually the same is true for the first two of the four Burschen. A special case is the unison duet for Frau von Luben and Baron Laur, as it allows for some flexibility. Both Kaiser's play and Weill's score merely state that it is sung by the two with no further allocation of individual stanzas or lines, but not necessarily prescribing that the two should sing together all the time. Apportioning here may be guided by vocal abilities, and also by considering which line seems right for which character, while keeping in mind that the two sound an octave apart.

Naturally, Weill took an interest in the caliber of the conductor for the original productions—but also for future ones—and he informed his publisher that *Der Silbersee* is intended for the Erster Kapellmeister, meaning a seasoned artist who is at ease leading a performance of *Die Zauberflöte* or, for that matter, any standard opera house repertoire.¹⁹⁰ (The fact that the Generalmusikdirektor signed on in each case for the triple premiere in 1933 shows that Weill's score is both a challenging and rewarding task.) The size of the orchestra will depend on that of the string section. The string books originally distributed by UE as part of the rental materials allowed for a maximum of thirty-four players (10/8/6/6/4). Based on press reports that the *Silbersee* orchestra requires no fewer than thirty musicians, the minimum string count would be seventeen (perhaps allocated 6/4/4/2/1 in light of *divisi* passages). The remaining instru-

mentalists number thirteen players (6 woodwinds, 4 brass, percussion, harp, and piano); this increases if the percussion part, which includes timpani, is divided between two or more players.

Aside from singing and acting, *Der Silbersee* calls for two “dances” by Fennimore, though neither requires dancing skills in the traditional sense. Weill and Kaiser supplied a kind of choreography for the first: an imitation of a then well-known scene in Charlie Chaplin’s silent film *The Gold Rush* (1925), in which he, alone at the dinner table, performs a dance for his imaginary dinner companions by sticking forks in two oblong bread rolls and transforming them into dancing legs and feet. The scene was known as the “dance of the bread rolls.” It became the “Brötchentanz” (Nr. 14) in *Der Silbersee*, but because the rolls that Fennimore finds on the dinner table are round and not pointed, she decides to take two bananas instead (from the fruit platter, with the crucial pineapple as its centerpiece). Kaiser’s stage direction has Fennimore perform the number with her back to the audience, thus sparing her the need to mimic Chaplin’s minimalist acrobatics; only her moving shoulders indicate the dance, which audiences would have been able to visualize in their minds. Fennimore’s second dance (Nr. 20) also uses props: two large keys (which she will use moments later to free Severin and Olim). Because von Luber asks her to perform a “Totentanz,” it has become known under that title rather than “Schlüssel-tanz.” Musically, however, Weill’s dance does not evoke a *danse macabre* in the vein of Saint-Saëns or Mahler; if anything, Walt Disney’s “Dance of the Skeletons” could have served as inspiration. It was released in 1929 as the

first in the series *Silly Symphonies*, with music by Carl W. Stalling, and Weill knew and liked the animated film.¹⁹¹ The dramatic context in *Der Silbersee* is not silly, however. When Fennimore is forced to dance, her movements are supposed to be awkward; she tries several times to stop, but Luber and Laur insist she keep going.

With three acts and sixteen scenes, Weill supplied a fair amount of music to cover set changes, even though few segments are labeled as such. Clearly identified are the overture, two entr’actes, and an interlude in Act I. All other sections appear as pre- or postludes to the vocal numbers. In one case Weill allowed for double duty: (part of) the music for Nr. 14 (“Brötchentanz”) can also be used to introduce the “8. Bild.” The original productions in 1933 placed intermissions between the acts: a short one after the first and a long one after the second. Productions after World War II tended to have just a single intermission, either after Act II or after the “10. Bild,” once Severin and Fennimore have concluded their duet (Nr. 16, “Auf jener Straße”).

Regardless of the number of intermissions, productions of *Der Silbersee* appear to have held running time to a reasonable length by cutting and pruning Kaiser’s play. The original productions in 1933 lasted about three hours, including the two intermissions, and postwar productions usually came up with a similar duration.¹⁹² Kaiser undoubtedly underestimated the task with his nonchalant remark that it would be “a mere practical matter to cut those few lines,” but his instincts were right, and a multiplicity of stagings have managed admirably.

Notes

1. Another of Weill’s stage works that shared a similar fate was *Happy End*, where critics had also praised the score but identified problems with the book. Weill’s hopes that Hauptmann and Brecht would revise the play went unfulfilled. See KWE I/6, Introduction, 26–27.
2. Davis, “Interview with Caspar and Erika Neher, Berlin, June 7, 1955” (unpublished typescript), 2; WLRC/DD.
3. See UE’s letter to Weill of 14 May 1932, and Weill’s reply of 17 May; *W-UE*, 380–81. The negotiations eventually failed, in part due to resistance from the Stadttheater’s chief music director, Karl Böhm. See Diana Stacie Diskin, “The Early History of Kurt Weill’s *Die Bürgschaft*, 1930–33” (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2004), 313–14.
4. “vor allem erfolgs[s]ichere Operetten, daneben einige musikalische Meisterwerke, möglichst deutschen Ursprungs, Pfitzner, Strauss.” Quoted in UE, letter to Weill, 31 May 1932; *W-UE*, 386. Translations are mine unless noted otherwise.
5. Weill to UE, 12 May 1932: “Since my return [from Vienna, where Weill had attended the production *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*] I’ve been working on the intended orchestral piece; but so far I have done only some preparatory work, as I still have not hit upon the right style for such a piece. As soon as Neher is back I want to start working on the cantata text” (Ich arbeite seit meiner Rückkehr an dem geplanten Orchesterstück; es handelt sich aber bisher nur um Vorarbeiten, da ich noch nicht den richtigen Stil für eine solche Arbeit gefunden habe. Sofort nach Neher’s Rückkehr will ich mit der Arbeit an dem Kantatentext beginnen). *W-UE*, 379. Whether Weill’s plans for an orchestral work exerted any kind of influence on the commissioning of such a piece by the Princesse de Polignac in October 1932, which would lead to Weill’s *Fantaisie symphonique*, is unclear.
6. Weill to UE, 29 May 1932; *W-UE*, 385.
7. “eine sehr lustige Geschichte, Hintergrund: das Aufeinanderprallen der russischen mit der westeuropäischen Weltanschauung”; *W-UE*, 397. Kaiser’s *Die jüdische Witwe*, subtitled “a biblical comedy” (based on Judith), had been printed in 1911, reprinted in 1920, and finally received its premiere in 1921.
8. “Ich habe mir gestern mit Charell und Neher den Film vorführen lassen. Für mich bietet dieser Film ausser dem Titel nichts, was man in ein Theaterstück übernehmen kann. Charell sieht es rein vom Atmosphärischen her. Er sieht Rummelplatz, Hypnose, Somnambulismus, Mystik – alles private, abnorme, bürgerliche Erscheinungen, die ich doch nun nicht plötzlich zum Inhalt eines Stückes machen kann, nachdem ich seit Jahren mit grösster Hartnäckigkeit den Standpunkt vertreten habe, das Theater müsse sich den grossen tragenden Ideen der Zeit widmen.” *W-UE*, 400.
9. “wir haben den *Caligari*-Stoff [...] durchgeknetet”; “Die Zusammenarbeit Kaiser-Neher-Weill hat sich übrigens so gut angelassen, dass ich bestimmt glaube, sie wird über die Charell-Sache hinaus noch wertvolle Früchte tragen. Ich würde gern in dieser Kombination Volksstücke schreiben, die gattungsmässig zwischen Oper und Schauspiel stehen müssten.” *W-UE*, 403.

10. "Kaiser will mit mir ein musikalisches Volksstück schreiben. Er hat dafür eine sehr schöne, echt Kaiserische Idee, an der wir jetzt seit einigen Tagen arbeiten. [...] Es soll keinesfalls eine Oper werden sondern ein Zwischengattungs-Stück. Es bleibt mir vorbehalten, ob ich daraus ein ‚Stück mit Musik‘, also mit ganz einfachen Liedern mache, die von reinen Schauspielern gesungen werden können, oder ob ich doch mit etwas grösseren musikalischen Ansprüchen herangehe und eine Musik im Umfang und im Schwierigkeitsgrad etwa einer Offenbach-Musiquette schreibe. Das letztere würde mich mehr reizen, weil ich hier über den in der *Dreigroschenoper* geschaffenen Typus hinausgehen könnte." Weill to UE, 29 July 1932; *W-UE*, 407.
11. "eine Art von modernem Märchen"; Weill to UE, 2 August 1932; *W-UE*, 407. Beginning with the 1932/33 season, the Deutsches Theater had been leased to Rudolf Beer and Karl Heinz Martin. It was one of several venues owned by Max Reinhardt, who had once expressed interest in producing Weill's *Zar* opera and obtained what appears to have been a one-year option for presenting *Aufstieg* at the Deutsches Theater (it never opened there, but it did eventually open in Berlin at the Kurfürstendamm-theater, operated by Ernst Josef Aufricht, in December 1931).
12. In late April 1932, press reports announced that the theater would premiere Kaiser's new play early in the next season (e.g., *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 April 1932). Reports appeared as late as 27 August (*Kölnische Zeitung*) and 7 September (*Gelenkirchener Allgemeine Zeitung*), mentioning productions of "Schwanengesang" in the coming season at the theaters in Breslau and Bochum, respectively. Beer later confirmed that a play by Kaiser was supposed to open the season but that the playwright found himself unable to write it, as the (unnamed) subject had been superseded by daily events ("Ende des künstlerischen Privattheaters?," *Theater-Tageblatt*, 17 January 1933).
13. Kaiser faced onerous financial obligations in 1932 and would lose his house at the end of November (similarities with Olim in *Der Silbersee* end there). That he had received money from Beer and/or the Deutsches Theater is suggested by correspondence from spring–summer 1932; see *Georg Kaiser in Sachen Georg Kaiser, Briefe 1916–1933*, ed. Gesa M. Valk (Leipzig: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1989), 310–16. Alfred Kerr's article "Samiel Alsberg, hilf!" (*Berliner Tageblatt*, 5 January 1933) also alludes to advance payments made by the Deutsches Theater. According to Kerr, these payments to Kaiser thwarted Weill's original plan to have the Volksbühne premiere *Der Silbersee*, which is also implied in a review by Herbert Jhering (*Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 20 February 1933).
14. Wienbibliothek im Rathaus, Musiksammlung, Archiv der Universal Edition (long-term loan by UE), Korrespondenz. Unless noted otherwise, all subsequent references to and quotations from the FBE–UE correspondence refer to this collection.
15. A signed copy of the contract between FBE and UE, dated 14 December 1932, is filed with the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music's business records. Division of authors' royalties is specified in Section 4.
16. *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*, vol. 51 (1932), ed. Statistisches Reichsamt (Berlin: Reimar Hobbing, 1932), 541. Another anti-democratic party on the right, Alfred Hugenberg's Deutschnationale Volkspartei (DNVP), received 5.9%. Its members would join the NSDAP in lockstep after Hitler had assumed total power in March 1933.
17. See, for example, *Vorwärts*, 17 July 1932.
18. "lichtscheue Elemente"; "Wer ist zuständig?" *Aachener Anzeiger*, 6 July 1932.
19. Kaiser mentioned the "Arbeitslosenroman" and its designated publisher, Transmare, in a letter to Fritz Landshoff at Kiepenheuer; see *Georg Kaiser in Sachen Georg Kaiser*, 305, 393. The letter is undated; the date assigned by Valk, January 1932, is a *terminus ante quem*.
20. Weill's setting of a text by Weisenborn lampooned a right-wing religious "healer" and was called "Lied vom weißen Käse" (Song of the White Cheese). See Elmar Juchem, "'Probably Buried in Some Basement': The Surprising Discovery of an Unknown Weill Song," *Kurt Weill Newsletter* 35, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 4–7.
21. Weill to UE, 17 May 1932; *W-UE*, 381.
22. Kessler attended the 9 April session of the *Oberprüfstelle* (higher review board) at the Ministry of the Interior. He found some of the film's sequences rather good, but the film as a whole too long and slightly boring. Harry Graf Kessler, *Das Tagebuch*, vol. 9, 1926–1937, ed. Sabine Gruber and Ulrich Ott (Stuttgart: Cotta, 2010), 408.
23. "Ein früherer Ulan aus meiner Schwadron redete mich auf der Strasse an. Hat den Krieg im Schützengraben mitgemacht (Loretto Höhe), seit 1 ½ Jahren arbeitslos, jetzt auch obdachlos, untergekröchen in einer Zeltstadt an irgendeinem See, Kommunist. Eine so konzentrierte Erbitterung wie bei ihm habe ich selten gesehen, gegen die Nazis, gegen Schleicher, gegen die S.P.D. Trotzdem knirschte er immer wieder, die Einheitsfront (der Arbeiter gegen die Nazis) käme, sie käme bestimmt, über die Köpfe der Führer hinweg. [...] [W]enn Hitler eine Diktatur aufrichte, dann würden er und Goebbels eines Tages unter ihren Wagen Bomben erleben, die ihnen in den Arsch giengen. Ich warnte ihn eindringlich vor Gewalttätigkeiten. Wieso, meinte er ganz erstaunt, wieso, wenn die Strolche illegal eine Diktatur aufrichten? [...] Er giebt die Stimmung wohl etwas hitziger wieder, wie sie im allgemeinen unter den Arbeitern ist; aber seine Äusserungen und die Erbitterung sind doch wohl Symptome für die Denkungsweise grosser Teile der Arbeiterschaft. Er behauptet, dass in den letzten 8 Tagen 250 alte S.P.D. Leute, langjährige organisierte Sozialdemokraten, in seine kommunistische Zelle übergetreten sind." Ibid., 441–42.
24. "Das Stück spielt in einem romantischen Heute und behandelt moderne Probleme des Tages." *Die Stunde*, 26 November 1932.
25. "Kaiser hat [...] einen sehr eigenartigen, wirklich dichterischen Stil für die Textierung dieser Nummern gefunden." Weill to UE, 15 August 1932; *W-UE*, 408f.
26. Kaiser to Weill, "Friday" [November–December 1933]: "The other day I was back at the Café Eden for the first time. My mood was rather sad. Alone I sat. Alone I bought the very expensive coffee and the cake whose price no doubt has gone up further. Two old waiters recognized me and grinned competently. My heart cringed. The dance band has shrunk to a grand piano, and a brute of a pianist tried to coax 'Celeste Aida' and 'Puppchen, Du bist mein Augenster' almost simultaneously out of the keys. Back in the day *Der Silbersee* originated here" (Im Café Eden war ich neulich zum erstenmal wieder. Mir war sehr traurig zumute. Allein sass ich da. Allein kaufte ich mir den sehr teuren Kaffee und den zweifellos im Preis noch gestiegenen Kuchen. Zwei alte Kellner erkannten mich wieder und grinsten beruflich. Mir verdrehte sich das Herz. Die Musikkapelle ist auf einen Solo Flügel zusammengeschrumpft, dem ein brutalster Flügelspieler fast gleichzeitig Holdeida und Puppchendubistmeinaugenstern enttastet. Damals entstand hier der Silbersee). WLA, Box 48, Folder 40. The date can be deduced from Kaiser writing about a visit to Sicily earlier in the year, asking about Louveciennes, where Weill moved in November 1933, and mentioning that winter was about to arrive.
27. "unzweifelhaft das schönste, was er überhaupt bisher geschrieben hat"; Weill to UE, 20 and 26 August as well as 7 September 1932; *W-UE*, 410–13.
28. FBE to UE, 5 October 1932.
29. "Wegen der Uraufführung waren wir übereingekommen, dass, wenn nichts aussergewöhnliches sich ereignet, die Placierung des Werkes an einer Reihe von Bühnen erwünscht sei." UE to FBE, 4 November 1932 (Wienbibliothek). The carbon copy for Weill appears to have been enclosed in UE's letter to Weill of 5 November; photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 3.
30. UE to FBE, 15 November 1932.
31. Weill to UE, 14 and 23 November 1932; *W-UE*, 418, 420.
32. "Es scheint, dass da mehr ‚politische Rücksichten‘ vorliegen, als künstlerische Erwägungen." FBE to UE, 8 November 1932. The overture to the Staatstheater is otherwise undocumented. It appears to have occurred around Heinsheimer's visit to Berlin, which made correspondence between FBE, UE, and Weill superfluous. Counterparts at the Schauspielhaus may have included intendant Heinz Tietjen along with directors Leopold Jessner, Jürgen Fehling, and Julius Halewicz (formerly a dramaturg at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm).
33. Weill to UE, 3 June 1932; *W-UE*, 388.
34. "Eine gewisse Erschwerung ergibt sich daraus, dass Kaiser, trotzdem ich einen Nachmittag lang auf ihn eingeredet habe, sich vorläufig ausserstande erklärt, Striche zu machen. Es ist, wenn man ihn kennt, bis zu einem gewissen Grade zu verstehen, da er nie in dieser Weise an seinen Stücken arbeitet und sich auf den Standpunkt stellt, das Stück sei viel kürzer als jedes Stück von Shakespeare, und es sei eine rein praktische Arbeit, die paar Sätze zu streichen. Er selbst findet es nicht zu lang. Immerhin hat er sich bereit erklärt, sofort, wenn die Uraufführungsbühne bestimmt ist, sich mit dem dortigen Regisseur zusammzusetzen und die nötigen Striche zu machen, die dann an die anderen Bühnen weitergegeben werden können. Aber wenn es schon früher nötig ist, kann Wreede sicher bei ihm mit einigem Druck erreichen, dass er es selbständig macht. Im übrigen werde ich, sobald ich mit meiner Partitur ein bisschen über den Berg bin, selbst ein Buch einstreichen. Ich bin jetzt mit der Komposition ganz fertig und arbeite an der Partitur des 2. Aktes." *W-UE*, 418.
35. Memo of telephone call by Alfred Kalmus, 18 November 1932; *W-UE*, 419. The details of Horenstein's criticism are unknown. Weill enclosed Horenstein's letter in a mailing to UE on 23 November, but the letter does not appear to survive.
36. See Günther Rühle, *Theater in Deutschland, 1887–1945: Seine Ereignisse – seine Menschen* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 2007), 667.
37. The Wallner-Theater, Die Tribüne, and the Deutsches Künstlertheater had closed; see Herbert Jhering's article "Zusammenbrüche und Mimikry," *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 1 November 1932. The Theater am Schiffbauerdamm defaulted on 24 November but failed to disclose its insolvency and was shut down by the authorities on 6 December; the Rotter Brothers, who owned or had leased nine theaters (among them the Theater des Westens, the Metropol-Theater, and the Theater im Admiralspalast), collapsed in mid-January 1933, at least in part due to financial irregularities.
38. Weill to UE, 14 November 1932; *W-UE*, 418.
39. "Beer und Martin haben das Buch gelesen, haben noch in der Nacht Wreede angerufen, sind restlos begeistert und wollen es unbedingt mit grosser Besetzung (Jannings oder George) als nächste grosse Premiere des Deutschen Theaters bringen. Ich habe ihnen gestern die Musik vorgespielt, sie versprechen sich eine ganz grosse Sache." *W-UE*, 420.
40. On 2 December 1932, Heinsheimer informed Weill that, after having read about the casting of Ernst Busch in Berlin's *B. Z. am Mittag*, he would send a detailed note to the Viennese papers; *W-UE*, 427.
41. Heinsheimer sent two reports on 5 December 1932. Writing to FBE, he described her as "very suitable" (*sehr geeignet*). In his letter to Weill, he reported that work with her

- had “in fact” (*durchaus*) shown her “suitability” (*Eignung*) for the role; *W-UE*, 427. Kapellmeister Erwin Stein, a former Schoenberg student, had created several piano reductions of Weill’s full scores. At the time, he was preparing the one for *Der Silbersee*.
42. Tt1 survives in her papers at the AdK (Agnes-Straub-Archiv, Folder 119). The copy shows no annotations except for a red mark highlighting the role of Frau von Luber on the list of characters.
 43. “Kurt Weill hat zu dem neuen Stück Georg Kaisers die Musik geschrieben, die dem Stück organisch verbunden ist. Die Musik begleitet große Teile des Werkes und enthält eine ganze Reihe großer Chorsätze. Die Chöre geben, wie in früheren Werken Weills, auch dem Stück Georg Kaisers eine Stilgeschlossenheit, die für das Werk charakteristisch ist.” *Die Stunde*, 26 November 1932.
 44. The minimum of twenty-five is implied in Weill’s report of 16 January 1933 on talks with Hamburg’s Thalia-Theater, whose general manager ruled out a twenty-five-piece orchestra but stated he could afford and accommodate up to eighteen musicians; *W-UE*, 443. The Berlin-based *Theater-Tageblatt* had reported on 4 January 1933 that the Deutsches Theater could not afford the thirty musicians that Weill’s music required. Early in the compositional process—well before any work on the orchestration—Weill had considered “employing a little orchestra of twenty players (in the pit, with conductor), a small chorus, all the main parts for actors” (Ich verwende ein kleines Orchester von 20 Mann (im Orchesterraum, mit Dirigent), einen kleinen Chor, alle Hauptrollen für Schauspieler). Weill to Walter Bruno Iltz, 9 September 1932; photocopy in WLRC, Series 40.
 45. “Herr Stein wird sich unsere verschiedenen Vorschläge zurechtlegen und Ihnen Anfang nächster Woche Bescheid geben, wie er sich die Einrichtung vorstellt.” Photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 3.
 46. “Es wäre wohl am besten, wenn man diese so einrichten würde, dass sie von ca. 16 Mann aufwärts bis zur Originalbesetzung spielbar wäre. Als Minimum denke ich mir: 1 Flöte, 1 Klarinette, 2 Trompeten, 1 Posaune, Klavier, Harmonium, Schlagzeug, Streicher. Die Stimmen müssten natürlich entsprechend eingerichtet werden, so dass z.B. ein Oboen Solo in kleinen Noten auch in der Klarinetten- (oder Flöten-)stimme steht, mit dem Vermerk ‚Oboe‘. So weiss der Klarinetist, dass er die Stimme blasen muss, wenn die Oboe fehlt.” *W-UE*, 423f.
 47. “Es ist natürlich ganz unmöglich, dass bei diesem Werk der Klavierauszug als Partitur verwendet werden kann. Es handelt sich ja nicht um eine Operette, bei der es auf die Instrumentierung nicht ankommt, sondern um eine ganz ausgewachsene, sehr sorgfältig gearbeitete Partitur. Das Werk ist an allen Theatern für die ersten Kapellmeister bestimmt, die es sicher und mit vollem Recht ablehnen werden, eine so umfangreiche und verantwortungsvoll gearbeitete Musik aus dem Klavierauszug zu dirigieren. Ich erinnere Sie, lieber Dr. Heinsheimer, daran, dass ich es hier in Berlin, als Sie mich danach fragten, ausdrücklich abgelehnt habe, dass von diesem Werk ein sogenannter Dirigierauszug gemacht wird. Schon bei der *Dreigroschenoper* (wo es sich nur um 7 Instrumente handelte) hat sich der Dirigierauszug nicht bewährt, weil kein Mensch sich von dem Klangbild, das bei mir ja immer besonders wichtig ist, eine Vorstellung machen konnte.” *W-UE*, 422.
 48. “Glauben Sie wirklich, dass man denen einen Dirigierauszug schicken kann? Sie können damit keine Fehler korrigieren, sie können nicht abdämpfen oder den Klang ausgleichen usw.” *W-UE*, 442.
 49. Weill to UE, 24 November 1932; *W-UE*, 422.
 50. “ein Stück für Schauspielbühnen, in das einige geschlossene Musikstücke (Lieder, Duette, Chöre und Orchesterstücke) organisch eingebaut sind”; *Langenberger Zeitung*, 5 December 1932.
 51. “4–5 kleine Lieder”; “es sind keine Songs, keine ‚Schlager‘, kein amerikanisches Milieu, es ist ganz ausserhalb des Produktionskreises meiner letzten Theaterarbeiten”; “einem wirklich volkstümlichen Ton, nicht provokatorisch, aber doch mit einer genügenden Menge bitterer Wahrheit”; “ein derartiges modernes Volksstück noch nicht gibt”; Weill to UE, 8 October 1929; *W-UE*, 191–92.
 52. In 1923, Gustav Kiepenheuer published Kaiser’s only “Volksstück,” the play *Nebeneinander*, subtitled *Volksstück 1923 in fünf Akten*. Its characters present a variety of “everyday people,” with realistic language (though bordering on caricature) to match.
 53. Also in his collaboration with Weill: the working title for *Der Protagonist* had been for the longest time “Kulissen,” and *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren* had seen earlier stages as “Photographie und Liebe” as well as “Der Zar lässt sich” (the nine dots so specified).
 54. “Der Titel steht noch nicht endgültig fest, Georg Kaiser schwankt zwischen ‚Der Silbersee‘ und ‚Die Olimpiade‘.” *Die Stunde*, 26 November 1932. Weill’s and Wreede’s hope is expressed in a letter from FBE to UE of 8 November 1932. If the report is correct, it is rather unclear what Kaiser may have intended with a wordplay that would have been cryptic to most: as a harlequinade is a play or an event involving Harlequin, the “Olimpiade” would have been a play involving Olim. The latter is not a common given name, used only humorously in German as “zu Olims Zeiten” (ages ago). People with a basic knowledge of Latin would have known the underlying word, *olim*, meaning “once” or “formerly,” including the archetypal beginning of fairy tales (“Once upon a time . . .”), so “Olimpiade” could have signaled a play about “once upon a time.” But the title could have also caused confusion: people might have wondered if it contained typographical errors as a garbled version of the German “Olympiade” (Olympics) or its Italian form, “Olimpiade,” also the title of a libretto by Metastasio.
 55. Information according to index card recording shipments of rental materials (*Materialeihkartei*) for “Silbersee” with stamped number “0428”; Universal Edition’s business archives in Vienna.
 56. FBE to UE, 12 December 1932.
 57. Weill to UE, 23 November 1932; *W-UE*, 420. Weill also mentioned the possibility that Lenya would play the role at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin.
 58. “Verworrenheit der Grundidee”; “verschwommene Symbolik des Stückschlusses”; “gekünstelte Sprache”; FBE to UE, 22 December 1932 (quoting a letter from the National-Theater Mannheim). Heinrich Schnitzler, dramaturg at Vienna’s Volkstheater, had also voiced some criticism, stating that characters often stopped being characters in order to express some of Kaiser’s abstract, philosophical, or sociological ideas; *W-UE*, 425–26.
 59. “Beer hat jetzt also offiziell Wreede mitgeteilt, dass er finanziell vollständig am Ende ist und garnicht daran denken kann, ein Stück mit Chor und Orchester zu geben. [...] Leider ist in der vorigen Woche wertvolle Zeit versäumt worden, weil man immer noch auf die Entscheidung der Herren Beer und Martin wartete, die natürlich längst gefallen war.” Weill to UE, 2 January 1933; *W-UE*, 436.
 60. Weill’s trip to southwest Germany did not materialize, but he did travel to Hamburg on 14 or 15 January, mainly to discuss plans for a *Bürgschaft* production at the Oper im Schiller-Theater in Altona. A discussion of *Der Silbersee* with the Deutsches Schauspielhaus did not happen, as the intendant was out of town. Weill then phoned Erich Ziegel at the Thalia-Theater (see note 44).
 61. UE to Weill, 19 January 1933; *W-UE*, 447. The “5–6 gleichzeitige Uraufführungsbühnen” are mentioned in Weill’s letter to UE of 6 January 1933; *W-UE*, 441. Leipzig had committed by 2 January, Magdeburg by 5 January, and Erfurt no later than 13 January. Except for Stuttgart, it is unclear which theaters were waiting and which ones had declined the offer. FBE, UE, and Weill were still negotiating with Mannheim, Frankfurt and Darmstadt (mutually exclusive because of their proximity), the Deutsches Theater am Rhein (Düsseldorf/Cologne), and Hamburg’s Thalia-Theater. Decisions in Vienna were also still pending.
 62. During the last days of December, Weill had played the music for Magdeburg’s intendant, Hellmuth Götze, who visited Berlin. See minutes of a meeting of the City of Magdeburg’s committee for theater and orchestra affairs on 23 February 1933; Stadtarchiv Magdeburg, Rep. A III, 59, 6x (Theater- und Orchesterausschuß), fol. 108r.
 63. Busch had also appeared in the revue *Wir sind ja sooo zufrieden*.
 64. Information taken from *Deutsches Bühnen-Jahrbuch*, vol. 44 (1933), 470.
 65. Daily listings with details about performing forces appeared in most Leipzig papers (e.g., *Neueste Nachrichten*, *Tageszeitung*, *Volkszeitung*, and *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung*). Another opera that ran in parallel to *Der Silbersee* was *Madame Butterfly* (on 2 March), but on that night—the sole exception—members of the Gewandhaus were announced as performing *Der Silbersee*, whereas the remaining players performed Puccini’s opera.
 66. For example, concurrent productions such as Sigmund Graff’s *Die vier Musketiere* and Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* (using Engelbert Humperdinck’s incidental music) also employed an orchestra that required removal of the same seats, which caused some disruption of seat assignments for subscription tickets.
 67. *Deutsches Bühnen-Jahrbuch*, vol. 44 (1933), 487f. and 366f. Listed are the total numbers of players employed. How many of them were used in the respective *Silbersee* productions is unknown.
 68. Listing of the performance in *Der Kontakt: Erfurter Bühnenblätter*, 1932–33, no. 19. Legband had directed a film version of the Kleist novella in 1920.
 69. A letter from Heinsheimer to Weill, 23 December 1932 (photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 3), mentions *Silbersee* sketches by Neher, one of which was supposed to be selected for the cover of *Ae*.
 70. “In allen unseren Gesprächen waren wir uns doch darüber klar, dass es die eingänglichste, geschlossenste und wirkungsvollste Nummer ist. [...] dass ich sie in den Mittelpunkt der Ouvertüre gestellt habe.” Weill to UE, 16 January 1933; *W-UE*, 444.
 71. Weill reported on 10 January that Neher had created an attractive cover design (“ein sehr schönes Titelblatt”), which the artist would send that day; on 12 January, Heinsheimer replied that UE had asked Mopp to create a drawing (photocopies in WLRC, Series 41, Box 3). On 16 January he informed Weill that UE would use Mopp’s design, since Neher’s had still not arrived; *W-UE*, 444.
 72. An interview with Abravanel (1984) suggests that a pick-up orchestra was used for the recording, which “we made one afternoon, a Monday afternoon in Berlin, and I remember the musicians rushing like mad at the end of the session, and they were taking quick taxis to get to the Deutsches Opernhaus, where they were going to play *Götterdämmerung*. The same musicians would do that, if you asked the horn player to repeat a passage. It is bad for your health. Because they could make a few bucks.” Transcript of oral history interview conducted by David Farneth and Lys Symonette, Tanglewood, 8 August 1984; WLRC, Series 60. More than half a century after the fact, Abravanel may have misremembered some details: the recording appears to have been made on 8 February, a Wednesday, and no Berlin opera house performed *Götterdämmerung* that week.

73. A letter of 3 February 1933 announcing the express package (photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 3) mentions four sections of the score, suggesting that two additional numbers were considered for recording.
74. *Der Ton: Ein Magazin für Musik- und Tanzfreunde* 7, no. 4 (April 1933): 19.
75. “ein bisschen roh, die Stimme Buschs übertönt das Orchester, aber sonst sind die Platten wirklich wieder sehr schön und bedeuten gerade jetzt eine wichtige Festlegung dieser Musik. Dass nun auch noch die Lenja-Platten kommen, ist wirklich erfreulich.” UE to Weill, 1 March 1933; *W-UE*, 457.
76. In an e-mail message of 16 August 2007 to the author of this Introduction, Rainer E. Lotz revealed that he holds recording logs from Berlin’s Electrola studio (in photocopy), which do not list a session with Lenja and Brecher but do have some gaps for 1933 and are thus unreliable. Lotz added that test pressings would have been routinely shipped to the HMV headquarters in Hayes, UK, where no pressing has surfaced as yet. One can only speculate which *Silbersee* numbers were considered for recording. Likely candidates are Fennimore’s “Ich bin eine arme Verwandte” and “Caesars Tod,” both of which Lenja recorded in the 1950s.
77. The British *Radio Times* of 3 February 1933 lists Lenja and Busch as participants in “the light programme,” as do several German and Austrian dailies. Some newspapers reported that the program would experience a 75-minute interruption for Hugenberg’s speech (e.g., *Vorwärts*, 11 February 1933), but this may not have applied to the various national and international stations that participated in relays.
78. Apparently on a suggestion by Gustav Kiepenheuer, Kaiser and Rothe met in the vacated apartment of Ernst Toller, who had left Germany in early January for a lecture tour in Switzerland. See Johannes F. Evelein, “Hans Rothe,” in: *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur seit 1933, Band 3: USA, Teil 5*, ed. John M. Spalek et al. (Zurich: K. G. Saur, 2005), 152–76, at p. 159. See also *Georg Kaiser in Sachen Georg Kaiser*, 319–20.
79. “Die antisemitische Frage spielt überhaupt keine Rolle, da ja jetzt ausschliesslich Gewittergojim gegeneinander kämpfen.” Weill to UE, 20 September 1932; *W-UE*, 413.
80. “Aber darin kann man sich ja sehr irren”; Weill to UE, 6 February 1933; *W-UE*, 451.
81. “[I]ch glaube, dass die Unterschätzung des Gegners sich nun erst rächen, dass es sich nun zeigen wird, dass jene alles besser, sicherer und rücksichtsloser halten werden, als es sich die Republikaner durch 15 Jahre getraut haben. Wie wird sich diese Lage nun im konkreten Fall *Silbersee* auswirken? Ich meine, dass ein Ausweichen jetzt, etwa eine Verschiebung der Premieren bis nach den Wahlen, nutzlos ist. Der Gedanke wäre aber immerhin zu diskutieren. Wir müssen es wohl ruhig darauf ankommen lassen und einmal sehen, was die neuen Regierungsblätter und Stellen nun zu Weill in einer derartigen unaggressiven Umgebung sagen. Es wird jedenfalls eine sehr wichtige und aufschlussreiche Kontrolle Ihres augenblicklichen Rufes in diesen Kreisen sein.” UE to Weill, 8 February 1933; *W-UE*, 452–53.
82. On 12 March, the *Kölnische Zeitung* listed *Der Silbersee* as one of several forthcoming Kiepenheuer publications. A Dutch newspaper, *De Telegraaf*, mentioned the publication on 29 March. A literary journal confirmed the book’s release in the following month: *Die neue Literatur* 34, no. 4 (April 1933): 224. That issue seems to have appeared by mid-April, as it was among periodicals discussed in a “Zeitschriftenschau” broadcast on 19 April (an announcement of the broadcast appeared in *Börsenblatt für den deutschen Buchhandel* on 13 April). The *Börsenblatt*’s daily supplement (“Tägliches Verzeichnis der Neuerscheinungen”) never listed *Der Silbersee*. Unsubstantiated claims of a release in January appear in Jürgen Schebera, “Georg Kaiser und Kurt Weill: Stationen einer Zusammenarbeit 1924–1933,” *Sinn und Form* 38, no. 1 (Jan.–Feb. 1986): 202, and in subsequent publications by that author, for example, *Gustav Brecher und die Leipziger Oper* (Leipzig: Peters, 1990), 87, and *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Life*, transl. Caroline Murphy (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1995), 198. Other authors have merely perpetuated the January date (e.g., Gudrun Dittmann, *Oper zwischen Anpassung und Integrität: Zu den Uraufführungen zeitgenössischer deutscher Opern am Leipziger Neuen Theater im NS-Staat* [Essen: Die blaue Eule, 2005], 52). Earlier publications have incorrectly given 1930; e.g., Kim H. Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 83, 443; Schebera, *Kurt Weill: Leben und Werk* (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1983), 151; and Ulrich Schreiber, *Opernführer für Fortgeschrittene: Die Geschichte des Musiktheaters—Das 20. Jahrhundert I: Von Verdi und Wagner bis zum Faschismus* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000), 621.
83. Among *M* are two unused cover designs that depict the same scene but are painted in different styles. One may have been an earlier version of the design chosen by Kiepenheuer.
84. Reviews of the opening night pointed out that—contrary to earlier press announcements—Kaiser did not show up (e.g., *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, 20 February; *Theater-Tageblatt* and *Deutsche Zeitung*, 21 February; *Duisburger Generalanzeiger*, 26 February). The *Wiesbadener Tagblatt* (21 February) claimed that Kaiser was present—perhaps trusting those earlier announcements—but did not appear during the curtain calls. An official explanation by the theater may have been that Kaiser had come down with the flu, as reported in *B.Z. am Mittag*, 20 February. Whether Kaiser could have attended the premiere is unclear, as he was en route to Sicily, where he arrived, in Agrigento, on the evening of the 20th; see *Georg Kaiser in Sachen Georg Kaiser*, 322.
85. It is unlikely that Kaiser attended the last rehearsals in Leipzig, given that his publisher sent telegrams to his new Berlin address in Karlshorst on 16 and 17 February; Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Bestand 21097 Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag und Dieterich’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Leipzig, Folder 45.
86. “das Handlungsmässige herauszubringen und auf gewisse gedankliche Formulierungen, die den Gang der Handlung hemmen, zu verzichten”; FBE to UE, 20 February 1933.
87. Josef Heinzelmann mentions a vocal score transmitting the cuts made in Leipzig; liner notes for compact disc *Der Silbersee*, issued in 1990 (Capriccio 60011-2), 18. Attempts to locate or identify the score have been unsuccessful.
88. Weill to UE, 16 January 1933; *W-UE*, 443.
89. In a snide remark for the NSDAP paper *Leipziger Tageszeitung* (20 February 1933), “F. Z.” (= Franz Zürner) noted that the production wisely did not stage the robbery.
90. Discussing cuts in the score, Heinrich Wiegand (*Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 20 February 1933) pointed out that “the Act II finale, for example, requires music” (Das Finale des zweiten Aktes beispielsweise verlangt die Musik).
91. “scharf rhythmische Deklamation”; *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 19 February 1933.
92. “die im Chanson-Vortrag mit Recht berühmt ist [...] durch Nervosität gehemmt”; *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 20 February 1933. Leipzig’s production of *Die Dreigroschenoper* had opened on 25 December 1928—with Weill in attendance—and played more than one hundred performances.
93. Annotations in *Fm* suggest that the following numbers were pruned: Nr. 1, mm. 49–67; Nr. 2, mm. 11–20 and 30–37; Nr. 8, mm. 10–17; Nr. 9, mm. 1–49; and Nr. 22, mm. 56–73.
94. On 19 January 1933, he wrote to Lenja that he would get to Leipzig around 14 February; *W-LL(g)*, 84; the date is omitted in *W-LL(e)*, 74. On 28 January 1933, he repeated the information: “I’m so delighted that you’ll be coming to Leipzig with me. I imagine I’ll be staying there from approximately the 14th [of February] on.” *W-LL(e)*, 75. The word “ständig” in the original German suggests that he may have traveled to Leipzig earlier for short trips: “Ich freue mich schon mächtig, besonders daß du mit mir nach Leipzig kommst. Ich denke, daß ich so ungefähr vom 14. [Februar] ab ständig drüben bin.” *W-LL(g)*, 85.
95. “kleine Probe, die von Ironie und heimlichen Sinn geladen ist”; *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, 18 February 1933. The same excerpt of the “dialogue,” lifted from the third scene, was reprinted in the *Prager Tagblatt*, 19 February 1933.
96. “Februar. Heimsheimer [*sic*]. - - - Aufmarsch der S.A. um die Ecke. Zu dritt in einer dunklen Gasse. Nachher machten wir Witze, ob die wohl geschlossen zur Premiere kämen.” Undated typescript by Caspar Neher (filed with George Davis’s notes about oral history interviews with Neher and others); WLRC/DD. Heinsheimer had planned to arrive early in the morning of the 18th; UE to Weill, 16 February 1933 (photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 3).
97. Threats in the form of anonymous letters are mentioned in a contemporaneous source (minutes of a committee meeting; see note 62); Stadtarchiv Magdeburg, Rep. A III, 59, 6x, fol. 108r. In a 1969 interview, Sirk recalled a council member named “Hauptmann” (i.e., Friedrich August Hauptmann) and Goerdeler’s phone call. *Sirk on Sirk: Interviews with Jon Halliday*, rev. edition (London: Faber, 1997), 28.
98. Hilpert is mentioned in FBE’s letter to UE of 20 February, Soergel in Neher’s typescript, and the Noailles and Rivière in Weill’s letter to Lenja of 28 January; *W-LL(g)*, 85 (the translation in *W-LL(e)*, 75, omits that Charles planned to attend as well). Soergel had covered Kaiser’s output in his influential second volume of *Dichtung und Dichter der Zeit: Eine Schilderung der deutschen Literatur der letzten Jahrzehnte*, titled *Neue Folge: Im Banne des Expressionismus* (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1925), 661–90. In 1933, he joined the NSDAP; the third and last volume of his compendium would be titled *Dichter aus deutschem Volkstum* (1935), wherein Kaiser and his output since 1924 went unmentioned.
99. Quoted in *Sirk on Sirk*, 35.
100. *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 22 February 1933; the paper was subsequently shut down by the Nazis (the last issue appeared on 1 March).
101. The *Chemnitzer Tageblatt* reported on 11 March that the *Silbersee* performances for the Arbeiterbildungskartell (*sic*) could not take place; reprinted in *Über Kurt Weill*, ed. David Drew (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), 114, but erroneously re-dated “6. März 1933.” The explanation on p. 174 for the revised dating is misguided: the performances were supposed to take place on 13 and 20 March (not 5 March, or 4 March as the chronology on p. 164 claims); the stamp “11. März 1933” on the original clipping is correct, as a comparison with a complete copy of the newspaper confirms. Programs at the Stadtarchiv Leipzig show that the Altes Theater offered Harry Frank’s *Der Liebeskalender* as a private performance on the 13th, and *The Merchant of Venice* as a public performance at popular prices on the 20th; StadtAL, 0150 (Städtische Theater), D/Nr. 1935. Reports of Brecher’s dismissal began to appear on 12 March 1933 (e.g., *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*).
102. The change is also documented on a handwritten cast list preserved in the Stadtarchiv Magdeburg; facsimile in András Borbély T., “Studien zu dem Bühnenspiel *Der Silbersee – Ein Wintermärchen* von Kurt Weill” (master’s thesis, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, 2017), 31. The same list identifies Busch as a guest. Ensemble member Gillis van Rappard appears to have been originally cast as Severin; he still may have served as an understudy.
103. The pages are bound without covers; see Critical Report, Source Descriptions. In a letter of 30 November 1932, Kiepenheuer’s co-owner Fritz Landshoff had informed

Kaiser that the typesetting could be completed fairly quickly, so that the press could roll before Christmas; Sächsisches Staatsarchiv, Bestand 21097, Folder 45. Presumably **TpB** represents an advance copy printed by Kiepenheuer to be used as rental material by FBE. Such practices were not uncommon (see Kaiser's letter to Kiepenheuer, 31 December 1924, asking him to produce some advance copies of the play *Gats* for theaters prior to the actual book publication; *Georg Kaiser in Sachen Georg Kaiser*, 278).

104. "nicht gerade sympathisch kostümiert"; *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 20 February 1933.
105. "einmal pff und trampelte es bedenklich"; *Tägliche Rundschau* (Berlin), 22 February 1933.
106. Aside from the NSDAP (Kreisleitung Magdeburg) and Stahlhelm (Bund der Frontsoldaten, Gründergau Magdeburg, Graf v. Alvensleben, Landesführer), seven other organizations signed: Frauenschaft der NSDAP, Kreis Magdeburg; Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur, Landesleitung Sachsen-Anhalt; DNVP, Kreisverein Magdeburg; Landbund der Provinz Sachsen, Reg.-Bez. Magdeburg; Nationalverband Deutscher Offiziere, Ortsgruppe Magdeburg; Kampfbund des gewerblichen Mittelstandes; and Bund Königin Luise. The morning edition of the *Berliner Tageblatt* reported on 21 February 1933 that an attempt to shut down the production by enlisting the police had failed (the police commissioner sharply rejected the idea).
107. "habe man im Einvernehmen mit dem Autor Streichungen vorgenommen, jedoch nur aus dramaturgischen Gründen. Die Bühnenbilder, von dem bekannten Berliner Bühnenbildner Kaspar [sic] Neher entworfen, seien gesucht primitiv und wahrscheinlich nicht für den Geschmack eines an naturalistische oder kunstgewerbliche Formen gewöhnten Publikums. Auch in Leipzig sei die Absicht, über die Rampe hinauszuspielen, unverkennbar. Das vollbesetzte Haus sei mit dem Werk durchaus mitgegangen; das Werk ist dort nicht als aggressiv empfunden worden, obwohl z.B. das Spiel Gollings erheblich aggressiver sei als das von Busch in Magdeburg. Im ganzen genommen sei die hiesige Inszenierung poetischer und insgesamt nicht aufreizender als die Leipziger Aufführung. Auch in Erfurt werde das Werk günstig beurteilt und bleibe scheinbar mit finanziellem Erfolge weiterhin im Spielplan. Magdeburg stehe also in diesem Falle vereinzelt da. Es sei vom Intendanten gleich nach der Premiere beabsichtigt gewesen, zwei vom Publikum möglicherweise als aggressiv empfundene Stellen zu streichen bzw. zu mildern." Stadtarchiv Magdeburg, Rep. A III, 59, 6x, fol. 108r.
108. *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 21 February 1933, 1. (Haupt-)Ausgabe (signed "By").
109. Asked by the committee about upcoming productions, Götze mentioned Pfitzner's *Palestrina*, Wagner's *Walküre* and *Rheingold*, and Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*; beginning on 1 May, a consecutive run of Oscar Straus's *Eine Frau, die weiß, was sie will* was scheduled to open, but Götze said that in light of the current situation, he would shelve plans to mount a new production of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. Stadtarchiv Magdeburg, Rep. A III, 59, 6x, fol. 109r.
110. Listings of the performance appeared in the *Magdeburgische Zeitung* on 25 and 28 (sic) February 1933.
111. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* (14 March) reported Reuter's dismissal; the *Theater-Tageblatt* (8 April) those of Götze, Beck, and the Erster Kapellmeister, Siegfried Blumann.
112. *Tribüne: Organ der Sozialdemokratie für Thüringen und den Regierungsbezirk Erfurt*, 20 February 1933.
113. Ibid. (Sprechgesang); *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 February 1933 (general praise for principals).
114. For examples, see *Berliner Morgenpost*, 21 February (unsigned) or *Tägliche Rundschau*, 22 February (signed "vl.").
115. UE to Weill, 8 February 1933; *W-UE*, 453.
116. "Was sagen Sie zu der neusten Methode der Berliner Presse, Stücke nach dem Klavierauszug zu kritisieren, ohne sich die Aufführung anzusehen? Und wie finden Sie die Haltung des 'Börsencouriers', der überhaupt keine Besprechung der Musik bringt, weil Herr Strobel jetzt schon zu feige ist, auch nur Stellung zu nehmen?" Weill to UE, 26 February 1933; *W-UE*, 456–57.
117. Kerr left for Prague on 15 February 1933. Strobel, a proponent of New Music, had published an important essay about Weill in 1927 and shown unflagging support through *Die Bürgschaft*. Strobel managed to continue his career in Germany, receiving special permissions from Goebbels's ministry in 1934, and again in 1937, to remain a registered member of the "Berufsliste der Schriftleiter" despite his Jewish spouse and his inclusion on a 1935 blacklist ("Liste der Musik-Bolschewisten") of the NS Kulturgemeinde e.V., the successor organization to Alfred Rosenberg's Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur; see Fred K. Prieberg, *Handbuch Deutsche Musiker, 1933–1945* (self-published, version 1.2, 3/2005), 7062–63; and Rainer Sieb, "Der Zugriff der NSDAP auf die Musik: Zum Aufbau von Organisationsstrukturen für die Musikarbeit in den Gliederungen der Partei" (Ph.D. diss., Universität Osnabrück, 2007), 59.
118. "Georg Kaiser, der Dramatiker mit den vielen Gesichtern [sic], zeigt dem Theater ein neues Gesicht: er schreibt ein Märchen; ein Wintermärchen nennt er es. Es versteht sich bei Kaiser von selbst, dass es kein lächelndes Kinderspiel ist, kein aus Luft gewebtes Netz, kein Ziergebilde, das, losgelöst von allen Erdketten, im leeren Raum einer erfundenen Weltordnung schwingt. Das Märchenhafte legt sich wie ein Schleier über die Gedanken; aber der Schleier bleibt klar wie seine Sprache, durchsichtig wie seine Gedanken. [/] [...], Wer weiter muss, den trägt der Silbersee: das ist dieses schö-

nen Märchens letzter Schluss. 'Fortschritt – es gilt nicht: wohin, sondern: fort wovon', so hieß es in einem früheren Werke Georg Kaisers. Um diesen Gedanken baut er jetzt eine Legende [...], die mit dichterischer Seherkraft das Dickicht der Zeit durchdringt. Fort wovon? Fort von tödlicher Entzweiung, von der nur die lachenden Dritten profitieren; fort mit dieser Mauer, die Gleichgesinnte, Zusammengehörige immer wieder zwischen sich errichten. Der arme Mensch, der in der Mooshütte am Silbersee ein Hundedasein führte, den die Sehnsucht nach einer Ananas mächtig überkommt, und der arme Mensch, den der märchenhafte Zufall in ein Schloss entführt: gehören sie nicht zusammen, müssen sie nicht gemeinsam marschieren, wissen sie nicht, von welcher Seite ihnen beiden Gefahr droht? Schon zeichnet sich am Horizont das Signal, wohin der Weg gehen muss. Noch liegt das Ziel im Nebel; aber der Nebel wird sich teilen, wie der Silbersee in der Sonne fror. Erst den gemeinsamen Gegner erkennen, erst gemeinsam marschieren, Hand in Hand: Erkenntnis und Einigkeit werden immer den Weg ins Helle finden. [/] Ein Märchen also, dessen bewegende Kraft die Idee ist. Figuren wachsen zu Begriffen, zu Symbolen, und diese wieder gleiten in den erregend schimmernden Bannkreis des Theaters. Ein Märchen, auf stählernem Grunde gebaut, erleuchtet von einem glühenden Herzen; ein Märchen, das Geist und Spiel, Mystik und Wirklichkeit zu einer höheren Form bindet. Hat man nicht Georg Kaiser oft vorgeworfen, seine Dramen seien kalte Konstruktionen, nach mathematischen Formeln errechnet? Gewiss, auch dieses neue Werk schließt sich nicht leicht auf, auch dieses Werk hat die Vieldeutigkeit in Wort und Gedanken. Aber das Eisen, das Kaiser schmiedet, hat magische Glut. [/] [...] eine umfangreiche Partitur, die nicht eine neben dem Werk herlaufende Begleitung bleibt [...] haben den schlagenden Rhythmus der 'Dreigroschenoper', deren Stil sich Kaiser auf durchaus persönliche Art zu eigen macht." *Berliner Tageblatt*, 20 February (evening edition).

119. "Ein böser Spinner sitzt am Rad." "das Märchenbild aus den harten Fäden der Wirklichkeit. [...] Man muß die Reichen, man muß die Obrigkeit, die ihr Schlemmen schützt, hassen wie fressendes Geschwür. [...] [/] Das Stück ist nicht ohne starke dichterische Kraft. Spannungen von großer geistiger Tragweite sind vorhanden und ungewöhnlich die gedanklichen Wallungen, die wie Sternschnuppen aus dämonischen Firmamenten schießen. Doch, und das entscheidet hier, schießen sie am Wesentlichen, am Ziel der wahren Volksgemeinschaft vorbei. Dies 'Wintermärchen' erlöst nicht, es verwirrt. Es ist destruktiv. Es propagiert die Verbrüderung über die nationalen Grenzen hinaus. An Stelle des heißen Herzens spricht ein demagogischer Verstand. Ohne die Musik von Kurt Weill, die über die der 'Dreigroschenoper' etwas hinausgewachsen ist [...] stünde der 'Gedankenspieler' Kaiser ziemlich isoliert da. So hüllt die leuchtende, nicht immer dissonierend abstrakte Eindrucks kraft des Klangbildes die stilzerissene Dichtung ein in den Mantel einer höchst virtuos gehandhabten Technik." Quoted from *Hagener Zeitung*, 22 February. Aside from the *Leipziger Abendpost*, the text also appeared in *Deutsche Tageszeitung* (20 February), *Karlsruher Tagblatt* (22 February), and *Bergische Zeitung* (24 February).
120. An exception was Karl Heinz Ruppel. Writing for the *Kölnische Zeitung* (23 February), he also mentioned Weill's other play with music, *Happy End*.
121. "Schauspielmusik im besten Sinne [...] Sie ist stimmungsfördernd, gibt in zahlreichen Chansons (die die Schauspieler allerdings nur andeutungsweise singen können), Gelegenheit zu epischem Verweilen. Die Tanzformen der 'Dreigroschenoper' sind nur noch vereinzelt genutzt, ein Trauermarsch zu Anfang macht Eindruck, symphonische Arbeit tritt öfters in den Vordergrund. Das Vorspiel zum dritten Akt erzielte Sonderbeifall. [/] Die orchestralen Mittel sind reicher als bei früheren Schauspielmusiken. Die Bläser überwiegen nach wie vor bei Weill, die Jazz-Instrumente sind ausgeschieden. Aber die Verwendung der klanglichen Mittel bleibt wohltuend sparsam und ist charaktervoll. [/] Rein musikalisch betrachtet befestigt Weill seinen Stil, der harmonisch freier ist, ohne dem Hörer Schwierigkeiten zu bereiten. Harmonisch übernimmt er wenig, desto mehr melodisch. Obschon viele Melodien bekannt sind – schwer zu unterscheiden, wo er Bekanntes unbewußt oder parodierend aufgreift! – ist ihre Fassung doch stets apart, reizvoll durch Rhythmus und Klang." *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, 19 February 1933.
122. *Durlacher Tagblatt*, 26 November 1953.
123. "Before hearing *Der Silbersee*," in: Program for the Holland Festival, The Hague (May 1971), 23.
124. Andreas Hauff, "Nicht denkbar 'ohne die sozialen und ethischen Hintergründe': Zum politischen Kontext des Weill'schen Musiktheaters," *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 161, no. 2 (February 2000): 36–41, at p. 40. Elaborating on Hauff's observations is Stephen Hinton, *Weill's Musical Theater: Stages of Reform* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2012), 131–37. Hauff also considered whether Fennimore's introductory song (Nr. 12) could have been inspired by Felix Joachimson's and Theo Mackeben's "Ich bin eine arme Verwandte" for an adaptation of Gustav Freytag's *Die Journalisten*, which premiered on 12 May 1932 at Berlin's Deutsches Theater and ran till the end of June; see *Der Silbersee: A Sourcebook*, 2nd edition, ed. Joanna Lee, Edward Harsh, and Kim Kowalke (New York: Kurt Weill Foundation, 2001), 6. Except for the first line and the subject, the lyric and Mackeben's setting seem to have little in common with Fennimore's number.
125. "Stimmungsmäßig hält Weills Musik die Mitte zwischen einem, mit einem gehörigen Schuß scharfer Satire ausgestatteten Realismus und einem Märchencharakter, in dem – wie im Stück selbst – das Gespenstische und Unwirkliche, das Dämonische und Grauensvolle bei weitem jenes friedliche Element überwiegen, das wir im allgemeinen mit dem Begriff des Märchens verbinden. Bewundernswert ist die Intensität, die von Weills Tonsprache ausgeht. Gleichviel, ob Freund oder Feind: diese Musik anzuhören, wird jedem Besucher der Vorstellung zum unumgänglichen Gebot; sie läßt sich nicht

- überhören. Diese Musik hat einen ganz starken, dramatischen Nerv, und sie knüpft damit wieder an ein früheres Werk Weills an, das ihn schon einmal in Verbindung mit Georg Kaiser gebracht hat, an seine Oper ‚Der Protagonist‘.” *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 19 February 1933.
126. “In der Fähigkeit, Atmosphäre zu erzeugen, gleichsam das Parfüm einer Begebenheit zu suggerieren, kommt ihm heute kein Komponist gleich. Damit ist das Entscheidende gesagt. [...] Kein wesentlich neuer Zug wird hinzugefügt, es sei denn eine wachsende Sicherheit im Charakterisieren, stärkeres Sentiment und mehr harmonische Erfindung.” *B.Z. am Mittag*, 20 February 1933.
127. “revolutionäre Spannung [...] in dem Rachegehang Severins (Nr. 11 Allegro agitato); “Parodie im Walzertempo”; “der durchaus ernst gemeinte Trauermarsch”; and “die wuchtigen Strawinski-Akkorde im Finale.” *Tribüne*, 20 February 1933.
128. “ein Hetzlied ‚Cäsars Tod‘, das in feiger Weise und anonymer Form geradezu eine wüste Hetze gegen unseren Führer hervorzurufen geeignet ist”; *Erfurter Nachrichten*, 22 February 1933. The Erfurt *Tribüne* review may have contributed to the fact that the paper was shut down within days: the last issue appeared on 27 February.
129. “Die Form dieses Werks stellt ein absolutes Novum dar.” Th. D., *Dortmunder Zeitung*, 22 February 1933. “hört man eine Oper mit zu viel Sprechdialog oder ein Schauspiel mit zu viel Musik”; R. (= Ludwig Emanuel Reindl), *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 20 February 1933.
130. “Aus kurzem Bild, Versgesang, Chor- und Sololied, Meditation, dramatischem Ausbruch, aufblitzender Zeitanklage, Gläubigenausblick. [...] Kurt Weills Musik ist diesem Werke eingeschmolzen, daß sie nicht daraus gelöst werden kann.” *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, 21 February 1933.
131. “eine Verbindung von Elementen des expressionistischen und des epischen Theaters. Dies wirkt sich auch in der Ideologie aus. Neben rein individualistischen Szenen stehen solche, deren sozialkritische Note einen aufklärenden, auf die Allgemeinheit bezüglichen Sinn hat.” *Duisburger General-Anzeiger*, 26 February 1933.
132. “ein Stück-Konstrukteur [...] andere Menschen das Herz haben [...] einen dialektischen Motor”; *B.Z. am Mittag*, 20 February 1933.
133. Reference to Heine in *Magdeburgische Zeitung*, 21 February 1933 (signed “By.”).
134. An oversize FBE broadsheet as well as a separate print of the title page (minus the header) of FBE’s *Charivari* 84, no. 7 (10 March 1933)—both copies appear to have belonged to Weill—survive in WLRC/DD.
135. “Es ist zwar alles, was über das Stück geschrieben wurde, von einer masslosen Dummheit, aber auffallend ist doch, wie positiv sich fast die gesamte Presse zu meiner Musik stellt, wie überall der Fortschritt festgestellt wird, und wie zurückhaltend sich sogar Nazi-Blätter äussern.” Weill to UE, 26 February 1933; *W-UE*, 455.
136. “Wir brauchen uns ja nichts vorzumachen: so schön der Leipziger Erfolg war, die Situation ist genau so ernst, wie wir es die ganze Zeit empfunden und gefühlt haben. Dass man gegen dieses harmlose Stück in Magdeburg so erfolgreich losgeht: es handelt sich eben nicht um die Sache, sondern um Ihre Person. Haben Sie die Kritik der Leipziger Tageszeitung (Nazi) gelesen? Nochmals, lieber Freund, bitte ich Sie herzlich unser Gespräch zu überlegen, die Fragen [...] zu prüfen und in einer neuen unerbittlichen Situation Entscheidungen zu treffen.” UE to Weill, 24 February 1933; *W-UE*, 454.
137. *Hakenkreuz und Notenschlüssel: Die Musikstadt Leipzig im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Kerstin Sieblist et al. (Altenburg: Kamprad, 2023), 125.
138. The abridged and slightly modified review as it appeared in the *Völkischer Beobachter* (Berlin edition) has been reprinted in *Über Kurt Weill*, 109–11; excerpts appear in *Der Silbersee: A Sourcebook*, 21, 23, and *WPD(e)*, 131. A week later, a long unsigned article, “Mißtöne aus der Systemflöte: Eine Abrechnung mit den Klassenkampfmusikern im Nachkriegsdeutschland,” attacked several composers but devoted the largest amount of space to Weill; *Völkischer Beobachter*, 3 March 1933.
139. On 24 March, after an unsuccessful attempt to contact Weill, Wreede expressed his astonishment to Heinsheimer that Weill had traveled to Italy (*sic*) without saying a word.
140. Caspar Neher later recalled details about the trip: using Weill’s car, the three left Berlin on the morning of the 21st, stayed overnight in Marburg, crossed the border into Luxembourg near Trier on the 22nd, spent the night in Luxembourg, and crossed the border into France at Longlaville on the 23rd, arriving in Paris later that day. Undated typescript (see note 96).
141. “Wichtig wird es sein, die Autoren jetzt zu der Herstellung einer endgültigen Provinzfassung zu bringen, wobei vielleicht doch gerade im Musikalischen die in Leipzig gemachten Striche aufgemacht werden, dafür aber textlich entsprechende Striche gemacht werden, die nicht dem Geschmack und der Willkür der einzelnen Bühnenleitungen überlassen bleiben.” FBE to UE, 20 February 1933.
142. I am grateful to Kim H. Kowalke for drawing my attention to a musically comparable section in Weill’s *Die sieben Todsünden* (“Neid,” mm. 47ff.).
143. *De Radiogids* 7, no. 24 (15 April 1933); *Het Volk*, 21 April 1933.
144. Kessler, *Tagebuch*, 9:558.
145. *Ibid.*, 607–08. Weill had played large parts of the opera for a circle of potential backers, and Kessler was awestruck (“Ein Werk ganz grossen Wurfs u. Formats”).
146. “Nous avons assez de mauvais musiciens en France, sans qu’on nous envoie tous les Juifs d’Allemagne!” *Le Populaire*, 28 November 1933. Abravanel later recalled that Weill had initially resisted the idea of having compositions of his performed that fall, but relented when the concert’s organizer insisted. “Maurice Abravanel Remembers Kurt Weill,” *High Fidelity* 28, no. 7 (July 1978): 67.
147. See, for example, *Hakenkreuzbanner* (Nordwestbaden), 29 November 1933, and *Zeitschrift für Musik* 101, no. 1 (January 1934): 81. The former publication was headlined “Kurt Weill in Paris ausgepfiffen” (implying that the audience had reacted hostilely to Weill); the latter reported that songs from *Die Dreigroschenoper* with lyrics by the “master plagiarizer” Brecht had been performed.
148. “Da in den Zeitungen fast überall ähnliche Komponisten wie Schmitt schreiben, sind sie wild über mich hergefallen, dieselben Zeitungen, die vor knapp einem Jahr sich nicht halten konnten vor Begeisterung.” Weill to Lenya, 8 December 1933; *W-LL(g)*, 115. Translation in *W-LL(e)*, 106.
149. “Bravo de tout cœur pour votre courage! Vous avez trouvé le mot juste pour caractériser une espèce de musique qui n’est pas du tout de la musique, mais, comme vous l’avez dit, de l’ordure, et même pire que cela.” Weingartner to Schmitt, 8 December 1933; quoted in Jean-François Trubert, “Zwischen Groupe des Six und École d’Arcueil: Aussagen und/oder Widersprüche der Weill-Rezeption in Frankreich,” in: *Kurt Weill und Frankreich*, ed. Andreas Eichhorn (Münster: Waxmann, 2014), 239. Holding a position in Basel, Weingartner would conduct several concerts in Paris in mid-December.
150. At the time, Odets also drafted a screenplay (“Castles in Spain”), in which Weill was to collaborate; see Naomi Graber, *Kurt Weill’s America* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2021), 68. This then became “The River Is Blue,” for which Weill drafted a piano score, although the film released in 1938 (as *Blockade*) did not use his music. He borrowed three thematic ideas from *Der Silbersee*; see David Drew, *Kurt Weill: A Handbook* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987), 284.
151. Elmar Juchem, *Kurt Weill und Maxwell Anderson: Neue Wege zu einem amerikanischen Musiktheater, 1938–1950* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 2000), 52–53.
152. The number is first mentioned in *The American Hebrew*, 8 January 1937. Weill repeated it in a letter to David Ewen, 13 August 1945; photocopy in WLRC, Series 40. Ewen eventually used the information for his entry on Weill in *Encyclopedia of the Opera* (New York: A. A. Wynn, 1955), 543.
153. Richard Révy, diary entry of 13 August 1944; quoted in KWE I/18 (*The Firebrand of Florence*, ed. Joel Galand), 21. Galand detected a case of Weillian self-borrowing (*ibid.*, 43), and conceivably the opening lines of *Firebrand* reminded Weill of the grave-digging scene in *Silbersee*. On 26 July 1944, he had asked Lenya, who was on the East Coast, to send him the piano score of *Der Silbersee*; *W-LL(e)*, 402.
154. UE sent the extant materials on 21 October 1946 to Margarethe Kaiser, c/o Georg Kaiser’s friend Julius Marx in Zurich. She forwarded them to the Hebbel-Theater on 11 February 1947. Information according to index card recording shipments of rental materials (*Materialeihkartei*) for “Silbersee” with stamped number “0427”; Universal Edition’s business archives in Vienna.
155. “Ich freue mich sehr, dass Martin den ‚Silbersee‘ am Hebbel Theater aufführen will [...]. Leider ist es aber sehr schwer für mich, von hier aus etwas Klarheit in die ganze Verlags-Situation zu bringen. Ich hatte einen Brief von der Universal-Edition mit der lakonischen Mitteilung, dass alle meine Partituren seinerzeit von der Gestapo geholt und weggenommen wurden. Das ist natürlich eine unglaubliche Vernachlässigung der Verpflichtungen eines Verlegers gegenüber seinen Autoren. Ich besitze keinerlei Partituren meiner europäischen Werke, und ich kann daher im Moment nicht sagen, wie man sie beschaffen kann.” Weill to Margarethe Kaiser, 1 May 1947; photocopy in WLRC, Series 40. Translation (except for last two clauses) in *WPD(e)*, 251.
156. For a facsimile of the letter and a discussion of its context see Kim H. Kowalke, “Dancing with the Devil: Publishing Modern Music in the Third Reich,” *Modernism/Modernity* 8, no. 1 (January 2001): 1–41, at pp. 8–13.
157. If UE’s records (see note 154) are reliable and the abbreviation “P.” stands for “Partitur” and “H.” for “Harmonie-Stimmen” (i.e., all instrumental parts except strings), it seems that the Paris-based publisher Fortin returned **Fm** to Vienna on 19 June 1947, and UE forwarded the score to FBE on 18 September. There is reason to assume, however, that **Fm** was not complete, as UE scored up fourteen missing pages from a set of parts in spring 1971 (affecting Nr. 15 and 21, both of which had undergone revisions in Leipzig, as documented by **Fm-misc**; it is unclear why UE did not consult **Fh**—which had surfaced by September 1952 at the latest—for the completion of **Fm**).
158. An undated brochure printed brief excerpts from the plays that were considered for the 1947–48 season. Appearing as teasers for *Der Silbersee* were Severin’s speech at the grave and the lyric for Nr. 3. The brochure also contained a translation of Maxwell Anderson’s lyric “How Can You Tell an American?” from *Knickerbocker Holiday* (another Weill work whose production at the Hebbel-Theater did not come to pass).
159. Letter in WLRC/DD. Not all of Weill’s scores resurfaced (that for *Royal Palace* is still lost).
160. This idea had some prehistory: in December 1932, Salomon sang the role of Jimmy in the Paris version of *Mahagonny* (see KWE I/3); unlikely as it may seem, in January 1933 he discussed with Carl Orff a Munich production of Weill’s *Die Bürgschaft*, but the idea obviously fizzled quickly. The two had previously collaborated on a success-

ful production of Weill's *Der Jasager*, also in Munich, at the end of November 1931, with Orff conducting and Salomon singing the part of the teacher. Diskin, "Early History of Kurt Weill's *Die Bürgschaft*," 329–35. In May 1933, Salomon fled to Palestine, where he became music director of the Palestine Broadcasting Service.

161. Salomon's request and his claim to have discussed the matter with Weill are reported in a letter from UE to Lenya, 14 March 1951, and Lenya gave permission to UE on 14 May 1951; WLRC, Series 42, Box 1, Folder 24. Opportunities for an exchange with Weill could have arisen as early as 1932 or in 1947, shortly before the *Palestine Post* reported on 2 June that Weill was "to write a score for the P.B.S. . . . at the request of Mr. Karl Salomon." Upon his return to the United States, Weill mentioned work on a symphonic suite not from *Der Silbersee* but from *Street Scene* (letters to Maxwell Anderson, 22 June and 10 July 1947; photocopies in WLRC, Series 40).
162. Listings in Israeli newspapers *Hazofe* and *Shearim*, 24 June 1952; a positive review by "Frango" (i.e., Franz Goldstein) appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* on 29 June. The National Library of Israel holds three non-commercial discs (78 rpm) that contain about twenty-seven minutes of music: overture, nos. 3, 9, 1, 6 (mm. 1–27), 4, 20 (mm. 1–46), and 22. The instrumentation is augmented by saxophone and guitar; harp is omitted. Labels state that discs were recorded on 19 December 1952 with the Kol Yisrael Orchestra conducted by Salomon.
163. Only the second shipment of **Fm** (from FBE's offices) to Jerusalem on 23 September 1953 is logged on UE index card "0427" (see note 154). A letter from UE to Lenya, 5 October 1954, reveals that the full score remained in Israel for many months; WLRC, Series 42, Box 1, Folder 25.
164. Listings in *Zmanim* and *Kol Haam*, 11 May 1954. Reviewing again for the *Jerusalem Post* (16 May), Frango compared the new version unfavorably with the earlier one. Weill's instrumentation is augmented by one oboe (doubling on English horn), one bassoon, and two horns, with harp being optional; Salomon omitted saxophone and guitar, which he had added in 1952. The suite is based on nos. 18, 19, 4, 15, 16, 3, 9, and 22.
165. UE's folder "Aufnahmen (K14)" contains one index card ("Werke-Kartothek") for "Kurt Weill-Salomon, 'Silbersee'-Suite"; Universal Edition's business archives in Vienna. Stations frequently broadcast only selections. The suite was first recorded in December 1978 by the M.I.T. Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Epstein but not released until 1980, when the Moss Music Group issued it on the Vox/Turnabout label as TV 34760 (perhaps prompted by New York City Opera's *Silverlake* production in March 1980).
166. Before and throughout most of the war, he had operated the family-owned Rose-Theater in Berlin. Although Rose had no known connection to Weill, in 1951, as intendant in Kassel, he had programmed the first production of Weill's *Lady in the Dark* in Germany.
167. "Das Stück rollt in fünfzehn knappen, spannungsdichten, dramatisch vorzüglich gebauten Bildern ab, von Songs und Couplets und einer rhythmisch raffinierten Zwischenaktmusik Kurt Weills begleitet. Und zu der fast schon mythischen Apotheose des Schlusses erklingt eine tristanähnliche Sphärenmusik, die dies moderne Wintermärchen in die Verklärung des Oratoriums emporträgt. Wo sich Kaiser mitunter in intellektuellen Konstruktionen zu verirren droht, wo seine Sprache seltsam stelzend und pathetisch zu werden beginnt, greift doch immer wieder – mal mit hämmernd motorischem Nachdruck, mal in lyrischer Innerlichkeit – wohlthuend die Weillsche Musik ein. [...] Es wäre ein schlechtes Zeichen für die deutschen Theater, wenn sie dies Werk nun nicht 'wiederentdecken' würden." The quotation follows the wording as it appeared in *Bremer Nachrichten*, 1 December 1953. Versions of this review appeared also in *Darmstädter Echo*, *Rheinische Post*, and *Kölnische Rundschau*. A critic ("R. B.") for the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* saw the programming as relevant for "our time," where people "are well-off again, filled with misguided optimism" but deaf to the playwright's alarms: "Today the Georg Kaiser of 1933 resembles a Georg Büchner of our time, a shark in the calm waters of a Restoration that is beginning to show signs of trouble again" (wieder gut bestellt und von einem trügerischen Optimismus erfüllt); "Der Georg Kaiser von 1933 gleicht heute einem Georg Büchner unserer Zeit, einem Hecht im Karpfenteich der Restauration, die sich wieder wichtig macht!"; *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 26 November 1953.
168. "Konglomerat aus Jazz, Chanson und echtem Empfinden, das mit seinem Einfallsreichtum und seiner Farbigkeit wünschen läßt, jede zeitgenössische Operette möchte nur annähernd so viel Substanz enthalten und wäre dann ein großartiger Reißer." *Pfälzer Abendzeitung* (Ludwigshafen), 26 November 1953 (signed "hkr.").
169. Boleslaw Barlog, a former assistant of Hilpert's at the Volksbühne, had begun to operate the Schloßpark-Theater in 1945 (located in the American Sector; it was one of the few theaters that had emerged from the war relatively unscathed).
170. Drew (*Handbook*, 241) erroneously states "five players" but correctly observes that the score is "by Boris Blacher (and others)." Information about different hands in the score has been confirmed by Blacher's son Kolja (e-mail message of 11 June 2015 to the author of this Introduction). The score is housed in Universal Edition–Kurt Weill Archives SC 1998.4, Sibley Music Library, Rochester, N.Y., Box 6, Folder 4.
171. More than in the reviews from Karlsruhe two years earlier, critics reflected on the circumstances of the original premiere and the horrific decades that had passed. Sabina Lietzmann commented for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (27 September 1955) that after twenty-two years of delay, the authors, having died in exile, regrettably did not live to enjoy the enthusiastic applause that greeted the Berlin premiere. Hermann

Wanderscheck likewise led off his review for Frankfurt's *Abendpost* (23 September) by pointing out the wrongs that had been done:

Georg Kaiser's winter's tale was the last premiere that the author experienced prior to being banned in the Nazi Reich. In Magdeburg the "national" associations called for a boycott of the play. Kaiser was called a cultural bolshevist, a preacher of class hatred. . . . The fake apostles of culture also ranted against Kurt Weill, the genius exegete of this nobly humane stage poetry. Both authors of *Der Silbersee* are no longer with us. Hans Lietzau's staging at the Schloßpark-Theater as part of the [Berliner] Festwochen has now restored their reputation in full.

(Georg Kaisers Wintermärchen „Der Silbersee“ war die letzte Premiere, die der Dichter vor seinem Verbot im Nazireich erlebte. In Magdeburg forderten die „nationalen“ Verbände zum Boykott des Stückes auf. Man schimpfte Kaiser einen Kulturbolschewisten, einen Klassenhaß-Prediger. [...] Auch gegen Kurt Weill, den genialen Interpreten dieser edlen humanitären Szenenpoesie, lärmten die falschen Kulturapostel. Beide Schöpfer des „Silbersees“ weilen heute nicht mehr unter uns. Ihre hundertprozentige Rehabilitierung nahm jetzt das Berliner Schloßparktheater mit Hans Lietzaus Inszenierung bei den Festwochen vor.)

Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, its coming to terms with the Nazi past, was only in its infant stages. And yet, it is startling to see that Wanderscheck himself had once expressed a rather different view of Germany's theatrical era that had ended with *Der Silbersee*. Headlined "This Was Jewish Theater!," he had penned a lengthy anti-Semitic tirade (*Die Glocke: Amtliches Mitteilungsblatt des Gaues Westfalen-Nord der NSDAP*, 10 June 1943):

The wrecking of the theater in the November State [derisive term for the Weimar Republic] was exclusively the doing of the Jews. They occupied leading positions in Germany's cultural life, being responsible for the Threepenny repertoire in the theaters and for dishonoring the German people in Jewish plays. . . . For this open attack on German culture, the theater was just the right springboard for such a Jewish-Bolshevist assault. . . . The world that today is waging war against Germany wants to resurrect such Jewish interests and goals. Germany, however, will fight for its culture, determined and willing to make every sacrifice.

(Die Zerrüttung des Theaters im Novemberstaat war ausschließlich das Machwerk der Juden. Sie saßen in führenden Stellungen des deutschen Kunstlebens, bestimmten die Dreigroschendramatik auf der Bühne und die Entehrung des deutschen Menschen in jüdischen Theaterstücken. [...] Der jüdische Geist tobte sich im Theater in einem offenen Angriff auf die deutsche Kultur aus. Die Bühne war das geeignete Sprungbrett für diesen jüdisch-bolschewistischen Angriff. [...] Die Welt, die heute im Krieg gegen Deutschland steht, will abermals die Verwirklichung solcher jüdischen Interessen und Ziele. Deutschland aber wird für seine Kultur kämpfen, entschlossen und dafür zu jedem Opfer bereit.)

Such perplexing about-faces were symptomatic of German society in the immediate postwar period. Werner Oehlmann, who praised Weill's music in *Der Tagesspiegel* (see next note), had also lauded Nazi politics when reporting for the weekly *Das Reich* in November 1941 about a trip to the new *Generalgouvernement* in German-occupied Poland, noting that "previously Polonized" areas were won back for the German cultural sphere, where "Jews, concentrated everywhere in separate districts, have practically been shut out as a politically relevant ethnic element" (bereits polonisiert . . . Die Juden, überall in eigenen Wohnvierteln konzentriert, sind praktisch als politisch völkisches Element schon ausgeschaltet). Quoted in Prieberg, *Handbuch*, 5004. Did Oehlmann and Wanderscheck honestly appreciate music by a Jewish composer in 1955? This and similar questions must have been on many people's minds, including perhaps Lenya's, who followed the fate of the Berlin production from afar in New York.

172. An exception was music critic Werner Oehlmann. He observed that Blacher had downsized the instrumentation, "taking into account the limited space of the theater and the wall of its host, but trying with a fine ear to retain the original sound. . . . The reduction cannot always do justice to Weill's intentions; especially for the ending, when the music takes the lead with choruses of invisible voices, additional sonic realms are needed" (den beschränkten Raumverhältnissen des Schloßparktheaters und der Sparsamkeit des Hausherrn Rechnung tragend, [...] und dabei mit feinem Takt den ursprünglichen Klang zu erhalten gesucht. [...] Nicht immer kann die Verkleinerung der Intention Weills gerecht werden; vor allem fordert der Schluß, an dem die Musik mit Chören unsichtbarer Stimmen die Führung ergreift, einen weiteren Klangraum). *Der Tagesspiegel*, 21 September 1955. Oehlmann (1901–1985) had studied conducting with Weill's erstwhile teacher Rudolf Krasselt and worked as a dramaturg and accompanist (in Bamberg and elsewhere). After the war, he worked for the North-West German Radio (NWDR) and became music critic for the *Tagesspiegel* in 1950. In spring 1955 he may have met Lenya, when the paper announced her search for Weill-related materials (on 14 April). In a subsequent article (1 May), "Für Kurt Weill: Werk und Vermächtnis eines Berliner Musikers," he reports having played through some of the piano-vocal score for *Der Silbersee*.
173. *Rheinische Post*, 23 September 1955. At least some small cuts appear to have occurred, however: Lietzau's marked-up copy of FBE's postwar script (Tt2) indicates internal ones in the lyrics for Nr. 3, 10, and 20; AdK, Hans-Lietzau-Archiv, Folder 171.
174. "Hundertmal geprobt," *Nacht-Depesche* (Berlin), 20 September 1955. The brief report by "G.H.P." also pointed out that the dramatic form represented unknown territory,

- requiring a new type of performer: the singing actor. The production ran for twenty-four performances; see *Theater in Berlin, 1951–1961: Zehn Jahre Schiller-Theater, Schlosspark-Theater, Schiller-Theater Werkstatt*, ed. Intendanz des Schiller-Theaters, with a foreword by Heinz Ritter (Berlin: Rembrandt, 1962), 176.
175. An exception was a production in Hamburg's tiny Theater im Zimmer (115 seats), which opened in early October 1956 and used either the reduced orchestration or piano accompaniment only. Prior to the Berlin production, *Der Silbersee* had also been staged in Bielefeld's 400-seat Theater am Alten Markt (unclear if with the original orchestration) in early June 1955.
 176. There is no evidence that Blacher's arrangement was ever offered to another theater.
 177. See Wolfgang Jansen, "Kein Ort – nirgends: Die erfolgreiche Zerstörung einer Infrastruktur," in: *Zwischen den Stühlen: Remigration und unterhaltendes Musiktheater in den 1950er Jahren*, ed. Nils Grosch and Wolfgang Jansen (Münster: Waxmann, 2012): 47–60.
 178. Els de Boer (*Volkskrant*, 28 June) nonetheless thought that *Der Silbersee* was a bold piece in which Weill's score "illustrated the harsh conditions of a period in crisis," and *De Tijd* (26 June) led with the title "Kurt Weill's Silbersee sterk muziektheater" (Kurt Weill's *Silbersee* Strong Music Theater). International papers also had an eye on the concert. Writing for the London *Times* (1 July), John Higgins hoped that Bertini and Drew would "come back to it again and tackle its acknowledged difficulties in a quite different way," while Ulrich Schreiber lamented that the worthwhile endeavor of a full staging of the work seemed to have poor prospects "in the country that felled the composer [i.e., Germany]; it almost seems as if Weill's posthumous rise will take place abroad: an embarrassment for our so-called musical life" (in einem Land, das den Komponisten Weill zu Fall brachte [...]); fast scheint es, als werde der postume Aufstieg Weills im Ausland erfolgen: eine Schande für unser sogenanntes Musikleben). *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 3 July 1971.
 179. UE index cards logging performances and broadcasts of *Der Silbersee*; photocopies in WLRC, Series 30, Box 12, Folder 15. Radio Hilversum first broadcast the work on 26 June 1971. The TV production aired on 4 July.
 180. "Die Musik zum ‚Silbersee‘ gehört zu dem Faszinierendsten, was er je geschrieben hat." *Rheinischer Merkur*, 19 September 1975. "Dieser ‚Silbersee‘ gehört, der Erfindung wie der Verarbeitung nach, zu den besten Partituren Weills"; *Kurier* (Vienna), 12 September 1975. Alone among his colleagues, Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt had not particularly warmed to Weill's score forty-two years after his first review, criticizing "Weill's English prophet" for the overlong concert version and finding only faint praise for his former confrère: "Here, too, songs, marches, and galloping anapests dominate side by side with wicked and lyrical ideas. There is a nice slow waltz between the two salesladies, a forceful song of the lottery agent, and an effective soprano solo, 'Caesar's Death,' as well as the 'fever-dream' melodrama" (Auch da dominieren Songs, Märsche und galoppierende Anapäste neben hämischen und lyrischen Einfällen. Hübsch ist der langsame Walzer der beiden Verkäuferinnen, kräftig das Lied des Lotterieagenten, wirkungsvoll das Sopransolo ‚Cäsars Tod‘ und das ‚Fiebertraum‘-Melodram). *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 September 1975.
 181. A review by Peter Heyworth for the British *Observer* (13 April) bore the sensationalist headline "The Silverlake Massacre." Other reviewers, however, were entirely sympathetic to the venture, thinking like Herbert Whittaker that the work had been "fortuitously restored" (*Globe and Mail*, 4 April) and should even be considered for a Tony nomination, as Nicholas Kenyon proposed in the *New Yorker* (14 April): "What we see on the stage . . . is a brilliant creation—a stark story of human love, greed, hate, overprotectiveness, ruthlessness, and utopian hope, set in a maze of moving mirrors and walls."
 182. Maurice Abravanel, transcript of "An Oral History from Silver Lake Seminar," Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, 28 March 1980; WLRC, Series 60.
 183. Nonesuch DB-79003, produced by Eric Salzman, recorded 24–26 March 1980 at Columbia Studios in New York, N.Y.; rereleased as compact disc Nonesuch DB-79003-2.
 184. *Opera* 46, no. 6 (June 1995): 665. The compact disc had appeared on Capriccio 60011-2.
 185. *Opera News* 64, no. 6 (December 1999): 86. The recording (BMG Classics 09026-63447-2) also happened to spot and correct the obvious errors in the Overture that had been introduced in the rental material. It missed others, though, for example, a line in the lyric for Nr. 1 is sung as "tief, weich und gut" (adopting a copyist's mistake in *Ve*) rather than the correct "hilfreich und gut," which alludes to the famous opening line of Goethe's poem "Das Göttliche."
 186. "Damals schrieb Weill die Musik zum *Silbersee* – das war eine herrliche Sache. Und es ist eine unsterbliche Sache, denn die Kunst lebt länger als alle Politik. Ich bin ganz unverzagt." Kaiser to Paul Gordon, 3 July 1941; Georg Kaiser, *Briefe*, ed. Gesa M. Valk (Berlin: Propyläen, 1980), 627.
 187. Almost all writings about *Der Silbersee* have made the Mozart connection. Informative publications include David Drew's program notes for the concert versions at the Holland Festival (1971) and the Berliner Festwochen (1975); Kim H. Kowalke's liner notes for the 1980 recording of *Silverlake* on Nonesuch; Ian Kemp, "Music as Metaphor: Aspects of *Der Silbersee*," in: *A New Orpheus: Essays on Kurt Weill*, ed. Kim H. Kowalke (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1986), 131–46; Josef Heinzelmann's liner notes for the 1990 Capriccio recording; Hauff, "Nicht denkbar" (see note 124): 36–41; and Hinton's chapter in *Weill's Musical Theater*, 126–37.
 188. Hinton, *Weill's Musical Theater*, 450–51.
 189. "Nur in Berlin besteht die Möglichkeit der Auswahl passender Schauspielsänger." *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 20 February 1933 (signed "H. W." [= Heinrich Wiegand]).
 190. Weill to UE, 24 November 1932; *W-UE*, 422.
 191. He mentioned it appreciatively in his article "Tonfilm, Opernfilm, Filmoper," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 24 May 1930 (morning edition); reprinted in *GS2*, 109–13.
 192. Local newspapers listed 8 P.M. as the curtain time, ending at 11 P.M. (Leipzig) and "after 10:45 P.M." (Magdeburg).