

# INTRODUCTION

by Giselher Schubert

This volume presents, for the first time in full score, a work whose significance in the oeuvre and artistic evolution of Kurt Weill can scarcely be overstated: *Mahagonny. Ein Songspiel*. This first collaboration between Weill and Bertolt Brecht would achieve epochal importance in the genre of opera (and music theater in general); it led Weill to form his signature “*Song style*,” which would exercise a stylistically formative impact on the music of the Weimar Republic; it brought about a musical breakthrough for Weill’s wife, Lotte Lenja (or Lenya, the name she adopted in the United States, and the one used below), whose performance inaugurated a new species of singer-actor; and it represents Brecht’s debut as a stage director in the domain of musical theater.<sup>1</sup> Yet the questions and difficulties raised by the versions of the Songspiel, their identification and source transmission, and the work’s close ties with the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* remain largely unresolved. The version found in Weill’s holograph score (Fh) differs from the one premiered in Baden-Baden in 1927. However, the version of the premiere, including its scenario, can be reconstructed with the aid of non-holograph inscriptions entered with various writing implements both in the holograph score (Fh) and in a piano-vocal score prepared after the premiere (Vm). The first layer of this piano-vocal score transmits a version—apparently reflecting the composer’s wishes—which differs from that of the holograph score (Fh) and the version heard at the premiere.

Because the Songspiel had not established itself when Weill began work on the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, he appears to have relegated the Songspiel to the status of a “test” for the nascent opera. However, he allowed the Songspiel to be expanded with the addition of four numbers from the opera for a Paris performance in 1932, which was repeated in the following year in Paris, London, and Rome. If the Songspiel was thus expanded, the opera was, conversely, abridged for performances in Berlin (1931) and Vienna (1932). Such alterations were not, however, coordinated with a common goal in mind. In 1949, without contacting Weill or obtaining his permission, the dramaturg and stage director Hans Curjel prepared yet another version of the Songspiel with still further alterations for a performance in Venice. This version was meant to supersede both the Songspiel and the opera, the performance material of which was then thought to have been completely destroyed by the Gestapo. Curjel’s conflation was withdrawn in 1957. Not until 1963 was it possible to perform the Songspiel in a version close to its original form, though it incorporated parts of the above-mentioned versions and added annotations that more properly belong to the opera. In sum, the Songspiel and the opera, though closely interrelated in both genesis and content, are poles apart in historical and aesthetic importance.

## I. Weill and Brecht: Initial Contacts

Judging from the available evidence, Weill initiated the collaboration with Brecht. In April or May 1925 Weill witnessed, for the first time, an appearance by Brecht and Carl Zuckmayer in Berlin’s Novembergruppe and wrote an account of it for the periodical *Der deutsche Rundfunk*: “Though the importance of Brecht and Zuckmayer lies more in the theater, their readings display them in all their individuality and the full range of their language and ideas.”<sup>2</sup> Weill’s article already demonstrates a certain familiarity with the works of Brecht, who had ranked as a preeminent talent at

least since the premiere of *Trommeln in der Nacht*, which opened at the Munich Kammerspiele on 29 September 1922 and received a trailblazing review from Herbert Jhering in the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* on 5 October.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter he attracted attention repeatedly with spectacular and often scandalous performances or provocative comments in the daily press. Later Weill took to the pages of *Der deutsche Rundfunk* again (though he was responsible mainly for its musical commentary) with an advance announcement (13 March 1927) followed by an almost euphoric review (27 March 1927) of a broadcast of Brecht’s “comedy” *Mann ist Mann*, adapted by the author himself as a “Sendespiel” (radio play). Here we read: “To get straight to the point: this radio performance of Brecht’s comedy *Mann ist Mann* far surpasses in immediate and lasting impact all that Berlin Radio has undertaken in this area.”<sup>4</sup>

It was in these weeks of March 1927 that Weill first attempted to establish direct contact with Brecht, who, since September 1924, had worked in Berlin as a dramaturg at the Deutsches Theater and had managed to assemble a circle of friends and collaborators (including Elisabeth Hauptmann, who joined him in November 1924).<sup>5</sup> Weill, having achieved a rousing success with his one-act opera *Der Protagonist* on a libretto by Georg Kaiser (premiered in Dresden in 1926), and having just witnessed the premieres of his *Der neue Orpheus* and *Royal Palace* at the Berlin Staatsoper on 2 March 1927 (his twenty-seventh birthday, as it happened), was invited to submit a stage work to the German Chamber Music Festival in Baden-Baden, scheduled to take place in summer 1927.<sup>6</sup> The new work was subject to certain stipulations, later outlined by Heinrich Burkard in the event’s program booklet: “The guiding thought for the commission was: Retreat from grand ‘opera’ with its giant apparatus, and the creation of a stage work with only a small cast, with music that is pure chamber music in scale and treatment, and with minimal scenery.”<sup>7</sup> This prestigious invitation, first mentioned indirectly in his correspondence on 15 March 1927, confirms that his contemporaries held a high opinion of Weill’s music.<sup>8</sup> He reacted favorably, and on 23 March 1927, he elaborated plans for the piece in a letter to his Viennese publisher, Universal Edition (hereafter UE): “I will not write a short opera for Baden-Baden, as I already have enough one-acters. My plan is to extract part of a classical tragedy (*Antigone, Lear, or the like*) and turn it into a short vocal scene of no more than ten minutes’ duration.”<sup>9</sup>

One day later, on 24 March 1927, he wrote to Lenya: “Baden-Baden is pressing me about the one-act opera. . . . Now I have to go see B.”<sup>10</sup> If “B” should actually stand for Brecht, as seems *prima facie* the case, the use of this abbreviation presupposes that Weill had previously discussed the matter with Lenya, who—as a former member of the Georg Kaiser household—was surely familiar with Brecht’s name. And as Brecht himself had already successfully adapted a “classic” with his *Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England*, drawing on Marlowe’s *Edward II*, Weill may well have proposed his plan to compose “a short vocal scene” from a “classical tragedy.” Brecht, who had previously been asked to collaborate by other composers, appears to have put off replying; in any case, “B” never again crops up in Weill’s subsequent correspondence.<sup>11</sup> Nor did Weill pursue the plan to compose a “short vocal scene”; instead, on 4 April 1927, he told his publisher of a plan to write “a grand tragic opera”—a plan which he is unlikely to have discussed with Brecht and soon dropped entirely.<sup>12</sup> (It is obviously unrelated to the project of submitting a stage work for Baden-

Baden.) On the other hand, Brecht may well have mentioned his own operatic scheme, noted in his journal as early as July 1924 (“Plans: [. . .] Mahagonny opera”).<sup>13</sup> He may also have alerted Weill to the “Mahagonnygesänge” (with his own musical “settings”) in his *Hauspostille* (Domestic Breviary). Weill could not have been aware of them, since they were not due to appear in print until several weeks later.<sup>14</sup> As the first meeting with Brecht (assuming that it actually took place on Thursday, 24 March 1927) evidently produced no tangible results, Weill seems to have lost his desire to write a piece for the Baden-Baden festival. However, he kept his final decision open, perhaps to await the publication of the *Hauspostille*. As he wrote to his father on 7 April 1927: “Whether I will do anything for Baden-Baden will be decided in the next few days. I’m not very keen about it because I want to begin tackling the new opera as soon as possible.”<sup>15</sup> In fact, Weill actually did first start work on the new opera with Kaiser, *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*, and on 25 April 1927, he told UE that he would not submit anything to Baden-Baden.<sup>16</sup> He must have changed his mind the moment the published *Hauspostille* finally fell into his hands, some time after 25 April, and he spontaneously came up with the idea of the Songspiel after reading the “Mahagonnygesänge” from the work’s “Vierte Lektion” (Fourth Lesson). He promptly informed his publisher of this idea on 2 May 1927:

In haste, let me say that I’ve changed my intentions regarding Baden-Baden. I’ve suddenly had a very nice idea and am now at work on its elaboration. The title: “Mahagonny,” a Song-Spiel on words by Brecht. I think the little piece will be finished by the middle of May. I’ll then send it to you to produce the performance material and the vocal score. Incidentally, you’ll probably also find use for it beyond Baden-Baden.<sup>17</sup>

There are, of course, other versions of the initial contacts between Weill and Brecht—with different emphases. It is necessary to draw attention to them, the more so because they stem from the two men themselves as well as from Lenya. Yet they do not always agree with the facts obtainable from the roughly contemporary correspondence; they can be neither verified nor disproved. Moreover, as Stephen Hinton has shown, these contacts have excessively stoked the imagination of later commentators and led to mythmaking.<sup>18</sup>

Weill himself commented twice in quick succession on his initial contacts with Brecht. In retrospect, the weeks that actually lay between their first meeting, Brecht’s own plans for a Mahagonny opera, the publication of the *Hauspostille*, and the beginning of his work on the Songspiel as a sort of exercise for the prospective opera, all collapsed into a single moment in his account of March 1930:

When Brecht and I first met in spring 1927 we were discussing the potentialities of an opera when the word “Mahagonny” was mentioned, and with it the notion of a “paradise city.” The idea instantly seized me, and with a view of developing it and trying out the musical style I had in mind I set the five “Mahagonnygesänge” from Brecht’s *Hauspostille*, combining them in a small-scale dramatic form to make a “Songspiel.”<sup>19</sup>

In this and the following account Weill may have wished to shield Brecht from accusations of plagiarism (leveled by the writer Walter Gilbricht some weeks after the premiere of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* in Leipzig) and therefore placed the beginnings of his work on the opera at the earliest possible date.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, he states that basic “potentialities of an opera” were discussed with Brecht at their first meeting, though without firm commitment, and that the name of the city of Mahagonny was mentioned, prompting him to set the “Mahagonnygesänge” from the *Hauspostille*. In another article of June 1930, Weill expressly gives March 1927 as the date of their first meeting:

A year earlier, in March 1927, a conversation between Brecht and Weill took place during which Brecht outlined a detailed plan for an opera that already contained its essential elements. At this point, sketches and theatrical drafts already existed for a piece entitled *Auf nach Mahagonny*.

Further, five “Mahagonnygesänge” from this draft piece had already been published in the *Hauspostille* (Propyläen-Verlag, 1926). The result of this conversation was the Songspiel *Mahagonny*, composed in March 1927, which was then performed at the music festival in Baden-Baden in summer 1927.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, there actually exists a “theatrical draft” by Brecht with the above-mentioned title, *Auf nach Mahagonny!!*, as well as a number of fragmentary scenes or poems that may well relate to the Mahagonny theme.<sup>22</sup> But they cannot be precisely dated, and there are no known draft musical settings by Weill of these fragments, which found their way neither into the Songspiel nor the opera. Moreover, as already mentioned, the *Hauspostille* did not appear in print until late April 1927, with three items specifically referred to as “Mahagonnygesänge.”<sup>23</sup> Nor did the Songspiel originate in March 1927: Weill did not begin it until May of that year.

Brecht in turn recalled his initial collaboration with Weill in a 1935 text on the use of music in epic theater:

These songs [i.e., from *Die Dreigroschenoper*] were widely popular, and their catchphrases cropped up in editorials and speeches. Lots of people sang them to a piano accompaniment or to orchestral recordings, as is commonly done with operetta hits. This type of song was created when I asked Weill simply to write new settings of half a dozen pre-existing songs for the 1927 Baden-Baden Music Festival, where one-act operas were supposed to be staged. Before then Weill had written fairly complicated music, mainly of a psychological bent, and by agreeing to set more or less banal song texts he bravely parted ways with a rigid preconception held by the solid majority of serious composers. The success of this application of modern music to the song was significant.<sup>24</sup>

In an entry in his *Arbeitsjournal*, dated 16 October 1940, Brecht even went so far as to claim:

A musician to whom I had given the texts of *Mother Courage* to set to music, along with some instructions, wrote three pieces, played them to his acquaintances, was told that he copied Weill, and sprang to his feet. I explained to him, in vain, that he had merely retained the principle, a principle not invented by Weill. (I told him how when I met Weill, a student of Busoni and Schreker [*sic*], he was known as a composer of atonal psychological operas, and how I whistled and above all declaimed the music to him bar by bar, etc.).<sup>25</sup>

In the two passages Brecht fails to mention that musical simplification and the turn to forms of light music were widely practiced among composers of the day—indeed, Weill had adopted both techniques well before he met Brecht (Weill, incidentally, had never studied with Schreker). As already mentioned, it was Weill who initiated the contact, and Brecht overlooks the fact that the idea of fashioning a work from songs of a popular cast, combined with brief intervening orchestral numbers to create a “dramatic form,” was Weill’s alone. Nor was it Weill, but Brecht, who had to consent to the musical setting of “banal song texts” from the *Hauspostille*, particularly the “Alabama Song” and “Benares Song.” It is impossible to take Brecht seriously when he discounts the distinctive and individual quality of Weill’s music and his unique gift for melodic invention, which lent the words an expressive power they otherwise lack (most of all in Brecht’s own “settings”). This is not to deny suggestions that may have originated with Brecht, but Brecht’s words or his “settings” would hardly have caused “lots of people” to sing any of the songs like “operetta hits.” Moreover, the name Brecht gave to the Fourth Lesson of his *Hauspostille* was “Mahagonnygesänge” (rather than “Mahagonny-Songs”), and the three numbered “Mahagonnygesänge” are still expressly referred to as *Gesänge*; only the English-language “Alabama Song” and “Benares Song” bear the label *Song*, this obviously being Elisabeth Hauptmann’s English-language analogy to the German word *Gesang*.<sup>26</sup> The emergence of the *Song* as a distinct genre, expressly singled out as such by Brecht himself, is wholly Weill’s doing.<sup>27</sup>

Lenya, in a contribution to the liner notes for her 1956 recording of the opera, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, conflates the origin and the

performance of the *Songspiel*: “It was the spring of 1927, and Kurt had just finished setting to music the five Mahagonny-songs from Brecht’s book of poems, *Hauspostille*. Now Brecht had linked the songs with a narrative into a completely new kind of song-sketch, and the work was to be performed at the Baden-Baden Kammermusik Festival that summer.”<sup>28</sup> These recollections say nothing at all about the *Songspiel*’s origin as a “stylistic exercise” for the projected opera, as Weill had emphasized. And we know that Weill not Brecht assembled the songs into a *Songspiel*, the memoir may corroborate that it was only during or after Weill’s compositional labors that Brecht invented a “plot”—or rather a dramatic framework—in order to satisfy the stipulations from Baden-Baden, but certainly not a “linking narrative.” In an interview with Steven Paul, conducted on 22 October 1975, Lenya responded to the question when Weill first met Brecht:

As far as I can remember, we met him first in a very famous theatre restaurant in Berlin called “Schlichter” and we were brought together through friends. From that point on, Kurt and Brecht visited each other quite often and started discussing what they could do together. I think Kurt suggested at that time that he would like to set those five Mahagonny-Gesänge and in that way, the Little Mahagonny came to life.<sup>29</sup>

Unless Lenya’s memory was faulty, this can mean only that she was present in Schlichter’s restaurant when Weill, after reading the “Mahagonnygesänge” in the *Hauspostille* (i.e., after 25 April 1927), announced his intention to set them to music and to have them staged in Baden-Baden, and that Weill and Brecht met fairly frequently thereafter.<sup>30</sup>

Weill evidently talked to Brecht before starting work on the composition, but no records of such consultation have survived. By now the texts he wished to set—the three “Mahagonnygesänge,” the “Alabama Song,” and the “Benares Song” from the Fourth Lesson of the *Hauspostille*, for which Brecht’s “melodies” had been published in an appendix—were more or less completely fixed (only minor details were altered later). But the sequence of the poems, the distribution of the lyrics among the voices, the work’s musical design, and the possibilities of a stage presentation still had to be determined. In these matters, the set designer Caspar Neher was apparently involved from the very outset. Neher was a close friend of Brecht’s, and Weill too developed friendly ties with him.<sup>31</sup> Among Brecht’s surviving papers is an undated holograph text containing, in six consecutively numbered sentences, a sort of draft plot that could possibly be linked, though not without problems, to a prospective or definitive order for the “Mahagonnygesänge” from the *Hauspostille*. It is conceivable that Brecht produced this draft to summarize their discussions after the fact:

- 1) The great cities in our day are full of people who do not like it there.<sup>32</sup>
- 2) So get away to Mahagonny, the gold town situated on the shores of consolation far from the rush of the world.
- 3) Here in Mahagonny life is lovely.
- 4) But even in Mahagonny there are moments of nausea, helplessness, and despair.
- 5) The men of Mahagonny are heard replying to God’s questions about the cause of their sinful life.
- 6) Lovely Mahagonny crumbles to nothing before your eyes.<sup>33</sup>

This plot outline, assuming that it applies to the *Songspiel* at all, would place the “I. Mahagonny-Song” (“Auf nach Mahagonny”) and the “Alabama-Song” (“Oh, show us the way to the next whisky-bar”) both in the second sentence.<sup>34</sup> The third sentence might correspond to the “II. Mahagonny-Song” (“Wer in Mahagonny blieb”), the fourth to the “Benares-Song” (“There is no whisky in this town”). The fifth sentence obviously alludes directly to the “III. Mahagonny-Song” (“An einem grauen Vormittag”), while the first and sixth sentences would have to relate somehow to the “Finale” (“The whole reason for this Mahagonny is because the world is so wretched . . . Mahagonny—there’s no such thing. Mahagonny—that’s not a place. Mahagonny—it’s only a made-up word”). The text of the “Finale,” which survives only in Weill’s handwriting, represents a barely altered section of Brecht’s poem “Wenn der Whisky ver-

raucht ist” that appears to date from 1926: “Surrabay, there’s no such thing | That’s not a place | Surrabay—it’s only | A made-up word.”<sup>35</sup> Brecht apparently sent Weill the text of this “Finale” at the last moment, for on 14 May 1927, Weill could still write to UE: “Brecht’s texts for the Baden-Baden *Songspiel* are taken from the *Hauspostille* volume published by Propyläen-Verlag (Ullstein). But he is writing some new additions for me, so that you can easily publish the whole thing as a booklet. The piece is almost fully composed and the orchestral score is underway.”<sup>36</sup> Weill’s sketches also contain a setting (Dh3) of the final section (“Schlusskapitel”) of the *Hauspostille*, namely, the poem “Gegen Verführung” (“Laßt euch nicht verführen!”). The text does not match the later version from *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, which could mean that Weill planned to use his setting in the *Songspiel* in case Brecht did not deliver the promised text for the “Finale” on time.

All the “Mahagonnygesänge” from the Fourth Lesson of the *Hauspostille* have, without exception, a group of men as the poetic *persona*. They hope to find “horse flesh and women” in “Mahagonnygesang Nr. 1”; they learn, in “Mahagonnygesang Nr. 2,” how costly their life in Mahagonny will become if they choose female companionship; and “the men in Mahagonny” are expressly mentioned in “Mahagonnygesang Nr. 3.” In the “Alabama Song” they look for a way to the “next pretty girl,” while in the “Benares Song” they complain that there are no women “with whom to shake hands.” Only the “Finale” cannot be ascribed to a particular sex. Weill obviously drew on this male collective when selecting his compositional resources and scored the songs primarily for four male soloists: two tenors and two basses. But for the “Alabama-Song” he chose two high female voices (soubrettes), a choice that logically entailed a minor alteration in the text (“girl” became “boy”). The new forces, and especially the canonic writing in the last refrain, lend the piece an expressive character and sensual aura neither present nor imaginable in Hauptmann/Brecht’s text, still less in Brecht’s “setting” of the same poem. Only in Weill’s setting, and in his choice of two high, bright female voices, does the “Alabama-Song” gain its distinctive quality and its *Gestus* (see below), neither of which is found in the masculine wording of Hauptmann/Brecht’s poem. Weill then probably decided to add the women’s voices to the final three vocal numbers of the *Songspiel*. Nonetheless, male voices predominate; in the “III. Mahagonny-Song” the women merely report the reactions of the men of Mahagonny to the questions from their “God.”

The choice of voice types—soubrettes on the one hand and four male voices on the other—is also directly related to the setting of the poems as *Songs* in a popular style. As Weill remarked of the new *Song* genre in 1935:

It corresponded, I suppose, to the better type of American popular song. And while it consisted of four or five verses and a refrain, it did not conform to a specific number of measures as your popular songs do here [in the United States]. We developed it still further. Brecht wrote a suite of five such numbers, which I set to music. This we called a “*Songspiel*,” which was to be sung, acted and danced.<sup>37</sup>

The use of four male voices seems to have been patterned on the familiar German “Männerchor” (men’s chorus) genre—which sometimes singled out choristers’ solo voices as a quartet—yet it may also reflect influences by the highly popular American vocal group The Revelers, whose recordings Weill had heard.<sup>38</sup> But not only were the *Song* style and choice of voices influenced by popular music, so were the orchestral scoring and instrumentation. The orchestra (the score calls for ten or eleven musicians depending on whether the percussion *cum* timpani part is taken by one or two players) consists primarily of wind instruments, along with a background piano that can also form a rhythm group with the percussion, and two solo violins that often play in a high register above the winds—all of which is typical of dance band orchestration in the 1920s. The only unusual feature is the use of three chimes in the percussion section, obviously to characterize the part of “God” in the “III. Mahagonny-Song.” To be sure, the instrumental interludes are treated in the manner familiar from contemporary chamber orchestras, where the instruments are taken either

one on a part or in special combinations, such as the trio for two trumpets and trombone at the opening of the “Kleiner Marsch.” Weill imparts a distinctive color to each of these instrumental numbers which dispense with percussion. He also parodies the slightly coarse, rough-hewn, “jangling” tutti of a full orchestra by adding tremolos in the two violins, clarinets, and piano and a trill in the alto saxophone, as in the “Vivace assai” or the beginning of the “Finale.” Even the quotation of “Die Internationale” as the musical emblem of “Aufruhr in Mahagonny” (Rebellion in Mahagonny) is slightly defamiliarized by having the second phrase played *fortissimo* by two muted trumpets.

## II. Composing the Songspiel

Weill described in detail the compositional devices he had employed in the creation of the Songspiel in May 1929, in conjunction with the cantata *Das Berliner Requiem*. His concern, he claimed, was a form that encompasses both “concert and theatrical possibilities on an equal basis”: “a strict musical form, whose inner logic must correspond to the content, and the presentation of an underlying *Gestus* that can be deployed scenically, but which, even without the aid of the stage, must be compelling enough to convey to the listener, with purely musical means, the image and movements of the human being who is addressing him.”<sup>39</sup>

The crucial new compositional principle—the “presentation of an underlying *Gestus*” that is “compelling enough to convey to the listener, with purely musical means, the image and movements of the human being who is addressing him”—had already been illustrated by Weill in March 1929 when he compared his setting of the “Alabama-Song” to the melody given in the *Hauspostille*. To Weill’s way of thinking, the music’s gestic resources find initial expression in the rhythmic definition of the words: “Within the framework of such rhythmically predetermined music, all methods of melodic elaboration and of harmonic and rhythmic differentiation are possible, if only the musical arcs of tension correspond to a gestic procedure.”<sup>40</sup> Against the backdrop of such a rhythmic predefinition, Weill illustrates the difference between Brecht’s melody for the refrain “Oh, Moon of Alabama” and his own:

One sees that this is nothing more than a transcription of the speech rhythm and cannot be used as music at all. In my composition of this text the same basic *Gestus* has been established, only here it has actually been “composed” for the first time with the much freer means of the musician. In my case the song has a much broader basis, extends much farther afield melodically, and even has a totally different rhythmic foundation as a result of the pattern of the accompaniment—but the gestic character has been preserved, although it emerges in a completely different form.<sup>41</sup>

It is only in Weill’s setting—through compositional design—that the refrain of the “Alabama-Song” acquires not only a *Gestus* (Brecht’s notated speech-rhythm might have one as well), but also, and more importantly, a quality of gestic expression wholly foreign to Brecht’s “melody.” Theodor W. Adorno attempted to pinpoint the expressive quality of Weill’s melody:<sup>42</sup> “The ‘Alabama-Song’ is indeed one of the strangest pieces in *Mahagonny*, and nowhere is the music better suited than in this song to the archaic power of the memory of bygone singing, vanished and recollected in meager scraps of melody.”<sup>43</sup> It was also, as Kim Kowalke has rightly observed, Weill’s settings—the musically shaped *Gestus*—that made Brecht’s poems known and ensured them widespread attention, and less the poems themselves, and least of all Brecht’s “melodies” or the *Gestus* of his delivery of them, accompanied by a guitar.<sup>44</sup>

In October 1927, shortly after the Baden-Baden premiere of the Songspiel, Weill described the succession of such vocal numbers conceived with a musically expressive *Gestus* as being, in general, the “epic posture of the piece of musical theater”—a posture that makes it possible to “create a piece of absolute concert music without having to neglect the laws of the theater.”<sup>45</sup> Moreover, he intensified the gestic expressive force of the Songspiel’s vocal numbers by supplying instrumental interludes that not

only interrupt the sequence of vocal numbers with sharp contrasts, but interrelate them, conjoin them with reminiscences, lead into them, or prolong them “gestically,” as happens especially vividly with the “Kleiner Marsch,” the “Choral,” and the quotation from “Die Internationale.” Later, in January 1930, Weill described this compositional approach as, at bottom, the “ideal form of musical theater”: “The epic theater form is a successive juxtaposition of situations. Hence it is the ideal form of musical theater; for it is only situations that can be performed as music in a closed form, and a juxtaposition of situations from a musical perspective produces the heightened form of music theater: opera.”<sup>46</sup>

In all these definitions we immediately sense how deeply the *Mahagonny* Songspiel stimulated Weill’s artistic evolution, and how deliberately he brought it about. He was thus fully justified in calling the Songspiel a “stylistic exercise” without belittling, lessening, or misjudging its unique historical and aesthetic significance. The crucial point is that the “stepwise sequence of situations,” meaning the epic shaping of the music’s expressive *Gestus*, by no means limits, codifies, or diminishes the musical design as such into, say, the mere enhancement of the text; nor does it boil the music down into the most elementary compositional devices. On the contrary, it liberates, magnifies, and intensifies the musical design (no matter how closely it clings to the rhythm of the words), lending it conciseness and an “autonomous” impact without becoming lost in esoteric musical extravaganzas or lessening the intelligibility of the words. All these features impinge on the genre of the Songspiel, to use Weill’s neologism. More than that, the term, obviously a parodic allusion to the German genre of Singspiel, ideally conveys something of that genre’s sharp-edged immediacy of impact, the aesthetically complex “naive indefinability” that Erich Doflein emphasized in his review of the Songspiel’s premiere.<sup>47</sup>

Although Weill still assigned opus numbers to his works of this period, none has yet been discovered for the Songspiel. His one-act opera *Der Zar lässt sich fotografieren*, composed between March and August 1927, claimed the opus number 21, and *Vom Tod im Wald*, a ballad for bass and ten wind instruments probably composed in September 1927, assumed op. 23 (the last opus number Weill officially assigned). Accordingly, the unused opus number 22 might well have been intended for the Songspiel, had UE decided to publish it promptly. Admittedly there is no surviving title page for the Songspiel with a complete title. Nor does the vocal score prepared after the premiere (Vm) have an opus number, and the question of opus number is nowhere raised in the correspondence. Perhaps Weill’s assessment of the Songspiel as a “stylistic exercise” dissuaded him from assigning it an opus number. That said, he also skipped opus numbers 18 to 20 between his op. 17 (*Royal Palace*, composed between October 1925 and January 1926) and op. 21. Viewed in this light, it is conceivable that the Songspiel might have been numbered op. 20 and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* op. 22, but these conjectures remain a matter of speculation.

Having determined the order of the poems, the vocal forces, the instrumentation, the work’s formal design, and the nature of the music, Weill could begin drafting the work, though drafts of only a few numbers survive: “Benares-Song,” the adjoining “Choral,” and “III. Mahagonny-Song” (all in Dh1), and the last seventeen bars of the “Finale” (Dh2). He drafted these passages contiguously in a sort of short score with standard iteration signs for repeated units. The sung text usually appears above the vocal line(s), and the instrumental accompaniment beneath, with all parts included but without dynamics, tempo marks, or articulation. The music for the first two stanzas of the “Benares-Song” (mm. 1–31 and 32–61) and the beginning of its third stanza (mm. 62–75) are written out only once. But apparently at some later point Weill, using a blank staff between the voices and the instrumental accompaniment, wrote out new accompaniment parts for stanza 2 (mm. 32–61), just as he added, alongside m. 31, a one-bar sketch containing the rhythmic variant for the accompaniment of stanza 3. Directly beneath it, beginning with m. 76 (i.e., m. 77 with the words “Worst of all, Benares is said . . .”), he continued with the setting of stanza 3, which leads straight into the draft of the “Choral.” There is no

indication in the instrumental accompaniment of the “Benares-Song” of how the parts are to be distributed among the instruments. In contrast, Weill quite precisely added instrument names to the draft of the “Choral.” The complete draft of the “III. Mahagonny-Song,” which immediately follows the “Choral,” and the final seventeen bars of the “Finale” are notated in the same manner as the draft of the “Benares-Song,” except that here Weill used the staves of the instrumental accompaniment for the “III. Mahagonny-Song” to list separately the instruments used for the verses of “God” and the inhabitants of Mahagonny—the differing line-ups keep the two parties timbrally distinct. (Weill drafted the final seventeen bars of the “Finale” on an empty page of a bifolium whose first three pages carry sketched material used in *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren* and *Gustav III*. Weill must have drafted the beginning of the “Finale” on a page now lost.)

Having produced such detailed drafts, Weill was now able to write out the holograph full score quickly and easily without any large-scale alterations. He even started to write the score in fair copy before the draft of the work was quite complete. He chose a layout which he retained in every number of the *Songspiel*, and which reflected not so much the conventional layout of orchestral or chamber music as the scoring of a dance band: the two violins appear at the top, followed by paired clarinets and trumpets, and continuing downward with the alto saxophone, the trombone, the timpani plus percussion, the voices, and finally the piano. This unusual layout conveys the music’s special sound and stylistic orientation, alternating between popular music and chamber music for an unusual combination of instruments.

On 14 May 1927, a mere twelve days after he had informed UE of his plans to compose “‘Mahagonny’—Ein Song-Spiel” for Baden-Baden, he wrote to the publisher: “The piece is almost fully composed and the orchestral score is underway. I’ll send you part of it next week and ask you to prepare the rehearsal material as quickly as possible.”<sup>48</sup> On 18 May, Weill duly sent his publisher the first section of the score, with pages 1 through 32 (on page 32 he notated mm. 1–22 of the instrumental “Vivace assai” that follows the “II. Mahagonny-Song”), together with a letter in which he stated:

I have just sent you the first section of “Mahagonny” with the request that you begin work on the vocal score without delay. As you will need several copies in any case, it would be very nice if you could have it lithographed and published. For this purpose, I’ll send you the intertitles and a more precise scenario for the vocal score in the next couple of days. Before preparing the material, please have rehearsal numbers entered in the score. The two remaining songs and the finale (*Aufbruch in Mahagonny*) will follow shortly. Once again, please be as quick as possible.<sup>49</sup>

By mentioning “intertitles” and a “more precise scenario,” this letter suggests that Weill and Brecht, together with Neher, had already begun to plan the implicit story line and the staging of the *Songspiel*. Yet there are no markings along these lines in this section of the score, apart from the inscription “Vorhang zu” (curtain descends) at the end of the “I. Mahagonny-Song” (m. 89)—an instruction that proved superfluous. The publisher acknowledged receipt of this section of the score on 21 May and immediately set about preparing the vocal score. On 26 May, Weill dispatched the rest of the score: “Today the rest of the *Mahagonny* score was sent to you. . . . Do you think it possible to have the vocal scores ready for the six singers by the second week of June?”<sup>50</sup> This section of the score contains a few stage directions, perhaps indicating that Weill, Brecht, and Neher had begun to deal more thoroughly with the *mise-en-scène*. In m. 16 of the “III. Mahagonny-Song,” for instance, Weill wrote an instruction for Jimmy’s appearance as “God”: “Jimmy pulls his hat down over his face and poses as ‘God.’” In m. 56 he added for Charlie, Billy, and Bobby the instruction that “They act as if they hadn’t heard a thing.” On 8 June, the publisher notified Weill that there was no time to publish the vocal score in any form:

Because of the delay in the delivery of your score, and because the vocal score had to be prepared on our premises, we were entirely unable to re-

produce the vocal score in any manner or form, so that we must be content to have the six parts and two complete piano-vocal scores copied on schedule for Burkard, who is already putting great pressure on us. As the six singers appear in entirely different passages, it will suffice, of course, to have their parts written out separately, as is also customary for operas. In the case of ensembles, it goes without saying that the entire passage will always be copied out *in toto* for each part, so that these [vocal] parts will absolutely suffice for purposes of study.<sup>51</sup>

In fact, the publisher had two vocal scores copied, along with six vocal parts and a set of orchestral material (which went unmentioned in the correspondence).<sup>52</sup> However, UE did not prepare a full score, with the consequence that Weill’s holograph score (Fh) had to be used both as a production master for the vocal scores and the orchestral material and by the conductor in performance. The six vocal parts (for Jessie, Bessie, Charlie, Billy, Bobby, and Jimmy) were simply extracted from the two complete vocal scores. Weill was not involved in the production of this performance material, nor did he proofread the orchestral material, the two vocal scores, or five of the six vocal parts before they were posted to Baden-Baden. Weill himself, by arrangement with UE, received the vocal part for Bessie (CmB) in order to coach coloratura soprano Irene Eden, a member of the ensemble of the Berlin Staatsoper who had already been engaged for the role.<sup>53</sup> Along with the performance material, UE also produced the *Gesangstexte* (sung texts), but without taking into account all of Weill’s suggestions, recommendations, or requests. Weill wrote to UE on this point on 26 May 1927: “The exact text, complete with intertitles, finale, and instructions for the set design, will be sent to you within the next couple of days for use in producing the libretto. You could perhaps make this little libretto especially attractive by enclosing, as illustrations, the five set designs which the well-known set designer and painter Caspar Neher will create for Baden-Baden.”<sup>54</sup> As late as 4 June Weill was still trying to whet his publisher’s appetite for a somewhat more lavish publication of a libretto:

The point is whether you want to print only the words of the five songs from the *Hauspostille* or (which would of course be preferable) the complete text with scenario, intertitles, and finale. In the latter case, you would first have to contact Bert Brecht (Berlin W., Spichernstr. 16). I would consider it best if you were to bring out the complete *Mahagonny* text with Neher’s drawings in a special booklet, for the piece has very good potential for exploitation as an insert item in revues, etc.<sup>55</sup>

At this point, however, it seems that there was neither a definitive scenario with intertitles from Brecht, nor any reproducible set designs from Neher (according to the scenario written into Vm, seventeen Neher designs were projected during the Baden-Baden production); there is no sign that Brecht ever responded to the publisher.<sup>56</sup> In the end, the *Gesangstexte* contained merely the exact content that Weill supplied to UE in a letter of 16 June; that is, it reproduces the vocal texts from the *Hauspostille* along with the words for the “Finale,” which are not to be found in the *Hauspostille*, and which Weill added to his inventory (see Plate 9).<sup>57</sup> It appeared in print on 11 July, just one week before the premiere. Again, Weill was not involved in its production, not even as a proofreader.

### III. Casting, Rehearsals, Premiere

The German Chamber Music Festival of 1927, sponsored by the city of Baden-Baden, took place there from 15 to 17 July. “Artistic directors” Heinrich Burkard, Joseph Haas, and Paul Hindemith assembled a striking, wide-ranging program.<sup>58</sup> The festival opened on Friday, 15 July, at 8:00 P.M. with the first chamber recital, featuring works by Bohuslav Martinů (String Quartet No. 2), Max Butting (Duo for violin and piano, op. 32), Hanns Eisler (a small cantata entitled *Tagebuch*), and Krsto Odak (String Quartet op. 7). A second chamber recital, held on Saturday, 16 July, at 11:00 A.M., presented Béla Bartók’s Piano Sonata—the world premiere, played by the composer himself—Hermann Reutter’s Cello Sonata, and

Alban Berg's *Lyric Suite*. In the afternoon, at 5:00 P.M., the audience was treated to "Original Works for Mechanical Instruments" by Mozart, Nicolai Lopatnikoff, Hanns Haass, George Antheil, Ernst Toch, and Hindemith himself. Four hours later, at 9:00 P.M., the program offered film music by Eisler (for Walter Ruttmann's *Lichtspiel Op. IV*) and Hindemith (for Pat Sullivan's *Felix der Kater im Zirkus*), all featuring different performing forces (chamber orchestra, mechanical organ, and the "Tri-Ergon system") together with a demonstration of how to synchronize music and film using a "Musikchronometer." The climax and conclusion of the festival took place on Sunday, 17 July 1927, at 8:00 P.M., when the stage works commissioned by the artistic directors were performed and broadcast live by radio stations in Frankfurt am Main and Stuttgart.<sup>59</sup> The works were presented in the following order: Ernst Toch's "musical fairy tale" *Die Prinzessin auf der Erbse* on a libretto by Benno Elkan after Andersen; Darius Milhaud's *Die Entführung der Europa*, an "opéra-minute in eight scenes" on a libretto by Henri Hoppenot translated into German by Walther Klein; Weill's *Mahagonny* Songspiel; and, last, Hindemith's "sketch" *Hin und zurück* on a libretto by Marcellus Schiffer.<sup>60</sup>

The responsibility for organizing the event fell upon Burkard, who also hired the performers. The orchestra comprised members of the Baden-Baden Municipal Orchestra conducted by its music director, Ernst Mehlich. The Songspiel was coached by Otto Besag, apparently aided by Ernst Wolff; stage direction was entrusted to Brecht; and the sets and costumes were created by Emilie Wallut and Franz Droll after Neher's designs.<sup>61</sup> The stage direction of the Songspiel is often, and mistakenly, attributed to Walther Brüggmann in the literature, with Brecht and sometimes Hans Curjel mentioned as assistants. In fact, Brecht was in sole charge of the production, and the program booklet (N, 13) lists only his name as director. Brüggmann staged the other one-act operas and may have helped out as a stage manager in the Songspiel. Curjel attended the festival only as a spectator and met Weill and Brecht there for the first time.

The vocal soloists hired by Burkard also appeared in the other operas. Irene Eden sang not only Bessie in the Songspiel, but The Princess in Toch's "musical fairy tale." Erik Wirl, a highly sought-after tenor without a permanent engagement, portrayed Charlie in the Songspiel and also sang in the pieces by Toch (The Prince), Milhaud (Jupiter as Bull), and Hindemith (Robert). Georg Ripperger, from the Stadttheater Würzburg, created the roles of Billy in the Songspiel, The Minister in Toch's piece, and A Wise Man in the Hindemith sketch. Karl Giebel, from the Stadttheater Hannover, took on the roles of Bobby in the Songspiel, Toch's Chancellor, Milhaud's Pergamon, and Hindemith's Professor. Finally, Gerhard Pechner of the Städtische Oper Charlottenburg sang Jimmy in the Songspiel, The King in Toch's fairy tale, Agenor in Milhaud's *opéra-minute*, and The Stretcher-Bearer in the Hindemith piece.

The only role for which Burkard willingly followed an outside recommendation (probably from Weill and Brecht) was that of Jessie in the Songspiel, for which he hired an actress-dancer who neither possessed a trained voice (she is the only singer listed in the program booklet without a vocal range) nor sang in an opera ensemble. Indeed, she even confessed that she was unable to read music and consequently took no part in the performances of the other stage works. She was Weill's wife, Lotte Lenya. Later she recalled how she came to be engaged for the role of Jessie, after auditioning for Brecht in Berlin:

A date was set for Brecht to come hear me sing "Alabama-Song." Kurt was nervous for me, as usual, but he never got nervous for himself. We had a good-sized living room, with a Swedish tile stove, pitch-black wooden furniture, a grand piano, a big desk, a couch, and an imitation Persian rug on the floor. Large, terrible paintings of a hunt, with ferocious dogs chasing deer, adorned the walls. We called it Grieneisen, after a famous Berlin funeral parlor. So—that's where Weill composed. Brecht came in, very cordial, very gentle, and very patient, as he always was with women and actors. Weill played a little of the music of the *Little Mahagonny* and then asked, "Would you like to listen to Lenya singing 'Alabama-Song'?" He said, "Oh, sure. Yea. Can she sing?" So Kurt said, "Well, you decide whether she can or not." I began by walking in rhythm and singing "Oh show me the way

to the next whisky bar," looking at the audience but not addressing them. When I reached "Oh moon of Alabama," I stood still with my hands folded behind my back. At this moment Brecht interrupted, "Now let's really work on it." He showed me how to take in the whole audience, asking them to help me find the next whisky bar, because they knew in their hearts why they must not ask why. At the refrain, he told me to forget the audience and pour out my sorrow to the moon, "We've lost our good old mama . . ." and reach toward the moon with my right hand. I did a gesture I had learned for a ballet in *Aida*. He took my hand and said, "Come on Lenya, not so Egyptian. Just turn your hand around this way." I caught on instantly, and, of course, he liked it very much.<sup>62</sup> That afternoon Brecht set my style of gesture. Kurt gave me the singing style and Brecht gave me the movements. And I sang the role in Baden-Baden without reading a note of music.<sup>63</sup>

She also recalled the rehearsals for the premiere: "The other five singers stood there with their partiturs and sang. Irene Eden told me to look at the score. I said, 'It doesn't mean much to me to look. I don't read music.' But I was the only one who didn't make a mistake."<sup>64</sup>

The exact circumstances of Lenya's casting are mysterious. It may have been a relatively late idea to involve her, possibly as a substitute for another singer who had to withdraw.<sup>65</sup> The surviving correspondence does not mention her as a performer, and Weill asked UE to send him only the vocal part for Bessie, so that he could rehearse that role with Eden in Berlin. Eden, confronted with what was no doubt a wholly unfamiliar task (apart from matters of vocal technique), surely must have felt out of her depth in Weill's *Song* style, here fully formed for the first time. In fact, Weill later wrote a new version of the second stanza of the "Alabama-Song" into the Bessie part, obviously for coloratura soprano. It is uncertain whether he entered the new version after observing that Eden could not manage the *Song* style, or in order to sharpen the musical and stylistic contrast between Jessie (sung "authentically" by Lenya) and Bessie (sung by Eden) and to broaden the range of styles.<sup>66</sup> (Later, in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, he combined the coloratura elements with the version in *Song* style.)

Weill and Lenya arrived in Baden-Baden's Hotel Frankfurter Hof either on Friday, 8 July, or Saturday, 9 July 1927.<sup>67</sup> On 11 July, Brecht too set out for Baden-Baden, where he checked into the Hotel Gunzenbachhof.<sup>68</sup> A frequently reproduced photograph shows the two authors and most of the team involved in the Songspiel production (as well as Hannes Küpper, Heinrich Burkard, and Walther Brüggmann with his wife, but not Caspar Neher) seated on the steps of the Baden-Baden Casino.<sup>69</sup> The photograph was apparently taken on 11 or 12 July, before rehearsals began. Another photograph, perhaps even more frequently reproduced (hardly any publication on music theater in the 1920s does without it), shows the same people in the same street clothing, apparently taken immediately before or afterward during an early blocking rehearsal (the orchestral musicians and conductor are not captured). They are standing on or alongside a platform enclosed with ropes and erected for the Songspiel production on the stage of the Kurhausbühne. The singers are holding up placards with inscriptions which, however, do not match those used in the "Finale" of the Songspiel (at least, not as recorded in the scenario). Behind the platform, we can already see one of Neher's backdrops projected onto a screen (see Plate 12).<sup>70</sup>

In designing the sets and costumes (all wear tuxedo-like suits, with bowler hats for the men and straw hats for the two women), Neher adhered closely to Burkard's request to make do "with minimal scenery." The small orchestra was placed on stage in full view alongside the roped platform, on which the protagonists generally acted. Although the platform automatically conjures up associations with a boxing ring, Weill, Brecht, and Neher never referred to it as such at the time, nor is it called a boxing ring in the scenario.<sup>71</sup> Instead, it represents a sort of stage within a stage, in keeping with Brecht's theory of *Verfremdung* (defamiliarization), which was just beginning to emerge. It presented the stage action with exaggerated flamboyance, much as the music was made visible and "exhibited" by placing the orchestra on stage.<sup>72</sup> The ropes, in turn, simply marked the boundaries of the raised platform and served as a safety measure for the actors (to

prevent them from falling off). They could also function as the railing of the ship transporting the men to Mahagonny, as in the “I. Mahagonny-Song.” The screen suspended behind the stage was used for the projection of Neher’s backdrops, apparently employing a technique developed by his close associate in the 1920s, Nina Tokumbet, who devised a way to transfer designs accurately by applying light- and heat-resistant paint to glass plates.<sup>73</sup> Neither the original drawings nor the glass plates for Neher’s seventeen backdrops have survived.<sup>74</sup>

Production notes for Baden-Baden have been preserved in maximum detail in a scenario entered into a vocal score (Vm) that was newly created after the premiere; five production photographs corroborate this scenario in virtually every respect (M1).<sup>75</sup> Judging from the prose style, much of the scenario seems attributable to Brecht. The rather simple stage action is directly suggested by the contents of his poems and meticulously coordinated with the music, even down to the beats on which the men place their feet on a table or deal cards in a poker game. The scenes include: the departure of the four men on their journey to Mahagonny, laden with luggage and stepping purposefully onto the platform, as if onto a ship (“I. Mahagonny-Song”); the arrival in Mahagonny of two “ladies of the night” from Alabama who hope to ply their trade (“Alabama-Song”); the life of the men in Mahagonny’s saloon as they slouch in their chairs and play cards (“II. Mahagonny-Song”); the stultifying boredom in Mahagonny and the dream of setting out for Benares, which, the newspapers tell us, has been destroyed by an earthquake (“Benares-Song”); the “interrogation” of the men of Mahagonny by “God” and their increasingly aggressive rebellion against him (“III. Mahagonny-Song”); finally the demonstrations of the workers, dissatisfied “because everything is so wretched,” before Mahagonny, the “gold town situated on the shores of consolation” (in contrast to or in competition with the “big cities”), is revealed to be “only a made-up word” (“Finale”). These at best loosely related scenes are stitched into a flimsy plot line by means of projected intertitles resembling the titles of silent films.<sup>76</sup> At the beginning of the Songspiel, which opens with a pistol shot (apparently intended to signal the work’s brash attitude), a stagehand unrolls a scroll across the upper part of the stage with the inscription “Für den Fortbestand des goldenen Zeitalters” (For the continuation of the Golden Age). The curtain, already partly raised at the beginning of the performance, goes all the way up, and the music immediately begins. The intertitles that guide the audience through the “plot” are partly taken from the poems: “Auf nach Mahagonny” (Off to Mahagonny) at the opening of the “I. Mahagonny-Song”; “Oh Moon of Alabama” at the opening of the “Alabama-Song”; “Das Leben in Mahagonny” (Life in Mahagonny) at the beginning of the “II. Mahagonny-Song”; “Is here no telephone” and “Let us go to Benares” at the beginning of and during the “Benares-Song”; “Gott in Mahagonny” (God in Mahagonny) at the beginning of the “III. Mahagonny-Song”; and “Aufruhr in Mahagonny” (Rebellion in Mahagonny) during the orchestral piece preceding the “Finale.” The instrumental pieces function as “dividers,” to accompany entrances and exits of the actors or to allow set-up or dismantling of the few props on the platform (the curtain does not come down until the end of the Songspiel). There are no known reports on the nature of Brecht’s stage direction in Baden-Baden, nor of Weill’s involvement in the musical or theatrical rehearsals.<sup>77</sup> Nonetheless, both led to changes in the Songspiel, as shown by annotations and markings on the holograph score (Fh).<sup>78</sup> Though Weill allowed these changes at the premiere, he did not, as we shall see, sanction them as “definitive.” The most important changes:

- Cuts to the “Kleiner Marsch” following the “I. Mahagonny-Song,” and repetition of a section of the “Kleiner Marsch” immediately after the “Alabama-Song.”
- Deletion of the second stanza (with refrain) of the “Alabama-Song” and redistribution of the text in the third stanza (before the refrain) between Bessie and Jessie.
- Bessie joins the refrain of the first stanza (sung by Jessie), by interpolating words repeated from Jessie’s text.

- Jessie’s part in the “III. Mahagonny-Song” includes two added lines shouted through a megaphone.
- In the “Finale,” mm. 5–14 are repeated after m. 14, the parts of Bessie and Jessie in mm. 25–38 are interchanged, the singers in mm. 23, 30–31, and 37–38 are joined by five tenors and five basses, and three bars containing a rhythm played on the snare drum are inserted after m. 24.

The most surprising change is the deletion of the second stanza of the “Alabama-Song,” though admittedly the song’s overwhelming success was impossible to foresee at the time. Perhaps the cut resulted from Irene Eden’s inability to articulate her stanza with a *Gestus* that Brecht demanded of her. Nor did the coloratura version of the stanza that Weill expressly wrote for her, and which was evidently considered for rehearsal in Baden-Baden (it is entered in Weill’s holograph score in a different hand, only to be crossed out later), produce the desired contrast. Or possibly Brecht prevented this version from being performed because it would allow Weill’s music to overshadow his text. The shortening of the “Kleiner Marsch” after the “I. Mahagonny-Song,” and the repeat of parts of it after the “Alabama-Song,” create a musical bracket that binds the first two numbers, thereby both articulating the form and imparting continuity. The alterations in the “Finale” emphasize its character as a clarion call and magnify its impact as a conclusion.<sup>79</sup> A small number of inscriptions penciled by Weill into the holograph score bear witness to his involvement in the rehearsals. For example, he added a few dynamic marks and wrote out a different melodic line in the “Finale,” apparently for Violin I, though without deleting the original one. In any event, he made no substantial revisions to his score in the course of rehearsals.<sup>80</sup>

Brecht did not individualize the six characters in his stage directions. Nonetheless, contrary to his abstract “theoretical” intentions, just such an individualization came about virtually of its own accord at the Baden-Baden premiere—namely, through the preeminent performance of Lenya, whose involvement created a wholly new species of singer-actor that Brecht would immediately put to use. For example, the redistribution of the parts between Jessie and Bessie in the “Finale,” placing greater weight on the role of Jessie, obviously derived from Lenya’s acting ability, which Eden probably did not command. In this way, the figure of Jessie took on a conspicuous significance that she did not originally possess and that neither Brecht nor Weill had foreseen. Casting Lenya in the role altered both the nature and the impact of the Songspiel, although, or perhaps precisely because, Lenya’s style of delivery came closest to Brecht’s intentions—an indirect confirmation of Weill’s view that a “recreative” performance had to be “creative.”<sup>81</sup>

Within the context of a contemporary music festival featuring such works as Berg’s *Lyric Suite* and Bartók’s Piano Sonata, the radical simplification that Weill introduced with his Songspiel by incorporating influences from popular music caused consternation, further enhanced by Neher’s provocative set designs, Brecht’s startling stage direction, and the novel mode of acting and singing inaugurated by Lenya. All of this was wholly new. Already during rehearsals it drew incredulity, as the performance stood out markedly from the largely conventional stagings and performances of the Toch, Milhaud, and Hindemith operas. Indeed, it amounted to an “avant-gardistic” outdoing of the “official” musical avant-garde of the day, which had assembled in Baden-Baden and included, besides Weill and Hindemith, the composers Adorno, Antheil, Bartók, Butting, Copland, Eisler, Haas, Milhaud, Reutter, and Toch. Stephen Hinton rightly describes the Songspiel as a “piece of inverted snobbism.”<sup>82</sup> Lenya recalled the prevailing mood of amazement with which it was received: “*Mahagonny* was so new, real avant-garde, you know, for a festival like that. To come into a highbrow festival with tunes again, at that time when everybody was writing atonal music, and here was somebody who wrote tunes people could sing. Like a Verdi or a Puccini. That was the great sensation.”<sup>83</sup>

Weill even contributed a short text to the program booklet (N), explaining his intentions to an audience of connoisseurs and critics and

unmistakably trying to provoke them as well:

In his more recent works Weill is moving in the direction of those artists of all forms who predict the liquidation of arts engendered by established society. The small epic piece *Mahagonny* merely takes the logical step from the inexorable decline of existing social structures. He already addresses an audience that naively demands its fun in the theater.<sup>84</sup>

As Brecht had anticipated, the reactions from the audience were intense, thereby completing the stunning impact of the premiere.<sup>85</sup> Lenya recalled:

It was a shock to everybody, except Otto Klemperer. Klemperer was the only one who understood it. People really liked when I sang, "Is here no telephone?" It was funny, I guess. Brecht had a great sense of humor, too. He said, "You know, they will whistle. I know they will," to show their disapproval. So, he gave us little whistles and said, "When they start to whistle at you, just go right to the footlights and whistle back." That's what we did. We were all young, you know? And it was a tremendous success of course. After the show we all went to a little bar across from the theater, and Klemperer came in and said, "Is here no telephone" and gave me a slap on my back. I almost fell off my chair, because he understood.<sup>86</sup>

And Brecht, writing to Helene Weigel one day after the premiere, exclaimed: "Huge success for the staging! Fifteen minutes of scandal!"<sup>87</sup> Even Weill's publisher Emil Hertzka was so taken with Lenya's achievement that he made it possible for her to stay in Baden-Baden for a few extra days and to vacation in the Baltic seaside resort of Prerow in August.

#### IV. Critical Response to the Premiere

After the premiere, Weill immediately returned to Berlin and waited for the reviews of the Songspiel to appear. Then, on 4 August 1927, he wrote to UE: "Meanwhile the sensational success of *Mahagonny* in Baden-Baden has spawned a wealth of glowing reviews, which I will forward to you in the next few days, since, of course, you will want to publicize the piece in grand style (as discussed)."<sup>88</sup> Indeed, the publisher ran an advertisement in *Anbruch* 9 (August–September 1927), *Pult & Taktstock* (September–October 1927), and other periodicals with excerpts from the almost ecstatic reviews by leading German critics of the day, including Max Marschalk and Adolf Weißmann.<sup>89</sup> A review that also conveys an impression of the staging was published by Hans Böhm in *Das Theater*:

[T]here was applause on one side and catcalls on the other, all loud enough to raise the roof. Still, I have a strong suspicion that Bert Brecht, the man in charge of the staging and the text of this highly controversial piece, organized the catcalls from the stalls as a precaution in order to generate even more applause. My suspicion grew all the more when the actors came out in style onto the apron and jeered at the spectators below. The bone of contention was *Mahagonny*, a singspiel [*sic*] by Kurt Weill on words taken from Brecht's *Hauspostille*. No plot, just a loose series of cabaret-like numbers presented in a thoroughly amusing and original way. No curtain, everything from the construction of the primitive set to the instructions from the director and stage manager to the activities of the lighting technician etc. takes place before the eyes of the audience, who can also ogle the unoccupied actors between entrances and during costume changes. Backdrops in the form of deliberately ill-matched slides, based on designs by Caspar Neher, are projected onto the wall with amusing quips and humorous drawings. Lines of text, now wittily satirical, now beautifully lyrical, are uttered by two girls and four boys in outlandish Americanized costumes and make-up. The music is extraordinarily inventive and sharp-edged, by no means strained and atonal, but full of pizzazz and packing a wallop. As it was not the composer's aim to produce a work with the qualities of *Die Meistersinger*, we can apply only the yardstick that he himself prescribes in his program note: "This small epic piece merely takes the logical step from the inexorable decline of existing social structures. It [*sic*] already addresses an audience that naively demands its fun in the theater." No doubt *Mahagonny* will be encountered in many a theater in the course of the winter, perhaps not at the State Opera, but all the more in the lighter repertoires.<sup>90</sup>

The misreading of "Er" as "Es" (the text, misquoted by Böhm, rightly refers to Weill and not the Songspiel) evidently led Böhm to view *Mahagonny* primarily as "fun," to emphasize the production's entertaining and amusing elements and to minimize its serious and caustic side. The most insightful contemporary account of the Songspiel came from the pen of Heinrich Strobel:

The sensation of the evening was *Mahagonny*. It begins like a revue. As does the score, an original amalgam of jazz, cabaret chansons, and lyrical elements. Cultivated *Gebrauchsmusik*. Social and political trends gradually enter this initially purely musical game. Strands of plot begin to coalesce. In close connection with them, the music grows imperceptibly from the dance-like to the dramatic. The final song, a revolt against the outdated world order in the guise of a revue, rises in a steep dramatic curve. It even surpasses *Der Protagonist* in intensity. We are swept along. Again we see Weill's outstanding gift for the theater, his skill at dramatic intensification.<sup>91</sup>

In an article on Weill published in the October issue of *Melos*, Strobel situates the Songspiel within Weill's artistic development and assesses it with remarkable perspicacity:

*Royal Palace* is transitional in nature, an attempt to capture our times in artistic form. This same aspiration continues, with increasing success. First in the cantata *Der neue Orpheus*, pushing toward the cabaret chanson with Stravinskian devices. Then with the highly significant *Mahagonny*, signaling a new species of epic *Zeitoper* that breaks with every traditional form of opera. The lyricism of *Royal Palace* and the dramatic intensity of *Der Protagonist* are newly united in music of supreme melodic force and thrilling topicality. It is not a superficial reflection of outward appearances, like Krenek's *Jonny*, the huge success of which was purchased only at the cost of compromises in the music. Instead, it is a work of quite decisive bearing, wholly novel in its artistic deployment of jazz, and one that attempts to give epic form to the meaning of present-day existence. No longer does it address a small circle of people interested in music, it addresses the public that has long since ceased to relate to our standard notion of "serious" art. . . . It is the first successful attempt to create a synthesis of topical music and current events on the stage. It takes its place in Weill's evolution as a basis for new and more encompassing works.<sup>92</sup>

Wholly negative reviews of a conservative or reactionary bent were few and far between. One such review, published in the *Rheinische Musik- und Theater-Zeitung*, is already shockingly anti-Semitic six years before Hitler's accession to power. The journal's editor, Gerhard Tischer, anticipates the perfidious language of denunciation that would prevail in German music criticism after 1933:

The very title and the names of the characters—Jessie, Bessie, Charlie, Billy, Bobby, Jimmy—are revealing, as is the entire presentation: half cinema, half cabaret. This Weill, the son of a Jewish cantor in Dessau, is highly skilled and captures the style of the milieu—the scum of humanity in a fictitious gold rush town—with infamous accuracy. To this end he has created a satirical, trivially commonplace, yet effective score. In short, he represents that type of destructive musical and artistic nature that sets fire to everything, not with the sacred, purifying flame of the zealot from a wish to improve, but with a speculative eye to the amusement of purveyors of a bankrupt world-view. It is thus highly revealing that one part of the audience, admiring the author's undoubted artistry and rootlessness, roared its approval of this insolent and sloppy Songspiel, while the other showed its rejection of this feculent art, partly with stony silence, partly with hisses and catcalls. . . . In its essence, Aryan art is ethically motivated and transcendent. It has risen above the sensual and worldly, whose coarseness need not be prudishly suppressed (witness Shakespeare, Hans Sachs, Simplizissimus), and has ascended to the supra-sensual and divine. To be sure, there is another view of art and the world, and it may have the same genuineness and *raison d'être* from the standpoint of its adherents. But surely we Germans do not need to abandon our standpoint for the sake of these others and to placidly accept such insulting abominations of sensibility and taste for the sake of brilliant handiwork.<sup>93</sup>

The international renown of the Baden-Baden events is confirmed by Aaron Copland and Olin Downes, who had traveled from the United

States to review the festival. Copland seems, unsurprisingly, to have had scant understanding of the Songspiel's specifically German brand of *Amerikanismus*. As he wrote in *Modern Music*:

The chamber opera which aroused most discussion was Kurt Weill's *Mahagonny* (accent on the third syllable, please!). A pupil of Busoni's, Weill is the new *enfant terrible* of Germany. But it is not so easy to be an *enfant terrible* as it used to be and nothing is more painful than the spectacle of a composer trying too hard to be revolutionary. Weill, in writing *Mahagonny*, cannot escape the accusation. It is termed a "songspiel" and is, in effect, a series of pseudo-popular songs in the jazz manner. (One remembers particularly Jessie and Bessie repeatedly singing in English, "Is here no telephone.") Weill is not without musical gifts but these are too often sacrificed for the sake of a questionable dramatic effectiveness.<sup>94</sup>

Downes's assessment, published in the *New York Times* on 14 August 1927, proved to be better informed but still uncomprehending:

In this composer's wit there is a thrust. As a craftsman he can afford to stick his tongue in his cheek. Musically speaking, his bitterness is under perfect control and the audience has good reason to laugh at various vocal and orchestral ingenuities. But Weill's ideas are not for the drawing room, and those who planned the stage must have been considerably restrained for the Baden-Baden production. We saw the original sketches of "Mahagonny" made in Berlin, and they were not pleasant. Judging by them the stage production at Baden-Baden was skeletonized. Quite enough was done under the circumstances. But how do they achieve such a performance on a stage set up for a moment in a concert hall, and an "opera" rehearsed between other jobs for a single performance at a three-day musical festival? The quartet of men, Erik Wirl, Georg Ripperger, Karl Geibel, and Gerhard Pechner, and the girls, too, Lotte Lenja and Irene Eden, were immense in make-up, in action and in song. With lesser interpreters, who visualized as well as made audible the spirit of the piece, it would have been far less fortunate. The question of the worthiness of the subject can go begging here. Composer and interpreters most emphatically achieved their ends.<sup>95</sup>

## V. Attempts to Exploit the Success

The question raised in Olin Downes's review—namely, how to make a place for the Songspiel in the music business—was already under discussion among Weill, Brecht, Hertzka, and Hans Heinsheimer (the head of UE's opera department at the time) shortly after the Baden-Baden premiere. Would vigorous publicity for the Songspiel advance or undermine the plan for a Mahagonny opera following upon the "stylistic exercise" of the Songspiel? Not only were the various opinions hotly debated, they also changed when difficulties regarding the conception of a Mahagonny opera began to arise in August 1927, even before real work on it had begun. The overlapping processes can be distinguished but not separated. In the months following the Baden-Baden premiere, Weill concentrated on completing his one-act opera *Der Zar lässt sich fotografieren*, produced a setting of Brecht's poem *Vom Tod im Wald* (September 1927), wrote incidental music for Strindberg's *Gustav III* (October 1927), started working with Brecht on the libretto of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* in October, and hoped to find a niche for his opera *Na und?*, which UE viewed with skepticism (it was neither published nor performed and has since disappeared)—all in an attempt to find a better way of making ends meet.<sup>96</sup>

The performance material employed in Baden-Baden (two vocal scores, six vocal parts, and orchestral material) and Weill's holograph score went their separate ways following the premiere. UE received the holograph score and one of the two vocal scores prepared by their copyists (and evidently the orchestral parts as well), whereas Weill, it may be concluded, took the other vocal score with him to Berlin.<sup>97</sup> At least some of the six vocal parts, on the other hand, apparently remained with the singers. Neither the two vocal scores nor the orchestral parts have survived, and the only extant vocal part is the one for Bessie, sung by Irene Eden.

Also while still in Baden-Baden, Weill and UE decided to publish the "Alabama-Song" as sheet music, which UE then promptly prepared. Weill

entrusted the arrangement entirely to the publisher but proofread the production master (Am).<sup>98</sup> It was published as a "Blues" (to quote the title page), received a new four-bar introduction, presented the musical text in doubled note-values, employed standard notation for the first section (Weill had written it in *Sprechstimme*), dispensed with a change in time signature for the refrain, and simplified the piano part (compared to the version transmitted in CmB).<sup>99</sup> This edition (Ae), though printed as early as November 1927, did not go on sale until February 1928 (facsimile in KWE IV/2).

In the first weeks of August 1927, Weill, now back in Berlin, already faced decisions about how best to exploit the spectacular success of the Songspiel's premiere. One possibility was to have it incorporated in a theatrical revue.<sup>100</sup> Initially, Weill took up this suggestion without putting much faith in it. Writing to Lenya on 8 August, he explained that "Papi [i.e., Georg Kaiser] said that *Mahagonny* would be brilliant for the Haller-Revue. He immediately telephoned Wurm, whom I visited just now. It's underway, but I doubt very much it'll work out."<sup>101</sup> Three days later, however, he reported to Lenya with more confidence: "Last night I was at the Wurms' to play *Mahagonny* for them. Salter and Papi were there. Everyone was simply knocked out. I had to play it three times. They now want to put a lot of pressure on Haller, and Salter will try to get the 'Alabama-Song' away from U.E. for America, because he thinks he can do terrific business with it over there. It was quite nice."<sup>102</sup> Only a day later, Weill received another inquiry, from stage director Karlheinz Martin, who wanted to make *Mahagonny* part of an artistically ambitious revue that the Berlin impresario Heinz Saltenburg was planning to open in December.<sup>103</sup> In light of these offers, Weill submitted a proposal to UE in a letter of 16 August:

Several days ago, I conducted negotiations for a performance of *Mahagonny* in a large production-number revue. I kept things vague at that time, especially since the matter was not urgent. Yesterday I received a similar offer, but with much more favorable conditions. Once again it is a revue, but of a serious artistic character, with outstanding personnel and brilliant potential (a well-known Berlin theater, a famous stage director, etc., an open-ended run of performances, not a one-sided arrangement as with Piscator!). I view such a production as the only way to make the most effective use of the Baden-Baden success without diminishing the impact of any later full-length Mahagonny opera (or operetta). On the contrary, I'm convinced that integrating the Baden-Baden piece into a large-scale revue would prepare the ground for the opera. (There is also the following possibility: the same theater directors would accept the big Mahagonny opera for a Berlin run after we've premiered it at a provincial opera house.) The potential for exploiting sheet music sales ("Alabama-Song"!!) at such a revue performance will be, of course, perfectly obvious to you.<sup>104</sup>

Not only did these plans never materialize, UE had in the meantime expressed serious doubts about the projected Mahagonny opera both on practical grounds (division of royalties) and on aesthetic grounds having to do with the plot and fundamental themes. Given that Brecht was a novice in the field of musical theater, Hertzka voiced additional caution:

There is no doubt that Brecht is a unique and original mind with an astonishing command of crass exoticism and irony. But I do not believe that *Mann ist Mann*, for example, is particularly suitable for so-called state theaters or large municipal stages, and I have the feeling that we are dealing with a genre better suited for chamber theaters or stages devoted to modern drama. Nor do I feel that we are in a position to accommodate an opera in the style of the *Mahagonny* songs, with pungent episodes of the sort that occur in *Mann ist Mann*, at any of the large opera houses. . . . These remarks should not, of course, be taken as directed against Herr Brecht; they are only meant to urge maximum caution on your part as the opera composer. After all, it should be taken into account that Herr Brecht has not yet written an opera libretto, and that no play of his has yet been set to music.<sup>105</sup>

Weill responded with disappointment and suggested for the first time that the Songspiel should be published. He had received a query from the Stadttheater Hagen asking for permission to perform the Songspiel.<sup>106</sup> The

publisher advised him to turn the theater down: “We would recommend that you simply place the blame on us, perhaps telling them we need the Baden-Baden rehearsal material for publication purposes, or something similar.”<sup>107</sup> Weill agreed:

I’ve just received a telephone call from the Stadttheater Hagen asking once again about *Mahagonny*. I said that they should contact you, there being nothing that I can do. In any case, it’s probably better to decline this Hagen performance, for other theaters haven’t been given the piece either. When you turn them down, you can perfectly well state that there is currently neither a complete vocal score nor a libretto for the work.<sup>108</sup>

Weill’s jab in the last sentence reflects the fact that he had received inquiries from other cities (including one from Copenhagen) to which he would gladly have consented, as they were “important for publicity purposes.”<sup>109</sup> Growing interest in the work made it all the more urgent to have a vocal score that could at least be sent for perusal. It is likely that the preparation of just such a vocal score had already been discussed by Weill and UE immediately after the Baden-Baden premiere; six weeks thereafter, the need for a “complete” version of the *Songspiel*, one which would codify the changes made in Baden-Baden, had only intensified. Such discussions probably prompted UE’s announcement of a “piano-vocal score in preparation” (in the above-mentioned advertisements), but the publisher’s correspondence says nothing about the production of such a score.<sup>110</sup> It is also possible that Weill raised the issue in conversation with UE’s representatives during a meeting he had proposed in a letter of 12 September 1927; the meeting took place in Berlin no later than mid-October.<sup>111</sup>

The vocal score that did emerge (*Vm*), probably in the fall of 1927, did not come from UE, notwithstanding the fact that it now bears a “UNIVERSAL-EDITION WIEN” stamp, which was applied only after World War II. Instead, it appears to have been produced in Berlin, at Weill’s direction, derived from the (now lost) vocal score that he had brought back from Baden-Baden.<sup>112</sup> The newly copied vocal score goes beyond Weill’s holograph score in terms of the work’s formal layout. On the other hand, it ignores some of the changes made for the premiere (see below). Moreover, it alters subtle details in the handling of the vocal parts—changes that, it would seem, could have originated only with Weill. It also presents a general production note that appears to have Weill’s approval, and writes out the repeat of mm. 100–109 from the “Kleiner Marsch” after the “Alabama-Song” as well as the repeat of mm. 5–14 after m. 15 in the “Finale.” However, of the changes made for the premiere, the following were either ignored or reversed:

- “Kleiner Marsch”: the deletion of mm. 90–110 following the “I. Mahagonny-Song.”
- “Alabama-Song”: the deletion of stanza 2 (Bessie), the changes to the distribution of voices in stanza 3, and Bessie’s interpolations in stanza 1.
- “III. Mahagonny-Song”: the addition of Jessie’s lines “Ansahn Gott die Männer von Mahagonny | Nein sagten die Männer von Mahagonny,” yelled into a megaphone between mm. 123–124.
- “Finale”: the doubling of the men’s voices by five tenors and five basses in mm. 23, 30f., and 37f., the insertion of a three-bar phrase on the snare drum after m. 24, and the exchange of Jessie’s and Bessie’s parts in mm. 25–38.<sup>113</sup>

In short, Weill reversed all changes made for the premiere to Jessie’s part. It is thus safe to conclude that they had depended entirely on Lenya’s participation, and that Weill considered them production-specific.

The resulting vocal score (*Vm*), meticulously written out in ink by a copyist, lacked any scenario (apart from the concise production note at the beginning of the piece), and thus did not contain notes on intertitles, lighting, the sequence of Neher’s projections, or the slogans on the placards in the “Finale.” All of this must have existed prior to the premiere; indeed, Weill himself proposed that at least some of the scenario be printed in a *Textbuch* together with the *Songspiel* lyrics.<sup>114</sup> Admittedly, because most

changes made for the premiere were not preserved, it was no longer possible to use the Baden-Baden scenario in every detail (for example, it lacks stage directions for the reinstated second stanza of the “Alabama-Song”). Nonetheless, what appears to be the exact scenario of the premiere, with all the information cited above, was subsequently entered into *Vm* by a different scribe with different writing implements, though it is unknown when or why this was done, who did it, on what authority, or what served as a model for the inscriptions (the added scenario is discussed in more detail in the Critical Report, where Supplement A offers a complete transcription). All we know is that, judging from the nature of some corrections (words inserted above or beneath the line concerned), it appears to have been copied from and checked against a master. The scenario’s musical ramifications were also entered into Weill’s holograph score by the same scribe using the same writing implements, but only those portions conductors needed to grasp for performance purposes (e.g., additions to and cuts in the musical fabric). Some instructions from the scenario of the *Songspiel*’s premiere were also incorporated directly into the opera.<sup>115</sup>

Olin Downes’s question of how to find a place for the *Songspiel* went unanswered. With no further performances or publications, the great success of the *Songspiel*’s premiere was left unexploited. Memories faded quickly after the far greater success of *Die Dreigroschenoper* in September 1928, and especially with the completion of the score of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (April 1929), which prompted heated debates and revisions even before its premiere. Weill himself began describing the *Songspiel* as a “stylistic exercise” for the opera.<sup>116</sup> However, he never minimized its importance or withdrew the work; he even urged its publication together with other works of his with texts by Brecht:

I’m writing *Der Lindberghflug* for Baden-Baden, together with Hindemith. The sections I’ve done (more than half the work) have come off so well that I plan to compose the entire piece, including the sections Hindemith is now doing. We could then bring out a very handsome volume: *Drei Songspiele von Weill und Brecht*: 1) *Mahagonny-Gesänge* (i.e., the Baden-Baden version of *Mahagonny*), 2) *Das Berliner Requiem*, and 3) *Der Lindberghflug*. I also intend to perform these three pieces together in a new form, a cross between concert and theater, with images etc. To do this, I’ll assemble a troupe in Berlin and send it on tour, not to theaters, but to concert halls or cabarets.<sup>117</sup>

No such plans ever came to fruition.

If UE considered performances of the *Songspiel* to be “not helpful” before the premiere of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, the firm definitely advised against its performance after the opera’s world premiere on 9 March 1930 in Leipzig.<sup>118</sup> Heinsheimer provided a rough outline of UE’s reasoning in a letter to Weill dated 16 May 1930: “Today the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus (the conductor [Hanns Walter] David) asked permission to perform the Baden-Baden version of *Mahagonny* during a matinée in June. It need hardly be mentioned that we turned him down, as it would be impossible to allow this performance prior to the performances [of the opera] in Essen and Dortmund.”<sup>119</sup> Following another query, this time from Königsberg’s theater director, Hans Schüler, Heinsheimer wrote to Weill on 17 June 1930:

In our view, it would be harmful now for *Mahagonny* to be given in its one-act version [i.e., the *Songspiel*], thereby allowing theaters that feel obligated to mount *Mahagonny* [i.e., the opera] to present, without great responsibility or effort, performances of the work which, it need hardly be said, will impede the progress of the full-length *Mahagonny*. We cannot, of course, withhold from one theater what we permit others to do, and if we abandon this principle, it will seriously encumber our promotion work for the full-length *Mahagonny*.<sup>120</sup>

Weill replied on 19 June: “In the matter of the little *Mahagonny* (Schüler), I fully agree with you. As before, the little *Mahagonny* will be made available only to those theaters that have already performed or at least accepted the opera.”<sup>121</sup> Yet attempts to interest opera houses in staging *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* encountered increasing difficulties. These diffi-

culties, as we learn from the correspondence between Weill and UE in these years, had from the very outset been occasioned by moral objections to the “God in Mahagonny” scene and the brothel scene, the latter of which Weill sought to address with revisions even before the premiere. But there were other causes as well: the sharply deteriorating financial state of Germany’s opera houses following the Wall Street crash on “Black Friday” (29 October 1929), which persuaded them to avoid financial risks (Berlin’s Krolloper was even shut down by a Landtag resolution of 6 March 1931); the massive disturbances created by Nazi demonstrators at performances in Leipzig and Braunschweig (and later in Frankfurt am Main), which dissuaded not only conservative theaters from programming the opera; and finally the dramatic decline of the liberal political climate after the Reichstag elections of 14 September 1930, which catapulted the Nazi party from 12 to 107 seats and caused theaters, in anticipatory submission, to avoid controversy or provocation. Under these circumstances, Weill not only continued to revise the opera, but also granted theaters license within certain limits. As early as July 1930, he responded enthusiastically to a proposed performance at the Munich Kammerspiele, as there was no chance of its being mounted at the Munich Staatsoper: “I’m excited about the proposal from the Munich Kammerspiele, since this theater in particular (like the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus, the Dresden Alberttheater, etc.) is especially well-equipped to mount a performance similar to [Max] Reinhardt’s. Please pursue this plan with maximum interest: a contract with the Kammerspiele would be an enormous gain. Tell the gentlemen that the orchestra and chorus can be brought down to a size roughly equivalent to that of an operetta.”<sup>122</sup>

The discussions with UE and the Kammerspiele episode illustrate an important point: by summer 1930 Weill was thinking in terms of abridging the opera rather than expanding the Songspiel. So rather than urging UE to publish a vocal score of the Songspiel, he pursued the plan of publishing a “small piano-vocal score” containing selections from the opera, for which he proposed the title “Zwölf ausgewählte Stücke aus der Oper *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*”—a selection that UE further abridged to achieve a more affordable sales price.<sup>123</sup> It was not until 1932 that Heinsheimer alluded to the Songspiel, and then only in connection with his own adaptation of the opera for a 1932 performance in Vienna: “Still, an attempt would be made initially to present a sort of cross-section of the work suitable for the theater’s resources, resorting to the Baden-Baden Songspiel but, of course, performing a number of newer items and declaiming the connecting passages of text, as on the *Mahagonny* recording or as in selections produced for radio. . . . I’ll send you a quite precise plan of the details in due time.”<sup>124</sup>

Weill did not agree to the proposal to revert to the Songspiel. In two letters to Heinsheimer, he laid down definite limits for any adaptation of the opera. On 2 March 1932, he wrote: “The changes of instrumentation suggested by Herr Simon represent, of course, a complete departure from my typical sound, and the *Mahagonny* score in particular is so carefully worked out in its wholly distinctive sound that it’s impossible simply to incorporate missing instruments into other groups.”<sup>125</sup> And on 24 March 1932, he laid out his terms: “What I wish to avoid at all costs is to have the piece whittled down to the songs or otherwise song-like sections. In principle, I’d rather have one or another song omitted than to have all the musically demanding pieces cut.”<sup>126</sup>

The production of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at Berlin’s Theater am Kurfürstendamm on 21 December 1931 (the last time the opera was staged in Germany until after World War II), was a great success and led to a run of about forty performances: Weill himself had thoroughly reworked the score for it. Heinsheimer’s adaptation of the opera, mounted at Vienna’s Raimund Theater on 26 April 1932, was likewise successful. They led Heinsheimer to set in motion the “*Mahagonny* publicity,” which Weill had requested, and to contact the International Society of Contemporary Music in Hamburg.<sup>127</sup>

Perhaps UE’s effort helped judicial councillor Otto Wolff, the new proprietor of the Schiller-Oper in Altona (near Hamburg), to learn about the

Songspiel. The theater, originally conceived for circus performances (it served as a venue for the Busch Circus from 1892 to 1899) and later used for theatrical productions, was acquired at auction by Wolff, who remodeled it in summer 1932. By radically overhauling it in the style of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, he hoped to turn the Schiller Theater into an opera house that would gain a reputation with modern stage productions.<sup>128</sup> The artistic direction of the theater was assigned to Hanns Walther Sattler, who also served as director of the Stadttheater Hamburg, and its staff included Benno Fraenkel (stage director), Wolfgang Hildebrandt (set designer), Ernst Roters (guest stage director as well as composer and conductor), and Willi Hammer (conductor).<sup>129</sup> The theater opened on 4 September 1932, with an *en suite* production of Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz* that was broadcast on radio. On 13 October 1932, Sattler programmed his first “Evening of Modern Opera,” previously announced in the *Hamburger Anzeiger* on 25 June 1932:

While the very extensive technical upgrading on the Hamburg-Altona border is going full throttle, the artistic management has made the welcome announcement that the director Dr. Sattler has, in addition to the originally planned exclusive focus on revivals of earlier operas, resolved to grant due space to the essential new forms of today. The repertoire features, among other things, Ernst Toch’s *Egon und Emilie*, Hindemith’s *Hin und zurück*, Stravinsky’s *L’histoire du soldat*, as well as *Der Jasager* and *Der Lindberghflug* by Weill and Brecht. . . . We note, with satisfaction in terms of cultural politics, that the idea of a vibrant and relevant Volks-Oper is finally being pursued, one capable of giving us many things which the official *grand opéra* denies us. Now if the basic requirements with regard to singers, orchestra, and stage direction (!) are met, then may good luck attend the opening of the season!<sup>130</sup>

As it happened, the Stravinsky was moved to the second “Evening of Modern Opera,” and, for unknown reasons, *Der Jasager* was replaced by the Songspiel *Mahagonny*, directed by Ernst Roters and conducted by Willi Hammer.<sup>131</sup> This was the first (and only) revival of the Songspiel after the Baden-Baden premiere in July 1927, and, judging from the reviews, Roters largely adhered to the model of the Baden-Baden production.<sup>132</sup> He even seems to have made use of the slides with Neher’s backdrops.<sup>133</sup> A review by “H. E.,” published in the *Hamburger Anzeiger*, suggests that the Songspiel’s spectacular premiere in Baden-Baden, though still remembered, was now, three months before Hitler’s ascension to power, dismissed with unmistakable political undertones as a document of its times:

This audacious evening proved just how great the interest even in problematic things can be: the Opera in the Schiller Theater was filled to overflowing . . . *Mahagonny* shows Weill at a much earlier stage of his development. This Songspiel received its premiere in Baden-Baden in 1927. Ernst Roters, who quite adroitly handled the stage direction, adhered closely to this model, which had been received with cheers and euphoria at the time. The loose string of five *Mahagonny Songs* is not quite intelligible to the listener (Weill-Brecht later expanded this operatic skeleton into a full-length work, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*). *Mahagonny* is a typical example of the evanescence of art in our day, of the treadmill of changing styles and stylistic viewpoints over the last ten years. This *Song* style, a revolutionary novelty five years ago, is already historical today . . . *Sachlichkeit* and Anti-Romanticism in this form are no longer topical problems. The unyielding stridency of the sound, the heightened brutality of the music, are exhausting and repellent. Still, one mood is captured surprisingly well in the four-voice male singing: soporific weariness. *Mahagonny* is a phantom trying to be a political mirror of our times.<sup>134</sup>

Weill was not involved in any way in this production, nor was Lenya, Neher, or Brecht. It is not even certain that the composer knew of it in advance; it is not mentioned in his correspondence. This single performance drew only regional attention. Still, the Weill items on the first “Evening of Modern Opera” were so successful that Willi Hammer contacted him in early November 1932 and asked him to consider the possibility of arranging the choruses from *Die Bürgschaft* for the conditions at

the Schiller-Oper—a request to which he willingly consented.<sup>135</sup> These plans, though well advanced, were thwarted by subsequent political developments in Germany.<sup>136</sup>

## VI. The “Paris Version” of the Songspiel

Because of the deteriorating political climate, performances of Weill’s works in Germany became increasingly difficult to bring off, and his contacts abroad became all the more important.<sup>137</sup> As early as 1 December 1931, he wrote to UE: “As you will recall, I asked you a while ago to set your sights on promoting my works in the great musical capitals abroad, now that the situation in Germany has become increasingly uncertain. You promised at the time to take steps in this direction. The great success of my *Dreigroschenoper* score in Paris . . . would be a sound basis for launching such a campaign there.”<sup>138</sup> Thus, when he received a proposal for an all-Weill concert there, supported by the Vicomte de Noailles, he reacted excitedly in a letter to UE of 26 August 1932 and immediately started making plans:

Owing to the huge success of the *Dreigroschenoper* score, I’ve just received an invitation from the Vicomte de Noailles in Paris to present an evening of my own works in Paris during the course of the winter. I’m asked for suggestions. Perhaps this gives me at last an opportunity to carry out my long-sought exploitation of the Paris success of my *Dreigroschenoper*. I’ll try to arrange a performance of *Der Jasager* at this occasion, and perhaps even *Mahagonny* as well.<sup>139</sup>

The Vicomte de Noailles was a member of the wealthy, distinguished, founding committee of the Société de La Sérénade, an organization established in Paris in 1931 by Yvonne de Casa Fuerte (*née* Yvonne Giraud), who had studied (alongside Darius Milhaud) with Paul Dukas. The society supported young composers outside the established Parisian concert series, promoted movement toward musical simplification, and explored new models relating music to society.<sup>140</sup> The Société’s artistic board included composers such as Georges Auric, Nicolas Nabokov, Francis Poulenc, and Milhaud, the last of whom had witnessed the Baden-Baden premiere of the Songspiel. Weill’s proposed program of *Der Jasager* and the Songspiel (a performance of the opera was impossible within the confines of the La Sérénade concerts) was fully in line with the Société’s philosophy and was accepted immediately. The Vicomte de Noailles even provided additional funds to enable *Der Jasager* to be performed by the youth choir of Berlin’s State Academy of Church and School Music.<sup>141</sup>

Weill entrusted his good friend and former student Maurice Abravanel with the Songspiel’s musical direction, Caspar Neher with the set design, and Hans Curjel, the former dramaturg of the Krolloper, with its stage direction; Brecht was not consulted. Abravanel had already conducted seven performances of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* in Kassel in 1930, and Curjel had been in close contact with Weill when the composer readied the opera for its first production. For the role of Jessie, Weill again chose Lotte Lenya. With this decision he apparently pursued artistic and private interests simultaneously; he wanted “to lure her away from the gaming tables” (at this time Lenya was romantically involved with the tenor Otto Pasetti and gambling on the Riviera), to grant her an *entrée* to Paris with maximum visibility, and to have his piece performed with her unique and original powers of interpretation.<sup>142</sup> Possibly to whet her appetite for the Paris performance, Weill expanded the Songspiel by adding numbers from the opera, and he made sure Pasetti was engaged to sing Charlie. The other roles were sung by Hilde Rosenthal (Bessie), Heinrich Greter (Bobby), Albert Peters (Billy), and Karl Salomon (Jimmy).<sup>143</sup> Weill himself did not modify the numbers from the opera so that they could be added to the Songspiel (there are no inscriptions from him to this effect in the sources **FhO** and **FeO**), for at the time he was deeply immersed in composing *Der Silbersee* and had also been commissioned by the Princesse de Polignac to write an orchestral work.<sup>144</sup> Instead, he delegated the task. Both Abravanel and Curjel later claimed to have created the adaptation in

consultation with Weill, but only Abravanel’s handwriting can be positively identified.<sup>145</sup> The performance material for Paris, rather than being newly prepared by UE in Vienna, was assembled at least partly from the existing materials for the Songspiel and the opera by UE’s staff member in Berlin, Alfred Schlee, apparently in consultation with Weill and/or Abravanel.<sup>146</sup>

Abravanel’s markings in **Fh** and in the surviving insertions **FeO** and **FhO** indicate that the Paris version included Jenny’s song “Ach bedenken Sie, Herr Jakob Schmidt” (No. 5 in the opera, as newly composed by Weill for the Berlin version of 1931 with Lenya as Jenny); the duet between Jenny and Jimmy, “Ich habe gelernt, wenn ich einen Mann kennenlerne” (No. 6); the male trio “Wunderbar ist das Heraufkommen des Abends” with Jimmy’s song “Ich glaube ich will meinen Hut aufessen” (No. 8) immediately following; and finally Jenny’s aria “Denn wie man sich bettet” (No. 16).<sup>147</sup> This expansion of the Songspiel showcased both Lenya and Pasetti: “Ach bedenken Sie” and “Denn wie man sich bettet” were basically solo vehicles for Lenya, “Ich habe gelernt” a duet for Lenya and Pasetti; Lenya anchored the “Finale,” and the ensemble number “Wunderbar ist das Heraufkommen des Abends” gave Pasetti an important solo part. Lenya and Pasetti were involved in every performance of this expanded version of the Songspiel, which reduces the music almost entirely to the *Song* style that Weill, as mentioned above, originally wanted to downplay in adaptations of his opera. This is one more indication that the choice of numbers served to place maximum emphasis on Lenya’s performance style, and Weill may have endorsed it for that reason. But this version is ill-suited to convey an overall impression of the *Mahagonny* music.

Aside from these four additions, Abravanel recalled that the Paris version replaced the Songspiel’s “Alabama-Song” with that of the opera. Although the insert has not been traced, several markings in **Fh** confirm Abravanel’s recollection.<sup>148</sup> It would seem that he revised the vocal parts so that Bessie would have sung the part of Jenny, whereas Jessie would have sung the top voice of the parts for the Six Girls of Mahagonny.<sup>149</sup>

Abravanel adapted the instrumentation of the five numbers from the opera so they could be performed by the ten players required for the Songspiel (eleven if the percussion part is divided between two players), but he left the opera’s banjo part (doubling on guitar and Hawaiian guitar) alone, apparently simply adding a player.<sup>150</sup> Though this did not entail any serious difficulties, it considerably altered the work’s original *Klangbild*. The exact details of Abravanel’s adaptation are frustratingly unclear, however, because many of his annotations were subsequently erased or altered, apparently after World War II. His discernible pencil annotations in **Fh** as well as **FeO** and **FhO** indicate that the Paris version retained the opera’s parts for clarinet as well as alto and tenor saxophone by having the second clarinetist switch to tenor saxophone (an exception may have been “Denn wie man sich bettet,” where two clarinets appear to have played, at least for the first part of the number). Of the two bassoon parts, Bassoon I was omitted and Bassoon II taken over in the higher register by the trombone, which also played the tuba part where feasible. The two horn parts called for in the opera were simply omitted; the piano seems to have served as a substitute for the opera’s lower strings (viola, violoncello, and double bass).

Just as rescoring numbers from the opera presented few problems, splicing them into Songspiel did not cause any serious difficulties either, because the Songspiel itself is a series of fairly loosely connected self-contained numbers. The Paris version placed the opera’s No. 8 (“Wunderbar ist das Heraufkommen des Abends”), No. 5 (“Ach bedenken Sie”), and No. 6 (“Ich habe gelernt”) in direct succession after the repeat of the truncated “Kleiner Marsch” that followed the “Alabama-Song” (also taken from the opera). Then came the instrumental “Vivace.” The fourth addition, No. 16 (“Denn wie man sich bettet”), appeared between the “Benares-Song” and the “Sostenuto (Choral).”<sup>151</sup>

Most of the cuts made in the Songspiel for the Baden-Baden premiere (which, as we have already seen, owed their existence mainly to Lenya’s participation and performance style) were retained and new ones intro-

duced, along with adjustments to the orchestration.<sup>152</sup> Of all these changes to the Songspiel, the most important were the deletion of the second stanza of the “Alabama-Song” (as in Baden-Baden), the omission of mm. 32–93 of the “II. Mahagonny-Song,” the omission of mm. 31–55 of the “III. Mahagonny-Song,” whose instrumentation of mm. 18–25 and 68–74 was reduced to bells, and the insertion of the two lines that Jessie yelled through a megaphone between mm. 122 and 123 (as in Baden-Baden). The changes made in Baden-Baden to the “Finale” were similarly retained (i.e., the interchanging of the parts for Jessie and Bessie), though not the doubling by five tenors and five basses.

No scenario has survived for this expanded version of the Songspiel. Still, as stage director, Curjel probably would have adhered to the model of Brecht’s scenario for the Baden-Baden premiere, with which he was already familiar (he had witnessed the premiere as a spectator). He may have completed the scenario for the four newly inserted numbers in the same spirit, perhaps even reverting to the opera’s stage action. Neher’s set design in Paris, judging from contemporary accounts, was patterned after the one used in Baden-Baden, including projections. Whether Brecht’s “intertitles” were also projected is unknown, but they would have had to be augmented to account for the new numbers. Whatever the case, the theatrical possibilities in Paris were, as we know from reviews and accounts given by the participants, extremely limited and were hardly capable of meaningfully conveying “epic alienation.” A description of the stage by Marcel Moré tells us:

[T]he stage of the Salle Gaveau was again divided into two parts. As in *Der Jasager*, the orchestra sat on one side, though with a quite different set-up: the strings reduced to the barest minimum, so you could easily count them, whereas brass sonorities predominated, enhanced above all by the plaintive song of the saxophones and the outbursts of the trombones.<sup>153</sup> On the other side of the stage were the characters: two women and four men moved about in a sort of boxing ring amid suitcases, barstools, and rocking chairs, the women in outfits redolent of poverty and prostitution, the men coiffed with those straw boaters typical of the underworld. Above the stage hung a yellow lantern. Slightly higher, as a commentary on the plot, grisaille *laterna magica* images in the style of the German caricaturist George Grosz were projected onto a wide screen: sleazy alleyways and exotic landscapes, gallows, monsters, mugshots, half-drunken women lounging on deck chairs by the seaside amidst broken bottles, murderers, agitators.<sup>154</sup>

The organizers of La Sérénade presented the Weill performances, preceded by Manuel de Falla’s Harpsichord Concerto (played by Marcelle Meyer) and the premiere of a new piano sonata by Georges Auric (played by Jacques Février), as a glittering social event. It was a rousing success for Weill and Lenya. On 10 December 1932, a more or less “private” advance performance of the concert took place in the great hall of the Noailles’ residence, attended by Paris’s cultural elite, including Stravinsky, who congratulated Weill. Abravanel recalls: “At this preview of *Mahagonny*, Stravinsky expressed his admiration for it, preferring it to the three-act version. He said it had a much higher density. Later, when we were approached to take a touring company to Spain and possibly to Italy, Stravinsky wanted *L’histoire du soldat* as a companion piece. An ideal bill, he called it.”<sup>155</sup>

The “public” concert duly took place in the Salle Gaveau on 11 December 1932, the first concert in La Sérénade’s second season.<sup>156</sup> Curjel has left an account of both concerts:

The first performance occurred in a pseudo-rococo hall at the Noailles’ city residence. A mad contradiction between the false splendor of the false ornaments and our austere stage with a couple of spotlights and a projector. But precisely these contrasts interacted marvelously; the stridency became even more strident. Again Lenya sang one of the girls, and the other parts were also very well cast. The strangest thing was the audience: Stravinsky, Picasso, Cocteau, Darius Milhaud, Fernand Léger, André Gide, Georges Auric, Arthur Honegger, and other Parisian artists and intellectuals. Weill paid no attention to the illustrious and highly knowledgeable

guests, but helped out at dicey moments in the half-improvised presentation. The next day, on 12 [recte 11] December 1932, we repeated the performance in the overfilled Salle Gaveau, which likewise had no stage and no technical facilities. But here, too, the performance on the platform of the “*théâtre spontané*,” as Le Corbusier later called it (he too was in the audience), was a success. This time the Parisian actors and chansonniers appeared—I can recall Damia, Lys Gauty, Marianne Oswald, Marie Dubas—leading to endless demonstrations of approval at the end of the concert, at which *Mahagonny* as well as *Der Jasager* were heard.<sup>157</sup>

The press response to the performance of the Songspiel, which was (understandably) not announced as an expansion of the original version, was almost ecstatic.<sup>158</sup> Emile Vuillermoz, for example, headed his review for *Candida* with the words “Enfin du nouveau!” (Something new at last!), and André George pinpointed the Songspiel’s aesthetic and historical significance:

Everything that young musicians from France and elsewhere have been avidly seeking since the war—the artistic use of popular forms, the aesthetic valorization of quite simple elements drawn from contemporary everyday life; jazz, with its renewal of rhythm as well as its power of suggestion; together with more technical means (such as the tiny orchestra with the strings dethroned from their traditional preeminence)—all of this is found here, carried out with a master’s hand to a degree of synthesis never yet attained, with unprecedented brilliance, ease, and assurance. What is most extraordinary is that the musical success arises alongside humane values and an emotional content that no public could resist, be it as jaded as the disenchanting denizens of Mahagonny. Among the many admirable passages, see, for example, the “Alabama-Song” blues, where the shocks and sneers of jazz suddenly dissolve into the rising cantilena, the cry of the heart: *Oh! moon of Alabama*, wafting over mysterious, deep basses—“night hymn” of the poor, *Dreigroschenristan*, *Tristan de Quat’ Sous*!<sup>159</sup>

Henry Prunières, in his review for the *New York Times* (22 January 1933), singled out the performance style of Lotte Lenya, who had to encore the “Alabama-Song”:

At the modern music festival at Baden-Baden one heard the first form of what later became the three-act opera “Mahagonny.” It was given the other day in this form at the Salle Gaveau, much too small to hold the crowd which besieged the doors. The performance had an excellent reading by Maurice d’Abravanel. One cannot sufficiently praise the protagonists, especially Mme. Lotte Lenja. She colored her role with a marvelous mixture of realism and stylization. The music sparkled and flowed, always expressive, abundant and easy; precisely the qualities to enchant a public wearied of music measured out with a medicine-dropper, a public suspecting from time to time that quality need not necessarily exclude quantity.

And Vuillermoz ended his review with the words: “For a good many years Paris did not have a chance to experience an emotion so intense and so noble. We need to bring back such performances for our masses.”<sup>160</sup>

As they had after the Baden-Baden premiere, Weill and UE soon began discussing ways to capitalize on the stunning success of the expanded Songspiel in Paris. By late December 1932, UE had already received inquiries from Berlin and Frankfurt am Main, and Weill informed the publisher that the BBC planned to perform the expanded Songspiel, and that a repeat performance by La Sérénade was in the offing.<sup>161</sup> While UE wished to know which of the two Songspiel versions—the Baden-Baden or the expanded Paris version—was to be performed, Weill was mainly concerned about finding a piece to complement the Songspiel. Not only did both questions remain unanswered, Hitler’s elevation to the chancellorship of the German Reich on 30 January 1933 quickly ended any thought of performances in Germany.

On 21 December 1932, UE sent a query to Weill:

We now wish to reach an agreement, my dear Weill, as to whether to play the Baden-Baden version, which surely was also given in Hamburg, or the expanded Paris version. I assume that the Paris version should now continue to be marketed and have commissioned Schlee to get hold of the

material as quickly as possible. I ask you to give me your thoughts on this subject, if not directly, then perhaps through Schlee. If Frankfurt and Berlin now want to follow Hamburg and Paris by doing the little *Mahagonny*, further possibilities will surely crop up.<sup>162</sup>

It is not known how Weill reacted to this proposal. At this time he was also working with Brecht, albeit reluctantly, on finding a companion piece for the Songspiel. These efforts came to naught. He remarked sarcastically to Lenya on 9 January 1933:

I was quite cool and restrained, while he was sedulous, submissive, shit-friendly. He wants to write a shorter play as a supplement to *Mahagonny*, with a wonderful role for you. He claims to have good material for that. After I got home, he called me at two o'clock in the morning with a proposition. Well, what do you think? You'll never guess: he wants to "dramatize" *Der Lindberghflug* for this purpose. Isn't that insane? Now he's calling me all the time; I should meet with him, but I don't want to yet. This time he will hear things from me that so far no one has ever told him.<sup>163</sup>

What eventually emerged from these efforts were three performances of the expanded Songspiel (all in 1933): in Paris on 20 June, again by La Sérénade at the Salle Gaveau; in London's Savoy Theatre the work was given on 18 July, not by the BBC, but by Edward James and "Les Ballets 1933," a dance company funded by James as a successor to Diaghilev's fabled Ballets Russes;<sup>164</sup> another performance was mounted in Rome on 29 December in the hall of the Regia Accademia di Santa Cecilia.

The Paris performance of 20 June 1933 presented the same version given six months earlier; Weill did not attend. Again Abravanel conducted, and in addition to Lenya and Pasetti the singers included Marie Chacko (or Schacko, Abravanel's wife, whose real name was Friedel Abravanel), Heinrich Gretler, Albert Peters, and Erik (Erich) Fuchs. The program opened with Leone Massimo's *Quatre Chansonnettes*, sung by the soloists of the Songspiel (but not Lenya), Alfredo Casella's *Serenata*, and Jean Françaix's *Septuor*. Once again the Songspiel created a great stir (the "Alabama-Song" and "Denn wie man sich bettet" had to be encored), but Lenya was extremely dissatisfied. She reported to Weill:

So on Tuesday we did *Mahagonny*, and again it was a huge success, although the performance was terrible. Peters and Fuchs were so sloppy, and Mrs. Abravanel was terrible (can't sing at all). Abravanel himself was bad too. I had a big argument with him the next day and told him, among other things, that you weren't very well served by such a "Kálmánesque" performance. He rushed it to death. Once again all the concentration had to come from me. Overall it's a tremendous strain to bring something to performance when the rest of it is lousy. Pasetti really sang very beautifully that evening, and Gretler was as dependable as ever. But everything else was awful.<sup>165</sup>

The London performance, again under Abravanel and with the same cast (apart from Friedel Abravanel, who was replaced by Hilde Rosenthal), took place under an even unluckier star.<sup>166</sup> Besides the Songspiel, the London performance included Weill's *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, Igor Markevitch's *Les hymnes*, Milhaud's *La mort d'un tyran*, and songs for voice and piano by Scarlatti and Pergolesi. Once again the performance took place in Weill's absence. Lenya sent him a report:

James had not advertised at all. He had lost a lot of money, had big fights with the Russians, and probably no longer gave a damn. Because of this, I wanted to cancel; so on the evening before the day of the performance I took seven sleeping pills. Of course, I was almost unconscious the next morning, and James came immediately with the doctor, who gave me something to counteract them. But at 5:00 P.M. I just felt I had to get on that stage, so I staggered into the theater. That I did a terrific job despite all this (Pasetti is very critical of such things, and everyone else said so too) is a complete mystery to me, especially because after the performance I totally collapsed and they had to take me home. I was raging like a bull because that louse James had the nerve to stand in front of the curtain and "introduce" the piece only on the evening of the performance. . . . The theater was one-third full and, even though there were so few people, it was still a great success. But there's no chance of repeat performances.<sup>167</sup>

The English music critics dismissed the Songspiel with a lack of understanding that now seems almost bizarre. William McNaught of the *Evening News* (19 July 1933) introduced his review: "The oddest entertainment of the century was given at the Savoy Theatre last night by the management of 'The Ballets of 1933.' They say that every country and every age gets the amusement it deserves. It is hard to believe that even modern Europe deserves Igor Markevitch and Kurt Weill." And he arrived at the following verdict on the Songspiel: "A clever creative artist might do something with this if he kept his own mind clear. But Weill has shown no more resource than to go gaga in company with his Mahagonneyans, and the result is just aimless, pointless dullness."

The Rome performance (again together with *Der Jasager*) probably came about due to an invitation that Weill received in March 1933, while still in Germany. He reacted with cautious excitement, well aware of the ironic possibility that his works "might succeed in the center of fascism," and arranged for *Der Jasager* to be performed with the "Zurich Youth Chorus" headed by Robert Blum, a former fellow student of Weill's in Busoni's Berlin master class.<sup>168</sup> In July Weill reported the date of the Rome performance in a letter to Lenya.<sup>169</sup> A month later he had a meeting in Zurich with Curjel, who again took charge of staging the Songspiel. Among the vocalists, in addition to Lenya and Pasetti, were Albert Peters, who had taken part in every performance of the expanded Songspiel, as well as Hanny Stutz (Bessie), Doda Conrad (Bobby), and Eméric Aldori (Jimmy). Lenya requested that Gustav Brecher conduct, but Weill entrusted the performance to Abravanel anyway.<sup>170</sup> Neher's stage design, with visible orchestra and roped platform, remained the same, as presumably did Curjel's staging. Unlike the inexperienced James in London, the venerable Accademia properly advertised the performance and printed a program booklet, which informed concertgoers that the 1927 Songspiel had been augmented with some numbers from the opera, cautioned that the "succession of lyrical scenes" had "neither dramatic continuity nor a plot," and offered a list of the instrumental forces.<sup>171</sup> Because there had not been enough time to prepare an Italian reading translation for the work sung in German (one did appear for *Der Jasager*), the booklet resorted to printing only the German text—rife with typographical errors—for all ten numbers, but each preceded by a brief description in Italian of the number's content (the source of these synopses appears to have been Weill himself).<sup>172</sup> Not surprisingly the Italian press reacted with greater understanding than its English counterpart had, and Weill recalled his days in Rome with pleasure.<sup>173</sup>

This was the last performance of the Songspiel that Weill would experience. When he arrived in New York in September 1935, he harbored hopes that his opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* could be produced on Broadway.<sup>174</sup> However vague these hopes may have been, they probably explain why he was no longer fully committed to the Songspiel, as he agreed only reluctantly to proposals by the League of Composers and the Friends and Enemies of Modern Music to perform it in the United States in early 1936, in the latter case with the "unconditional" proviso that it be combined with *Die sieben Todsünden* once it was clear that the organization could not produce the full opera, as initially discussed. Both plans fell through, however.<sup>175</sup> In a 1935 interview for the *New York Times*, Weill suggested that the Songspiel represented a transitional stage in his artistic development and had to be viewed in the context of its time and place: "The early sketch reflected the effects of the horrors of war, which we had witnessed, and which we wanted to throw off in a cynical manner. That was only a passing phase. This first *Mahagonny* was merely an attempt to invent a new style for use in the larger work."<sup>176</sup>

Weill took a similar stance thirteen years later when Ferdinando Ballo informed him, in a letter of 17 December 1948, that the Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea in Venice planned to perform the Paris version of the Songspiel along with either *Down in the Valley* or *Street Scene* in autumn 1949. Weill responded on 29 December 1948, fifteen years to the day after the Rome performance of the expanded Songspiel: "It seems to me that it will be much more attractive to present one of my more recent works, than to revive a work like 'Mahagonny' which was very much

an expression of the decade after the first world war.”<sup>177</sup> Weill favored a performance of *Street Scene*, which Ballo was unable to bring off for lack of suitable singers. But the plan to perform the Songspiel proceeded; on 18 January 1949 Ballo informed Weill that he had already approached Neher and Curjel.<sup>178</sup>

### VII. The “Venice Version” of the Songspiel

In fact, Curjel had safeguarded some of the performing materials during the Nazi years. In October 1935, after Weill had left France for the United States, Curjel received from UE what appears to have been Weill’s holograph score (Fh) along with the four numbers inserted from the opera (FhO and FeO), as last performed in Rome. In January 1936 UE sent him also two vocal scores, apparently including the copyist’s vocal score containing the scenario documenting the premiere (Vm); he also retained original projection plates with Neher’s set designs. When UE contacted him in 1948, Curjel expressed strong interest in staging any future performance:

As I told you by telegram, the score of the Paris version of the *Little Mahagonny* is with me, as is the vocal score of the first Baden-Baden version. What are you planning? A performance? And if so, when and where? As you know, I staged the work in Paris and Rome (incidentally I also have Neher’s projection plates, which we used in those performances), and you will certainly understand if I have the wish (and probably the credentials as well) to take charge of the production of any planned performance, which, by the way, I could also conduct.<sup>179</sup>

Curjel did indeed stage the Venice production of the Songspiel with Neher as set designer. This time he added the “Kraniche-Duett” from the opera just after the “Benares-Song” and placed “Denn wie man sich bettet” right before the “Benares-Song.” There is no sign that either he or UE informed Weill of these changes, much less asked permission. Despite the fact that this version bore little relation to the attitude, style, and workmanship of the original Songspiel as premiered in Baden-Baden, UE had its Italian representative, Carisch S. A., in Milan, prepare a vocal score (VeV) with Italian text provided by A. Conti. This vocal score is based both on Vm and on the vocal score of the opera for those numbers borrowed from *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (VeO). The performance of this version, preceded by Giorgio Federico Ghedini’s one-act opera *Billy Budd*, took place in Venice as scheduled on 8 and 10 September 1949, during the XII<sup>o</sup> Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea. Jessie was sung by Hilde Güden, and the male singers included Fernando Corena as Jimmy.<sup>180</sup> The musical direction was entrusted not to Curjel but to Bruno Bogo, who conducted the Orchestra del Teatro La Fenice. Neher designed the sets along the same lines as the premiere, but the roped elevated platform, placed center stage, now looked exactly like a boxing ring. Judging from a drawing for the stage set reproduced in the program booklet, it would also seem that Neher’s backdrops differed from those of the premiere, though they were likewise projected on a screen behind the stage. Curjel recalled a strikingly successful performance: “In Venice, we took the Paris version as our basis and added the ‘Kraniche-Duett,’ during which the two thousand or so listeners stopped breathing. Not a sound was to be heard, nor any applause; it seemed to me one of those rare moments in which art appears incarnate before humankind.”<sup>181</sup> Lenya, writing to Curjel on 9 November 1957, related the far less effusive impression of the evening’s success that Güden had reported: “Hilde Güden, who of course sang in Venice, told me about this performance, which is said to have been fairly unsuccessful.”<sup>182</sup>

For unknown reasons, the Venice production made changes to the instrumentation of the Paris version. Italian-language pencil markings in FeO—there are none in FhO—suggest that the production attempted to handle the clarinet/saxophone issue in those numbers added from the opera in a way resembling the Baden-Baden scoring: the two clarinetists and the alto sax player were directed to cover the parts played in the opera by one clarinet, one alto and one tenor saxophone. In other areas, the

Venice production followed Abravanel’s solutions for the Paris version, although the production appears to have added a double bass. No information survives as to how the “Kraniche-Duett” was rescored.<sup>183</sup>

Weill’s work was announced on an official broadside as “Opera in un atto” (opera in one act) with the addendum “Prima rappresentazione in Italia” (first performance in Italy)—a sign of the growing confusion surrounding conflicting versions. The reasons for this confusion were, among other things, the belief that major sources for *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, such as copies of the full score and the performance material, including that of the Songspiel, had been confiscated and destroyed by the Gestapo during World War II, and the fact that the Songspiel had remained unpublished in any version whatsoever.<sup>184</sup> Thus Curjel, some eighteen months after the Venice performance, and evidently in consultation with UE, set about producing what he called a “stage adaptation of Mahagonny,” which was probably intended to replace both the allegedly destroyed opera version and the various unpublished versions of the Songspiel. He explained his procedure in a “Commentary on the Adaptation of ‘Mahagonny’”:

The stage adaptation of *Mahagonny* is based on the “Little Mahagonny,” which I prepared jointly with Kurt Weill in Paris (December 1932) and Rome (December 1933), and on the practical experiences I drew from the performance in Venice (September 1949). The adaptation gives only the main outline of the stage presentation. It does not constitute a production book.<sup>185</sup>

Compared to the version performed in Venice, the biggest difference lay in the orchestration. For the new version, Curjel and UE approximated the orchestration of the opera, based on the information available at the time.<sup>186</sup> UE created a vocal score of Curjel’s “stage adaptation” (VeC) in which the “Alabama-Song” departed from VeV, and which deleted the repeated bars of the “Kleiner Marsch” thereafter. Curjel’s stage directions, the sung text in German, and a new translation into Italian of all texts were added. Curjel also recast some of the roles and assigned arbitrary titles to some of the numbers.<sup>187</sup> Although his stage directions represent a heavily abridged combination of the scenario in Vm and the stage directions of the vocal score for the opera and can make no claim of authenticity, UE used them to prepare a new libretto in 1953, which circulated as a hectographed typescript.<sup>188</sup>

The disentangling of the conflicting versions became all the more urgent in 1952, when Weill’s full score of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* resurfaced on the publisher’s premises after all.<sup>189</sup> The confusion that reigned at UE finds expression in a letter sent to Lenya on 1 March 1955, by Schlee, who had advanced to UE’s board of directors:

Mahagonny—new version: this is indeed a somewhat misleading term. The original *Mahagonny* was the Songspiel. Later, at the regrettable request of the publisher (!), the large version was prepared, which received its premiere in Leipzig.<sup>190</sup> Still later the original little version was expanded with a few items from the large one and the version was referred to by us as the new version. [Inserted in the bottom margin: Two years ago Dr. Curjel checked this version against the Paris performance of the work under Abravanel.] We in fact have the complete handwritten score of the large version. In other words, it is possible, in practical terms, to produce a set of performance material for the “Large Mahagonny.” This is, however, a fairly expensive matter.<sup>191</sup>

In another letter from UE, dated 29 September 1955, Oktavian Spitzmüller tried to provide Lenya with further, albeit inaccurate, information about the conflicting versions. He indicated the location of the manuscripts and offered clues regarding the performance material:

I hope you will not be angry with me for waiting until today to give a detailed answer to your letter of last July. In compensation, I can now precisely explain the confusing situation surrounding the various versions of *Mahagonny*: 1) The first version to be written was the Songspiel, of which we have a piano-vocal score. 2) Weill expanded this Songspiel and called

it an *opera*. This is now the so-called “old version” of the opera *Mahagonny*. Of this version we have the full score, of which you have received a photocopy. 3) Weill then prepared a reduced version (the Paris version). The full score of this Paris version is in your possession. There is no performance material for the Paris version; instead, we have a set of material for the old version, which could probably be adapted on the basis of the Paris version. 4) Later Curjel prepared a new version based on the Songspiel—the so-called Curjel version or “new version.” We have a complete set of performance material for this version, presently located, as you know, at AMP [Associated Music Publishers].<sup>192</sup>

The distinction between the “old version” (the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*) and the “new version” (prepared by Curjel after the Venice performance) illustrates at least indirectly that the Curjel version was in fact intended by Schlee and UE to supersede the purportedly lost opera version and the unpublished Songspiel.

There was no longer a single set of performance material capable of being performed in a version Weill himself had heard or sanctioned. The few performances or radio broadcasts announced between 1951 and 1953 must have relied on performance material prepared by UE (or Carisch) on the basis of Curjel’s version for Venice.<sup>193</sup> In other words, this was neither the version heard at the Baden-Baden premiere, nor the expanded version heard in Paris, London, or Rome, still less the version that Weill and a copyist had prepared after the Baden-Baden premiere. UE’s card catalogue tracking the shipping of rental materials (M2) reflects the confusion about the various Songspiel versions and their relation to the opera, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*. Three cards exist for the Songspiel: one for the Baden-Baden version, apparently set up after the premiere but before November 1927; another one for the Paris version, again started after the premiere but before the end of January 1933; and one last for the post-Venice Curjel version, set up in summer 1951. Not only do these cards fail to specify precisely which performance materials were created for which version, they also seem to record shipments of materials that apparently relate to the opera. The confusion increases with what appear to be post-war entries that document the location and shipment of materials, so that many of the entries can no longer be attributed with certainty to a specific version. That said, the cards do offer valuable, if tantalizing, information; for example, Alfred Schlee’s annotation—found on the cards for the Baden-Baden and the Paris version—that the materials (without further qualification) had been confiscated by the Gestapo.

In the years that followed, Lenya grappled with questions surrounding the Songspiel’s overlapping versions. Finally, in a letter of 20 June 1957, she instructed UE to withdraw the new “Curjel version.” The vocal score VeC contains the note “Paris [*sic*] version, blocked by Mrs. Weill, must not be performed (according to Mr. Füssl, 29 June 1959).”<sup>194</sup> To be sure, this obviously does not refer to the “Paris version” of the Songspiel heard in Paris, London, and Rome, but rather to the “Curjel version,” which UE printed as a rental score, but which was assumed by the publisher, in its ongoing confusion, to be identical to the Paris version.<sup>195</sup>

### VIII. Reconstructing the Original Version

Lenya’s decision to block performances of the Curjel version forced all concerned to address, once and for all, the questions surrounding the Songspiel’s conflicting versions. This task was undertaken by David Drew, beginning in 1959. He also attempted to foster a historically informed understanding of the Songspiel, with extensive comments and suggestions for making performances as authentic as possible. All the same, the publication of his edition of the vocal score (VeS1) along with the rental full score (FeS), both issued as the “original 1927 version,” was accompanied by mishaps, pointed out by Drew himself: the first imprint of the vocal score, issued by UE in 1963, contained references to notes intended for but omitted from the edition. The second imprint of 1968 (VeS2) did include those notes, although Drew no longer wished them to be published, because he regarded them as obsolete. (He informs us that they were in real-

ity intended for a performance of the Songspiel that took place in Gelsenkirchen on 2 March 1961.)<sup>196</sup> Furthermore, in an undated letter of 1967 to UE, he expressly states that the edition of the musical text had not received his final approval, so that he could not properly be called the editor of these materials.<sup>197</sup>

Nonetheless, the musical text presented came quite close to the original version of the Songspiel. But Drew did not succeed in distinguishing between what was performed at the Baden-Baden premiere and Weill’s version of the Songspiel as codified in the first layer of Vm. Nor did he spell out the relation between the newly published score and the version handed down in Weill’s holograph score (Fh). Changes for the Baden-Baden premiere that Weill reversed for the version transmitted by Vm, such as Bessie’s parenthetical interjections in the first stanza of the “Alabama-Song,” were reinstated and mistakenly identified as Weill’s additions to the “Paris version,” even though they were in reality made for Baden-Baden.<sup>198</sup> The second stanza of the “Alabama-Song” bears the footnote: “This verse may be omitted. In the case of concert or radio performances this cut is strongly advisable.”<sup>199</sup> True, it was cut during the premiere, but Vm lacks any indication that the second stanza might be optional. The same is true for the repeat of the refrain in stanza 3, which VeS1/2 and FeS leave to the performers’ discretion. Equally questionable are the notes and stage directions added to the 1968 imprint of the vocal score; they were treated as more or less authentic although in reality they represent an arbitrary mixture from a very wide range of sources. These notes, with their references to the stage set, a tripartite formal division, and a synopsis of the “plot,” define a style and a compositional fabric that originate with neither Weill nor Brecht, whereas the sole production note found in Vm was disregarded entirely.<sup>200</sup> The published “general production notes” for the Songspiel (VeS2, p. 2) represent a compilation of comments on the staging and performance style of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* and have no validity for the Songspiel. The detailed production notes (pp. 3ff.), for their part, are a concise summary of the scenario later entered into the vocal score Vm, a scenario which is, in this form, far too simplified and which no longer reflects the original language and detail. For example, the published vocal score describes the staging at the end of the “Alabama-Song”:

Bessie picks up her case, and moves to the centre of the stage in front of the platform. The two girls sit back-to-back on the case, facing half-front. As they sing the refrain in canon, Jessie smokes a cigarette and Bessie attends to her toilet. At the end (if there is no repeat) or during the repeat, they pick up their belongings and leave in the direction of Mahagonny.<sup>201</sup>

The stage directions entered into Vm translate as follows:

Bessie drags her travel case until it stands in front, between the platform and the orchestra. Jessie steps down from the platform and moves up to Bessie. The latter opens the case and takes out a powder puff, mirror, and lipstick. Jessie tosses her half-eaten orange into the case, after which Bessie shuts it. Both sit back-to-back on the case. Jessie with her face to the right. She smokes, sentimentally. Bessie with her face to the left. She busies herself with her powder puff, lipstick, and mirror. Jessie stands up. Bessie does the same, opens the case, tosses her cosmetics inside, and closes it. After each has grabbed a handle of the case, Jessie and Bessie saunter backstage to the right with their travel case.

The stage actions are more or less the same, but the Brechtian diction gives full attention to each action and gesture: they have Jessie not merely smoke, but smoke “sentimentally”; Jessie and Bessie “saunter” rather than simply “leave” in the direction of Mahagonny, unmistakably expressing the “trade” they ply by means of their gait. Here again, the published vocal score, while clearing up a number of misconceptions about the Songspiel, fails to fulfill its promise of a definitive Urtext (or original text). The published edition of the Songspiel attempts to reproduce the Baden-Baden premiere with maximum fidelity and thus set itself apart from the excrescences and distortions of later adaptations. But it ends up creating yet another adaptation of the work. It presents information that pertains more to the opera,

information that neither Weill nor Brecht intended for the Songspiel and that is not related to the character of the Songspiel as Drew, “ghosting” for Lenya, pointedly described it in a letter of 1963 to the director of the Wuppertaler Bühnen, Grischa Barfuss:

There has been a fundamental misunderstanding of what the Songspiel is. There is only one version, and that is the version Weill wrote in 1927 for Baden-Baden, and in which I appeared. (There is no “Pariser Fassung”: what was performed in Paris was the best selection from the opera and Songspiel that could be managed with the resources available, and it was intended for that occasion and that place only—a single concert performance.) The 1927 Songspiel is quite distinct from the opera, and that is what no-one understands. There are no characters in the Songspiel. No lumberjacks, no escaping criminals, no prostitutes. The four men appear in *Frack*, and the girls (two) are described as “Soubrettes.” There is no “drama.” It is simply a little “scenic cantata” based on the Mahagonnygesänge from Brecht’s *Hauspostille*, with orchestral interludes between each of the vocal numbers. It is, I admit, difficult to produce, but if it is produced with understanding, it cannot fail, because the form, the musical form, is perfect. It even seems to succeed when it is not produced with understanding—again, for musical reasons. But the moment you start introducing new bits here and there, the moment you introduce an element of “drama” where none existed, you confuse the whole issue.<sup>202</sup>

To be sure, Drew neglects to mention that most of the changes to the Songspiel, including those made at its premiere, owed their existence to Lenya’s performance style, and the Baden-Baden scenario specifically called for Jessie and Bessie to act like prostitutes during the “Benares-Song.”

## IX. Editorial Strategies

Although there are several possible approaches to editing *Mahagonny. Ein Songspiel*, the Edition considers the version transmitted by **Vm** the most plausible one, because it is distilled from Weill’s experiences in Baden-Baden. On the one hand, it did not adopt all the changes made in Baden-Baden (in particular, it reversed all those changes that took advantage of Lenya’s unique talents); on the other hand, not all of **Vm**’s sections were performed there. Whereas the first layer of **Vm** constitutes a “text,” the scenario subsequently added to **Vm** represents a “script” (documenting the stage directions that were specific to the Baden-Baden performance). With regard to orchestration, the Edition follows **Fh**, where Weill precisely notated and codified the music of the Songspiel with great circumspection and consistency in nearly every respect. Admittedly, both sources are encrusted with layers of markings in various colors and writing implements—the result of the many uses to which these sources were put—but nowhere do these layers render the underlying musical text of the Songspiel illegible or unintelligible. A complete account of the sources and their chronology, as well as their use in the Edition, appears in the Critical Report.

While theoretically conceivable, a critical edition of the Paris version is practically impossible, because the surviving source materials do not offer all the information required to reconstruct the changes made to the four additional numbers from the opera in order to integrate them (many pencil markings in **Fh** have been erased), and the whereabouts of the modified score pages for the “Alabama-Song,” also borrowed from the opera, are unknown. Even if every detail were available, it would be problematic to edit this expanded version, partly because Weill did not participate directly in its creation, but also because it owed its existence to peculiar circumstances: Weill needed to arrive at a full-length evening of his music for a specific event, and he wanted to create a vehicle that featured Lenya—all at a time when performances of the full-length opera had become all but impossible to arrange.

## X. Performance Issues

In light of the carefully notated musical text, supplemented by the succinct general note about staging the Songspiel (see p. 52 of this Edition),

questions of performance tend to emerge from the work’s musical conception, as it confronts performers with unusual tasks. By choosing soubrettes for the two female roles, Weill sets apart the light, brilliant, agile, rather delicate and flexible colors of the women’s voices. In contrast, the choice of a male quartet for the men’s roles, besides the up-to-date allusions to similar vocal ensembles in popular music of the 1920s, remains in the still robust German tradition of the male quartet (whether choral or solo) dating roughly from the late nineteenth century. Here the repertoire consisted mainly of folk songs and excerpts from operas or operettas (i.e., from what might be called “sunken cultural goods”—an origin confirmed, as it were, by Weill’s allusion to Carl Maria von Weber in the “I. Mahagonny-Song”).<sup>203</sup> Lenya’s rendition of the role of Jessie proved to be a unique stroke of luck: not only did she have inborn acting ability, the soubrette timbre of her light, delicate voice inflected a sort of sly innocence that proved virtually impossible to imitate and that imparted a sensual radiance to her delivery even of such lines as “Where is the telephone?”<sup>204</sup>

Singers will observe that in the vocal parts, the songs’ melodic phrases often end with long note values (e.g., “Alabama-Song” mm. 58f. and 117f.). However, one should carefully assess whether such long note values, apparently written as a matter of convenience, should be sustained or cut off following the word’s (or syllable’s) natural conclusion or “rhythm.”

Regarding percussion and timpani, it appears that Weill originally envisioned only one player for Baden-Baden. This is indeed feasible, except in mm. 117–133 of the “III. Mahagonny-Song,” where the snare drum and chimes are notated in a manner unplayable by a single musician. As none of the other musicians can lend a hand (they all have their own parts to perform in this passage), the percussion *cum* timpani should be divided between two players. Although **Fh** gives no information about the nature of the jazz drum (*Jazztrommel*), it appears that Weill meant a tom-tom (see “Issues of Instrumentation” in Critical Report).

Weill did not supply metronome markings with the tempo indications in the Songspiel (he would not begin to do so routinely until *Die Dreigroschenoper*), and the few metronome markings subsequently added to **Fh** are in every case in an unknown hand. Guidance, however, can be obtained from metronome markings in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* for those numbers that the opera adapted from the Songspiel. It should be borne in mind, of course, that they are invariably placed in different musical contexts and also differ in their instrumentation. But the metronome markings in the piano-vocal score of the opera (**VeO**) have Weill’s authority: In a letter of 1 November 1929, he explicitly sanctioned the markings and instructed his publisher to revise those found in the opera’s holograph full score accordingly.<sup>205</sup> As an orientation, the Edition provides, whenever sensible, information about **VeO**’s metronome markings in on-page footnotes to the score.

All things considered, Weill gave the Songspiel a unique and unmistakable character that not only invites but seems to demand performances faithful to the musical text. At the same time, however, its conception is marked by an aesthetically meaningful ambivalence that also affects questions of performance, as it grants musicians an interpretative leeway that they may want to exploit in performance. One striking indication of this point is the paradoxical fact that the Songspiel was premiered at a festival expressly devoted to “new” music and attended by an audience of musical connoisseurs and experts, whereas Weill stated in a program note that he was “already turning to an audience that naively demands its fun in the theater.” In the context of the Baden-Baden festival, his work functioned as an “avant-gardist” provocation of the assembled musical avant-garde. Not that such a provocation was for Weill a meaningful compositional goal. Rather, the decisive point is the ambivalence tellingly reflected in the musical fabric, such as the Songspiel’s deliberate contrast between “songs” patterned on popular music, composed for two soubrettes and male quartet, and intervening instrumental numbers reminiscent of Stravinsky (*L’histoire du soldat*) and Schoenberg (*Pierrot lunaire*). A strict interpretation of the sort demanded by instrumental music influenced by Stravinsky or Schoenberg is hardly suitable for music from the world of entertainment.

The same tension underlies our understanding of the allusions and quotations. The allusion to the refrain of the “Bridesmaids’ Chorus” from Weber’s *Der Freischütz* (“Schöner, grüner, schöner, grüner Jungfernkranz”) in the refrain of the male quartet’s “I. Mahagonny-Song” (“Schöner grüner Mond von Mahagonny”) is obvious and immediately perceptible both in the words and in the rhythm, which verges on quotation. Viewed “naively,” it is “fun” and provides pleasure; viewed without humor, it seems sarcastic and cynical. To emphasize only one of these readings cannot help but diminish the aesthetic significance of the allusion. Yet such an emphasis is virtually unavoidable in performance, for the refrain cannot be rendered at once with naive joy and bitter seriousness. Hardly less ambivalent is the quotation from Pierre Degeyter’s “Internationale” (“So comrades come rally, | And the last fight let us face”) in the instrumental interlude between the “III. Mahagonny-Song” and the “Finale” (m. 142 with pickup). The orchestration of the second four-bar limb of the quotation (“The Internationale | Unites the human race!”), with two muted trumpets playing *fortissimo* (m. 148 with pickup), yields a constricted sound that arguably serves to parody the clarion call of the original.

The stage action for Baden-Baden was, as already mentioned, invented by Brecht after the words and the music. But it was intended less to enact a traditional plot line (it is perfectly banal in the same way as eating oranges, applying make-up, playing cards, reading newspapers, or being bored) than to “defamiliarize” the element of play and performance. Brecht

placed the stage actions on display and made them visible with no attempt at illusion. Paradoxically, they thereby prove in the final analysis to be superfluous, for things that happen “playfully” in performance in any case do not necessarily have to be “playfully” overstated as well. (This would be an argument for performing the Songspiel as a “cantata” without staging, or without “defamiliarization,” given that it is “compelling enough to convey to the listener, with purely musical means, the image and movements of the human being,” as Weill basically described the “equally concertante and theatrical potential of his music.”)<sup>206</sup> Neher must have sensed this by the time of the Venice performance, when he assigned the express significance of a boxing ring to the roped platform on which the performance and play are exhibited, thereby imparting a specific meaning to what happens upon it rather than merely showing performance and play. The musical fabric is similarly multi-layered: the refrain of the “Alabama-Song” is rooted in a rigid rhythmic ostinato from which the vocal melody stands out with all the more freedom, expression, and contrasting buoyancy. Still, it remains open to debate whether the melody must be adapted to the rigid rhythm or, conversely, whether the rhythm should follow the lithe, flexible shape of the melody, or whether the contrast should be accentuated. Such questions of interpretation are, need it be said, inherent to practically all great music.

(Translated from the German by J. Bradford Robinson, and edited by Elmar Juchem, Kim H. Kowalke, and Dave Stein)

## Notes

All quotations in the essay (and in the notes below) from letters and writings are reproduced in standardized form; obvious misprints have been corrected without comment. The Edition upholds the different wording and punctuation of titles in Brecht’s *Hauspostille* compared to those in Weill’s Songspiel (e.g., “Alabama Song” vs. “Alabama-Song”), thereby distinguishing between poem and musical setting.

- To be sure, some Brecht scholars have maintained that the Songspiel is Weill’s creation and that Brecht had no part in it. For example, Jan Knopf (“Wo ist ‘Mahagonny?’” *Dreigroschenheft* [1/2009]: 59) claims that the Songspiel should not have been included in the *Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe der Werke Brechts*, “because it is a work by Kurt Weill in which Brecht was not involved.” These scholars were presumably unaware of Brecht’s stage direction in Baden-Baden and the detailed scenario documenting the premiere, which appears to transmit much of Brecht’s work. See also Esbjörn Nyström, *Libretto im Progress: Brechts und Weills ‘Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny’ aus textgeschichtlicher Sicht* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 141f.
- “Wenn auch die Bedeutung von Brecht und Zuckmayer mehr im Drama liegt, so zeigen ihre Vorträge sie doch in ihrer Eigenart und im ganzen Reichtum ihrer Sprache und ihrer Gedanken.” *Der deutsche Rundfunk* 3, no. 21 (24 May 1925): 1323; reprinted in *GS2*, 258.
- See Günther Rühle, *Theater für die Republik: Im Spiegel der Kritik 1: 1917–1925* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1967), 400f.
- “Um es gleich zu sagen: Diese Sendespieldarstellung von Brechts Lustspiel *Mann ist Mann* ging an unmittelbarer und bleibender Wirkung weit über alles hinaus, was der Berliner Sender bisher auf diesem Gebiete unternommen hat.” *Der deutsche Rundfunk* 5, no. 13 (27 March 1927): 879; reprinted in *GS2*, 349.
- See the reminiscences of Brecht by Carl Zuckmayer, who worked alongside Brecht as a dramaturg at the Deutsches Theater: “In many respects Brecht was dangerous, as is every genius, presumably. He did not seek admirers or disciples so much as collaborators who would join and thereby submit to him. For all his seeming complaisance, he had a strong need for power—namely, for mental power that guides rather than commands. In the late 1920s, when collectives came into fashion in literature and the theater, especially in Berlin, I once said to him, ‘To you, a collective is a group of intelligent people who contribute to what one of them wants: namely, you.’ He replied, with his distinctive wry smile, that I was not entirely wrong.” Carl Zuckmayer, *Als wär’s ein Stück von mir: Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1981), 320f.
- This festival, “Deutsche Kammermusik Baden-Baden,” was the first successor to the Donaueschingen Chamber Music Performances, a festival with the same program committee of Heinrich Burkard, Paul Hindemith, and Joseph Haas. The performance of theater pieces in addition to chamber music was meant both to demonstrate and exploit the superior performance conditions *vis-à-vis* Donaueschingen. For *Der Protagonist*, see *KWE I/1*; for *Der neue Orpheus*, see *KWE II/2*.
- “Leitend bei dieser Bestellung war der Gedanke: Abkehr von der großen ‚Oper‘ mit ihrem Riesenapparat und Schaffung des Bühnenstücks mit nur wenig Personen, mit kleiner, rein kammermusikalisch behandelter Musik und mit geringem dekorativen Aufwand.” Source N, 22; translation in Stephen Hinton, *Weill’s Musical Theater: Stages of Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 103.
- UE, letter to Weill; *W-UE*, 52f. It mentions a new work to be offered to a theater at the opening of the upcoming season for a “proper” (“richtige”) premiere following its “Baden-Baden performance, which we will publicize, so to speak, as its unofficial pre-

- miere.” (“nach der Badener Aufführung, die wir gleichsam als nicht offizielle Uraufführung ausgeben werden”).
- In 1923 the Donaueschingen program committee, which Hindemith had not yet joined, had turned down the String Quartet op. 8, which Weill had submitted for consideration; see KWE II/1, 17f.
9. “Für Baden-Baden werde ich nicht eine kleine Oper machen, da ich jetzt genug Einakter habe. Ich habe den Plan, aus einer klassischen Tragödie (*Antigone, Lear* oder dergl.) ein Stück herauszunehmen u. daraus eine kurze Gesangsszene von höchstens 10 Min. Dauer zu machen.” *W-UE*, 53.
  10. “Baden-Baden drängt mich wegen Einakter. [...] Jetzt muß ich zu B.” *W-LL(g)*, 61; translated in *W-LL(e)*, 51f.
  11. Composers approaching Brecht do not include Franz S. Bruinier or Edmund Meisel, who wrote down Brecht’s “compositions,” but rather Hindemith, who had proposed a collaboration as early as February 1924 and June 1925. Neither attempt yielded any results. See Giselher Schubert, *Paul Hindemith in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1981), 47.
  12. “grossen tragischen Oper”; *W-UE*, 55.
  13. “Pläne: . . . Mahagonny-Oper”; quoted in Joachim Lucchesi and Ronald K. Shull, *Musik bei Brecht* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1988), 106.
  14. Brecht’s *Taschenpostille*, which already contains the “Mahagonnygesänge,” was printed privately in twenty-five copies for Brecht’s use in early 1926. Weill was apparently unaware of it; in any event, he never mentioned the *Taschenpostille*. Compared to the *Hauspostille* and to Weill’s settings, the poems in the *Taschenpostille* show a handful of minor variants.
  15. “Ob ich für Baden-Baden was mache, entscheidet sich in den nächsten Tagen. Viel Lust habe ich nicht, weil ich möglichst bald die neue Oper in Angriff nehmen will.” *W-Fam*, 334. The “new opera” refers to *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*, again on a libretto by Georg Kaiser.
  16. See Weill’s letter of 25 April 1927; *W-UE*, 59: “In the meantime Burkard has written and telegraphed several times, but I will stick to my No.” (“Burkard hat unterdessen mehrfach geschrieben u. telegraphiert, aber ich werde bei meinem Nein bleiben.”)
  17. “in Eile die Mitteilung, dass ich meine Absichten bez. Baden-Baden geändert habe. Ich habe plötzlich einen sehr schönen Einfall gehabt, an dessen Ausführung ich jetzt arbeite. Titel: ‚Mahagonny‘ ein Song-Spiel nach Texten von Brecht. Ich denke, das kleine Stück bis Mitte Mai zu vollenden. Kann ich es Ihnen dann zur Herstellung des Materials u. Klavierauszugs schicken. Sie werden übrigens auch ausserhalb Baden-Badens Verwendung dafür haben.” *W-UE*, 60; stylings of the quotation follow original letter (photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 1).
  18. Hinton, *Weill’s Musical Theater*, 95.
  19. “Schon bei meiner ersten Begegnung mit Brecht im Frühjahr 1927 tauchte in einem Gespräch über Möglichkeiten der Oper das Wort ‚Mahagonny‘ auf und mit ihm die Vorstellung einer ‚Paradiesstadt‘. Um diese Idee, die mich sofort gefangen nahm, weiterzutreiben, und um den musikalischen Stil, der mir dafür vorschwebte, einmal auszuprobieren, komponierte ich zunächst die fünf Mahagonny-Gesänge aus Brechts ‚Hauspostille‘ und faßte sie zu einer kleinen dramatischen Form zusammen, einem ‚Songspiel‘.” “Anmerkungen zu meiner Oper *Mahagonny*,” *Die Musik* 12, no. 6 (March 1930): 440; reprinted in *GS2*, 102. Weill opened another article, “Zur Uraufführung der *Mahagonny*-Oper” (reprinted in *GS2*, 106), with a similar account in the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten* on 8 March 1930.
  20. Hinton, *Weill’s Musical Theater*, 94.
  21. “Schon ein Jahr früher, im März 1927, fand eine Unterredung zwischen Brecht und Weill statt, in deren Verlauf Brecht einen ausführlichen Plan einer Oper entwarf, der bereits die wesentlichsten Elemente der Oper enthielt. Zu dieser Zeit lagen bereits Skizzen und Szenenentwürfe zu einem Stück *Auf nach Mahagonny* vor. Ferner waren fünf Mahagonny-Gesänge, die diesem Stückentwurf entstammten, schon in der *Hauspostille* (Propyläen-Verlag 1926) gedruckt. Als Ergebnis dieser Unterredung entstand März 1927 das Songspiel *Mahagonny*, das dann im Sommer 1927 bei dem Musikfest in Baden-Baden aufgeführt wurde.” *Der Montag Morgen*, 10 June 1930; reprinted in *GS2*, 114.
  22. Published in Fritz Hennenberg and Jan Knopf, ed., *Brecht/Weill “Mahagonny,”* Suhrkamp taschenbuch 2081 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), 103–12.
  23. The “Alabama Song” and the “Benares Song” are not among the consecutively numbered “Mahagonnygesänge.” However, they are both found in the Fourth Lesson, to which Brecht gave the collective title “Mahagonnygesänge.”
  24. “Diese Songs gewannen eine große Verbreitung, ihre Losungen tauchten in Leitartikeln und Reden auf. Viele Leute sangen sie zu Klavierbegleitung oder nach Orchesterplatten, so wie sie Operettenschlager zu singen pflegten. Der Song dieser Art wurde kreiert, als ich Weill aufforderte, für die Baden-Badener Musikfestwoche 1927, wo Operneinakter gezeigt werden sollten, einfach ein halbes Dutzend schon vorliegender Songs neu zu vertonen. Weill hatte bis dahin ziemlich komplizierte, hauptsächlich psychologisierende Musik geschrieben, und als er in die Komposition mehr oder weniger banaler Songtexte einwilligte, brach er mutig mit einem zähen Vorurteil der kompakten Majorität ernsthafter Komponisten. Der Erfolg dieser Anwendung moderner Musik für den Song war bedeutend.” “Über die Verwendung von Musik für ein episches Theater,” quoted in Lucchesi/Shull, *Musik bei Brecht*, 159.
  25. “ein musiker, dem ich die texte der COURAGE zum komponieren gab, nebst einigen anleitungen, machte drei kompositionen, spielte sie seinen bekannten vor, hörte, er kopiere WEILL, und sprang ab. umsonst, daß ich ihm erklärte, nur das prinzip sei von ihm beibehalten, ein prinzip, das nicht weill gefunden hat. (ich erzählte ihm, wie ich weill seinerzeit als busoni- und schreckerschüler antraf, als verfasser atonaler, psychologischer opern, und ihm takt für takt vorpiff und vor allem vortrug usw.)” Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal 1938 bis 1942*, ed. Werner Hecht (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 146.
  26. Elisabeth Hauptmann’s co-authorship of the “Alabama Song” and the “Benares Song” is now an established fact verified by her inscriptions on copies of their draft lyrics (Tt and Tm1). Weill could not have been aware of this.
  27. Brecht’s “settings” by no means possess the defining features of *Songs*.
  28. “Lotte Lenya Remembers *Mahagonny*,” in: Liner notes to the three-record set *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (Columbia Records, K3L 243), 6. Columbia released the recording in Spring 1958; Philips issued the recording in Germany in 1959.
  29. Quoted in the liner notes to the three-record set *Kurt Weill* (Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft / Polydor, 3 LP 2709 064, 1976), 8.
  30. It is hardly surprising that events contiguous in time, perhaps even overlapping, should merge in memory. In another memoir, dated 1964, Lenya claimed that “it was Weill who first had gone to see Brecht, early in 1927. . . . He had read poems by Brecht that had stirred him deeply, and which said in words what he was increasingly drawn to say in music.”; quoted in *W-LL(e)*, 52.
  31. Neher’s first assignment was the set design for Brecht’s *Trommeln in der Nacht*, premiered at the Munich Kammerspiele on 29 September 1922. Later, in 1930–31, he would write the libretto for Weill’s opera *Die Bürgschaft*. The relations between the two men are discussed in David Drew’s “Neher und Weill” in *Caspar Neher*, ed. Gottfried von Einem and Siegfried Melchinger (Velber bei Hannover: Friedrich, 1966), 96–100, where Drew’s first name is given incorrectly as “Daniel.”
  32. This sentence was to appear verbatim in the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (Act I, Scene iii, Fatty): “Zu unserer Zeit gibt es in den großen Städten viele, denen es nicht mehr gefällt. Solche gehen nach Mahagonny, der Goldstadt” (VeO, p. 26f.). Information kindly provided by Elmar Juchem.
  33. Brecht’s text was first published in facsimile, accompanied by a transcription with standardized orthography, on a single sheet of glossy paper inserted into *das neue forum* 4 (1957–58). Information kindly supplied by Yorck A. Haase.
    - 1) Zu unserer zeit gibt es in den großen städten viele, denen es nicht mehr gefällt.
    - 2) Macht euch also auf nach Mahagonny, der goldstadt, die fern vom verkehr der welt an der küste des trostes liegt!
    - 3) Hier in Mah. ist das leben schön.
    - 4) aber sogar in Mah. gibt es stunden des ekels, der hilflosigkeit u. der verzweiflung
    - 5) hier hört man die männer von M. antworten auf die frage gottes warum sie sündhaft leben
    - 6) vor euren augen fällt das schöne Mah. in nichts zusammen
  34. In the “I. Mahagonny-Song,” the men setting out for Mahagonny sing “Schöner grüner Mond von Mahagonny, leuchte uns!” In the “Alabama-Song” that follows, the new arrivals in Mahagonny take leave of the moon of Alabama: “Oh! Moon of Alabama, we now must say good-bye.”
  35. “Surrabay, das gibt es nicht | Das ist kein Ort | Surrabay – das ist nur | Ein erfundenes Wort.” See Nyström, *Libretto im Progress*, 142.
  36. “Die Brecht’schen Texte für das Baden-Badener Songspiel sind aus dem im Propyläen-Verlag (Ullstein) erschienenen Band der *Hauspostille* entnommen. Doch schreibt mir Brecht einige neue Ergänzungen hinzu, sodass Sie das Ganze sehr wohl als kleines Textbuch herausgeben könnten. Das Stück ist fast fertig komponiert u. die Partitur in Arbeit.” *W-UE*, 62.
  37. *New York World-Telegram* (21 December 1935); German translation in *GS2*, 468. The ending of the last sentence is a literal translation of part of the general production note that appears in Vm: “Die Songs werden gesungen, gespielt, getanzt” (emphasis added).
  38. Lenya remembered owning a record of The Revelers, according to typewritten notes for “I remember Mahagonny”; WLA, Box 69, Folder 22. The Revelers served as a model for the extremely popular Berlin vocal group Comedian Harmonists, founded in 1928.
  39. “eine strenge musikalische Form, deren innere Gesetzmäßigkeit dem Inhalt entsprechen muß, und die Darstellung eines Grundgestus, der szenisch ausgespielt werden kann, der aber auch, wenn er nicht gespielt wird, zwingend genug sein muß, um mit rein musikalischen Mitteln den Hörern das Bild und die Bewegung des Menschen aufzuzeigen, der zu ihm [sic] spricht.” “Zu meiner Kantate *Das Berliner Requiem*,” *Südwestdeutsche Rundfunk-Zeitung* 5, no. 20 (16 May 1929); reprinted in *GS2*, 90f.; translation kindly provided by Stephen Hinton.
  40. “Im Rahmen einer solchen rhythmisch vorausbestimmten Musik sind alle Mittel der melodischen Ausbreitung, der harmonischen und rhythmischen Differenzierung möglich, wenn nur die musikalischen Spannungsbögen dem gestischen Vorgang entsprechen.” *Die Musik* 21, no. 6 (March 1929): 421; reprinted in *GS2*, 86. For a detailed discussion of *Gestus* in Weill and Brecht, see Kim Kowalke’s “Singing Brecht vs. Brecht

- singing: Performance in theory and practice," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5, no. 1 (1993): 65–70.
41. "Man sieht: das ist nicht mehr als eine Aufzeichnung des Sprachrhythmus und als Musik überhaupt nicht zu verwenden. In meiner Komposition desselben Textes ist der gleiche Grundgestus gestaltet, nur ist er hier erst mit den viel freieren Mitteln des Musikers wirklich ‚komponiert‘. Der Song ist bei mir ganz breit angelegt, schwingt melodisch weit aus, ist auch rhythmisch durch die Begleitungsformel ganz anders fundiert – aber der gestische Charakter ist gewahrt, obwohl er in einer ganz anderen Erscheinungsform auftritt"; reprinted in *GS2*, 87; translation emended from Kim Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe*, Studies in Musicology 14 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1979), 494.
  42. Incidentally Weill himself, when responding to a questionnaire on 9 October 1930, called the "Alabama-Song" one of "schönsten Melodien" (most beautiful melodies) he knew, placing it on a par with "Qual corradisti" from the finale of Bellini's *Norma*, "Bella figlia dell'amore" from the final act of Verdi's *Rigoletto*, the English soldiers' song "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," the trio from the third movement of Schubert's Great C-major Symphony, and the popular song "Valencia." Information kindly supplied by Elmar Juchem.
  43. "Der Alabama-Song ist überhaupt eines der seltsamsten Stücke in *Mahagonny*, und nirgends eignet der Musik mehr die archaische Kraft der Erinnerung an einmal gewesene, verschollene, in kümmerlichen Melodieschriften wiedererkannte Gesänge wie in diesem Song . . ." "Mahagonny," *Der Scheinwerfer* 3, no. 14 (1930); reprinted in Adorno, *Moments musicaux: Neu gedruckte Aufsätze 1928–1962*, edition suhrkamp 54 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1964), 139f. On the musical expression see also Alexander L. Ringer, "Kleinkunst and Küchenlied in the Socio-Musical World of Kurt Weill," in *A New Orpheus: Essays on Kurt Weill*, ed. Kim H. Kowalke (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 37–50.
  44. Kowalke, "Singing Brecht": 58.
  45. "epischen Haltung des musikalischen Bühnenwerkes [...] eine absolut musikalische, konzertante Gestaltung zu geben, ohne dabei die Gesetze der Bühne vernachlässigen zu müssen." "Wie denken Sie über die zeitgemäße Weiterentwicklung der Oper?" *Blätter der Staatsoper und der Städtischen Oper* [Berlin] 8, no. 3 (October 1927): 19; reprinted in *GS2*, 60.
  46. "Die epische Theaterform ist eine stufenartige Aneinanderreihung von Zuständen. Sie ist daher die ideale Form des musikalischen Theaters, denn nur Zustände können in geschlossener Form musiziert werden, und eine Aneinanderreihung von Zuständen nach musikalischen Gesichtspunkten ergibt die gesteigerte Form des musikalischen Theaters: die Oper." "Vorwort zum Regiebuch der Oper 'Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny,'" *Anbruch: Monatschrift für moderne Musik* 12, no. 1 (January 1930): 5; reprinted in *GS2*, 103; translated in Hinton, *Weill's Musical Theater*, 145.
  47. Erich Doflein, "Bühne mit Kammermusik: Über Möglichkeiten einer neuen Kammeroper," *Melos* 6, no. 10 (October 1927): 422. For the parodistic allusion to Singspiel, see Hinton, *Weill's Musical Theater*, 103f.
  48. "Das Stück ist fast fertig komponiert u. die Partitur in Arbeit. Ein Teil geht Ihnen Mitte nächster Woche zu u. ich würde Sie bitten, so schnell wie möglich Studiermaterial herzustellen." *W-UE*, 62.
  49. "soeben geht der erste Teil von *Mahagonny* an Sie ab mit der Bitte, den Klavierauszug unverzüglich in Angriff zu nehmen. Da Sie sowieso mehrere Exemplare brauchen, wäre es sehr schön, wenn Sie den Auszug autographieren und herausgeben könnten. Für diesen Fall schicke ich Ihnen in den nächsten Tagen noch die Zwischentitel u. genaueres Szenarium zu dem Auszug. Bitte lassen Sie vor Anfertigung des Materials in die Partitur Ziffern eintragen. Die restlichen 2 Songs u. das Finale (Revolution in *Mahagonny*) folgt [*sic*] bald. Bitte nochmals um möglichste Eile." *W-UE*, 63.
  50. "heute ging der Rest der *Mahagonny*-Partitur an Sie ab. [...] Halten Sie es für möglich, dass spätestens in der 2. Juniwoche die Klavierauszüge für die 6 Sänger fertig sind?" *W-UE*, 63f.
  51. "Infolge der späten Ablieferung Ihrer Partitur und nachdem der Klavierauszug erst hier hergestellt werden mußte, war es uns ganz unmöglich, diesen Klavierauszug noch in irgend einer Weise zu vervielfältigen, sodaß wir froh sein müssen, wenn wir rechtzeitig für den schon sehr drängenden Burkard die 6 Partien sowie zwei vollständige Klavierauszüge abschreiben können. Nachdem ja die 6 Sänger an ganz verschiedenen Stellen zu tun haben, ist es ja vollkommen genügend, wenn, wie dies ja auch bei Opern üblich ist, einzelne Partien herausgeschrieben werden. Wo es sich um Ensembles handelt, wird selbstverständlich immer die gesamte betreffende Stelle für jede einzelne Partie abgeschrieben, sodaß zum Studium für die Sänger diese Partien absolut genügen." Letter to UE of 8 June 1927; *Lw-ue* (photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 1).
  52. UE's card catalogue for the shipping of rental materials (M2) contains a card for the Songspiel (apparently created shortly after the Baden-Baden performance), which shows two percussion books, one labeled "Schlagwerk," the other "Becken, große Trommel."
  53. On 4 June 1927, Weill wrote to UE: "Please send me a vocal score the moment you finish it, for I need it here to rehearse 'Bessie.'" ("Bitte senden Sie mir sofort nach Fertigstellung einen Klavierauszug, den ich zur Einstudierung der ‚Bessie‘ hier brauche."); *W-UE*, 64. Weill had heard Edén in a Berlin Radio broadcast on 1 April 1925, when she had sung excerpts from Friedrich von Flotow's opera *Alessandro Stradella*, jokingly altered in honor of April Fool's Day. On 12 April 1925, he wrote that "Irene Edén, as Leonore, gave the evening's most commendable performance." ("Irene Edén bot als Leonore die anerkanntwerteste Leistung des Abends.") *Der deutsche Rundfunk* 3, no. 15: 955; reprinted in *GS2*, 237.
  54. "Der genaue Gesamttext mit Zwischentiteln, Finale u. Szenerieangaben geht Ihnen in den allernächsten Tagen zu zur Verwendung für das Textbuch. Vielleicht könnten Sie das kleine Textbuch besonders reizvoll ausstatten, wenn Sie die 5 Bühnenbilder, die der bekannte Theatermaler Caspar Neher für Baden-Baden machen wird, als Buchillustrationen beigegeben würden." *W-UE*, 63f.
  55. "Es handelt sich nun darum, ob Sie nur die Texte der 5 Songs aus der *Hauspostille* oder (was natürlich besser wäre) den vollständigen Text mit Szenarium, Zwischentexten und Finale drucken wollen. Im letzten Falle müssten Sie sich zunächst mit Bert Brecht (Berlin W., Spichernstr. 16) in Verbindung setzen. Ich würde es für am besten halten, wenn Sie den vollständigen *Mahagonny*-Text mit den Bildern Nehers als besonderes kleines Heft herausbringen würden, da das Stück als Einlage in Revuen u.s.w. sehr gute Auswertungsmöglichkeiten hat." *W-UE*, 64.
  56. "We have written to Brecht . . . and hope to reach an agreement with him soon." ("An Brecht haben wir [...] geschrieben und hoffen, uns mit ihm bald verständigen zu können.") UE, letter to Weill, 21 June 1927; *Lw-ue* (photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 1).
  57. *W-UE*, 66.
  58. At the same time, the second week-long festival of the Musikantengilde, Germany's largest organization of amateur musicians, was held in Baden-Lichtental. The working program included visits to performances at the Baden-Baden Chamber Music Festival. Hindemith, who was responsible for coordinating these events, thereby pursued the plan of introducing musical amateurs to contemporary music and familiarizing them with the latest developments in this area.
  59. See the review by "R. Z.," "Die Baden-Badener Kammeroper im Rundfunk," *Der deutsche Rundfunk* 5, no. 32 (7 August 1927): 2195.
  60. "Entr'acte music" by Milhaud and Martinů was played between the performances of the one-act operas.
  61. For Wolff's involvement in the rehearsals, see Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe*, 334.
  62. This gesture would become one of Lenya's trademarks. It is reproduced in a photograph in *Lenya: The Legend: A Pictorial Autobiography*, ed. David Farneth (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook Press, 1998), 13. See also Jürgen Schebera, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Life*, transl. Carolyn Murphy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 170, and Kowalke, "Singing Brecht": 70: ". . . Weill's major-mode refrain unfolds in broad melodic sweeps, which yearn for the lost object no less than Lenya's famous gesture of palm upturned towards the moon."
  63. *Lenya: The Legend*, 53f.
  64. Lenya, interview with Robert Wennersten, 27 November 1971; quoted in *W-LL(e)*, 50.
  65. David Drew noted: "The circumstances of the Baden-Baden commission are confirmed by the evidence of the score; Weill was writing for experienced opera singers even when—or especially when—he was making them do things of which they had little experience. The fact that he and Brecht, at a comparatively late stage, had the brilliant idea of persuading Lotte Lenya to sing Jessie (opposite Irene Edén's Bessie) does not alter the situation. Another year was to pass before Weill started to write specifically for actors—and even then, for actors of a very special kind." Liner notes, 17 (compare note 29). This would seem to flatly contradict Lenya's account of two decades earlier, "Kurt had written the 'Alabama-Song' for my completely untrained voice—I had begun as a dancer and then turned to acting—and insisted I must sing it in Baden-Baden" ("Lotte Lenya Remembers Mahagonny," 6 [compare note 28]), but Lenya probably had little incentive to reveal herself as a "last-minute substitute" in the context of liner notes to a recording, in which her voice proved to be not unproblematic (all of her passages had to be transposed down a major third or a fourth).
  66. In the article mentioned above, "Über den gestischen Charakter der Musik," where Weill compares Brecht's "setting" of the "Alabama-Song" with his own, he draws express attention to the stylistic resources: "Thus, a coloratura-type dwelling on a single syllable may be completely suitable if it is based on a gestic lingering at the same spot" ("So ist etwa ein koloraturartiges Verweilen auf einer Silbe durchaus angebracht, wenn es durch ein gestisches Verweilen an der gleichen Stelle zu begründen ist.") *GS2*, 86; translated in Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe*, 493. Here, Weill may actually refer to his coloratura version of the second stanza of the "Alabama-Song" (see music example in Critical Report).
  67. The exact date is uncertain. Writing on a postcard to Peter Bing on 30 June 1927 (WLRC Series 30, Box 8, Folder 9), Weill notes that they will most likely be in Baden-Baden "from the eighth on" ("vom 8. an"). On 9 July, he wrote to UE by postcard for the first time from Baden-Baden, where he found a libretto for Milhaud's *Die Entführung der Europa* but none for the Songspiel. The *Gesangstexte* for the Songspiel appeared in print on 11 July, and UE sent several copies to him at the Frankfurter Hof that same day; UE's production card catalogue (*Herstellkartei*) gives 8 July as the publication date.
  68. Werner Hecht, *Brecht Chronik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), 234. Hecht's claim that Weill then moved to Hotel Gunzenbachhof cannot be verified.

69. Cf. *Lenya: The Legend*, 56, or Schebera, *Kurt Weill*, 98, where everyone in the photograph is identified.
70. The two photos in question were apparently created as publicity material, for only these two photos would appear in press coverage of the festival that survives in WLRC, Series 50A. Both photos were printed in *Das Theater* 8, no. 15 (August 1927): 351; the “posed” stage photo appeared in *Die Musik* 19, no. 12 (September 1927): plate preceding p. 881. The placards’ slogans on the photograph read: “Für die Sterblichkeit der Seele!” “Gegen die Zivilis!” “Für irdischen Lohn!” “Für die natürliche Unzucht!” and “Für Weill!”
71. At Brecht’s suggestion, his one-act play *Die Hochzeit*, premiered in Frankfurt am Main on 11 December 1926, was given on a stage resembling a boxing ring. See *Brecht-Chronik: Daten zu Leben und Werk*, compiled by Klaus Völker (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1971), 42.
72. The unused space on the stage served in effect as wings, where the actors remained after exiting the podium, always visible and preparing for their next entrance. Even the entrances onto the platform were put to theatrical use. According to reports of the performance, Brecht himself walked about on the stage (but not on the platform) in full view smoking a cigar, evidently in order to give instructions to the actors. In the section “Über das Singen der Songs” in his *Anmerkungen zur ‘Dreigroschenoper,’* Brecht noted that it is “helpful to the actor if the musicians are visible during his performance and also if he is allowed to make visible preparation for it (by repositioning a chair perhaps, or doing his own make-up, etc.)” (“Gut für den Schauspieler ist es, wenn die Musiker während seines Vortrags sichtbar sind, und gut, wenn ihm erlaubt wird, zu seinem Vortrag sichtbar Vorbereitungen zu treffen (indem er etwa einen Stuhl zurückrückt oder sich eigens schminkt usw.)”) Bertolt Brecht, *Schriften IV*, vol. 24 of *Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, ed. Werner Hecht et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 66; translation in *Brecht on Theatre*, 3rd ed., ed. Marc Silberman, Steve Giles, and Tom Kuhn (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 78.
73. See Björn Gerum, “Herstellung von Projektionsvorlagen” (unpubd. thesis, Berlin Technische Fachhochschule, 1998), 9, and the definitive study by Marianne Viehhaus-Mildenberger, *Film und Projektion auf der Bühne* (Emsdetten: Lechte, 1961). Tokumbet also created the well-known graphic design of the promotional record for the Berlin Mahagonny 1931: “The disc was made of laminated cardboard and printed in color on both sides.” Quoted in *Lenya: The Legend*, 77, which also has a color reproduction of Tokumbet’s design.
74. The set designs and the scene changes during the performance are listed in the scenario published in Supplement A to the Critical Report. It is unclear from the scenario whether there were seventeen different projections or whether some were repeated. Neher’s designs for the Songspiel are described and interpreted on the basis of the five surviving production photographs in Susanne de Ponte, *Caspar Neher, Bertolt Brecht: Eine Bühne für das epische Theater* (Berlin: Henschel, 2006), 71f.
75. Some of these photographs (see Plates 11a–e) show Weill standing beside the platform, as well as Brecht, garbed in his notorious leather jacket almost in the manner of a stage costume. (He is casually dressed in a light-colored suit in the photographs taken before and during the first blocking rehearsal.) In essence, Brecht is acting the part of the stage director.
76. There is no recognizable “primitive attempt at a literarization of the theater” (“primitiver Anlauf zur Literarisierung des Theaters”) that Brecht hoped to achieve with these texts. Bertolt Brecht, *Schriften I*, vol. 21 of *Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, ed. Werner Hecht et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992), 58.
77. According to Ernst Wolff, who assisted in the Songspiel rehearsals, Brecht insisted that the two female roles were to be played in the nude: “Although Brecht threatened to withdraw the work if his wishes were thwarted, the city council of Baden-Baden intervened, and Lotte Lenya and Irene Eden appeared clothed in evening dresses.” Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe*, 334n. 31. The production photograph for the “III. Mahagonny-Song” (M1; see Plate 11e) shows Lenya and Eden seated to the left alongside the platform “lightly” clothed, i.e., without the jackets and blouses they wear in the other production photographs.
78. For a precise catalogue of these changes, see “Supplement B” in Critical Report. The changes in the vocal lines (redistribution of material between Jessie and Bessie) can be seen in annotations of **Vm**.
79. Characteristically, the dynamics in the final instrumental bars were completely inverted at the premiere: in Weill’s holograph score, the work ends in a *pianissimo* that was changed in a different hand to *fortissimo* for the premiere, preceded by a crescendo.
80. Weill’s inscriptions in the holograph score (**Fh**) are listed within the critical notes in the Critical Report.
81. “Die Reproduktion muß produktiv werden.” Weill, “Fort vom Durchschnitt! Zur Krise der musikalischen Interpretation,” *Berliner Börsen-Courier*, 20 August 1925; reprinted in *GS2*, 36.
82. Hinton, *Weill’s Musical Theater*, 97
83. Quoted in *Lenya: The Legend*, 56f.
84. “In seinen neueren Werken bewegt sich Weill in der Richtung jener Künstler aller Kunstgebiete, die die Liquidation der gesellschaftlichen Künste voraussagen. Das kleine epische Stück ‚Mahagonny‘ zieht lediglich die Konsequenz aus dem unaufhaltsamen Verfall der bestehenden Gesellschaftsschichten[.] Er wendet sich bereits an ein Publikum, das im Theater naiv seinen Spass verlangt.”; translated in Hinton, *Weill’s Musical Theater*, 102 (translation emended). This much-quoted passage is usually (e.g., in Hecht’s *Brecht-Chronik*, 234, or even in the Brecht *Gesamtausgabe*) reproduced with a misprint that distorts its meaning, namely, beginning the last sentence with “Es” (referring to “the short epic piece *Mahagonny*”) instead of “Er” (referring to Weill).
85. It has occasionally been claimed that the order of the Weill and Hindemith pieces was reversed in expectation of a tumultuous response from the audience after the Songspiel; compare Hans W. Heinsheimer, *Best Regards to Aida: The Defeats and Victories of a Music Man on Two Continents* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 107. This claim is contradicted by Hermann Ensslin’s review in the *Neue Musik-Zeitung* 48, no. 22 (1927), 493, who noted: “No doubt it would have been better to place . . . Hindemith’s sketch, which had been placed at the end, as a transition here, at it was not quite so effective after the strong medicine of *Mahagonny*.” (“Es wäre zweifellos richtiger gewesen, den am Schluß stehenden [...] Sketch von Hindemith hier als Uebergang einzuschalten, der nach dem etwas starken Tabak von *Mahagonny* auch nicht mehr so ganz wirkt.”)
86. Quoted in *Lenya: The Legend*, 57f.
87. “Hier großer Regieerfolg! 15 Minuten Skandal!”; letter of 18 July 1927, quoted in *Bertolt Brecht, Helene Weigel: Briefe 1923–1956: ‘Ich lerne: gläser + tassen spülen,’* ed. Erdmut Wizisla (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012), 49.
88. “Der sensationelle Erfolg von *Mahagonny* in Baden-Baden hat sich unterdessen in einer Fülle glänzender Kritiken ausgewirkt, die ich Ihnen in den nächsten Tagen zugehen lasse, da Sie ja (wie besprochen) das Stück in grossem Stile propagieren wollen.” *W-UE*, 68. Weill did not send the reviews to UE until 14 August; see *W-UE*, 68.
89. A facsimile of the advertisement appears in Kowalke, *Kurt Weill in Europe*, 402, and *WPD(e)*, 63.
90. “man klatschte auf der einen, piff auf der anderen Seite nach Leibes- oder Mundeskräften. Allerdings habe ich Bert Brecht, der als Regisseur und Textautor des besonders umstrittenen Werkes zeichnete, stark im Verdacht, daß er auch das Pfeifkonzert im Parkett vorsorglich inszeniert hat, um dadurch den Beifall desto kräftiger anzustacheln. Dies um so mehr, als auch oben auf der Rampe die Darsteller sich nicht lumpen ließen und denen drunten eins piffen. Gegenstand des Streites war *Mahagonny*, ein Singspiel [*sic*] von Kurt Weill, nach Texten aus Brechts *Hauspostille*. Keine Handlung, nur eine lose Reihe von brettartigen Nummern, aber in überaus amüsanter und origineller Weise dargestellt. Kein Vorhang, alles an Aufbau der primitiven Szenerie, Weisungen von Regisseur und Inspizient, Tätigkeit des Beleuchters usw. vor Augen des Publikums, das auch die nicht beschäftigten Darsteller während ihrer Auftrittspausen und der Umzüge ungeniert beobachten kann. Hintergründe, in Form absichtlich schlecht zusammenpassender Diapositive nach Zeichnungen Caspar Neher’s an die Wand projiziert mit lustigen Sprüchen und humorvollen Zeichnungen, Vortragstexte, teilweise als witzige Persiflage, teilweise von schönem lyrischen Gehalt, von zwei Girls und vier Boys in outrierten amerikanisierten Kostümen und Masken produziert. Die Vertonung außerordentlich geistreich und pointiert, keineswegs übertrieben und atonal, aber von starkem Schmiß und packender Wirkung. Gewiß will der Komponist hier kein Werk von den Qualitäten der *Meistersinger* schaffen, darum darf auch nur der Maßstab angelegt werden, den er selbst durch die Programmbemerkung vorschreibt: ‚Dieses kleine epische Stück zieht lediglich die Konsequenz aus dem unaufhaltsamen Verfall der bestehenden Gesellschaftsschichten. Es [*sic*] wendet sich bereits an ein Publikum, das im Theater naiv seinen Spass verlangt.‘ Kein Zweifel, daß man *Mahagonny* im Laufe des Winters an mancher Bühne begegnen wird, vielleicht nicht an der Staatsoper, um so eher dann im Rahmen leichter Spielfolgen.” *Das Theater* 8, no. 15 (August 1927): 350f.
91. “Die Sensation des Opernabends war *Mahagonny*. Als Revue fängt es an. Auch in der Musik, die Jazz, Kabarettchansons und lyrische Elemente überaus originell verschmilzt. Veredelte Gebrauchsmusik. Soziale und politische Tendenz dringt allmählich in dieses zunächst rein musikalische Spiel. Es formen sich Handlungsvorgänge. In engster Verbindung damit wächst die Musik unmerklich aus dem Tanzhaften ins Dramatische. Der letzte Song, Auflehnung gegen die überkommene Weltordnung in revuehafter Aufmachung, reckt sich in steiler dramatischer Kurve auf. Das geht an Intensität des Ausdrucks noch über den *Protagonisten* hinaus. Das reißt mit. Verrät wieder Weill’s eminente Theaterbegabung, seine Fähigkeit der dramatischen Konzentration.” Quoted in the above-mentioned publisher’s advertisement.
92. “*Royal Palace* ist Uebergangswert, Versuch einer künstlerischen Gestaltung der Zeit. Das wird weiterhin erstrebt, mit wachsendem Erfolg. Zuerst in der mit strawinsky’schen Mitteln zum Kabarettchanson vorstossenden Kantate: *Der neue Orpheus*. Dann mit dem höchst bedeutenden *Mahagonny*, das, mit aller traditionellen Opernform brechend, einen neuen Typ epischer Zeitoper andeutet; das die Lyrik des *Royal Palace* und die dramatische Intensität des *Protagonist* neu bindet in Musik von stärkster melodischer Kraft und packender Gegenwärtigkeit. Es ist nicht oberflächliche Spiegelung äusserer Erscheinung wie Kreneks *Jonny*, dessen Riesenerfolg nur durch das Kompromiss [*sic*] in der Musik erkaufte wurde, sondern ein Werk von ganz entscheidender, in der künstlerischen Verwendung des Jazz völlig neuartiger Haltung, das den Inhalten des heutigen Daseins epische Gestalt zu geben sucht. Es wendet sich nicht mehr an den einen kleinen Kreis musikalisch Interessierter, sondern an jenes Publikum, das zu der uns geläufigen ‚ersten‘ Kunst längst keine Beziehung mehr hat. [...] Es ist der erste gelungene Versuch, eine Synthese von Zeitmusik und Zeitgeschehen auf der Bühne zu geben. Es ist, in Weill’s Entwicklung eingereicht, eine Basis für neue, um-

- spannendere Arbeiten." *Melos* 6, no. 10 (October 1927): 433. Weill drew UE's attention to Strobel's article in a postcard postmarked 30 September 1927 (Lw-ue; photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 1): "An article on me by Dr. Strobel will appear in the next number of *Melos's* opera issue. Perhaps you could also run an advertisement of my stage works." ("In der nächsten Nummer des *Melos*-Opernhefts erscheint ein Aufsatz über mich von Dr. Strobel. Vielleicht können Sie gleichzeitig ein Inserat über meine Bühnenwerke bringen.") The publisher did not take up Weill's suggestion; on the contrary, it ran ads in the *Melos* issue for Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf* and Schoenberg's "Recent Works."
93. "Schon der Titel samt den Namen der Personen, Jessie, Bessie, Charlie, Billy, Bobby, Jimmy ist bezeichnend, dazu die ganze Aufmachung: Halb Kino, halb Kabarett. Dieser Weill, Sohn eines jüdischen Kantors in Dessau, kann viel, trifft den Stil des Milieus – Auswurf der Menschheit in einer fingierten Goldgräberstadt – mit infamer Sicherheit, macht dazu eine persiflierende und banal-gemeine, aber effektvolle Musik; kurz und gut, er ist der Typus jener zerstörenden Musik- und Kunstübung, die nicht mit dem heiligen, reinigenden Feuer des Eiferers aus dem Besserungswunsch heraus alles in Brand steckt, sondern auf die Amüsierfreudigkeit von Weltanschauungs-Bankerrotteuren spekuliert. So jubelte sehr bezeichnend der eine Teil des Publikums, das unzweifelhafte Artistentum und die Wurzellosigkeit des Autors bewundernd, diesem frechen und unsauberen ‚Songspiel‘ zu, während der andere, teils mit ablehnender Ruhe, teils mit Zischen und Pfeifen diese Afterkunst ablehnte. [...] Arische Kunst ist ihrem Wesen nach ethisch gerichtet, transzendental, vom Sinnlichen und Irdischen – dessen Derbheiten durchaus nicht prude unterdrückt werden müssen (Shakespeare, Hans Sachs, Simplicissimus) – zum Uebersinnlichen und Göttlichen gesteigert. Es gibt sicherlich daneben eine andere Kunst- und Weltanschauung, und sie mag vom Standpunkt ihrer Anhänger aus ebenso echt und lebensberechtigt sein. Aber wir Deutsche haben wirklich nicht nötig, der Anderen wegen unseren Standpunkt aufzugeben und wegen der glänzenden Mache solche uns verletzenden Unsauberkeiten des Empfindens und Geschmacks ruhig hinzunehmen." *Rheinische Musik- und Theater-Zeitung* 28, nos. 27/28 (6 August 1927): 321.
94. *Modern Music* 5, no. 1 (November 1927): 32.
95. This review is reproduced in *WPD(e)*, 62. Weill specifically mentioned Downes's review to UE in a letter of 20 September 1927 (*W-UE*, 83): "Today I'm sending you a review of *Mahagonny* from the *New York Times*. Of all the reviews of *Mahagonny* it is the most detailed and noteworthy, and I would urgently request that you publish it in an especially conspicuous place on account of its publicity value." ("Heute schicke ich Ihnen eine *Mahagonny*-Kritik aus den [sic] *New York Times*. Es ist die ausführlichste u. beachtenswerteste Besprechung von *Mahagonny*, u. ich möchte Sie dringend bitten, sie wegen des propagandistischen Wertes an einer besonders günstigen Stelle noch zu veröffentlichen.")
96. A reference to work on the *Mahagonny* opera appears in a letter to UE of 23 October 1927 (*W-UE*, 86): "Mahagonny is underway. More to follow soon." ("Mahagonny ist in Arbeit. Bald mehr.")
97. See Weill's letter to UE of 4 August 1927 (*W-UE*, 68): "You have probably received the vocal score and the full score back from Baden-Baden." ("Klavierauszug u. Partitur haben Sie wohl aus B.-B. zurückerhalten.") It appears that UE set up a record for the *Songspiel* (M2)—as part of its card catalogue for the shipping of rental materials—when the publisher received the materials back from Baden-Baden, as the card lists only one vocal score for the Baden-Baden version. After World War II, Alfred Schlee noted at the top of the card: "von Gestapo beschlagnahmt" (confiscated by Gestapo), and all the original entries for materials were excised, indicating that they no longer existed. On the rental card for the Paris version, an entry, apparently penciled in after the war, seems to suggest that a set of materials for the "Urfassung" had been located in the "Schwarzschriftlager" (storage for hand-copied materials). If indeed the original set of parts for the Baden-Baden version survived the war, it has since disappeared. However, given the general confusion about the various versions of *Mahagonny* after the war, it may well be that the materials referred to in the pencil note originated from the "Paris version," which did not match the "Curjel version" that UE tried to promote after 1951.
98. See the introduction in *KWE* IV/2, 42. The planned edition for salon orchestra did not appear until May 1930, after the premiere of the opera.
99. As a piece of sheet music, this edition places the text of all three stanzas beneath the vocal line, and thus cannot even hint at the canon in the refrain of stanza 3.
100. A "proximity to the revue" appears among the original stipulations that the Baden-Baden Chamber Music Festival imposed on the invited composers; see N, 22. Moreover, Weill himself, in his above-mentioned letter to UE of 4 June 1927, had recommended using the *Songspiel* "as an intermezzo in revues" ("als Einlage in Revuen"). The revue-like features of the *Songspiel* were also pointed out in Strobel's review of the premiere, quoted above.
101. "Papi sagte, *Mahagonny* sei glänzend für die Haller-Revue. Er hat gleich mit Wurm telefoniert, den ich eben aufgesucht habe. Die Sache ist eingeleitet, aber ich bezweifle stark, daß es was wird." *W-LL(g)*, 64; translated in *W-LL(e)*, 54f.; the letter (with "Montag" as the only clue for a date) has been dated "[1? August 1927]" by the editors, but evidence, also from other Weill correspondence, now strongly suggests Monday, 8 August 1927.
102. "Gestern war ich abends bei Wurms, um *Mahagonny* vorzuspielen. Salter u. Papi waren da. Alle waren einfach erschlagen. Ich mußte dreimal spielen. Sie wollen jetzt die Sache mit Haller mit Hochdruck betreiben u. Salter will versuchen, den ‚Alabama-Song‘ für Amerika von der U.E. freizukriegen, weil er sich drüben ein tolles Geschäft verspricht. Es war ganz nett." *W-LL(g)*, 66; translated in *W-LL(e)*, 56; the letter (with "Donnerstag" as the only clue for a date) has been dated by the editors "[25 August 1927]," but other Weill correspondence now strongly suggests 11 August 1927. Weill presumably played the *Songspiel* from the vocal score he had taken with him to Berlin from Baden-Baden. Fritz Wurm and Julius Salter were the owners of the publishing firm Die Schmiede; Hermann Haller was a well-known producer of Berlin revues.
103. See Weill's letter of 12 August 1927 to Lenya; *W-LL(e)*, 56.
104. "Schon vor mehreren Tagen hatte man mit mir über eine Aufführung von *Mahagonny* im Rahmen einer grossen Ausstattungsrevue verhandelt. Ich hatte mich damals haltend geäußert, zumal die Sache nicht unmittelbar akut war. Gestern nun bekam ich ein ähnliches Angebot, nur mit bedeutend günstigeren Begleiterscheinungen. Es handelt sich ebenfalls um eine Revue, aber ernsthaften künstlerischen Charakters, mit hervorragenden Mitarbeitern u. glänzenden Möglichkeiten (ein bekanntes Berliner Theater, berühmter Regisseur u.s.w., Serienaufführung, keine einseitige Festlegung wie bei Piscator!). Ich würde in einer solchen Aufführung die einzige Möglichkeit sehen, den Baden-Badener Erfolg äusserst wirkungsvoll auszunützen, ohne der Wirkung einer späteren grossen *Mahagonny*-Oper(ette) Abbruch zu tun. Im Gegenteil bin ich überzeugt, dass eine solche Eingliederung des Baden-Badener Stückes in eine grosse Publikumsrevue die Oper glänzend vorbereiten würde. (Ausserdem ergibt sich folgende Möglichkeit: die gleiche Theaterdirektion würde die grosse *Mahagonny*-Oper, nachdem wir sie an einer Provinzoper zur Uraufführung gebracht haben, für eine Berliner Serienaufführung annehmen). Die Ausnutzungsmöglichkeiten des Notenverkaufs (Alabama-Song!) bei einer solchen Revueaufführung sind ja für Sie klar ersichtlich." *W-UE*, 73.
105. "Darüber, dass Brecht ein eigenartiger origineller Kopf ist, der die exotische Drastik, Ironie in verblüffender Weise beherrscht, ist kein Zweifel. Aber ebenso wenig wie ich glaube, dass zum Beispiel *Mann ist Mann* zur Aufführung an sogenannten Staatstheatern oder grossen Städtischen Bühnen besonders geeignet ist und die Empfindung habe, dass es sich hier um ein Genre handelt, das mehr für Kammerspiele und moderne Spezialitätenbühnen geeignet ist, ebenso wenig glaube ich, dass wir in der Lage wären, eine Oper im Stile der *Mahagonny*-Gesänge mit zu starken Episoden, wie sie in *Mann ist Mann* vorkommen, bei den grossen Opernbühnen unterzubringen. [...] Diese Ausführungen sollen natürlich in keiner Weise als gegen Herrn Brecht gerichtet sein, sondern nur Ihnen als dem Opernkomponisten die grösste Vorsicht nahelegen, wobei immerhin doch in die Waagschale fällt, dass Herr Brecht bisher noch kein Opernbuch geschrieben hat und dass von ihm bisher noch kein Stück vertont wurde."; letter to Weill of 15 August 1927; *W-UE*, 72.
106. Letter to UE of 19 August 1927; *W-UE*, 74f.
107. "Wir würden Ihnen empfehlen, dem Theater gegenüber ruhig die Schuld auf uns zu schieben, eventuell zu schreiben, dass wir das in Baden-Baden verwendete Studiermaterial jetzt für Druckzwecke brauchen, oder so ähnlich." Letter of 22 August 1927; *W-UE*, 75.
108. "Eben fragt das Stadttheater Hagen telephonisch noch einmal wegen *Mahagonny* an. Ich habe gesagt, dass man sich an Sie wenden soll, da ich nichts machen kann. Es ist wohl in jedem Fall besser, diese Hagener Aufführung zu unterlassen, da ja andere Bühnen das Stück auch nicht bekommen haben. Sie haben ja bei der Absage die gute Begründung, dass von dem Werk vorläufig weder ein vollständiger Klavierauszug noch ein Textbuch vorliegt." Letter of 25 August 1927; *W-UE*, 79.
109. "propagandamässig wichtig"; *W-UE*, 80.
110. "Klavierauszug in Vorbereitung," announcement in the publisher's ad listing excerpts of reviews (see note 89). Presumably UE postponed the publication of a vocal score because it deemed performances of the *Songspiel* counterproductive until the opera *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* had firmly established itself; see Heinsheimer, letter to Weill, 2 October 1928 (*W-UE*, 142f.).
111. *W-UE*, 81.
112. As this vocal score is undated, we do not know exactly when it was copied out. The manuscript paper on which it is written was used in Berlin but not in Vienna. Information kindly supplied by Elmar Juchem.
113. For all changes, precisely itemized, see Critical Report, Supplement B.
114. See Weill's letters to UE of 26 May and 4 June 1927; *W-UE*, 63f.
115. To take an example from the "Benares-Song," the guests in the saloon leap up from their barstools when they read in the newspaper that Benares has been destroyed by an earthquake (Vm, p. 44; VeO, p. 293). Another, from "Spiel von ‚Gott‘ in Mahagonny," is the instruction to have Jenny (Jessie in the *Songspiel*) yell through a megaphone: "Ansahen Gott die Männer von Mahagonny, | Nein, sagten die Männer von Mahagonny." (Vm, p. 58; VeO, p. 314).
116. Writing to Alfred Einstein on 26 July 1928, for instance, Weill listed the *Songspiel* with the comment "[It] is a study for the forthcoming three-act opera *Mahagonny*, libretto by Bert Brecht." ("[Es] ist eine Studie zu der demnächst erscheinenden dreiaktigen Oper ‚Mahagonny‘, Text von Bert Brecht.") *WPD(e)*, 71; translation *ibid.*, 287.
117. "ich schreibe für Baden-Baden mit Hindemith zusammen den *Lindberghflug*. Die Teile, die ich gemacht habe, (mehr als die Hälfte des ganzen) sind so gut gelungen, dass

- ich das ganze Stück durchkomponieren werde, also auch die Teile, die Hindemith jetzt macht. Wir könnten dann einen sehr schönen Band herausbringen: 3 Songspiele von Weill und Brecht. 1.) Mahagonny-Gesänge (d.i. die Baden-Badener *Mahagonny-Fassung*), 2. *Das Berliner Requiem*, 3. *Der Lindberghflug*. Ich habe auch die Absicht, diese drei Stücke zusammen aufzuführen, in einer neuen Form zwischen Konzert und Theater, mit Bildern usw., und zwar will ich dafür in Berlin eine Truppe zusammenstellen, die ich dann auf Reisen schicken will, nicht für die Theater sondern für die Konzertinstitute oder Cabarets." *W-UE*, 168. Letter of 4 June 1929.
118. The words "not helpful" (nicht zweckmäßig) appear in a letter of 2 October 1928; *W-UE*, 142.
119. "Heute hat das Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf (Kapellmeister David) bei uns um die Erlaubnis angesucht, 'Mahagonny' in der Baden-Badener Fassung in einer Morgenfeier im Juni in Düsseldorf aufzuführen zu können. Wir haben das selbstverständlich abgelehnt, da wir ja unmöglich vor den Aufführungen in Essen und Dortmund diese Aufführung gestatten könnten." *Lw-ue*; photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 2. As it happened, the Essen and Dortmund performances never materialized.
120. "Wir sind der Ansicht, dass es schädlich wäre, wenn jetzt schon 'Mahagonny' in der einaktigen Fassung aufgeführt würde und dadurch die Bühnen, die sich doch verpflichtet fühlen, 'Mahagonny' zu geben, ohne viel Verantwortung und viel Mühe zu Aufführungen des Werkes kommen, die selbstverständlich den Weg des abendfüllenden 'Mahagonny' erschweren. Selbstverständlich können wir einer Bühne nicht verweigern, was wir einer anderen erlauben und wenn wir das Prinzip durchbrechen, so ist die Vertriebsarbeit für das abendfüllende 'Mahagonny' entscheidend erschwert." *Lw-ue*; photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 2.
121. "In der Angelegenheit des kleinen Mahagonny (Schüler) bin ich vollkommen Ihrer Meinung. Das kleine Mahagonny kommt nach wie vor nur für diejenigen Bühnen in Frage, die die Oper bereits aufgeführt oder mindestens angenommen haben." *W-UE*, 255f.
122. "Von dem Vorschlag der Münchener Kammerspiele bin ich begeistert, da gerade diese Bühne (wie Schauspielhaus Düsseldorf, Alberttheater Dresden usw.) für eine ähnliche Aufführung wie bei Reinhardt in hervorragendem Masse geeignet ist. Ich bitte Sie, diesem Plan mit grösstem Interesse nachzugehen: ein Abschluss mit den Kammerspielen wäre ein enormer Gewinn. Teilen Sie den Herren mit, dass man Orchester u. Chor etwa auf die Besetzungszahlen einer Operette bringen kann." Letter to UE of 29 July 1930; *W-UE*, 261.
123. See Heinsheimer's letter to Weill of 2 December 1931; *W-UE*, 350: "Little Vocal Score of Mahagonny: The little vocal score is already in print and will, I believe, be very handsome and practical. To further reduce its size and to turn the selection into a sort of album, we have removed yet another number." ("Kleiner Klavierauszug Mahagonny: Der kleine Klavierauszug ist bereits im Druck und wird, glaube ich, sehr schön und zweckmäßig sein. Wir haben, um den Umfang weiter zu reduzieren und den Auszug zu einer Art Album zu machen, noch eine Nummer herausgenommen.") In other words, UE required more than a year to publish the "kleiner Klavierauszug" that Weill had suggested and conceived as "Twelve Selected Pieces" in a letter of 6 August 1930 (*W-UE*, 262), and then the publisher abridged it without consultation. This little vocal score (U.E. 9851a) was published on 18 December 1931, with the title *Sechs ausgewählte Stücke aus der Oper Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*. The numbers selected were "Auf nach Mahagonny," "Alabama-Song," "Lied der Liebenden [Kraniche-Duett]," "Jennys Lied [Denn wie man sich bettet]," "Nur die Nacht darf nicht aufhör'n," and "Können einem toten Mann nicht helfen." For a facsimile of the cover and "Jennys Lied" see KWE IV/2, 165–170.
- Weill's idea of a cross-section of the opera was recorded by HMV early in 1932 with Lotte Lenya, among others, and the Kurfürstendamm Theater orchestra conducted by Hans Sommer. Albert Peters, who sang Billy in every performance of the Songspiel in the expanded Paris version, also appeared on the recording.
124. "Allerdings würde der Versuch gemacht werden, den Mitteln der Bühne entsprechend zunächst eine Art Querschnitt durch das Werk zu geben, wobei auf das Baden-Badener Songspiel zurückgegriffen, aber natürlich eine ganze Reihe neuerer Nummern auch aufgeführt würde und der verbindende Text, so wie auf der Mahagonny-Schallplatte oder wie bei einem Radioquerschnitt gesprochen würde. [...] Einen ganz genauen Plan über die Einzelheiten werde ich Ihnen rechtzeitig übermitteln." Letter of 12 February 1932; *W-UE*, 367. "*Mahagonny* recording" refers to the HMV recording mentioned in the preceding note.
125. "Die von Herrn Simon angedeuteten Instrumental-Änderungen stellen natürlich eine vollständige Verschiebung des für mich typischen Klangbildes dar, und gerade die Mahagonny-Partitur ist in ihrem völlig eigenen Klangbild so sorgfältig gearbeitet, dass eine einfache Einbeziehung von fehlenden Instrumenten in andere Gruppen garnicht möglich ist." *W-UE*, 370.
126. "Was ich vor allen Dingen vermeiden möchte, ist, dass das Stück lediglich auf die Songs oder songartigen Teile zusammengestrichen wird, und es ist mir prinzipiell lieber, wenn hier und da einmal ein Song wegfällt, als dass alle musikalisch anspruchsvolleren Stücke gestrichen werden." *W-UE*, 372.
127. See Heinsheimer's letter to Weill of 7 May 1932; *W-UE*, 376.
128. Anke Rees, *Die Schiller-Oper in Hamburg: Der letzte Zirkusbau des 19. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland* (Hamburg: St. Pauli-Archiv, 2010), 47.
129. At the time, the Schiller Opera was the only privately managed opera house in Germany with its own chorus and orchestra. *Ibid.*, 51. Both Sattler and particularly Roters (also spelled "Rothers") were active in left-wing politics. "Especially after the Nazis took power on 30 January 1933, the altered political mood toward the Schiller Opera became clearly visible and audible. Bullet holes in the main entrance bore witness to nocturnal gun battles between the Brownshirts and the Roter Frontkämpferbund. For the first time, actors were systematically booed during an evening of modern opera. One morning a sign stood in front of the building: 'Jews employed here.' . . . The opera's director, Sattler, placed his building at the disposal of communist collectives for nightly events, and thus the Rote Marine occasionally marched on stage with their hobnailed boots. A short while later it was the National Socialists whose marching steps reverberated through the auditorium." *Ibid.*
130. "Während die sehr umfangreiche technische Aufbauarbeit an der Hamburg-Altonaer Grenze in vollem Gange ist, kommt von der künstlerischen Leitung die erfreuliche Kunde, daß Direktor Dr. Sattler sich entschlossen hat, neben der ursprünglich allein geplanten Wiedererweckung alten Operngutes auch den wesentlichen zeitgenössischen Neuformen den ihnen gebührenden Raum zu gewähren: auf dem Spielplan stehen u.a. Ernst Toch 'Egon und Emilie', Hindemith 'Hin und zurück', Strawinsky 'Geschichte vom Soldaten', Weill/Brecht 'Jasager' und 'Lindberghflug'. [...] wir stellen mit kulturpolitischer Befriedigung fest, daß nunmehr an eine lebendige, gültige Volks-Oper gedacht wird, die uns vieles wird geben können, was uns die offizielle grand opéra vorenthält. Werden jetzt noch die Grundforderungen an Sänger, Orchester und Regie (!) erfüllt, dann Glückauf zum Saisonbeginn!" Quoted in Horst Königstein, *Die Schiller-Oper in Altona: Eine Archäologie der Unterhaltung*, Suhrkamp taschenbuch 832 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 118.
131. The same evening witnessed the premiere of Roters's *Kleine Ouverture* (op. 38), which, according to the *Hamburger Anzeiger* (14 October 1932), "deliberately echoed the style of *Mahagonny*" ("war bewußt im Stil des *Mahagonny* gehalten").
132. The reviews of this performance, controversial as always, are discussed in J. Bradford Robinson, "Epic Opera in Embryo," in *Amerikanismus, Americanism, Weill: Die Suche nach kultureller Identität in der Moderne*, ed. Hermann Danuser and Hermann Gottschewski (Schliengen: Argus, 2003), 252f.
133. Neher's slide projections were probably provided by Nina Tokumbet, who, as mentioned above, had transferred Neher's drawings to glass plates for the Baden-Baden premiere of the Songspiel. She also designed sets for the Schiller Opera, including those for Verdi's *Rigoletto*, which followed the first run of *Der Freischütz* in September 1932. See Königstein, *Schiller-Oper*, 120f.
134. "Welch großes Interesse, selbst an problematischen Dingen vorhanden ist, hat dieser mutige Abend bewiesen: die Oper im Schiller-Theater war überfüllt [...]. *Mahagonny* zeigt Weill auf einer wesentlichen früheren Entwicklungsstufe. 1927 war die Uraufführung dieses Songspiels in Baden-Baden. Ernst Roters, der eine recht geschickte Regie führte, hielt sich eng an dieses Vorbild, das damals mit Gejohle und Enthusiasmus aufgenommen wurde. Diese lose Aneinanderreihung der fünf Mahagonny-Gesänge bleibt für den Hörer nicht ganz verständlich (Weill-Brecht haben dieses Operngerippe später zum abendfüllenden Werk *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* erweitert). *Mahagonny* ist ein typisches Beispiel für die Schnellebigkeit der Kunst in unserer Zeit, für das laufende Band wechselnder Stile und Stilanschauungen in den letzten zehn Jahren: Dieser Songstil, vor fünf Jahren revolutionäre Novität, ist heute bereits historisch ... Sachlichkeit und Antiromantik in dieser Gestalt sind nicht mehr Tagesprobleme. Die dauernde Schärfe des Klanges, die gesteigerte Brutalität der Musik ermüdet und stößt ab. Eine Stimmung allerdings ist in dieser männlichen Vierstimmigkeit überraschend getroffen: die müde Schläfrigkeit. *Mahagonny* ist Phantom und will politischer Zeitspiegel sein." *Hamburger Anzeiger*, 14 October 1932. Information kindly supplied by Jürgen Neubacher.
135. See Weill's letter to UE of 7 November 1932; *W-UE*, 416.
136. Weill had traveled to Hamburg in mid-January 1933 to discuss the performance of *Die Bürgschaft* at the Schiller Opera. He must have gained a favorable impression of the company, for he wrote to UE on 16 January 1933: "I've just returned from Hamburg. Everything seems to be going quite well there with *Die Bürgschaft*. Nothing but very young people with the right views and a refreshingly spirited work ethic. We've already discussed everything in depth, but have agreed that the conductor [Willi Hammer] and the stage director [Benno Fraenkel] will meet with me once again before beginning the stage rehearsals, for I want to give this performance special attention. It's supposed to take place at the end of March." ("ich komme eben aus Hamburg zurück. Mit der *Bürgschaft* scheint dort alles ganz gut zu gehen. Es sind lauter ganz junge Leute von sehr guter Gesinnung und von erfreulichem Arbeitsgeist. Wir haben schon alles genau vorbesprochen, haben aber vereinbart, dass Kapellmeister und Regisseur vor Beginn der Bühnenproben noch einmal zu mir kommen, da ich mich speziell um diese Aufführung ein bischen kümmern will. Sie soll Ende März sein.") *W-UE*, 443.
137. In a letter to UE of 15 June 1932 (*W-UE*, 396), Weill writes of "these wretched, cowardly theater managers" ("diesen erbärmlichen Feiglingen von Theaterdirektoren").
138. "Ich hatte Sie, wie Sie sich erinnern werden, schon vor längerer Zeit gebeten, Ihr Augenmerk darauf zu richten, dass meine Arbeiten auch in den grossen ausländischen Musikzentren stärker durchgesetzt werden, nachdem die Situation in Deutschland immer ungewisser wird, und Sie hatten mir damals versprochen, in dieser Richtung Schritte zu unternehmen. Der grosse Erfolg meiner *Dreigroschenoper*-Musik in Paris [...] wäre eine gute Unterlage für eine derartige Aktion in Paris." *W-UE*, 350.
139. "Ich erhalte soeben aus Paris vom Vicomte de Noailles, auf Grund des riesigen Erfolges der *Dreigroschenoper*-Musik in Paris, eine Aufforderung, im Laufe des Winters in

Paris einen Abend mit eigenen Werken zu geben. Ich soll Vorschläge machen. Vielleicht ist hier endlich eine Gelegenheit, die von mir seit langem angestrebte Ausnützung des Pariser Erfolges der *3 Gr.-O.* durchzuführen. Ich werde versuchen, in diesem Rahmen eine Aufführung vom *Jasager*, vielleicht sogar von *Mahagonny* durchzusetzen." *W-UE*, 411.

140. See Michel Duchesneau, *L'avant-garde musicale à Paris de 1871 à 1939* (Spirmont: Mardaga, 1997), 123ff.
141. See Weill's letter to UE of 14 November 1932; *W-UE*, 418. Weill later gave the sketches for *Der Jasager* to the Vicomtesse and Vicomte de Noailles as a present.
142. *W-LL(e)*, 71 (commentary by Symonette and Kowalke). Pasetti had sung the role of Jimmy in the production of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* that opened on 26 April 1932 in Vienna, where the affair with Lenya started.
143. Gretler and Peters had taken part in the version of the opera that Weill had reworked for Berlin in 1931. Rosenthal sang one of the Seven [*sic*] Girls of Mahagonny in that same production, and Lenya, for the first time, the role of Jenny.
144. See Weill's letter of 7 November 1932, to UE; *W-UE*, 417.
145. Abravanel, in a letter to Lys Symonette and Kim Kowalke, dated 21 January 1985, recalled that "Kurt and I without any hesitation agreed that . . . [specific numbers from the opera] should be added"; WLRC, Series 47; published in *Kurt Weill Newsletter* 11, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 5. Curjel, in typewritten comments for his 1951 version (see note 185 below) spoke of the Paris version, which he also staged in Rome, as "performances prepared in collaboration with Kurt Weill" ("mit Kurt Weill gemeinsam vorbereiteten Aufführungen").
146. Abravanel's markings suggest that he conducted the Paris performance of the expanded Songspiel from the full score that he had prepared (i.e., **Fh** with **FeO** and **FhO** inserted). UE informed Weill that Schlee had all the material in his possession and was arranging for it to be copied out in Berlin; letters of 23 and 28 November 1932; *W-UE*, 421 and 424.
- For the subsequent performances of the Paris version, UE generated a complete new set of performing materials, as documented by a card in **M2** set up specifically for the Paris version. According to this card as well as a packing list from UE, dated 29 May 1933, the performance material consisted of one full score, two vocal scores, and a set of orchestral parts, including a part for banjo. Two undated lists drawn up by Schlee transmit his ideas about how to compile and/or produce both full score and vocal score for the Paris version. Whereas the former lists the obvious sources (**Fh**, **FeO**, and **FhO**), the latter calls for use of a "Kleiner Klavierauszug" (little vocal score; though it is unclear whether this is **Vm**), a "Großer Klavierauszug" (i.e., **VeO**), and the album of selections from the opera (i.e., *Sechs ausgewählte Stücke aus der Oper Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*), printed in 1931. Schlee's notes and the packing list are preserved among the Maurice Abravanel Papers, Ms 517, Box 1, Folder 45, Special Collections and Archives, University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Weill was never informed of the production of a new full score, as he complained to UE on 18 October 1933: "We agreed at the time to have a fair copy made of the full score of the Paris version. Apparently this wasn't done. In the piece's present condition, you will hardly be able to hand it to anyone for performance. But if you want to print or reproduce it, I'm prepared to compile a vocal score ready to print" ("Es war seinerzeit verabredet worden, dass eine Abschrift der Partitur der Pariser Fassung gemacht werden sollte. Das ist offenbar nicht geschehen. In der Verfassung, wie das Stück jetzt ist, können Sie es wohl kaum irgend jemandem zur Aufführung übergeben. Wenn Sie es aber drucken oder vervielfältigen wollen, bin ich bereit, Ihnen einen druckfertigen Klavierauszug zusammenzustellen."); *W-UE*, 479.
- M2** records a shipment of the new full score to UE's representative in the United States on 15 February 1935. Two months after Weill had arrived in New York, Heinsheimer informed him about the location of the score in a letter of 9 November 1935: "We draw your attention to the fact that our American representatives, Associated Music Publishers, New York, 25 West 45th Street, have a full score of the Paris *Mahagonny*" ("Wir machen darauf aufmerksam, dass unser amerikanischer Vertreter, die Firma Associated Music Publishers, New York, 25 West, 45th street, eine Partitur des Pariser *Mahagonny* dort hat."); *W-UE*, 491. This score has subsequently disappeared.
147. Evidently the names of the characters in the opera were left unaltered for the Songspiel. The Songspiel, of course, does not have a "Herr Jakob Schmidt," and Jimmy's song in the opera is sung by Charlie in the Songspiel. The Paris version of the Songspiel was sung in German, and the conflicting names of the characters passed unnoticed.
148. The sources show that Abravanel, in his letter of 21 January 1985 (see note 145), no longer recalled all the details of the Paris version more than half a century later (he expressly conceded that his information might be wrong): "Kurt and I without any hesitation agreed that 'Denn wie man sich bettet' should be added and that Alabama should of course be in the improved (opera) version. Then I was asked to condense those 2 Song orchestrations from the operatic (larger) to the Songspiel instrumental ensemble. I did not (and nobody did) make any other reduction of any other number.—Now, it seems to me that Lenya did sing 'Ach bedenken Sie, Herr Jakob Schmidt,' and also No. 6 ('ohne Wäsche'). So, if those 2 numbers could be taken over without change in the orchestration (except for the piano playing the guitar part in No. 6), then I would be inclined to think that they were included too.—If not, then my memory is playing tricks." Abravanel forgot that the opera's No. 5 "Wunderbar ist das Heraufkommen des Abends" was also added for Paris, and, contrary to his recollections, he adapted the orchestration of all additional numbers.
149. In **Fh**, at the beginning of the "Kleiner Marsch," Abravanel instructed the second clarinet player to switch to tenor saxophone. After the "Kleiner Marsch" he added a note in pencil: "Paris: folgt attacca Alabama-Song (Grosse Partitur S. 34)," which corresponds to the correct page in the rental score of the opera. There are stains from a rusty paper clip that appears to have held the insert, which did not survive as part of **FeO**. The vocal parts of "Alabama-Song" as transmitted by **VeC** may have been based on this Paris version.
150. It is not entirely clear whether the first two performances in Paris used a banjo player. The publisher's card catalogue for rental materials (**M2**) indicates that Alfred Schlee compiled a new set of parts for the Paris version in January 1933 (i.e., after the first two performances in Paris). The books for this no longer extant set corresponded to the Baden-Baden forces except for the additional banjo part; on the other hand, the set appears to have included only one book for percussion.
151. This is the only insertion that led to slight alterations in the musical text, all of which are described in the Critical Report.
152. The Baden-Baden cuts were, as depicted, entered very meticulously into Weill's full score (**Fh**) and especially into the vocal score **Vm**. Abravanel and Curjel were thus aware of the significance of these inscriptions.
153. In contrast, André Cœuroy states in his review that the orchestra consisted of only ten players ("L'orchestre de Kurt Weill, orchestre de jazz, obtient, avec dix exécutants, des effets de puissance [. . .]"; *Paris Midi*, 19 December 1932). There is no way of deciding whether Cœuroy or Moré is correct in his account of the size and forces of the orchestra. None of the extant reviews of the performance mention the use of a banjo, Hawaiian guitar, or bass guitar. The score of the Songspiel (*pace* Moré) calls for only one trombone, and the strings consist of two violins.
154. "La scène de la Salle Gaveau était, cette fois encore, divisée en deux parties : d'un côté, comme pour « Der Jasager », se tenait l'orchestre, mais d'un aspect bien différent, avec des cordes réduites au strict minimum et se comptant par unité, dominé tout au contraire par la sonorité des cuivres, étoffé avant tout par le chant plaintif des saxophones et l'éclat des trombones. De l'autre côté, les personnages : deux femmes et quatre hommes, évoluaient sur une manière de petit ring, entre des valises, des tabourets et des rocking-chair : les femmes portant le costume tailleur de la misère et de la prostitution, les hommes coiffés du canotier de paille des indésirables. Au-dessus de la scène, une lanterne jaune : plus haut on projetait sur un large écran, pour servir de commentaires à l'action, des vues de lanterne magique en grisaille dessinées à la manière du caricaturiste allemand Georges Grosz : des ruelles louches et des paysages exotiques, des gibets, des monstres, des faces patibulaires, des femmes à moitié ivres, sur des chaises-longues au bord de la mer au milieu de débris de bouteilles, des assassins, des incendiaires." Marcel Moré, "Un musicien allemand à Paris: Kurt Weill," *Politique* 7, no. 4 (April 1933): 369f.
155. "Maurice Abravanel Remembers Kurt Weill," *High Fidelity Magazine* (July 1978): 67. The planned tour was never realized. Stravinsky had seen a performance of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at the opera house in Frankfurt am Main, the premiere of which took place on 16 October 1930. In later years he recalled the Paris performance: "I [. . .] developed an acquaintance with him [Kurt Weill] later, in Paris, at the time of *Mahagonny* and *Der Jasager*, both of which were performed, without staging, at the Vicomtesse [de] Noailles; and both of which I admired." Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 66n. 1. In other words, Stravinsky did not recall that the Songspiel was indeed staged in Paris, however rudimentary that staging may have been.
156. Weill's presence at the concert was expressly noted in the playbill.
157. "Die erste Aufführung fand in einem Pseudo-Rokokosaal im Stadtpalais der Noailles statt. Ein toller Gegensatz zwischen der falschen Pracht der falschen Ornamente und unserer austeren Bühne mit ein paar Scheinwerfern und einem Projektionsapparat. Aber gerade die Kontraste spielten herrlich zusammen, die Schärfe wurde noch schärfer. Lenja sang wieder das eine der Mädchen, auch die anderen Partien waren sehr gut besetzt. Das Seltenste war das Publikum: Strawinsky, Picasso, Cocteau, Darius Milhaud, Fernand Léger, André Gide, Georges Auric, Arthur Honegger und andere Pariser Künstler und Intellektuelle. Weill kümmerte sich nicht um die illustren und so hochverständigen Gäste, sondern half an gefährlichen Stellen der halb improvisierten Darstellung mit. Tags darauf, am 12. [recte: 11.] Dezember 1932, wiederholten wir die Aufführung in der überfüllten Salle Gaveau, wo es auch keine Bühne und keine technischen Hilfsmittel gab. Aber auch hier gelang die Aufführung auf dem Podium des 'théâtre spontané', wie Le Corbusier, der ebenfalls anwesend war, es später genannt hat. Jetzt waren noch die Pariser Schauspieler und Chansonniers erschienen – ich erinnere mich an Damia, Lys Gauty, Marianne Oswald, Marie Dubas – was nach Ende der Vorstellung, bei der *Mahagonny* wie der *Jasager* gegeben wurden, zu endlosen Demonstrationen der Zustimmung führte." Hans Curjel, "Erinnerungen um Kurt Weill," *Melos* 37, no. 3 (March 1970): 83f. Milhaud, on the other hand, states in his memoirs that he was delivering lectures in Holland at the time; see Darius Milhaud, *Notes sans musique* (Paris: Julliard, 1949), 263. Abravanel confirmed Milhaud's absence in an oral history interview conducted by Alan Rich, Kim Kowalke, and Lys Symonette in Tanglewood on 26 August 1982; WLRC, Series 60.
158. See also Weill's reaction to the critics in a letter to UE of 6 January 1933: "Soon I'll send you some Paris reviews that exceed everything yet written about me in enthusiasm and understanding." ("Ich schicke Ihnen nächstens noch Pariser Pressestimmen, die an Enthusiasmus, aber auch an Verständnis, alles überbieten, was bisher über mich geschrieben wurde.") *W-UE*, 441.

159. "Tout ce que les jeunes musiciens de France et d'ailleurs ont tant cherché depuis la guerre ; l'utilisation artistique des formes populaires, la valeur d'art des éléments fort simples et pris à la vie la plus quotidienne d'aujourd'hui ; le jazz et son nouveau rythmique, sa puissance de suggestion, aussi ; cela et des moyens plus techniques (tel le petit orchestre aux cordes détronées de leur prépondérance ancienne), tout ici se retrouve, porté de main de maître à un degré de fusion jamais atteint, à un splendeur, une aisance et une sûreté inouïes ! Le plus extraordinaire est que la réussite musicale s'accompagne d'une valeur humaine et d'une émotion à quoi nul public ne résisterait — fût-il plus blasé que les désenchantés de *Mahagonny*. Entre tant de pages admirables, voyez, par exemple, le blues de l'*Alabama-Song*, où, des heurts, des ricanements du jazz, fuse tout à coup la montante chanson, le cri du cœur : *Oh ! moon of Alabama*, qui s'exhale sur ses basses mystérieuses, profondes — « hymne à la nuit » du pauvre, *Dreigroschentrستان, Tristan de Quat' Sous !*" "Mahagonny," *Les nouvelles littéraires* 11, no. 533 (31 December 1932): 8; translation kindly provided by Joel Galand.
160. "Voilà bien des années que Paris n'a pas eu l'occasion d'éprouver une émotion aussi intense et aussi noble. Il faut que ces spectacles soient offerts de nouveau à notre foule." *Candide*, 15 December 1932.
161. See Weill's letter to UE of 26 December 1932; *W-UE*, 431f.
162. "Wir wollen uns nun einigen, lieber Weill, ob man die Baden-Badener Fassung, die ja wohl auch in Hamburg gespielt wurde, oder die erweiterte Pariser Fassung spielen soll. Ich nehme an, dass die Pariser Fassung jetzt weitervertrieben werden soll und habe Schlee beauftragt uns aufs rascheste in den Besitz des Materiales zu setzen. Ich bitte Sie mir eventuell durch Schlee, wenn nicht direkt, eine Äusserung zu diesem Thema zukommen zu lassen. Wenn jetzt Frankfurt und Berlin nach Hamburg und Paris das kleine Mahagonny machen, so werden sich sicher weitere Möglichkeiten finden." *W-UE*, 430.
163. "Ich war ganz kühl u. zurückhaltend, er ganz beflissen, devot, anscheißenisch. Er will ein kürzeres Stück als Ergänzung zu *Mahagonny* schreiben, mit einer schönen Rolle für dich. Er behauptete, dafür gute Stoffe zu haben. Als ich dann zu Haus war, rief er um 2 Uhr nachts an, um mir einen Vorschlag zu machen. Na was meinst du? Du rätst es nicht: den *Lindberghflug* will er für diesen Zweck ‚dramatisieren‘. Ist das nicht idiotisch? Jetzt ruft er dauernd an, ich soll mich mit ihm treffen, aber ich mag noch nicht. Diesmal bekommt er von mir Dinge zu hören, die ihm noch keiner gesagt hat." *W-LL(g)*, 83; translated in *W-LL(e)*, 72f.
164. In April 1933, James commissioned Weill to write a ballet for Les Ballets 1933. The result was the "ballet chanté" *Die sieben Todsünden*, which the company premiered in Paris on 7 June 1933. The same company gave the work's English premiere in London on 1 July.
165. "Dienstag war nun *Mahagonny* und wieder ein Riesenerfolg, obwohl die Aufführung schrecklich war. Der Peters und Fuchs haben so geschmiert und die Frau Abravanel war schrecklich (kann überhaupt nicht singen). Abravanel selbst war auch schlecht. Ich hatte den nächsten Tag eine große Auseinandersetzung mit ihm und sagte ihm unter andern, daß mit so einer Kalman-Aufführung Dir nicht viel gedient sei. Er hat es nämlich furchtbar heruntergehetzt. Die ganze Konzentration mußte wieder von mir aufgebracht werden. Aber auf die Dauer ist das auch anstrengend was [für] die Aufführung schlecht ist, hereinzubringen. Pasetti hat an dem Abend wirklich sehr schön gesungen und Gretler ist ja immer gleich verlässlich. Aber alles andere war schrecklich." Letter of 23 June 1933, *W-LL(g)*, 94; translated in *W-LL(e)*, 84.
166. In a letter to Weill, dated 23 June 1933, Lenya reported that UE had sent "lousy performance material, half of which was simply missing and which James has had redone for the London performance." ("schlechte Material, wo die Hälfte einfach fehlte und was James für die Londoner Aufführung neu herstellen hat lassen") *W-LL(g)*, 94; translated in *W-LL(e)*, 84.
167. "James hatte gar keine Reklame gemacht. Er hat sehr viel Geld verloren, und große Krachs mit den Russen und hatte wohl keine Lust mehr. Aus diesem Grunde wollte ich absagen und nahm am Vorabend der Aufführung 7 Schlafpulver. Am morgen war ich natürlich fast bewußtlos und James kam sofort mit dem Arzt an, der mir Gegenmittel gab. Um 5h nachmittags erfaßte mich aber doch meine Spielwut und ich wankte ins Theater. Daß ich trotzdem wirklich wunderbar war (Pasetti ist da ganz kritisch), übrigens haben es alle gesagt, ist mir ein völliges Rätsel, da ich sofort nach der Aufführung zusammenfiel und heimgebracht wurde. Ich hatte nur so eine tierische Wut, weil dieser Bengel James es fertigbrachte, das Stück am Abend erst vor dem Vorhang ‚anzusagen‘. Weder im Programm noch sonstwo war es angekündigt. [...] Das Theater war 1/3 voll und für die paar Leute war es noch ein großer Erfolg. Von Wiederholungen aber keine Spur." Letter of 22 July 1933; *W-LL(g)*, 100; translated in *W-LL(e)*, 90. The London performance appears to have involved Lenya's friend Louise Hartung, although the exact nature of her participation, if any, is unclear. An unknown hand prominently penciled Hartung's name into Vm at the beginning of Jessie's entrance in "Benares-Song" and "III. Mahagonny-Song." Hartung confirmed some involvement in an undated interview given—in Lenya's presence—to Horst Koegler, a summary of which survives in WLRC, Series 60 (photocopy).
168. "im Zentrum des Faschismus Anklang finden würden"; Weill, letter to UE, 14 March 1933 (*W-UE*, 461). Performances planned for Copenhagen and Hilversum (Holland) evidently never materialized. About the projected Copenhagen performance see Heinsheimer's query in his letter to Weill of 24 August 1933 (*W-UE*, 474), to which Weill did not respond. About Hilversum see Heinsheimer's letter to Weill of 6 October 1933 (*W-UE*, 478), and Weill's surprised reply of 18 October 1933 (*W-UE*, 479).
169. Letter to Lenya of 28 July 1933; *W-LL(e)*, 94.
170. See her letter to Weill of 7 August 1933; *W-LL(e)*, 96.
171. "suite di scene liriche" "Non c'è continuità drammatica nè intreccio." The booklet lists the instrumentation as follows (n.p.): "un violino primo, un violino secondo, sassofono contralto, sassofono tenore, due clarinetti, clarinetto basso, due trombe, trombone, banjo, chitarra havaiana, chitarra, pianoforte, jazz, timpani, campane."; photocopy in WLRC, programs file. For many years after World War I, "jazz" was short for "batteria" (drum kit) in Italian; see Claudio Sessa, *Le età del jazz: i contemporanei* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2009), 76.
172. The program reads: "Lack of time and space have prevented us from offering an Italian translation also of the text for *Mahagonny*. However, to briefly illustrate the various scenes, we are presenting some notes expressly conveyed by the author." ("La mancanza di tempo e di spazio ci ha impedito di dare la traduzione italiana anche del testo di *Mahagonny*. Riportiamo però, a breve illustrazione delle varie scene, alcune note espressamente dettate dall'Autore.") Weill's involvement with the preparations for this performance, which he considered an important showcasing of his works, can be sensed throughout the program notes. Nowhere, however, do these notes convey a sense that Weill considered the Paris version of the Songspiel "definitive." By contrast, Abravanel, in his letter of 21 January 1985 (see note 145) remembered: "After that triumph [i.e., the two Paris performances of the Songspiel on 10 and 11 December 1932], that version was for Kurt the definite, final, authentic version of the Songspiel. . . . Weill never even discussed the possibility or desirability of any change whatever."
173. See his letter to Lenya of 11 January 1934; *W-LL(e)*, 108. The concert garnered a positive review even from the reviewer "m.l." of *Il Lavoro Fascista*, 31 December 1933. The unnamed critic writing for *Il Messaggero* (30 December 1933) disliked Weill's music for the Songspiel except for "the song about the moon, 'Alabama-Song,' but that one, unless we are mistaken, is not by Kurt Weill . . ." ("la canzone della luna, l'*Alabama-Song*, ma questa, se non erriamo, non è di Kurt Weill . . ."). Weill may have contributed to this misunderstanding with his tongue-in-cheek "synopsis" of the "Alabama-Song" for the program: "Two girls arrive in Mahagonny and sing the famous 'Alabama-Song.'" ("Due ragazze arrivano a Mahagonny, e cantano il celebre 'Alabama-Song'.")
174. See, for example, his telegram to UE of 7 November 1935; *W-UE*, 490.
175. For the League of Composers' plan, see Weill's letter of 7 January 1936 to Ernest R. Voigt of Associated Music Publishers; reprinted in *WPD(e)*, 162. For the plan of the Friends and Enemies of Modern Music, see Eugene R. Gaddis, *Magician of the Modern: Chick Austin and the Transformation of the Arts in America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 290–99, and Weill's letter to Austin of 15 January 1936; WLA, Box 47, Folder 1.
176. "Music for 'Road of Promise' Written in Modern Contemporary Style," *New York Times* (27 October 1935). Although GS2 attributes the interviewer's initials ("N. S.") to Nicolas Slonimsky, Noel Straus is a more plausible candidate; information kindly supplied by Elmar Juchem.
177. WLA, Box 47, Folder 2.
178. WLA, Box 48, Folder 20.
179. "Wie ich Ihnen telegraphierte, befindet sich die Partitur der Pariser Fassung des kleinen Mahagonny bei mir; ebenso der Klavierauszug der ersten Baden-Badener Fassung. Was haben Sie vor? Eine Aufführung? Und wann und wo? Wie Sie wissen, habe ich das Werk in Paris und Rom inszeniert (ich besitze übrigens auch die Diapositive Nehers, die wir zu jenen Aufführungen benutzt haben), und Sie werden es gewiss verstehen, wenn ich den Wunsch (und wohl übrigens auch die Legitimation) habe, bei einer etwa geplanten Aufführung Regie zu führen, die ich übrigens auch zugleich dirigieren könnte."; letter to Alfred Schlee of UE, 28 June 1948; Universal Edition Archives, Folder "Curjel."
180. An official broadside (but not the program booklet) lists an additional singer, "Un tenore" (sung by Angelo Marcuriali), but without indicating in which number(s) he appeared.
181. "In Venedig legten wir die Pariser Fassung zugrunde und fügten noch das Duett von den Kranichen hinzu, bei dem den zweitausend oder noch mehr Zuhörern der Atem stillstand. Kein Laut zu hören, kein Beifall – mir schien es einer der seltenen Momente, in denen die Kunst leibhaftig vor den Menschen tritt." Curjel, "Erinnerungen": 85. As Teatro La Fenice had only 1,000 seats, Curjel appears to have combined the number of spectators of the two performances.
182. "Hilde Guden, die ja in Venedig wohl mitgesungen hat, erzählte mir von dieser Aufführung, die nicht sehr erfolgreich gewesen sein soll." Photocopy in WLRC, Series 43.
183. The number appears to have been newly orchestrated, possibly with reference to an incomplete set of parts from the opera. According to M2, UE had sent such a set in June 1948 to its Italian representative, Carisch, in Milan. Although the catalogue states "1 kompl. Orch. Mat. d. grossen Fassung" (1 complete set of orchestra parts for large version), the detailed list of the books that follows is incomplete: "Str. 6 VI, 3 Violen, 2 Celli, 2 Bässe, Bandoneon, Zither, Schlagwerk, Sax. (Bühne), Flöte." When Curjel prepared a "stage adaptation" of Mahagonny in 1951, he instructed UE: "If no full score of the large Mahagonny can be traced, the number [i.e., "Kraniche-Duett"] needs to be newly orchestrated. Obviously! The instrumentation found in

- the orchestral parts [of the Venice version] is very bad!" ("Findet sich keine Partitur des grossen Mahagonny so muss das Stück neu instrumentiert werden. Sehr einfach! Die im Orchestermaterial vorliegende Instrumentation ist sehr schlecht!"); typescript "Kommentar" (see note 185).
184. See the seminal study by Kim Kowalke, "Music Publishing and the Nazis: Schott, Universal Edition, and Their Composers," in *Music and Nazism: Art under Tyranny, 1933–1945*, ed. Michael Kater and Albrecht Riethmüller (Laaber: Laaber, 2003), 170–218, which for the first time clarifies the entire state of affairs.
185. "Die Bühneneinrichtung von ‚Mahagonny‘ beruht auf den mit Kurt Weill gemeinsam vorbereiteten Aufführungen des ‚Kleinen Mahagonny‘ in Paris (Dezember 1932) und Rom (Dezember 1933) und auf den praktischen Erfahrungen der Aufführung in Venedig (September 1949). Die Einrichtung gibt nur die Haupthinweise für die szenische Darstellung. Sie stellt kein Regiebuch dar.;" undated typescript [M2 suggests Spring 1951] "Kommentar zur Einrichtung von *Mahagonny*"; Universal Edition Archives, Vienna, Folder "Curjel." Next to the title appears a misleading annotation, "(Pariser Fassg.)," in the hand of Alfred Schlee.
186. According to an entry in the card catalogue for the shipping of rental materials (M2), Curjel cannibalized a set of parts for the Paris version in the process of creating the new version, which left no materials for the Paris version.
187. The duet "Ich habe gelernt," for example, was sung by Bessie and Charlie (instead of Jessie and Charlie) and called "Liebe in Mahagonny." *Brecht/Weill "Mahagonny,"* 28.
188. Hennenberg and Knopf, in *Brecht/Weill "Mahagonny,"* 23–39, erroneously published this conglomerate as the "Paris version" of the Songspiel. At least they pointed out (437): "As the relevant documents are inaccessible at present, the question remains whether this is a nonauthorial arrangement or an authentic version by Weill." Yet the "relevant documents" were indeed readily accessible at the time they produced their publication.
189. In a letter from UE, dated 3 September 1952, Lenya was informed almost parenthetically that "only the original score of the large version exists." Later a set of performance material for the opera was likewise rediscovered on the publisher's premises. WLRC, David Drew Collection.
190. Parenthetical exclamation point in the original.
191. "Mahagonny – neue Fassung: dies ist tatsächlich eine etwas irreführende Bezeichnung. Das ursprüngliche ‚Mahagonny‘ war das Songspiel. Später wurde auf den dauerlichen Wunsch des Verlegers (!) die grosse Fassung angefertigt, die in Leipzig zur Uraufführung kam. Noch später wurde die ursprüngliche kleine Fassung durch einige wenige Stücke der grossen ergänzt und diese Fassung wurde von uns als neue Fassung bezeichnet. [Einfügung am unteren Rand des Briefes: „Diese Fassung wurde vor 2 Jahren von Dr. Curjel durchgesehen und zwar nach der Pariser Aufführung des Werkes unter Abravanel.“] Wir haben tatsächlich die komplette Manuskript-Partitur der grossen Fassung. Es ist also praktisch möglich, ein Material des ‚grossen Mahagonny‘ herzustellen. Allerdings ist das eine ziemlich teure Sache."
192. "ich hoffe, Sie sind mir nicht böse, daß ich Ihren Brief vom Juli d.J. erst heute ausführlich beantworte. Dafür kann ich Ihnen heute die verwirrende Angelegenheit der verschiedenen Mahagonny-Fassungen genau erklären: 1). Zuerst ist das Songspiel entstanden, wovon wir einen Klavierauszug besitzen. 2). Dieses Songspiel hat Weill ausgearbeitet und nannte es Oper. Das ist nun die sogenannte ‚alte Fassung‘ der Oper ‚Mahagonny‘. Von dieser Fassung besitzen wir die Partitur, und von dieser Partitur haben Sie die Photokopie bekommen. 3). Es wurde dann von Weill eine eingezogene Fassung (Pariser Fassung) gemacht. Die Partitur dieser Pariser Fassung befindet sich bei Ihnen. Zur Pariser Fassung gibt es kein Material, dafür haben wir noch ein Material der alten Fassung, das wahrscheinlich nach der Pariser Fassung eingerichtet werden könnte. 4). Später hat dann Curjel eine neue Fassung gemacht, die auf dem Songspiel basiert, die sogenannte Curjel-Fassung oder ‚neue Fassung‘. Davon besitzen wir ein komplettes Material, das sich derzeit, wie Sie wissen, bei der AMP befindet." WLRC, Series 42, Box 1, Folder 26.
193. For example, performances in Cologne (1951) or on Italian Radio (1954), neither of which has been verified to date.
194. "Pariser [*sic*] Fassung, durch Frau Weill inhibiert, darf nicht aufgeführt werden (lt. H. Füssl 29.6.59)" WLRC, Series 18, Folder 3.
195. The "Paris version," too, was no longer allowed to be performed, as we know from Lenya's letter of 2 November 1963 to Grischa Barfuss; see note 202 below.
196. David Drew, *Kurt Weill: A Handbook* (London: Faber & Faber, 1987), 173f.
197. Undated letter [early May 1967] to Jörg Polzin: "As you may know, the Klavierauszug of the *Mahagonny-Songspiel* was published prematurely. It is in fact an uncorrected proof, and should not bear my name as editor, since I never edited the musical text." WLRC, David Drew Collection.
198. "The phrases in brackets are optional. They were added to the original score for the Paris performance in 1932." *VeS1/2*, p. 13 (English-language text of footnote); the German-language text expressly states "were added by Weill."
199. *VeS1/2*, p. 14.
200. This refers to such statements as ". . . and the city goes up in flames: the plunderers are plundered" (*VeS2*, p. 2). In the Songspiel, Mahagonny is still seen in a positive light as a counterfoil to the "great cities," as a "city of gold": "Why, though, do we need a Mahagonny? Because this world is a foul one . . ." Another such statement, "FOR MAHAGONNY IS A TOTENTANZ" (*VeS2*, p. 2), is not found in any text produced by Weill or Brecht in connection with the Songspiel.
201. *VeS2*, p. 3. The quotation omits the information on the projections and precise measure numbers. See scenario, reprinted in Critical Report, Supplement A.
202. Letter of 2 November 1963; carbon copy in WLRC, Series 42, Box 7, Folder 8; published in *Mahagonny: A Sourcebook*, ed. Joanna Lee, Edward Harsh, and Kim Kowalke (New York: Kurt Weill Foundation, 1995), 63. Drew typed the letter in London on Lenya's stationery and then mailed it to her (she was touring in Cleveland) to sign and send. Drew's reaction (on Lenya's behalf) in this letter was all the more resolute owing to a performance of a hybrid of the Songspiel and the opera organized by Manfred Wekwerth, Manfred Karge, and Matthias Langhoff and mounted as "*Das kleine Mahagonny*" at the Berliner Ensemble, the company established by Brecht in East Berlin. For this performance, Hans Dieter Hosalla had arranged Weill's music in a manner that no longer bore any relation to his intentions. Nonetheless, this arrangement was announced as being "after the Songspiel of 1927." When Lenya was informed by friends of this arrangement, created without the least regard for Weill's intentions, she sought to have its performance prohibited, but later allowed it to be given exclusively by the Berliner Ensemble. See Kim Kowalke, "Mahagonny Destroyed: The Berliner Ensemble Version," *Ibid.*, 62.
203. The "Hunters' Chorus" from *Der Freischütz* ("Was gleicht wohl auf Erden dem Jägervergnügen") is one of the most popular numbers in the male quartet repertoire.
204. Lenya's voice is described as "sweet, high, light, dangerous, cool, with the light of the crescent moon" by Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit: Erweiterte Ausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 231. On the evolution of Lenya's voice see Elmar Juchem, "Lotte Lenya: Interpretin und Nachlassverwalterin Kurt Weills," *Die Tonkunst* 8, no. 4 (October 2014): 527f.
205. "Furthermore, I ask you to check the full score, before duplicating it, against the piano-vocal score, with a particular eye on the latest revisions of the text, the stage directions, the metronome markings, etc. The piano-vocal score is definitive in all those points." ("Ferner bitte ich die ganze Partitur, bevor sie vervielfältigt wird, noch einmal mit dem Klavierauszug zu vergleichen, und zwar hauptsächlich die nachträglichen Aenderungen im Text, in Regiebemerkungen, in Metronomzeichen usw. zu beachten. Der Klavierauszug ist in allen diesen Punkten authentisch."); *Lw-ue*; photocopy in WLRC, Series 41, Box 2. Information kindly supplied by Elmar Juchem.
206. *GS2*, 90f.; see note 39.