

## Weill, Kurt (Julian)

(b Dessau, 2 March 1900; d New York, 3 April 1950). German composer, American citizen from 1943. He was one of the outstanding composers in the generation that came to maturity after World War I, and a key figure in the development of modern forms of musical theatre. His successful and innovatory work for Broadway during the 1940s was a development in more popular terms of the exploratory stage works that had made him the foremost avant-garde theatre composer of the Weimar Republic.

### 1. Life.

Weill's father Albert was chief cantor at the synagogue in Dessau from 1899 to 1919 and was himself a composer, mostly of liturgical music and sacred motets. Kurt was the third of his four children, all of whom were from an early age taught music and taken regularly to the opera. Despite its strong Wagnerian emphasis, the Hoftheater's repertory was broad enough to provide the young Weill with a wide range of music-theatrical experiences which were supplemented by the orchestra's subscription concerts and by much domestic music-making.

Weill began to show an interest in composition as he entered his teens. By 1915 the evidence of a creative bent was such that his father sought the advice of Albert Bing, the assistant conductor at the Hoftheater. Bing was so impressed by Weill's gifts that he undertook to teach him himself. For three years Bing and his wife, a sister of the Expressionist playwright Carl Sternheim, provided Weill with what almost amounted to a second home and introduced him a world of metropolitan sophistication. Later, in 1917, Bing also found him volunteer work as a coach at the opera.

In April 1918, at Bing's suggestion, Weill enrolled at the Berlin Musikhochschule where he studied with Humperdinck (composition), Friedrich Koch (counterpoint) and Rudolf Krasselt (conducting). Although he had won a bursary from the Hochschule for the following year, he found its musical climate stifling and applied to Schoenberg to study privately with him in Vienna. Financial situations intervened, however, and Weill returned in the summer of 1919 to Dessau, where he worked for three months under Knappertsbusch and Bing at the Hoftheater before taking up a post as a conductor of a tiny municipal opera company in Lüdenscheid. He remained with the company until the early summer of 1920, when the announcement that Busoni had been invited to direct a masterclass in composition at the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, encouraged him to apply for membership. The last and youngest of the applicants, Weill was duly accepted for a three-year period, officially beginning in July 1921 but in practice earlier.

Busoni had a special regard for Weill's musical gifts. Recognizing some technical shortcomings, he referred the young man to his disciple Philipp Jarnach for some rigorous training in counterpoint. Weill progressed rapidly, and in the summer of 1922 Busoni and Jarnach encouraged him to provide a score for a ballet-pantomime entitled *Zaubernacht*, which was successfully staged in Berlin in November 1922 and presented three years later in New York. The 1922–3 season also witnessed premières of no fewer than four concert works by Weill, including the *Sinfonia sacra* op.6 and the *Divertimento* op.5, both by the Berlin PO. At the end of his three years in the masterclass Busoni recommended him wholeheartedly to Universal Edition in Vienna, who were to become Weill's exclusive publishers for the next ten years.

Some weeks before Busoni's death in July 1924 Weill entered an association with the leading Expressionist playwright Georg Kaiser that was to remain close until Weill left Germany nearly ten years later. The première, under Fritz Busch, of the Weill–Kaiser opera *Der Protagonist* in Dresden in 1926 made Weill's name known beyond specialist circles and was hailed by Oskar Bie and others as the first genuine operatic success achieved by a German postwar composer. Largely on the strength of that success, Weill was invited to write a short opera for Hindemith's chamber music festival in Baden-Baden. At first he vacillated between two classical texts, but having already begun his collaboration with Bertolt Brecht in March 1927, he arranged instead to set the five *Mahagonny-Gesänge* from Brecht's recent verse collection *Die Hauspostille*. The result, the 'Songspiel' *Mahagonny*, was presented in Baden-Baden in July 1927 to great effect, and encouraged the two men to proceed with their full-length opera project *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (1927–9).

Weill and Brecht had thus laid the foundations of a collaboration that, however short-lived, can be numbered among the most fruitful in 20th-century music. It did not undermine the collaboration with Kaiser, however, and in 1928 a one-act *opera buffa* by Weill and Kaiser, *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*, was launched on its highly successful career. A few months later Weill's and Brecht's *Die Dreigroschenoper* had its historic première in Berlin, with the part of Jenny played and sung by Weill's wife Lotte Lenya, whom he had married in 1926. Other Brecht projects followed in short order: *Das Berliner Requiem* (1928), *Der Lindberghflug* (1929), *Happy End* (1929) and *Der Jasager* (1930), as well as cantatas, workers' choruses and incidental music for *Mann ist Mann* (1931).

The international triumph of *Die Dreigroschenoper* ensured that after years of financial hardship Weill was now free to devote himself entirely to composition. Since 1923 he had been giving private lessons in theory and composition to various young musicians, among them Claudio Arrau, Nikos Skalkottas and Maurice Abravanel; and beginning in 1925 he was also a prolific contributor to the radio weekly *Der deutsche Rundfunk*, providing previews and reviews on a regular basis and occasionally offering essays on larger cultural issues. By the spring of 1929, however, he was able to withdraw from all such work, and for the remaining 20 years of his life he depended entirely on his earnings as a freelance composer, primarily for the stage.

Weill was now the most successful theatre composer to have emerged in the Weimar Republic. This fact, quite apart from his Jewish ancestry and leftist political associations, ensured that he and his works became exposed targets when the tide turned against the republic in 1929. The riotous première of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* in Leipzig in 1930 was the prelude to a concerted campaign to drive his works from the state-subsidized theatres. By the start of the 1932–3 season this campaign had largely achieved its ends: despite the critical and public acclaim for his opera *Die Bürgschaft* (1930–32), the most ambitious of his pieces for the German stage, the work was shunned by most theatres. The enthusiastic reception given to a concert of his music at the Salle Gaveau in Paris (December 1932) confirmed his feeling that he should do more to promote his works outside Germany.

Although Weill's last work for Germany, the musical play *Der Silbersee* (also with Kaiser), was warmly received at its triple première in Leipzig, Magdeburg and Erfurt in February 1933, the emergency decrees and rigorous censorship that followed upon the Reichstag fire a fortnight later put paid to his further possibilities in Germany. In circumstances of some danger he fled to Paris on 14 March 1933, taking with him only a few belongings and the sketches of his Second Symphony. Soon after his arrival he was commissioned to compose a

score for Les Ballets 1933 and reluctantly renewed his collaboration with Brecht, which had ended, none too amicably, almost three years earlier. The resultant work, *Die sieben Todsünden*, choreographed by Balanchine and sung by Lenya, was hardly more than a succès d'estime in Paris and London. By the end of 1933 Weill realized not only that the political situation in Germany was no temporary aberration (as the suspension of his contract with Universal in the summer had already implied), but that it would be very difficult to consolidate his position in France. Shocked by a pro-Nazi demonstration at a concert performance of *Der Silbersee* in Paris, he withdrew to the village of Louveciennes in 1934 and began to focus his attention on the commercial theatres of Paris, London and Zürich.

The first result of this new focus was *Marie galante* (1934), a stage play to which Weill contributed songs and incidental music. Despite the immediate popularity of some of its songs the play was poorly received. Hardly more successful was the operetta *Der Kuhhandel*, which reached the stage only in an English adaptation entitled *A Kingdom for a Cow* (1935) and failed utterly in London.

These two disappointments were somewhat alleviated by a major collaboration with Max Reinhardt and Franz Werfel which had begun in the summer of 1934 and occupied much of Weill's attention for the next 18 months. The result, a vast historical spectacle of the Jewish people from Abraham's time until the destruction of Solomon's temple, was originally set to music in German as *Der Weg der Verheissung*, but planned for production in New York in December 1935 as *The Eternal Road*. Weill, accompanied by Lenya, travelled to New York in September of that year as a member of the production team. When the production had to be postponed he chose to remain in the United States, where he had already begun to form new contacts with the theatre scene.

Weill's first work for the American stage came about at the instigation of the Group Theatre, which invited him to collaborate with the playwright Paul Green on an anti-war musical play entitled *Johnny Johnson*. The piece was duly staged in New York in November 1936, only eight weeks before the resuscitated première of *The Eternal Road*. Although the score of *Johnny Johnson* won Weill some important new friends and supporters, and *The Eternal Road* was lauded by press and public alike before succumbing to financial mismanagement, neither work brought the composer the triumph he so desperately needed. Nevertheless, with new prospects in Hollywood and little to tempt him back to Europe, he took the first steps towards American citizenship in May 1937. His material problems were partially solved by *Knickerbocker Holiday*, a political satire composed in 1938 to a book by Maxwell Anderson, the first in an impressive list of American collaborators that was to include Ira Gershwin, Moss Hart, Langston Hughes, Alan Jay Lerner, S.J. Perelmann and Ogden Nash. *Knickerbocker Holiday*, though often unmistakably European in idiom, introduced Weill to a much wider audience and produced, in 'September Song', what was soon to become his first fully-fledged American hit song.

After the demise of the government-sponsored Federal Theatre in July 1939 and the failure of his attempts to find a sponsor for a series of radio operas, Weill now strengthened his links with Broadway, to which, and its Hollywood annexes, he devoted himself for the remaining ten years of his life. During the early 1940s he produced two resounding successes, the formally innovative *Lady in the Dark* (1940) and *One Touch of Venus* (1943). He also contributed patriotic pieces to the war effort, culminating in his first and only musical film, *Where do we go from here?* (1943–4). Less fortunate was *The Firebrand of Florence* (1944),

an operetta based on the memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini and his only box-office failure of the 1940s.

Weill's first new venture of the postwar years was a boldly conceived 'American opera' for Broadway based on Elmer Rice's prize-winning drama *Street Scene* (1946). Though only moderately successful at the time, *Street Scene* marked, in Weill's widely publicized view, a culmination in his career as a theatre composer. It was followed by the equally innovatory 'vaudeville' *Love Life* (1947–8) and the less ambitious but politically and socially controversial *Lost in the Stars* (1949), a musical adaptation of Alan Paton's anti-apartheid novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

If none of Weill's three postwar musicals could match the success of their predecessors of the early 1940s, the same cannot be said of his sole venture into the non-Broadway musical stage, the college opera *Down in the Valley* (1945–8), which far outstripped his other American works in number of productions and performances. Plans to develop a series of such works, with Alan J. Lerner as his collaborator, occupied Weill during the last weeks of his life. Eventually the strain of his workload proved too great for his constitution, and shortly after he and Maxwell Anderson had started work on a musical adaptation of *Huckleberry Finn* he died of a longstanding heart ailment.

David Drew/J. Bradford Robinson

## 2. Early works.

In 1983, 14 items of Weill juvenilia resurfaced in the estate of his sister-in-law, and revealed a lack of precocity surprising in a composer whose two previously known early works, the B minor String Quartet (1918) and the Sonata for cello and piano (1919–20), were remarkable precisely for their individuality. In the quartet particularly, the composer's distinctive profile is already discernible. But despite the characteristically unsettling transformation of popular waltz idioms which interrupts the fugal finale, the quartet still belongs to a relatively stable world where the later and lighter Reger is the principal modern influence and Mendelssohn the classical model.

The Cello Sonata is already heading in quite another direction, away from classical ideals and towards the ferment which had begun in pre-war Vienna. Schreker has replaced Reger as the main influence, and there are signs of some fleeting acquaintance with the Schoenberg of opp. 7 and 9. After the first movement, key signatures are dispensed with, and the last ties with functional tonality loosened. The surviving fragments of the cantata *Sulamith* (1920) reveal further developments on these same lines, reaching at times an almost Skryabinesque luxuriance.

The remarkable one-movement Symphony of 1921 is, in contrast, clearly transitional. Whereas in the first two sections Weill adapted a basically late Romantic language to new harmonic and motivic purposes, in the third he attempted to check the flow by reverting to a post-Regerian fugal texture, but without the tonal constraints observed in the quartet. For reasons partly technical and partly programmatic, the fuguing soon peters out and the impassioned rhetoric is resumed. Whatever the programmatic justification, the awkwardness reflects the kind of technical shortcomings that necessitated Weill's subsequent studies with Jarnach.

Less than a fully-fledged composition, yet more than a promising student piece, the Symphony is in a sense explained, amplified and corrected by the two major achievements of the following year: the *Chorale-Fantasy* for large string orchestra with horn, trombones and unison male chorus (it became the finale of the Divertimento op.5) and the *Sinfonia sacra*. Already in the *Fantasy*, technical lessons learned from Jarnach are made subservient to a strikingly personal vision. The idea of following a sequence of divertimento-style movements with a massive finale envisaging the Last Judgment is one that could have occurred only to the future composer of *Mahagonny*.

*Zaubernacht* (1922), a ballet-pantomime for young audiences, clearly offered Weill an opportunity to return to the vein of simple lyricism so winningly uncovered in the B minor Quartet. Several ideas from the quartet are woven into the narrative sections of the score and developed in the set dances. Among the latter are a waltz and a cortège based on a foxtrot that Weill had written while working as house pianist and composer in a Berlin cabaret. Without realizing it, he had laid the foundations for the song style that would make him world famous.

*Zaubernacht* prepares us for the instrumental song cycle *Frauentanz* (1923) and the alla marcia section of the op.8 String Quartet of the same year. In the latter work Weill tries to resuscitate the final section of his Symphony, but to formally and texturally inappropriate ends. Unlike the two movements which he discarded, the Quartet as it stands adds little to what he had achieved in the earlier orchestral piece. Their true successor is the *Recordare* op.11 (1923), a setting for large mixed chorus and children's voices of verses from the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Modelled on Bach's motets and related to the modern north German choral tradition that leads from Reger to Distler, the *Recordare* has claim to be considered Weill's early masterpiece. The fact that it remained unpublished, whereas op.8 was accepted by Universal on Busoni's recommendation, is attributable only to the technical demands it places on even the most experienced choirs.

The Concerto for violin and wind instruments which Weill composed in the early summer of 1924, shortly before Busoni's death, is the first work in which he consciously declares his independence from his beloved teacher. Despite its elements of harlequinade and its apparent leanings towards an Italianate style, its home is the Expressionist vein of the early Hindemith. The leap from the free-tonal classicism of the *Recordare* to a largely non-tonal harmonic language risks some loss of coherence in the immediate formal context, but acquires justification as a step toward the one-act opera *Der Protagonist* (1924–5).

It says much for Weill's powers of self-criticism that the critical and public acclaim of *Der Protagonist* at its prestigious Dresden première in 1926 did not deflect him from the exploratory path he pursued in his next two works, the significantly titled cantata *Der neue Orpheus* (1925) and the one-act ballet-opera *Royal Palace* (1925–6), both to texts by the Expressionist poet Yvan Goll. The excitement and sense of discovery Weill associated with these two works were surely inseparable from his renewed encounter with certain vernacular and tonal elements. Although still attracted by the lonely example of Schoenberg, Weill had realized that his own talents and responsibilities lay elsewhere. Just as the cantata, with its concertante solo violin, can be heard as a critical reply to the hermetic attitudes of the Violin Concerto, so may *Royal Palace* be viewed as a plea for stylistic diversity as opposed to the more uniform compositional fabric of *Der Protagonist*.

The fact that in *Royal Palace* Weill made use of syncopated dance idioms for the first time is less important in itself than in relation to a new concept of style: unity is no longer sought

through the dominance of any one idiom, but through a personal view of a multiplicity of idioms, with a particular emphasis on those which are discredited or out of fashion (notably those associated with his early admiration for Schreker). In this work, and in its successor *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren* (1927), Weill also sheds most of his inhibitions regarding popular and jazz materials, although his guide in this matter would seem to be Krenek rather than Milhaud and Stravinsky. Largely unappreciated at its first performance, *Royal Palace* is the work in which Weill's originality as a theatre composer first manifests itself. Its failure influenced the rejection of his next work, a full-length opera provisionally titled *Na und?*, by publishers and opera houses alike. The few sketches of this work to have survived are sufficient to indicate that, in its clearcut number form and range of styles, *Na und?* was the necessary link between *Royal Palace* and the radically pluralist *Mahagonny* opera.

David Drew/J. Bradford Robinson

### 3. European maturity.

Stylistically *Mahagonny* has three main musical levels: the neo-classical, the neo-Verdian, and the popular (coloured by cabaret and popular song). Melodically and motivically these are interlinked, as were the analogous levels in *Royal Palace*. But in *Mahagonny* the fundamental integrating factor is the harmony. Whereas in *Royal Palace* and, apparently, in *Na und?* the harmonic terms of reference had changed from level to level – non-tonal, free tonal and tonal – in *Mahagonny* they are constant throughout and merely subject to changes of emphasis (for instance, the submediant emphasis characteristic of the popular level).

It is the new consistency and sharper focus of the harmony, and not the influence of popular music or even of Brecht, that distinguishes Weill's works of 1927–33 from most of his earlier ones up to and including the *Mahagonny* Songspiel. The juxtaposition of tonal songs and non-tonal interludes in the Songspiel had been his last contribution to the formal experiments of the postwar avant garde. In transferring the Songspiel material to the opera, he not only removed most of the non-tonal passages but also clarified the harmony at those points in the songs where elements from the 'free' style had been allowed to intrude. The introductory verses of the 'Alabama-Song', for instance, were divested of their Bartók-like dissonances and recomposed in an ostensibly simpler though actually more personal harmonic idiom.

In the midst of its two-and-a-half-year gestation *Mahagonny* suffered two interruptions – for *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Das Berliner Requiem* (both 1928) – that left their mark on the opera's third act, which is structurally the weakest of the three and relies on a last-minute borrowing from *Das Berliner Requiem* to shore up its finale. Equally damaging to the opera's unity were the squeamishness of publishers and opera directors towards some of its scenes (especially the Act 2 brothel scene), which had to be revised, cut or replaced accordingly, and the deterioration of Weill's relations with Brecht, which prevented him as late as 1931 from putting the opera into definitive form. Yet however insoluble the problems of its text, this uncomfortable and thought-provoking work continues to maintain an uneasy place in the opera repertory and to deliver its polemical barbs against consumer society and the cultural establishment.

If the *Mahagonny* opera is likely to remain the best-known of Weill's full-length through-composed works from the Weimar period, its historical impact pales beside that of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, the most frequently performed piece of musical theatre of the 20th century. Here Weill alluded to an astonishing range of musical *objets trouvés*, from broadside

ballads and sanctimonious parlour tunes to operatic recitative and ensemble-finales. The 'song' forms, for which the work has become justly famous, are merely one strand in a score which thrives as much on the manifold contrast of stylistic levels as on its carefully controlled mixture of the sentimental and the sardonic. Weill's handling of the band was immediately recognized as definitive for jazz orchestration in art music, and his pseudo-tonal harmonizations came to be identified not only with his own inimitable voice but with the Weimar jazz age as a whole. Yet for all the diversity of its material, the *Dreigroschenoper* score, composed against the clock in one broad sweep of passion and amusement, has the benefit of a few sharply delineated motifs that impart a satisfying if fully intuitive sense of unity to the entire work.

Weill was momentarily taken aback by the acclaim *Die Dreigroschenoper* won in intellectual circles as well as from the general public, and a self-protective withdrawal may be sensed in his two radio cantatas of 1928–9, *Das Berliner Requiem* and *Der Lindberghflug*. Both are austere in mood, and rely for the most part on a radically simplified and concentrated neo-classical idiom partly beholden to Busoni's view of Bach and partly forced on Weill by the primitive radio technology of the time. Although in theory addressed to a mass audience, neither work makes more than an incidental allusion to the *Dreigroschenoper* manner which numerous composers throughout Europe were already trying to emulate, and both take their bearings from the more introspective passages of *Mahagonny*. Not until the second cantata is there a hint of the impression which Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* had made on Weill.

Although Weill was rightly proud of *Die Dreigroschenoper* and of his discovery that a 'serious' modern composer could still reach a large audience without sacrifice of originality or contemporaneity, he recognized that the new song style was not, at that stage of its development, a suitable basis for the continuous musical structures which were his main concern. Nevertheless, not wishing to abandon his new audience, he felt called upon to develop and refine the song style, whether by enlarging it into scenas or by diversifying its expression. If the former is apparent in such sections of *Mahagonny* as the 'Anglers' Quartet' (no.8), the latter is the main impetus behind his collaboration on *Happy End* (1929), a 'play with music' to which Brecht supplied apposite song texts. The resultant set of songs and choruses, though they greatly expanded the range of possibilities opened up by *Die Dreigroschenoper*, could not counteract the fiasco of the play's première and earned Weill a gentle reprimand from his Viennese publishers to return to the straight path.

In fact Weill had already resolved to do so, as was evident in his next Brecht collaboration, the 'school opera' *Der Jasager* (1930). In this extraordinary work the classical economy practised in the two radio cantatas is applied with extreme, almost self-effacing rigour; and yet the restrictive pressure, related to the stern morality of the libretto no less than to practical exigencies of non-professional performance, serves to intensify the lyricism that had begun to make itself heard in parts of *Mahagonny* and then, more clearly, in the radio cantatas. Although *Der Jasager* was conceived by its librettist as a *Lehrstück* to instruct audiences and performers alike in collective morality, there is some indication that Weill took the work's didactic element in his own special sense, and produced what was in effect a *vade mecum* for young composers aspiring to write modern opera. Adopted for use in the Prussian school system, the work quickly achieved a huge number of performances (exceeding even those of *Die Dreigroschenoper* at the time) and spawned a great many imitations, thereby laying the groundwork for a 'Weill underground tradition' which persisted even during the Third Reich and into the postwar era.

The idea of a dialectical relationship between words and music, and between the ingredients of the music itself, had already been fundamental to the *Mahagonny* Songspiel, and is one of the reasons why at this time Weill favoured texts in which affirmative views are indicated by negative examples. The principle, widely misunderstood or misrepresented by those who castigated the ‘immorality’ of the *Mahagonny* opera or applauded the ‘morality’ of *Der Jasager*, and is again fundamental to *Mahagonny*’s successor, the three-act opera *Die Bürgschaft* (1930–31). Here too there is a triple stratification of styles, although the popular level has become less jazzy (there are no saxophones and the banjo has been replaced by two Stravinskian pianos). Like *Der Jasager*, *Die Bürgschaft* is a modern morality play in consciously antiquated garb, and owes something to the example of Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex* without imitating its music. But unlike *Der Jasager*, it criticizes the prevailing order, and is actively supported both by a commenting chorus in the classic Handelian tradition and by a stage chorus representing the exploited and oppressed masses. By allowing the stage chorus to emerge, at decisive moments, as the drama’s true protagonist, Weill created a modern ‘chorus opera’ that drew historical consequences from Verdi and Musorgsky.

By now it was beyond question that whatever his genius as a writer of songs, Weill’s finest inventions depended on the kind of dramatic momentum that could be accumulated only in a continuous musical structure. Weill himself was well aware of this; indeed, it was one of the factors that led eventually to his rupture with Brecht. But as his chances of mounting a full-length opera in Germany receded, he decided to return to the ‘play with music’ that had been successfully established in *Die Dreigroschenoper*. The ‘winter’s tale’ *Der Silbersee* which Weill and Kaiser wrote in the second half of 1932 is, in its subject matter, an almost direct continuation of *Die Bürgschaft*, being an undisguised response to the political, cultural and economic crisis in the last year of the Weimar Republic. The Weillian seven-piece jazz band of *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Happy End* has now been replaced by a medium-sized opera orchestra, and the song style has branched out towards both opera and cantata in a manner that aspires to a modern version of 18th- and early 19th-century Singspiel.

Expelled from Germany at the height of his powers, Weill wrote two complementary works in 1933 which have some claim to be considered his European masterpieces: the Second Symphony (begun before his flight to Paris and completed in 1934) and the choral ballet or cantata *Die sieben Todsünden*. While the former, championed and first performed by Bruno Walter, releases the neo-Mendelssohnian symphonic energy latent in the upper levels of *Die Bürgschaft*, the latter accomplishes with the song style something that would not have been feasible at any stage in its evolution before *Der Silbersee*. Thanks in some degree to Brecht’s tightly structured text and his new-found understanding of Weill’s musical and aesthetic needs, the song style now evolves into a continuous and developing musical structure to produce a unique and unrepeatable mixture of cantata and ballet, half song cycle, half madrigal play.

The symphony and the ballet-cantata were the last pieces Weill wrote for the audience he had left behind in Germany. Although the two main works of 1934–5, the political operetta *Der Kuhhandel* and the biblical drama *Der Weg der Verheissung*, still have the advantage of a text in his native language, they are already the works of an expatriate searching for another audience and therefore anxious to make himself understood. Different as they are in style and aim, both seek to conceal their German origins – the operetta by way of Latin American inflections appropriate to its Caribbean setting, the biblical drama by the use of synagogue melodies – and both are harmonically much milder and more traditional than any of the German works. Yet *Der Kuhhandel*, a light-handed satire on war profiteering, might well

have been acclaimed as a minor masterpiece had it been completed and staged in the form Weill originally envisaged; and *Der Weg der Verheissung* promised, in scope and stylistic variety, to be a legitimate successor to *Mahagonny* before it underwent drastic rewriting as *The Eternal Road*. In the event, another 60 years lapsed before either work was heard in its original form, and the musical material amassed for these two failures formed an enormous quarry which Weill was to mine again and again for the works of his American years.

David Drew/J. Bradford Robinson

#### 4. American works.

For his first work specifically written for the American stage, *Johnny Johnson* (1936), Weill attained a diversity of style that far exceeds that of even the most pluralistic of his earlier works. To a certain extent this resulted from extensive borrowings from his preceding failures (including *Happy End*, *Der Kuhhandel* and *Marie Galante*), but it also reflects an almost encyclopedic urge to capture the musical ethos of his host country: patriotic songs of World War I, torch songs from urban nightclubs, cowboy songs, college glees and a love duet in waltz time redolent of Victor Herbert vie with a starkly Expressionist vein for the scenes of trench warfare. But if Weill's polyglot score is at least justified by the international setting of the plot, and his partitioning of the musical resources into 'islands of music' (Blitzstein, E1936) impressed his colleagues, there is no overlooking the strain he apparently felt at having suddenly to come to terms with a new set of theatrical and musical conventions.

Something of the same strain can be sensed in *Knickerbocker Holiday* (1938), a putative and well-liked successor to Gershwin's political operettas which was in fact an Americanized by-product of *Der Kuhhandel* and, like that work, made use of Weill's new-found talent for light music in the Strauss and Offenbach vein. But the passages in *Knickerbocker Holiday* where Weill attempted to Americanize fundamentally European material by the mechanical application of certain jazz and blues formulae lacked the effortlessness of those emigré art composers who, like Will Grosz or Vernon Duke, were turning out successful popular songs with apparent ease. More convincing, and technically more accomplished, than some of the Americanisms in *Knickerbocker Holiday* is the entire score Weill wrote for the pageant *Railroads on Parade* (1938–9).

Such exertions are nowhere to be found in *Lady in the Dark* (1940), the work that established Weill as a Broadway composer of the first rank. The European harmony and Pucciniesque bridge of 'September Song' have given way, in 'My Ship', to smooth 5th-related chord progressions and an exquisitely gradated melody proceeding from pentatonicism to diatonicism to delicate chromaticism. Equally virtuoso is Weill's handling of Broadway reprise conventions, here convincingly wedded to the dramaturgy in the form of an *idée fixe*. The work's three through-composed dream sequences, in effect one-act operas, gave Weill a renewed opportunity to demonstrate his 'gestic' control of dramatic pacing and momentum. Even the subject-matter, psychoanalysis, was new to American musical comedy. Exemplary yet inimitable, the score resembles a surreal Broadway montage of *Royal Palace* and *Die Dreigroschenoper*, and was fiercely rejected by admirers of the latter (Stravinsky excepted).

In its form and style *Lady in the Dark* inaugurated and set impeccably high standards for Weill's series of six Broadway musicals in which, to quote Virgil Thomson's obituary in the *New York Herald Tribune*, 'every new work was a new model, a new shape, a new solution of dramatic problems'. The wartime entertainment *One Touch of Venus* (1943) might be

considered an exception, but even there the incorporation of dance sequences to advance the story was commercially risky, as was the ironic and parodistic treatment of much that other songwriters and show composers took seriously. More challenging, however, were the shows that followed. *The Firebrand of Florence* (1944), a bold attempt to write a full-blooded Broadway operetta, suffered from Weill's own public confession of failure, and has only recently proved successful in revival. Much more successful in its day, and now regarded as one of the central achievements of his American career, was *Street Scene* (1946). A grim tragedy set in a New York tenement district and aptly subtitled 'an American opera', it bears much the same relation to musical comedy as does Weill's admitted exemplar *Porgy and Bess* in its through-composed score, its use of vernacular musical idioms for local colour, and its frequent nods in the direction of the European opera tradition, in this case *verismo*. Equally unusual to Broadway were the highly stylized vaudeville of *Love Life* (1947–8), whose dramatic structure is plainly influenced by the theatre of Thornton Wilder, and the themes of racial prejudice and persecution that inform Weill's last completed work for Broadway, *Lost in the Stars* (1949). But a similar innate urge to innovation is apparent in the non-Broadway works from these years: *Where do we go from here?* (1943–4), written in collaboration with Ira Gershwin, was meant to be a first step leading towards a through-composed film musical, while the one-act college opera *Down in the Valley* (1945–8) clearly aspires to the role of an American *Jasager* in its modest technical requirements and didactic impetus. Both these works attempted to establish genres non-existent in the American musical landscape of their day.

Weill retained from his discarded background two notable advantages over his popular competitors, and was wise enough to exploit them. The first was an aural imagination that freed him from any dependence on the piano and compelled him to make his own orchestral scores, a practice unknown on Broadway at the time and one which vastly increased the amount of work involved in each new production. It is in these scores that his technical mastery is unequalled and his special place in history as a precursor of Bernstein and Sondheim is assured. The second and related advantage was his highly cultivated sense of musical character and theatrical form. This is already apparent in the individual numbers, which are more sharply and variously characterized than even the most skilful Broadway products of the time, and it becomes decisive and unique in the way it determines the distinctive profile of each show. Given the multifariousness of Weill's American stage works, it is hard to trace a line of development within them, just as it is hard to speculate about the course he might have followed had he lived on into the 1950s and 60s, when he would have confronted not only the flowering of the American musical but also, and especially, the renaissance of his own European stage works. For in the end his greatest American success, indeed one of the most successful off-Broadway shows of all times, proved to be a posthumously Americanized version of *Die Dreigroschenoper*.

David Drew/J. Bradford Robinson

## **5. Posthumous reputation.**

Even during his lifetime Weill's achievement was never less than controversial. If the success of *Die Dreigroschenoper* brought an ill-tempered dismissal from Schoenberg, his abandonment of that very style earned him the disapproval and disrespect of Adorno and the avant-garde critical establishment, while admirers of his Broadway work found his European music, to quote the posthumous assessment of his American publisher, to 'have no present value at all'. The difficulty of assessing Weill's achievement was compounded by the extreme

disarray of his European output, which even before his emigration to America he had made little effort to keep intact, and by the two problems he bequeathed to his immediate posterity: the 'Brecht–Weill' problem and the problem of the 'two Weills'.

The former refers to the alleged role of Brecht in the creation of their collaborative works. It was long thought that Brecht contributed some if not all of the melodies in *Die Dreigroschenoper* and the *Mahagonny* Songspiel, a view which Brecht, with his self-confessed broad-mindedness in matters of intellectual property, did nothing to dispel. This view was thought to be confirmed by the discovery, in the early 1980s, of a manuscript containing Brecht's pre-*Dreigroschenoper* melody for 'Seeräuber-Jenny' with several remarkable resemblances to Weill's later setting. A closer inspection of this and other Brecht tunes reveals, however, that even where Weill used them as a pre-compositional framework, he made decisive departures in declamation and melodic shape to lend them a distinctive character, in effect refashioning them into something quite different and entirely his own.

The problem of the 'two Weills' is more fundamental and raises some basic questions in the aesthetics of musical reception. Obviously Weill's European works and his American works spoke to quite different audiences and require different sets of categories for their appraisal. This difference was long thought to be unbridgeable and to stand in need of special biographical or even psychological pleading. But the pre- and post-*Dreigroschenoper* works of his Weimar period likewise addressed different audiences, and Weill's Broadway shows contain a sufficient number of identifying 'fingerprints' and self-borrowings from his European works to make their authorship unmistakable. Similarly, an examination of the sketches for his Broadway musicals reveals that Weill basically used the same working methods at all stages of his career. Nor did he feel that his music required any special pleading: reviewing his career in retrospect in 1950, he rightly pointed out that all his stage works consistently probe a middle ground between musical comedy and opera – between the play with interpolated music and the through-composed operatic score in the European tradition. Moreover, following the decline of Berlin as a theatrical capital in the early 1930s, he was convinced that New York was the only place that offered him the necessary platform, audience and financial substructure to realize his ambitions for the musical stage.

The problem, as Adorno perceptively if pejoratively remarked in his obituary for the *Frankfurter Rundschau* (15 April 1950), has to do with the concept of 'composer' altogether. As a confirmed man of the theatre, Weill was less interested in a sacrosanct work or text than in the reactions of its intended audience. To achieve his ends he frequently made or sanctioned far-reaching changes in his scores, albeit never so as to violate the work's fundamental ethos. But just as the importance of the 'text' recedes in his output, so does the notion of a composer as fashioning an inimitable personal style and expressing a consistent artistic persona. For Weill each new stage work posed unique problems of style, organization and musical language that had to be confronted and solved afresh. If the scores of *Der Jasager* and *Lady in the Dark* seem incommensurable, so too were their audiences, their executants and their generic traditions. What they shared, apart from Weill's habitually superior craftsmanship, were their mastery of the musico-dramatic problems at hand. In this light, his work is best viewed, and assessed, not in terms of 19th-century *Ausdruckskunst*, but under the categories of stylistic plurality and applied composition, categories that have some right to be regarded as his historical contribution to postmodernism.

Weill himself was aware of the uniqueness of his personal aesthetic. Writing to his publisher in 1929, he exclaimed, with justifiable professional pride: For years I have been the only

creative musician to work consistently and uncompromisingly, against the resistance of the snobs and aesthetes, to create basic forms [*Urformen*] of a new, simple, popular musical theatre. Even the least of the theatre works I have produced during this period has arisen under the impress of this responsibility and from a constant effort to pursue a line of development which seems, to me, the only one possible.

J. Bradford Robinson

## **6. Influence.**

Although, unlike his contemporary Hindemith, Weill did not bequeath to posterity a corpus of pedagogical writings or a codifiable musical language, he must be viewed in retrospect as the most influential German composer of his generation. His example is still invoked today by art composers interested in pursuing stylistic pluralism, whether this is taken to mean the adoption of popular idioms, the ‘crossover’ from art to commercial music, or stylistic contrast as a compositional element in its own right. Equally important was his advocacy of ‘gestic music’, by which he meant a theatre score that precisely undergirds and pre-defines the pace, timing, character and mood of the drama. *Der Jasager*, a casebook example of gestic music reduced to essentials, left an indelible mark on 20th-century music theatre, whether that of his younger German contemporaries (from Blacher to Orff), his American colleagues (Copland’s *The Second Hurricane*, and thus indirectly Britten’s *The Little Sweep*) or the minimalist theatre composers of subsequent decades. Another of his influential characteristics, widely attributed to his association with Brecht and the ‘alienation effect’, was a supposedly ironic detachment of his music from the text or context. Further, just as Brecht advocated a ‘separation of elements’ in the art of acting, so Weill’s Weimar scores lend themselves to the kind of analysis in which the ingredients are seen to conflict dialectically rather than cohering into a unified whole.

In none of these respects would Weill himself have claimed to be the innovator, however aware he was of the influence he exerted on his contemporaries. He deferred in his writings to Mozart as a quintessentially ‘gestic’ opera composer, and the stylistic plurality he avowed is, of course, as old as Monteverdi. But by presenting these devices forcefully in modern contexts he offered examples which other composers could, and did, usefully follow. The specific ‘tone’ of Weill’s works of the late 1920s is often consciously quoted, particularly his distinctive handling of bitonal harmony, triadic atonality and jazz timbres. In the Broadway musical his influence has perhaps been less noticeable, partly because of transformations in the genre itself, partly because none of his shows have remotely approached the iconic status accorded to such contemporary productions as *Porgy and Bess*, *Oklahoma!*, *Annie Get Your Gun* or *Guys and Dolls*. Nonetheless, their importance in elevating the genre’s subject matter, sharpness of characterization and general craftsmanship is unquestionable. Finally, in the search for new audiences and hybrid forms of music theatre, Weill’s name and the protean example of *Die Dreigroschenoper* continue to be invoked by composers as varied as Hans Werner Henze and John Adams in their own attempts to broaden the base for contemporary music.

J. Bradford Robinson

## **Bibliography**

### **A: Documents and catalogues**

- D. Drew, ed.: *Kurt Weill: Ausgewählte Schriften* (Frankfurt, 1975)
- D. Drew, ed.: *Über Kurt Weill* (Frankfurt, 1975)
- H. Marx, ed.: *Weill-Lenya* (New York, 1976)
- M. Wyss: *Brecht in der Kritik: Rezensionen aller Brecht-Uraufführungen* (Munich, 1977)
- D. Drew: *Kurt Weill: a Handbook* (London, 1987)
- H. Fetting, ed.: *Von der Freien Bühne zum Politischen Theater: Drama und Theater im Spiegel der Kritik, ii: 1919-1933* (Leipzig, 1987)
- J. Lucchesi and R.K. Shull: *Musik bei Brecht* (Berlin, 1988)
- M.R. Mercado: *Kurt Weill: a Guide to his Works* (New York, 1989)
- S. Hinton and J. Schebera, eds.: *Kurt Weill: Musik und Theater, gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin, 1990, 2/2000)
- B. Meyer-Rähnitz: *Kurt-Weill-Diskographie: die Grammophon-Schallplatten (1927-1961)* (Dresden, 1994)
- D. Farneth, J. Andrus and D. Stein: *A Guide to the Weill-Lenya Research Center* (New York, 1995)
- L. Symonette and K. H. Kowalke: *Speak Low (when you Speak Love): the Letters of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya* (Berkeley, 1996)
- D. Farneth: *Kurt Weill: a Life in Pictures and Documents* (Woodstock, NY, 1999)
- N. Grosch: *Kurt Weill und die Universal Edition: ein kommentierter Briefwechsel* (Freiburg, forthcoming)
- B: Biographies**
- H. Kotschenreuther: *Kurt Weill* (Berlin, 1962)
- R. Sanders: *The Days Grow Short: the Life and Music of Kurt Weill* (London and New York, 1980)
- J. Schebera: *Für Sie porträtiert: Kurt Weill* (Leipzig, 1980)
- D. Jarman: *Kurt Weill: an Illustrated Biography* (Bloomington, IN, 1982)
- J. Schebera: *Kurt Weill: Leben und Werk, mit Texten und Materialien von und über Kurt Weill* (Leipzig, 1983)
- E. Hayasaki and T. Iwabuchi: *Kuruto Wairu* (Tokyo, 1985) [in Jap.]

J. Schebera: *Kurt Weill: eine Biographie in Texten, Bildern und Dokumenten* (Leipzig, 1990; Eng. trans., 1995)

R. Taylor: *Kurt Weill: Composer in a Divided World* (London, 1991)

J. Rosteck: *Zwei auf einer Insel: Lotte Lenya und Kurt Weill* (Berlin, 1999)

J. Schebera: *Kurt Weill* (Reinbek, 2000)

## **C: Monographs and essay collections**

G. Wagner: *Weill und Brecht: das musikalische Zeittheater* (Munich, 1977)

K.H. Kowalke: *Kurt Weill in Europe* (Ann Arbor, 1979)

A New Orpheus: New Haven, CT, 1983

J. Engelhardt: *Gestus und Verfremdung: Studien zum Musiktheater bei Strawinsky und Brecht/Weill* (Munich, 1984)

F. Hennenberg: *Neue Funktionsweisen der Musik und des Musiktheaters in den zwanziger Jahren: Studien über die Zusammenarbeit Bertolt Brechts mit Franz S. Brunier und Kurt Weill* (diss., U. of Halle, 1987)

B. Kortländer, W. Meiszies and D. Farneth, eds.: *Vom Kurfürstendamm zum Broadway: Kurt Weill (1900-1950)* (Düsseldorf, 1990)

H. Edler and K.H. Kowalke, eds.: *A Stranger Here Myself: Kurt Weill Studien* (Hildesheim, 1992)

R. Bélicha: *Kurt Weill et la France* (Villejuif, 1996)

N. Grosch, J. Lucchesi and J. Schebera, eds.: *Kurt Weill-Studien* (Stuttgart, 1996)

H. Geuen: *Von der Zeitoper zur Broadway Opera: Kurt Weill und die Idee des musikalischen Theaters* (Schliengen, 1997)

Kurt Weill: die frühen Werke, 1916-1928, Musik-Konzepte, nos.101–2 (1998)

F. Hirsch: *How Can you Tell an American? Kurt Weill on Stage from Berlin to Broadway* (New York, 2000)

E. Juchem: *Kurt Weill und Maxwell Anderson: neue Wege zu einem amerikanischen Musiktheater* (Stuttgart, 2000)

## **D: Style, aesthetics**

G. Hartung: 'Zur epischen Oper Brechts und Weills', *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg: gesellschafts- und sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe*, viii (1958–9), 659–73

- A.L. Ringer: 'Schoenberg, Weill and Epic Theatre', *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute*, v (1980), 77–98
- A.L. Ringer: 'Weill, Schönberg und die Zeitoper"', *Mf*, xxxiii (1980), 465–72
- G. Rienäcker: 'Thesen zur Opernästhetik Kurt Weills', *JbMP* 1980 (1981), 116–34
- S.H. Borwick: 'Weill's and Brecht's Theories on Music in Drama', *JMR*, iv (1982), 39–67
- U. Weisstein: 'Von reitenden Boten und singenden Holzfällern: Bertolt Brecht und die Oper', *Brechts Dramen: neue Interpretationen*, ed. W. Hinderer (Stuttgart, 1984), 266–99
- S.C. Cook: *Opera for a New Republic: the 'Zeitoper' of Krenek, Weill, and Hindemith* (Ann Arbor, 1988)
- S. Hinton: 'The Concept of Epic Opera: Theoretical Anomalies in the Brecht–Weill Partnership', *Das musikalische Kunstwerk: Festschrift Carl Dahlhaus*, ed. H. Danuser and others (Laaber, 1988), 285–94
- A. Quinones: 'Aspekte von Kurt Weills Musiktheaterkonzept', *Studien zur Berliner Musikgeschichte*, ed. T. Ebert-Obermeier (Berlin, 1989), 353–9
- K.H. Kowalke: 'Hin und Zurück: Kurt Weill at 90', *MT*, cxxi (1990), 188–92
- K.H. Kowalke: 'Singing Brecht versus Brecht Singing: Performance in Theory and Practice', *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic*, ed. B. Gilliam (Cambridge, 1994), 74–93
- J.B. Robinson: 'Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany: in Search of a Shimmy Figure', *ibid.*, 107–34
- K.H. Kowalke: 'Kurt Weill, Modernism, and Popular Culture: "Öffentlichkeit als Stil"', *Modernism/Modernity*, ii/1 (1995), 27–69
- J.B. Robinson: 'Learning the New Ropes: Kurt Weill and the American Theater Song', *Kurt Weill Newsletter*, xv/2 (1997), 3–7

## **E: Particular works**

### **Die Dreigroschenoper**

- T.W. Adorno: 'Kompositionskritik: Kurt Weill, Kleine Dreigroschenmusik', *Musikblätter des Anbruch*, xi (1929), 316–17
- T.W. Adorno: 'Zur Dreigroschenoper', *Die Musik*, xxii (1929–30), 424–8
- C. Tolksdorf: *John Gays 'Beggar's Opera' und Bert Brechts 'Dreigroschenoper'* (Rheinberg, 1934)
- S. Unseld, ed.: *Bertolt Brechts Dreigroschenbuch* (Frankfurt, 1960, 2/1978)

R. Speirs: 'A Note on the First Published Version of *Die Dreigroschenoper* and its Relation to the Standard Text', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, xiii (1977), 25–32

W. Ruf: 'Gebrauchsmusik in der Oper: der "Alabama Song" von Brecht und Weill', *Festschrift Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht* (Stuttgart, 1984), 411–22

W. Hecht, ed.: *Brechts Dreigroschenoper* (Frankfurt, 1985)

F. Hennenberg: 'Weill, Brecht und die "Dreigroschenoper": neue Materialien zur Entstehung und Uraufführung', *ÖMz*, xl (1985), 281–91

A. Csampai and D. Holland, eds.: *Bertolt Brecht/Kurt Weill, Die Dreigroschenoper; Igor Strawinsky, The Rake's Progress: Texte, Materialien, Kommentare* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1987)

K.H. Kowalke: 'Accounting for Success: Misunderstanding *Die Dreigroschenoper*', *OO*, vi/3 (1988), 18–38

K.H. Kowalke: 'In Trivial (?) Pursuit: Who Sings the "Barbarasong"?', *Kurt Weill Newsletter*, vi/2 (1988), 8–11

S. Giles: 'From Althusser to Brecht: Formalism, Materialism and *The Threepenny Opera*', *New Ways in Germanistik*, ed. R. Sheppard (Berg, 1989), 1–25

S. Giles: 'Rewriting Brecht: *Die Dreigroschenoper 1928–1931*', *Literaturwissenschaftliches Jb*, xxx (1989), 249–79

S. Hinton, ed.: *Kurt Weill: The Threepenny Opera* (Cambridge, 1990)

E. Harsh, ed.: *K. Weill: Die Dreigroschenoper, a Facsimile of the Holograph Full Score*, Kurt Weill Edition, iv/1 (New York, 1996)

S. Giles: *Bertolt Brecht and Critical Theory: Marxism, Modernity and the 'Threepenny' Lawsuit* (Berne, 1997)

## **Mahagonny**

B. Brecht: 'Anmerkungen zur Oper *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*', *Versuche*, ii (Berlin, 1930); repr. in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. E. Hauptman, xvii (Frankfurt, 1967), 1004–16

K. Weill: 'Zur Aufführung der Mahagonny-Oper', *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten und Handelszeitung* (8 March 1930)

D. Drew: 'The History of Mahagonny', *MT*, civ (1963), 18–24

## **Der Jasager**

D. Drew: 'Weill's School Opera', *MT*, cvi (1965), 934–7

P.W. Humphries: *Expressions of Einverständnis: Musical Structure and Affective Content in Kurt Weill's Score for Der Jasager* (diss., UCLA, 1988)

S. Hinton: 'Lehrstück: an Aesthetics of Performance', *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic*, ed. B. Gilliam (Cambridge, 1994), 59–73

E. Hayasaki: 'Klaus Pringsheims Jasager-Projekt in Tokyo 1932 und weitere japanische Weill-Erstaufführungen der dreissiger Jahre', *Emigrierte Komponisten in der Medienlandschaft des Exils 1933–1945*: Dessau 1997, 159–69

## Other works

M. Blitzstein: 'Weill scores for Johnny Johnson', [MM](#), xiv (1936–7), 25ff

D. Drew: 'Topicality and the Universal: the Strange Case of Weill's *Die Bürgschaft*', [ML](#), xxxix (1958), 242–4

F. Köhn: 'Das Ruhepos: Dokumentation eines gescheiterten Projekts', *Brecht-Jb* (1977), 52–80

A. Sundgaard: 'Writing Folk Opera with Kurt Weill: Portrait of the Librettist as a Silenced Composer', *Dramatists Guild Quarterly*, xvi/4 (1980), 24–30 [on *Down in the Valley*]

D. Farneth: 'From the Archives: Retracing *The Eternal Road*', *Kurt Weill Newsletter*, vi/1 (1988), 10–13

J. Pritchard: 'Les Ballets 1933', *Ballet Review*, xvi (1988), 13–34 [on *Die sieben Todsünden*]

G. Diehl: *Der junge Kurt Weill und seine Oper 'Der Protagonist': exemplarische Untersuchungen zur Deutung des frühen kompositorischen Werkes* (Kassel, 1994)

J. Lee, E. Harsh and K.H. Kowalke: *Street Scene: a Sourcebook* (New York, 1994)

B.D. McClung: *American Dreams: Analyzing Moss Hart, Ira Gershwin, and Kurt Weill's 'Lady in the Dark'* (diss., U. of Rochester, 1995)

M. Krueger: 'Some Words about *Where do we go from here?*', *Kurt Weill Newsletter*, xiv/2 (1996), 10–12

A. Hauff: 'Ein Komponist auf Abwegen? Kurt Weills Operette *Der Kuhhandel*', *Festschrift Christoph-Hellmut Mahling zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. A. Beer, K. Pfarr and W. Ruf (Tutzing, 1997), 501–16

A. Pollock: 'A Question of Baloney: the Search for a Lost Translation of *The Seven Deadly Sins*', *Kurt Weill Newsletter*, xvi/1 (1998), 12–13

H. Loos and G. Stern: *Auf dem Weg zum 'Weg der Verheissung'* (Freiburg, 2000)

## F: Other literature

- D. Drew: 'Musical Theatre in the Weimar Republic', [PRMA](#), lxxxviii (1961–2), 89–108
- S. Amzoll: 'Kritik der Radioproduktion: Kurt Weill als Rundfunkpublizist', *Musik und Gesellschaft*, xxxiii (1983), 601–5
- F. Hennenberg: *Das grosse Brecht-Liederbuch* (Frankfurt, 1984)
- G.S. Cahn: 'Weimar Music in America: its Reception and Impact', *Centennial Review*, xxix (1985), 186–204
- A. Dümling: *Lasst euch nicht verführen: Brecht und die Musik* (Munich, 1985)
- B. Meyer-Rähnitz: 'Drei Groschen und mehr: Werke von Brecht-Weill auf 78er Schallplatten', *Fox auf 78* (1987), 44–50; (1988), 24–8
- J. Willett: *The Theatre of the Weimar Republic* (New York, 1988)
- D. Spoto: *Lenya: a Life* (Boston, 1989)
- R.H. Kornick: *Recent American Opera: a Production Guide* (New York, 1991)
- D. Drew: 'Schoenberg and Weill', *Sundry Sorts of Music Books: Essays on the British Library Collection Presented to O.W. Neighbour*, ed. C. Banks, A. Searle and M. Turner (London, 1993), 346–53
- B. Gilliam: 'Stage and Screen: Kurt Weill and Operatic Reform in the 1920s', *Music and Performance during the Weimar Republic*, ed. B. Gilliam (Cambridge, 1994), 1–12
- S. Hinton: 'Grossbritannien als Exilland: der Fall Weill', *Musik in der Emigration 1933–1945: Verfolgung, Vertreibung, Rückwirkung*, ed. H. Weber (Stuttgart, 1994), 213–27
- P. Huynh: 'Bote einer neuen Zeit? Kurt Weills theoretische und praktische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Rundfunk in der Zeit von 1925 bis 1945', *Das Orchester*, xliii/2 (1995), 14–18
- T. Levitz: *Teaching New Classicality: Ferruccio Busoni's Master Class in Composition* (Frankfurt, 1996)
- J.B. Robinson: 'Tra Broadway e il Metropolitan: il teatro musicale politico nell'America degli anni Trenta', *Itinerari della musica americana*, ed. G. Borio and G. Taglietti (Lucca, 1996), 25–58
- E. Juchem: 'Kurt Weill und die Radiokunst in den USA', *Emigrierte Komponisten in der Medienlandschaft des Exils 1933–1945: Dessau 1997*, 55–72
- J. Bradford Robinson
- J. Bradford Robinson

## Works

Weill's opus numbering is incomplete and stops at op.23

for full list including incomplete, lost and projected works, see Drew (A1987)

**Edition:**

*The Kurt Weill Edition*, ed. K. Kowalke and others (New York, 1996–)

**Stage**

Das hohe Lied (op, 1, after H. Suderman), 1914, lost

Zriny, 1916 (op, after T. Körner), lost

Ninon von Lenclos (op.1, after E. Hardt), 1920, lost

Zaubernacht (children's pantomime, 1, V. Boritch), Berlin, Kurfürstendamm, 18 Nov 1922, fs lost, vs [US-NH](#); arr. Weill as orch suite Quodlibet, op.9, 1923

Pantomime, op.14 (ballet, 3, G. Kaiser), 1924, inc.

Der Protagonist (op, 1, G. Kaiser), op.15, Dresden, Staatsoper, 27 March 1926 (Vienna, 1926)

Royal Palace (ballet-op, 1, Y. Goll), op.17, 1925–6, Berlin, Staatsoper, 2 March 1927, fs lost, vs (Vienna, 1926); reorchd version, Nederlands Congresgebouw, The Hague, 25 June 1971

Na und? (op, 2, F. Joachimson), 1926–7, unperf., lost, sketches in [NH](#)

Mahagonny (Songspiel, 3 pts, B. Brecht), 1927, Baden-Baden, Kurhaus, Grosser Bühnensaal, 17 July 1927 (Vienna, 1964) [incl. Alabama-Song, Benares-Song]

Der Zar lässt sich photographieren (ob, 1, Kaiser), op.21, 1927, Leipzig, Neues, 18 Feb 1928 (Vienna, 1928)

Die Dreigroschenoper (play with music, prol., 3, Brecht and E. Hauptmann, after J. Gay: *The Beggar's Opera*), 1928, Berlin, Schiffbauerdamm, 31 Aug 1928, vs (Vienna, 1928), fs (Vienna, 1972), facs. edn (New York, 1996) [incl. Moritat von Mackie Messer, Seeräuber-Jenny, Kanonen-Song, Barbara-Song, Zuhälter-Ballade, Ballade vom angenehmen Leben, Lied von der Unzulänglichkeit menschlichen Strebens]

Happy End (comedy with music, 3, D. Lane [E. Hauptmann] and Brecht), 1929, Berlin, Schiffbauerdamm, 2 Sept 1929, vs (Vienna, 1958), fs (Vienna, 1981) [incl. Bilbao-Song, Matrosen-Tango, Surabaya-Johnny, Hosianna Rockefeller]

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny (op, 3, Brecht), 1927–9, Leipzig, Neues, 9 March 1930 (Vienna, 1929) [derived in part from Mahagonny; incl. Alabama-Song, Denn wie man sich bettet, so liegt man]

Der Jasager (Schuloper, 2, Brecht, after Jap. noh play *Taniko*), 1930, Berlin, Zentralinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht, 23 June 1930 (Vienna, 1930)

Die Bürgerschaft (3, C. Neher, after J.G. Herder: *Der afrikanische Rechtspruch*), 1930–31, Berlin, Städtische Oper, 10 March 1932, vs (Vienna, 1932), fs (Vienna, 1977) [incl. Song der beiden Verkäuferinnen, Song von der Krone des Gewinns, Der Bäcker bäckt ums Morgenrot, Ballade von Cäsars Tod, Schlaraffenland-Song]

Der Silbersee: ein Wintermärchen (play with music, 3, Kaiser), 1932–3, simultaneous premières at Leipzig, Altes; Erfurt, Stadt; and Magdeburg, Stadt, 18 Feb 1933 (Vienna, n.d.)

Die sieben Todsünden (ballet chanté, 8 pts, Brecht), 1933, Paris, Champs-Élysées, 7 June 1933, vs (New York, 1955) [transposed version], fs (Mainz, 1968)

Der Kuhhandel (operetta, 2, R. Vambery), 1934, inc., concert perf. Dusseldorf, Tonhalle, 23 March 1990; rev. as *A Kingdom for a Cow* (musical play, 3, R. Arkell; lyrics D. Carter), London, Savoy, 28 June 1935 (Mainz, 1989)

Der Weg der Verheissung (biblical drama, 4, F. Werfel), 1934–5, Chemnitz, 13 June 1999, autograph lost, copy in Weill–Lenya Research Center, New York; rev. by Weill and L. Lewisohn as *The Eternal Road*, 1935–6, New York, Manhattan Opera House, 4 Jan 1937, vs (New York, 1937)

Johnny Johnson (musical play, 3, P. Green), 1936, New York, 44th Street, 19 Nov 1936 (New York, 1936) [incl. Johnny's Song, Mon ami, my friend]

The Common Glory (pageant, P. Green), 1937, inc.

Knickerbocker Holiday (musical comedy, 2, M. Anderson), 1938, New York, Ethel Barrymore Theatre, 19 Oct 1938, vs (New York, 1938) [incl. How can you tell an American, It never was you, September Song, There's nowhere to go but up]

Davy Crockett, 1938 (musical play, 2, H.R. Hays), inc., vs [NH](#)

Railroads on Parade (pageant, E. Hungerford), 1938–9, New York, World's Fair, 30 April 1939

Ulysses Africanus (musical play, 2, Anderson), 1939, inc., vs [NH](#)

Lady in the Dark (musical play, 2, M. Hart; lyrics I. Gershwin), 1940, Boston, Colonial, 30 Dec 1940, New York, Alvin, 21 Jan 1941, vs, ed. A. Sirmay (New York, 1941), restored fs and vs, ed. D. Loud and J. Mauceri (New York, 1987) [incl. My Ship, One Life to Live, The Saga of Jenny, Tchaikovsky, This is New]

The Pirate (musical, S.N. Behrman, after L. Fulda), 1942, inc.

One Touch of Venus (musical comedy, S.J. Perelman and O. Nash), 1943, New York, Imperial, 7 Oct 1943, vs excerpts (New York, 1984) [incl. Speak Low]

The Firebrand of Florence (operetta, E.J. Mayer; lyrics I. Gershwin), 1944, New York, Alvin, 22 March 1945 [incl. Sing me not a ballad, You're far too near me]

Street Scene (American op, 2, E. Rice; lyrics L. Hughes), 1946, Philadelphia, Shubert, 16 Dec 1946, New York, Adelphi, 9 Jan 1947, vs (New York, 1947), fs (New York, n.d.) [incl. A Boy Like You; Lonely House; Moon-Faced, Starry-Eyed; Wrapped in a ribbon and tied with a bow; What good would the moon be?]

Down in the Valley (folk op, 1, A. Sundgaard), 1945–8, Bloomington, IN, School of Music, 15 July 1948, vs (New York, 1948)

Love Life (vaudeville, 2 pts, A.J. Lerner), 1947–8, New York, 46th Street, 7 Oct 1948, 8 songs (New York, 1948) [incl. Green-Up Time, Here I'll stay, I remember it well, Love Song]

Lost in the Stars (musical tragedy, Anderson, after A. Paton: *Cry the Beloved Country*), 1949, New York, Music Box, 30 Oct 1949; fs (New York, n.d., 2/1988) [incl. Cry the Beloved Country, The Hills of Ixopo, Lost in the Stars, Thousands of Miles]

Huckleberry Finn (musical, Anderson), 1950, inc., 5 songs (New York, 1954)

## **Film scores**

You and Me (dir. F. Lang), 1937–8

The River is Blue (Milestone), 1937–8, discarded

Where do we go from here? (dir. G. Ratoff), 1943–4, collab. I. Gershwin

Salute to France (dir. J. Renoir and G. Kanin), 1944

## **Radio scores**

Herzog Theodor von Gothland (Grabbe), 1926, lost

Das Berliner Requiem (radio cant., Brecht), T, Bar, male chorus, wind orch, 1928 (Vienna, 1967)

Der Lindberghflug (Brecht), 1929, collab. Hindemith, withdrawn (Mainz, 1982), rev. as concert work

La grande complainte de Fantômas (R. Desnos), 1933, Radio Paris, 3 Nov 1933, lost

The Ballad of Magna Carta (radio cant., M. Anderson), T, B, chorus, orch, 1940, CBS, 4 Feb 1940 (New York, 1940)

Down in the Valley (radio op, A. Sundgaard), 1945, withdrawn, rev. as school opera

## **Incidental music**

Die Weber (G. Hauptmann), 1920, part lost

Gustav III (A. Strindberg), 1927

Leben Eduards des Zweiten von England (Brecht and L. Feuchtwanger, after C. Marlowe), 1928, mostly lost

Konjunktur (L. Lania, Gasbarra, Piscator), 1928, part lost, no.1 (Vienna, 1929)

Katalaunische Schlacht (A. Bronnen), 1928, lost

Petroleuminseln (Feuchtwanger), 1928, part lost, no.10 (Vienna, 1929)

Mann ist Mann (Brecht), 1931, lost

Marie Galante (J. Deval), 1934; 7 songs (Paris, 1934), no.14 arr. L. Berio (Vienna, 1970)

High Wind in Jamaica, 1936; 2 songs, [US-Wc](#)

Madam, will you Walk? (S. Howard), 1939

Two on an Island (E. Rice), 1939, lost

It's Fun to be Free (B. Hecht), 1941, part lost

Your Navy (Anderson), 1942, part lost

We will Never Die (Hecht), 1943, part lost

A Flag is Born (Hecht), 1946, part lost

## **Orchestral**

Suite, E, 1918–19

Symphonic Poem, after Rilke: Die Weise von Liebe und Tod, 1919, lost

Symphony no.1, 1921

Divertimento, op.5, 1921–2, part lost

Sinfonia sacra, op.6, 1922, fs lost: Fantasia, Passacaglia, Hymnus

Quodlibet, suite, op.9, 1923 [from stage work Zaubernacht]

Concerto, op.12, vn, wind, 1924

Berlin im Licht, military band, 1928

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik, wind, 1928–9 [from Die Dreigroschenoper]

Symphony no.2, 1933–4

## **Choral and vocal orchestral**

Sulamith, choral fantasy, S, female chorus, orch, 1920, part lost

Psalm viii, 6vv, 1921, part lost

Divertimento, op.5, male chorus, small orch, 1921–2, part lost

Recordare (Bible: *Lamentations*), op.11, SATB, 3-part children's chorus, 1923

Das Stundenbuch (6 songs, Rilke), T/S, orch, 1923–4, part lost

Der neue Orpheus (cant., Y. Goll), op.[16], S, vn, orch, 1925

Der Lindberghflug (cant., Brecht), T, Bar, chorus, orch, 1929 [after radio score]

Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen (Brecht), TTBB, 1929, also version for 1v, pf [arr. from radio cant. Das Berliner Requiem]

Die Legende vom toten Soldaten (Brecht), SATB, 1929

Kiddush, T, SATB, org, 1946

## **Songs**

for solo voice and piano unless otherwise stated

[5] Schilflieder (N. Lenau), 1919, lost; Die stille Stadt (R. Dehmel), 1919; Die Bekehrte (J.W. von Goethe), 1921; [2] Rilkelieder, 1921; Frauentanz (7 songs, medieval), op.10, S, 5 insts, 1923; Ich sitze da un' esse klops (anon.), T, 2 pic, bn, 1925; Vom Tod im Wald (ballad, Brecht), op.23, B, 10 wind, 1927; Berlin im Licht (Weill), 1928, arr. military band; Der Abschiedsbrief (E. Kästner), 1933; Fantômas (R. Desnos), 1933; Es regnet (J. Cocteau), 1933; Complainte de la Seine (M. Magre), 1934; Je ne t'aime pas (Magre), 1934; The Fräulein and the Little Son of the Rich (R. Graham), song drama, 1936

2 chansons pour 'L'opéra de quat' sous' (Y. Guilbert), 1938, no.1 lost; Nanas Lied (Brecht), 1939; Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening (R. Frost), 1939, inc.; Buddy on the Nightshift (O.

Hammerstein), 1942; The Good Earth (Hammerstein), 1942; Oh Uncle Samuel! (Anderson), 1942; One Morning in Spring (McKelway), 1942, lost; Russian War Relief (J.P. McEnvoy), 1942; Schickelgruber (H. Dietz), 1942; Song of the Free (A. MacLeish), 1942; Walt Whitman Songs, 1942, orchd Weill with I. Schlein; Song of the Inventory (L. Allan), 1942; Toughen up, buckle down, carry on (D. Fields), 1942; We don't feel like surrendering today (Anderson), 1942; Was bekam des Soldaten Weib? (Brecht), 1943; Wie lange noch? (W. Mehring), 1944; Come up from the fields, father (Whitman), 1947, orchd C. Surinach, 1956

## **Chamber and solo instrumental**

String Quartet, b, 1918

Sonata, vc, pf, 1919–20

String Quartet, 1922–3, withdrawn, movts 3–4 incl. in op.8

String Quartet, op.8, 1923

Albumblatt für Erika, pf, 1937 [arr. of no.7 from stage work Der Weg der Verheissung]

## **Juvenilia**

Mi addir, high v/high vv, ?pf/org, 1913; Es blühen zwei flammende Rosen, 1913, 1v, pf, inc.; Ich weiss wofür (G. von Güllhausen), 4 male vv, 1914 ; Reiterlied (H. Löns), 1v, pf, 1914; Gebet (E. Geibel), SATB, 1915; Sehnsucht (J. von Eichendorff), 1v, pf, 1916, inc.; [5] Ofrah's Lieder (J. Halevi), 1v, pf, 1916; Im Volkston (A. Holz), 1v, pf, 1916; Volkslied (A. Ritter), 1v, pf, 1917; Das schöne Kind, 1v, pf, 1917; Maikaterlied (O. Bierbaum), 2 S, pf, 1917; Abendlied (Bierbaum), 2 S, pf, 1917, arr. S, pf; Intermezzo, pf, 1917

## **Arrangements**

C.M. von Weber: Piano Sonata no.2: Andante, orch, 1918

F. Busoni: Divertimento, op.52, fl, orch/pf, 1922

[2] Folksongs of the New Palestine, 1v, pf (New York, 1938)

Battle Hymn of the Republic, The Star-Spangled Banner, America, spkr, chorus, orch, 1942

Hatikvah, orch, 1947

MSS in [A-Wst](#), [US-NH](#), [NYp](#), [R](#)

Principal publishers: Universal, Chappell, Samuel French, Heugel, Schott

