

THE CONCEPT OF EPIC OPERA:
THEORETICAL ANOMALIES IN THE BRECHT-WEILL PARTNERSHIP

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»Another great abuse of Words is, the taking them for Things . . . To this Abuse, those Men are most subject, who confine their Thoughts to any one System, and give themselves up into a firm belief of the Perfection of any received Hypothesis: whereby they come to be persuaded, that the Terms of that Sect, are so suited to the nature of Things, that they perfectly correspond with their real Existence« (John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690, Book III, Chap. X, § 14).

In 1955, during a visit to Brecht's home in East Berlin, Lotte Lenya was invited by her host to sing to him. They hadn't seen each other for a number of years, and Lenya at first demurred, feeling apprehensive about her grasp of the playwright's celebrated theories. Brecht, however, was quick to supply words of encouragement. »Whatever you do, Lenya«, he reassured her, »is epic enough for me.«¹

However fanciful, the anecdote serves as a reminder that Brecht's approach to theatre, notwithstanding all the widely publicized theories, was thoroughly pragmatic. The proof of the pudding, he reportedly liked to say (borrowing an unabashedly culinary metaphor), is in the eating. And the test of epic theatre, by the same token, is in the performing, requiring for its impact the likes of Lenya and Helene Weigel. In the anecdote, the notion of »epic« becomes consigned to the sphere of performance; it defines a particular artistic quality or distinction. Yet Brecht's remark indirectly illustrates a point of more general significance. When considering his theories, whether in terms of poetics or aesthetics, creation or performance, it is important to bear in mind their relation to his practice, not just how the theory applies (if it does) to the actual works and their realization, but also the context and circumstances in which theoretical reflection was articulated.

Of all Brecht's tracts, none more warrants such circumspection than the best-known of all: the *Anmerkungen zur Oper »Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny«*. Not only do these »Notes« represent the most often-quoted source of the theory of epic theatre — remarkable enough for a text purportedly about opera. They also provide the frequently invoked Brechtian precepts of epic opera and, by implication, what many have taken to be the theoretical foundation for the Brecht-Weill collaboration in general — which is equally remarkable. For the *Anmerkungen* have been subjected to abuse of the kind that John Locke defined in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, cited at the outset: as a closed system, a hypothesis, Brecht's words have been mistaken for the thing itself. Or — to apply Locke's distinction — the nominal essence has been substituted for the real essence.²

By adopting wholesale Brecht's definition of a shift from dramatic opera to epic opera, whereby the music »mediates« — »setting forth the text« (»den Text auslegend«), »taking the text as known« (»den Text voraussetzend«), »taking up a position« (»Stellung nehmend«), »indicating the attitude« (»das Verhalten gebend«) — one influential commentator has mechanistically drawn the conclusion that in Kurt Weill and Hanns Eisler Brecht had found composers who had created »›vermittelnde, ›den Text auslegende, ›Stellung nehmende, ›das Verhalten gebende, Partei ergreifende Musik«. ³ Another, to take a further example, has expressed the view that »in the *Mahagonny* opera both [Brecht and Weill] achieved the profoundest artistic realization of their theoretical postulates«. ⁴ A closer examination of the »Notes« which takes in the circumstances of their genesis as well as the collaborators' divergent notions of what constitutes epic opera reveals such assumptions about a harmonious correspondence between theory and practice to be erroneous. Significant anomalies emerge.

The first and most obvious ground for questioning the adequacy of Brecht's *Anmerkungen* could be seen to rest in the fact that they were formulated only after the first performance of the *Mahagonny* opera, which took place in Leipzig on 9 March 1930. *Post festum* theory is not in itself a questionable undertaking. If anything, it is preferable; or in this case — given the two-year genesis of the opera, during which time the conceptions and styles of the authors underwent certain changes — the only kind of theoretical abstraction realistically possible. What invites circumspection is not the mere fact that Brecht wished to reflect on his work or on opera in general. It was, after all, a period when the genre's very existence and justification were permanently under discussion. Rather, it is that Brecht's views diverge in several fundamental respects from Weill's own and, moreover, that Weill's views may well have been partly responsible for prompting Brecht's proclamations in the first place. Before the appearance of the *Anmerkungen* in 1930, Weill had published the *Vorwort zum Regiebuch der Oper »Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny«* ⁵ as well as two articles that share common material, *Zur Uraufführung der Mahagonny-Oper* ⁶ and the *Anmerkungen zu meiner Oper »Mahagonny«*. ⁷ Brecht, as David Drew has put it, »retaliated«. ⁸ In other words, it is possible to read the *Anmerkungen* more as an aggrieved answer to Weill's contrary opinions than as the expression of collaborative or collective aims.

»What principally appealed to me about this subject matter«, wrote Weill, »was the fact that it offered me the best possibilities for realizing my musical and formal intentions in the field of opera.« ⁹ Or as he expressed it in the *Vorwort*: »The subject matter of the opera ›Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny‹ made possible a *structure based on purely musical laws*.« The prefatory remarks to the *Vorwort* — remarks which Weill himself formulated in a letter, dated 11 December 1929, to his publishers, Universal Edition — refer to Weill's working »jointly with Caspar Neher and Bertolt Brecht on a production book [*Regiebuch*] for the opera *Mahagonny*«. The *Regiebuch*, which was originally intended for distribution to theatres together with Neher's projections, was in fact solely the creation of Neher and Weill. Brecht had no hand in the matter. From the start, it would seem, Weill

had conceived of the work along purely musical lines. As he wrote to his publisher as early as 18 November 1927: »I am in the middle of working on ›Mahagonny‹. I have been working daily with Brecht on the libretto, which is being formed completely in accordance with my directions. This type of collaboration, on the basis of which a libretto is actually structured from a purely musical point of view, opens up whole new possibilities. The composition [of the music] has already begun.«

Weill was evidently instrumental in shaping the libretto. At all events, the espoused primacy of music in the overall conception must have incensed Brecht, whose central idea behind epic opera, which he saw principally in terms of an antithesis to the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*, was the »separation of the elements«. As Brecht wrote in the *Anmerkungen*: »The penetration of opera by the methods of epic theatre leads principally to a radical separation of the elements.«¹⁰ To Brecht's chagrin, Weill was expounding a theory of opera that gave music primacy over the word and hence upheld what Brecht wished »simply to abolish«: »the music occasioning the events on stage« or vice versa.¹¹ Admittedly, Weill no longer saw the music as the »motivating [*handlungstreibendes*] element«; »[the music] enters where certain situations or states [*Zustände*] are arrived at«. ¹² Yet for him it was precisely the juxtaposition of such »states« or »situations« that, »in their musically fixed, dynamic sequence, yield a dramatic form«. ¹³

Where Brecht was seeking to overturn, Weill was being a traditionalist. For each collaborator, the translation of the principles of epic theatre to the opera house meant something quite different. For the composer it meant primarily the restitution of the number opera: »the division of the plot or action [*Handlung*] into closed numbers and placing greater dramaturgic importance on musical form«. ¹⁴ Weill's aim, as he expressed it in December 1929, was »a form of opera founded on musical principles«. ¹⁵

On several points, the collaborators of course saw eye to eye. How else would their partnership have been possible? It could just as easily have been Brecht who wrote: »This theatre is, to the highest degree, unromantic. ›Romanticism‹ as art switches off our capacity to think; it operates with narcotic means; it shows human beings only in exceptional states; and in its heyday (in Wagner) it avoids representing any human beings at all.« The words are Weill's, from his 1929 essay *Über den gestischen Charakter der Musik*. ¹⁶ In his *Anmerkungen*, Brecht circumscribes Weill's first clause with: »Together with their hat, they [grown men] also give up their normal behaviour, their attitude ›in life‹ . . . The old opera completely excludes any discussion of content.« ¹⁷ Weill's clause about »narcotic means« finds expression in Brecht as: »A state of intoxication is indispensable.« ¹⁸ Weill's last two clauses are covered by Brecht's notion of »culinary« or »genießerbisch«: »the degree of enjoyment is directly dependent on the degree of unreality«. ¹⁹ »Those composers who are addicted to Wagner even persist in adopting a *Weltanschauung* — one which is otherwise quite useless and is dumped on the public purely as a means of sensual pleasure!« ²⁰

Where Weill and Brecht part company is, as mentioned, on the question of music's predominance. But they also differ on a more basic question — namely,

the prospects for the genre as such. Brecht is pessimistic. »Today one has to ask whether opera is not already in a state in which innovations no longer lead to the rejuvenation of this genre but rather to its destruction.«²¹ He summarizes the innovations of *Mahagonny* as »those that make it possible for the theatre to present moral tableaux (revealing the commodity status both of entertainment and of those being entertained) and those that put the spectator in a moralizing frame of mind«.²² Yet he then applies the self-destruction metaphor of sawing off the same branch one is still sitting on: »but Mahagonny has at least started (absent-mindedly or out of bad conscience) to saw [the branch] through«.²³ »Real innovations«, he argues, »attack the base«²⁴: the economic base which determines — as Brecht sets forth at the outset of his *Anmerkungen* — the very nature of the operatic establishment. With a subtle shift of terminology Brecht then implies in his final paragraph, by introducing the superscription »Für Neuerungen — gegen Erneuerungen«, that *Mahagonny* also falls under the second category — rejuvenation, rather than real innovation. Consequently, Brecht's closing remarks are devoted to promoting what came after his opera: »experiments [which] emphasize more and more the didactic at the expense of the culinary«²⁵, in other words, his *Lehrstücke*.

Weill, too, wrote *Lehrstücke* after *Mahagonny*. Yet he never proffered a Marxist analysis of the operatic establishment. His didactically conceived pieces were just part of an overall strategy to reach a new, wider audience, as were other hybrid forms such as *Die Dreigroschenoper*. But all along, large-scale opera had been a goal. For all his scathing criticism of the musical establishment, Weill never opposed opera, as Brecht appeared to, as an essentially reactionary, untenable and ultimately dispensable institution. On the contrary, he viewed all the other collaborations with Brecht written between the inception of the *Mahagonny* opera in the summer of 1927 and its completion in the winter of 1929 — *Die Dreigroschenoper*, *Happy End*, *Das Berliner Requiem* and *Der Lindberghflug* — as »building blocks towards this opera«.²⁶ Even the *Mahagonny-Songspiel*, the »Baden-Baden ›Mahagonny‹ « as Weill described it, he considered a »stylistic study to prepare for the operatic work«.²⁷ Weill's public articulation of these views, as mentioned, may have prompted Brecht to exaggerate or polarize his own position. The crucial theoretical difference remains, however: Brecht was expressing a negative, destructive intent; Weill a positive, constructive one.

The disparity between Brecht and Weill's theoretical stances is not merely to be put down to a matter of temperament, nor explained away by invoking the age-long quarrel between librettist and composer over the primacy of their respective media, words and music. To be sure, Brecht's negative attitude towards opera partly reflects his ambitions as a playwright, his professed anti-expressionist mistrust of music and, not least, his Marxian opposition to the institution of opera as such, to the genre's representative function, its embodiment of oppressive power relations. All these factors of course have a role to play. Yet there is also a sense in which the very notion of »epic« as applied to the theatre functions as an essentially negative category, in Brecht's words: where »innovations no longer lead to the rejuvenation of this genre but rather to its destruction«.²⁸

Within the strictly defined terms of classical poetics, the concept of epic theatre can be seen to represent a paradox or, to use Emil Staiger's hyperbole, »babylonian confusion«. ²⁹ True, the adjectives »epic«, »dramatic« and »lyric« denote qualities whose application is not restricted to the genres that their cognate nouns signify, »epos«, »drama« and »lyric«. As Staiger puts it, »nicht jeder Mensch ist menschlich«. ³⁰ Similarly, not every drama is purely dramatic, but can contain other qualities or elements, either lyric or, in Brecht's case, epic ones. Brecht's experiments in epic drama begin, as Peter Szondi observed in his *Theorie des modernen Dramas*, where the contradiction becomes evident between social subject matter and dramatic form. ³¹ Yet within the context of the theatre, the injection of these epic elements is to be understood in terms of liberties taken with the dramatic unities. »In place of dramatic teleology there is the epic freedom to linger and reflect.« ³² Indeed, Szondi's theory of modern drama, underpinned as it is by the seminal idea of the »epicization« of the dramatic (an idea borne out particularly by Brecht's work), propounds a fundamentally negative thesis or ideal model — namely, that »developments in modern writing for the theatre lead away from drama«. ³³ The rules of epic theatre are not in themselves normative, as Szondi remarked in his *Nachtrag zur »Theorie des modernen Dramas«* ³⁴; hence epic structure in plays tends to be interpreted in terms of the impossibility and therefore specific negation of the dramatic. In purely formal terms, Brecht achieved his renunciation of traditional drama by means of epic »liberties« which, because of their intended impact on the audience, he labelled »Verfremdungseffekte«. In early Brecht, such »effects« — for example, the intervention of the auctorial voice in *Mann ist Mann* (something also planned for the scene before Macheath's proposed hanging in *Die Dreigroschenoper*, but ultimately suppressed) — are clearly intended as *épatant*. Later, however, they serve a positive, pedagogical purpose, as the theory expounds: »The object of the effect is to allow the spectator to criticize constructively from a social point of view.« ³⁵ Wilful disruption of the illusion of dramatic unity and socially critical didacticism are two faces of the same epic coin.

The crux of Brecht's *Anmerkungen* is the underlying assumption that his theory of drama neatly translates, with the additional element of music, into a theory of opera, that the shift from dramatic to epic in the former also applies to the latter. Just as, by drawing up the ubiquitously cited parallel columns, he posits an ideal model of the »dramatic form of theatre« which is contrasted and, in practice, negated by the »epic form of theatre«, so he similarly distinguishes a dramatic and an epic form of opera. What goes for his theatre pieces, Brecht seems to be saying, also goes for his opera, *Mahagonny*. The assumption is, however, flawed — a fact which becomes apparent when one attempts to apply the Szondian model. ³⁶ Opera is different. Furthermore, Brecht's basic understanding of opera appears to consist in a facile and uncharitable concept of Wagnerian music-drama.

In its essentials, opera can be both more and less dramatic, more and less epic, than spoken drama. This is not to presume a fundamental generic structure, as Erik Fischer has done with systematic, and hence abstractly ahistorical, pretensions. ³⁷ It is simply to draw attention to two salient differences between the two types of theatre — differences which, for diametrically opposed reasons, serve to

undermine Brecht's proposed »epicization« of opera. The first, historically specific difference is that, formally speaking, opera has tended all along towards »epic« construction. Thus, Brecht's model of the epic form of theatre — entailing, in contradistinction to the dramatic form, not »one scene for another« but »each scene for itself«, not »growth« but »montage«, not »linear action« but »in curves«, not »evolutionary inevitability« but »jumps« — applies quite readily to operas Brecht would doubtless have considered as belonging to the old, dramatic form. To cite Carl Dahlhaus: »Non-aristotelian« dramaturgy, a sign of modernity in plays, appears in opera . . . as a piece of tradition.«³⁸ This, at least, is why Weill could see *Mahagonny* as an opportunity to compose an opera with closed musical numbers, to reinstate what, in his notes on *Die Dreigroschenoper*, he termed the *Urform* of opera.³⁹ As Weill remarks in his *Vorwort zum Regiebuch*: »The epic theatre form is a successive juxtaposition of situations. Hence it is the ideal form of musical theatre; 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 musical theatre: opera.«⁴⁰

It is possible to discern a symptom of this structural anomaly between opera and drama in the differing importance the two collaborators attach to the use of projections. What principally concerned Weill with the composition of *Mahagonny* was »to give the links between the musical numbers a form that obstructs as little as possible the musical design of the whole«. »For this reason«, Weill continued, »we have replaced the dialogue with inscriptions.«⁴¹ For Brecht, on the other hand, the inscriptions represent a significant innovation or »Novum«, as he calls them.⁴² They constitute an important means of »Verfremdung« or »V-Effekt«, one of the separated, discrete elements of epic theatre that serve to disrupt dramatic illusion and unity. That Weill openly declared the inscriptions an expedient measure, a ready solution to the opera composer's abiding problem of dealing with bothersome dramatic dialogue, must have only fuelled Brecht's wrath still further. Where Brecht wished to »alienate« the audience, Weill only succeeded in alienating Brecht. (Given the extent of Chaplin's influence on Brecht, the latter's written titles may well have been inspired by silent films, irrespective of the fact that here, as for Weill, their use was largely a matter of expediency.)

Both collaborators were at one in consciously rejecting the principles of Wagnerian music-drama. »The penetration of opera by the methods of epic theatre«, as Brecht makes plain, is directed specifically at the »Gesamtkunstwerk«. ⁴³ Where, indeed, Brecht writes of the music in dramatic opera as »heightening the text«, »asserting the text« and as »illustrating«, he not only had in mind »attempts to hypnotize« as well as »undignified states of intoxication« but, in either case, those perpetrated or unleashed in particular by Wagner. One side of Brecht's critique of traditional, »dramatic« opera refers to its effect on the audience — »the undignified states of intoxication« which on Brecht's own admission did not escape him either. The other side addresses the question of music's relation to the text, which Brecht accuses of being tautologous. The accusation is based, among other things, on a superficial and misinformed understanding of Wagner's leitmotif technique: on the assumption that the music merely doubles

the action on stage or what the *dramatis personae* are declaiming. To cite Carl Dahlhaus again: »It is simply absurd to accuse a technique of being tautologous whose point and dramaturgic function consist, on the contrary, in constituting a ›second plot‹ alongside the events made manifest by verbal and scenic means — an imaginary drama, that is, compounded of references backwards and forwards and which outstretches the consciousness of the characters involved.«⁴⁴ Where, in Wagner, Brecht described the music as »painting the psychic situation«, it may well in fact be »indicating the attitude«. Leitmotif technique often represents auctorial intervention and comment on the composer's part. To that extent it serves what Brecht would define as an epic purpose.

Just as opera before *Mahagonny* contained epic elements not discussed in Brecht's *Anmerkungen*, so did Weill's own operas composed before his partnership with Brecht. The two one-act operas to texts by Georg Kaiser are cases in point. If Weill's debt to his teacher, Busoni, was more an aesthetic than a stylistic matter, then this seems especially evident in his first opera *Der Protagonist*, completed in 1925. The critic Oskar Bie declared Weill's achievement in this work as pointing to »the future of opera«; and he may well have had in mind Busoni's essay of the same name (*Von der Zukunft der Oper*), which appeared in *Von der Einheit der Musik* in 1922. And even if he did not, it is scarcely an exaggeration to regard *Der Protagonist* as a practical realization of Busoni's programmatic reflections. (For this reason one could be forgiven for assuming that Weill had specially commissioned the libretto from Kaiser. The text already existed as a play, written in 1920; and for the opera version very little was changed or cut from the original, making this an early example of *Literaturoper*.)

Busoni's reflections on opera had already appeared in his *Entwurf einer neuen Ästhetik der Tonkunst*, but without a significant passage which was only added to the 1922 version: ». . . it ought to be possible to consider the form of a scenario accompanied by music and illustrated by song, without words, producing a kind of ›sung pantomime‹.«⁴⁵ It is this »afterthought« that crucially informs, whether directly or not, the musical language and structure of *Der Protagonist*. The two pantomime scenes, fortuitously present in Kaiser's play, occasion Weill to experiment for the first time with the device of stylistic dualism. He establishes a theatrically highly effective opposition between the *espressivo* of the opera proper and the neo-classical, Stravinskian angularity of the pantomime music. Weill's own espoused repudiation of Wagnerian music-drama — an obligatory manoeuvre for his generation — was thus aided and abetted by Busoni.

It is noteworthy in this connection that Maurice de Abravanel described *Der Protagonist* as »the first successful attempt at an opera that moves the spectator while completely leaving his feelings of sympathy to one side«.⁴⁶ And Adorno observed: »The unity of the dramatic individual, which until now almost always functioned as the cohesive force of dramatic music, is shattered.«⁴⁷ Weill's third one-act opera, the Opera Buffa *Der Zar läßt sich photographieren* is concerned, much like *Der Protagonist*, with the typically Kaiserian dialectic of illusion and reality. With all its »epic« elements — the stylistic dualism embracing chromatic *espressivo* and jaunty tango, impassively commenting chorus, the confrontation of

old and new, »false« and »real« — *Der Zar* can be seen, on a meta-level, as an opera about opera. By placing a lyrically amorous member of the old order (the Tsar) in the altogether up-to-date setting of a photographer's studio, with the property of telephone and gramophone playing an integral role in the proceedings, Weill and Kaiser have a serious point to make — albeit with delightfully witty and undogmatic means. In the prefatory material to the *Mahagonny-Songspiel* (whose composition held up progress on *Der Zar*) there is talk of »the liquidation of aristocratic art forms« — an issue of cultural politics which the *Songspiel* formulates in a stridently question-begging fashion and which later finds its way into Brecht's *Anmerkungen*. The creators of *Der Zar*, however, would appear no less aware of the agenda. Yet they employ a much more equivocal approach, nudging rather than shaking their audience into drawing its own conclusions.

The other seminal difference between opera and drama that potentially undermines Brecht's theory of the epicization of opera has to do with nothing less than the distinction between the modes of delivery: speech on the one hand and song on the other. It is not so much a purely formal matter as one that has to do with reception, thus belonging in the same category as Brecht's objection to music's intoxicating effect. Music, according to W. H. Auden, is »immediate actuality«; and opera, he maintained, is »an imitation of human willfulness . . . rooted in the fact that we not only have feelings but insist upon having them at whatever cost to ourselves«. ⁴⁸ If Auden's observation therefore applies, according to which »every high C accurately struck demolishes the theory that we are the irresponsible puppets of fate or chance« ⁴⁹, then the very idea of opera is at loggerheads with the central notion behind epic »Verfremdung« which, as Szondi perceived, emerged as an attempt to resolve the contradiction between social subject matter and dramatic form. Opera, as described by Auden, stubbornly upholds that contradiction — a fact which can have ramifications for *Mahagonny*. Either Jimmy Mahoney sings himself out of the plot, or the plot demolishes the music. Peter Conrad, appearing to echo Auden, put his finger on this anomaly when reviewing a production of *Mahagonny* at the New York Metropolitan Opera in 1979. »Though Brecht's *Mahagonny*«, he wrote, »is a study of economic villany, Weill's musical commentary changes it to a work about the pursuit of pleasure . . . Song in this work is a medium not of alienatory critique, as Brecht wished, but of wishful fantasy . . . and an assertion of appetitive freedom: during the hurricane Mahoney sings defiantly.« ⁵⁰ This is always assuming — something Conrad failed to mention — that the protagonist's high C is accurately struck. The conviction and defiance lie as much in the performance as in the music itself; just as the »Verfremdungseffekte« vary in frequency and degree from production to production. Whether or not a work is perceived as epic is not ultimately decided by the librettist or by the composer; as a matter for realization in the theatre it is subject to what William Empson termed »dramatic ambiguity«. ⁵¹

A distinction must be drawn, then, between epic structure and epic effect, between means and ends. In this sense, Lenya's opening anecdote is anything but flippant or trivial, emphasizing as it does the extent to which epic theatre relies for its impact on certain qualities of production and performance, while at the

same time serving as a reminder that Brecht's notion of »epic« is not only a theory of creation, a poetics, but also an aesthetic of performance and reception. The distinction, as has been shown, is all the more crucial for opera, in view of the genre's inherent tendency towards epic structure but both dramatic and lyrical effect. As a category in the poetics of music theatre, »epic opera« can be seen as a tautology; in terms of a *Wirkungsästhetik*, on the other hand, it functions more as an oxymoron. Where, however, in the Brechtian sense, the epithet »epic« would appear most meaningful and appropriate is as a style of production. Indeed, if Brecht's theories have exerted any influence on opera, then this has most clearly been on production techniques. What is director's theatre, *Regietheater*, if not an attempt, through the imposition of extraneous, often didactic concepts, to point beyond the work and thus undermine music's dramatic impact, in other words: to make opera epic? The result is often called music theatre, as are later attempts to implement more emphatically at the compositional stage Brecht's »separation of the elements«.

The differences are of course gradual rather than absolute. Weill himself was keen to cultivate what he called »Zwischengattungen«, mixed genres, whose originator he saw as Stravinsky with *L'histoire du soldat*.⁵² Yet as he remarked in an interview published in 1930: »Particularly dangerous are the sort of aspirations that can be described as modernistic . . . Some people preach a dissolution [of opera] in a theatrical direction but do nothing other than those older opera directors who, out of an aversion to music, destroy every musical form with a theatrical gimmick or a surfeit of »production ideas« [*Regieeinfälle*]«. ⁵³ Weill clearly stopped short of such »epic« invasions. That he did so is thoroughly characteristic of his commitment to opera and, moreover, of the tensions and anomalies in the Brecht-Weill partnership.

NOTES

- 1 Quoted from an interview which Lenya gave for American television on 7 December 1978.
- 2 A notable exception was Arnold Schoenberg, who polemicized vehemently against Brecht's theory as he found it summarized in an article by Hans Heinrich Stuckenschmidt. Cf. Alexander Ringer, »Schoenberg, Weill and Epic Theatre«, in: *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* iv (1980), pp. 77—98.
- 3 Werner Hecht, *Brechts Weg zum epischen Theater*, Berlin 1962, p. 146.
- 4 Jürgen Schebera, *Kurt Weill: Leben und Werk*, Leipzig 1983, p. 112.
- 5 *Anbruch* xii (1930), pp. 1—5.
- 6 *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 8 March 1930.
- 7 *Die Musik* xxii (1929/30), pp. 440f.
- 8 »Kurt Weill and his critics«, in: *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 October 1975, p. 1143.
- 9 »Zur Uraufführung der Mahagonny-Oper«, in: *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, 8 March 1930.
- 10 Bertolt Brecht, »Anmerkungen zur Oper *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*«, in: *Versuche* 2, Berlin 1930; reprinted in: *Schriften zum Theater*, Frankfurt am Main 1957, p. 20.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 12 Weill, »Anmerkungen zu meiner Oper »Mahagonny««, in: *Die Musik* xxii (1929/30), p. 441.
- 13 Weill, »Zur Uraufführung der Mahagonny-Oper«, in: *op. cit.*
- 14 Weill, »Anmerkungen«, in: *op. cit.*, p. 441.

- 15 Weill, »Das Formproblem der modernen Oper«, in: *Der Scheinwerfer* v (1931/32), p. 4.
- 16 *Die Musik* xxi (1928/29), pp. 419—423.
- 17 Brecht, »Anmerkungen«, pp. 23f.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 27f.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 Weill, »Zur Uraufführung«, in: op. cit.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 Brecht, »Anmerkungen«, pp. 27f.
- 29 Emil Staiger, *Grundbegriffe der Poetik*, Zürich ⁵1961, p. 235.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- 31 Peter Szondi, *Theorie des modernen Dramas*, Frankfurt am Main 1959, p. 115.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 118.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 34 Szondi, *Schriften* vol. 2, Frankfurt am Main 1978, pp. 198—204.
- 35 Brecht, »Die Straßenszene: Grundmodell einer Szene des epischen Theaters«, in: *Schriften zum Theater*, op. cit., p. 99.
- 36 For a general discussion of this issue, see Wolfgang Ruf, *Modernes Musiktheater: Studien zu seiner Geschichte und Typologie* (unpublished *Habilitationsschrift*, Freiburg i. Br. 1983), pp. 123ff.
- 37 Erik Fischer, *Zur Problematik der Opernstruktur: Das künstlerische System und seine Krisis im 20. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 1982; cf. the present author's review of Fischer's book in *Music and Letters* lxxv (1984), pp. 271—275.
- 38 Carl Dahlhaus, »Traditionelle Dramaturgie in der modernen Oper«, in: *Musiktheater heute* (= Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Neue Musik und Musikerziehung Darmstadt 22), Mainz 1982, p. 25.
- 39 Weill, »Korrespondenz über Dreigroschenoper«, in: *Anbruch*, xi (1929), p. 25.
- 40 Weill, »Vorwort zum Regiebuch der Oper ›Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny‹«, in: *Anbruch* xii (1930), p. 5.
- 41 Weill, »Zur Uraufführung«, op. cit.
- 42 Brecht, »Anmerkungen«, p. 22.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 44 Carl Dahlhaus, »›Am Text entlang komponiert‹. Bemerkungen zu einem Schlagwort«, in: *Für und wider die Literaturoper* (Thurnauer Schriften zum Musiktheater 6), ed. Sigrid Wiesmann, Laaber 1982, p. 194.
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- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 48 W. H. Auden, »Notes on Music and Opera«, in: *The Dyer's Hand*, New York 1962, p. 470.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 474.
- 50 *New Statesman*, 30 November 1979, p. 870.
- 51 William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, London ³1953, p. 43: »We are concerned here with a sort of dramatic ambiguity of judgment which does not consider the character so much as the audience.«
- 52 Weill, »Die neue Oper«, in: *Der neue Weg* lv (1926), p. 24.
- 53 Weill, »Situation der Oper«, in: *Melos* x (1930), p. 45.