

The Brecht – Weill Music Theatre: An invaluable tool for the actor’s vocal training

INTRODUCTION

The Voice is one of the actor’s most important instruments of communication and creative expression. Therefore, the vocal process, which leads to learning how to speak and sing on-stage with clarity and power and enables one to act with great ease, forms a significant and inseparable part of the actor’s training.

There is no such thing as a ‘correct’ voice. There are only – according to Peter Brook in his Foreword to Cicely Berry’s *‘Voice and the actor’* – a million wrong ways: *‘wrong uses of the voice are those that constrict activity, blunt expression, level out idiosyncrasy, generalize experience, coarsen intimacy...’* (Berry, 1973: 1).

It is not the aim of the present article to investigate the primary technical areas that the actor must master or to analyze in detail the work that needs to be done concerning the various aspects of vocal technique required to form a solid foundation for good acting. Luckily, there is a quite extended and interesting bibliography that deals with the above mentioned issues and covers all the key components of voice work.¹

Taking one step further in the fundamental process of voice training we come across one of the most challenging tasks facing a performer: after having dealt with the basic technical means that allow the voice to work with freedom – breathing, support, correct placing, resonance, flexibility of the speech muscles – and having achieved the correct balance of tension, relaxation and power, the actor must get his / her voice working as a whole. No musical language is more appropriate to encourage the integration of singing and theatre voice techniques than the Brecht-Weill songs that demand from the performer the

¹ Berry, Cicely (1973): *Voice and the actor*. New York: Wiley Publishing Inc.
Melton, Joan with Tom, Kenneth (2003): *One Voice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
Rodenburg, Patsy (1997, reissued in 2005): *The Actor Speaks*. London: Methuen.
Rodenburg, Patsy (1992): *The right to speak*. New York: Routledge.

capability to ‘talk-sing’ them, a style that ‘*was to become an indelible part of Weill’s Berlin signature*, (Hirsch, 2003: 37).

The subject of the present article is an examination of the invaluable contribution of the Brecht-Weill works to the achievement of the ‘*availability of the whole instrument, body and voice*’¹, which gives the actor the ability to move freely from speaking to singing and vice versa. I shall use ‘Alabama Song’ and ‘Moritat von Mackie Messer’ as specific examples of the innovative use of the song form as the basis for highly effective musical theatre. Moreover, I shall discuss – through the restructuring of existing information pertaining to the genesis and first representations of Mahagonny Songspiel and The Threepenny Opera – other radical innovations that Brecht and Weill introduced into music theatre, thus establishing their works as one of the cornerstones of the actor’s repertoire.

In order to examine how the Brecht-Weill repertoire may lead the actor to acquire a matching level of energy and placing between the spoken and the sung voice it is useful to first identify the role of songs according to Brecht’s perspective (as a playwright and poet) and also to look at their primary functions as the key components of Weill’s music theatre.

A student of the Staatliche Hochschule für Music in Berlin and, later, a pupil of Ferruccio Busoni, Kurt Weill is considered one of the great innovators of the twentieth century, especially in his works for the stage. In 1947 Weill reflects: ‘*Ever since I made up my mind at the age of nineteen that my special field of activity would be the theatre I have tried continuously to solve, in my own way, the form problems of the musical theatre, and through the years I have approached these problems from all different angles*’.²

¹ Melton, 2003, p. xi

² Weill, Kurt (1947): liner notes to CD *Street Scene-An American Opera*, Broadway cast: Anne Jeffreys, Polyna Stoska, Brian Sullivan, dir. Maurice Abravanel. CBS Records MK 44668

Avoiding the rigid concept of 'operatic', Weill believed throughout his entire career that *'opera is whatever its creators choose to place on an opera house stage'*.¹

Although he began his career as a composer of atonal music, very soon he became interested in bringing music theatre back to a large public through new musical idioms. Conventional theatre and opera, he thought, were in need of reform and he planned *'to wage a cultural war against opera house elitism and insularity'*. (Hirsch, 2003: 13)

Two of the most important innovations that Weill introduced into his music, and which represent the radical break marking the transformation of his musical identity, are jazz-like rhythms and the use of song form.

In the Weimar culture, the newly-born jazz became quickly an emblem of modernity. Weill regarded it as the new universal language which could be used to reform the theatre and, consequently, he fused into his music *'such jazz-based elements as syncopation, improvisation, a greater use of wind instruments and a driving percussive beat mixed with native expressionist and atonal idioms'*. (Hirsch, 2003: 18).

Mahagonny Songspiel was Weill's first work where *'jazz exploded at full force'*.² Up to then, he had written mostly atonal music but in 1927, on the occasion of the Baden-Baden Music Festival, Weill attempted to introduce a new kind of song style derived from elements of popular music and, also, *'based on the style of the popular cabaret'*.³ In a letter to Universal edition in December 1923 he wrote: *'...in the operatic style I am establishing here, music has a much more fundamental role than in the purely plot-driven opera, since I am replacing the earlier bravura aria with a new kind of popular song'* (Farneth et al., 2000: 64).

The main function of Weill's particular song style is to act as a direct commentary on the actions of the characters.

¹ Hirsch, 2003, p. 5

² Hirsch, 2003, p. 19

³ Nadar, 1974, p. 213

Moreover, songs are on several occasions used – through the utilization of highly associative musical styles – as a way to characterize the different personalities. The idea according to which the composer *'instead of processing the text for his own musical ends, studies how the words communicate the gest or attitude by rhythmic means, including pauses, and must then respect it while underlining and adding to it by means special to music'*¹ was for the first time introduced by Weill in March 1928, during the run of *The Threepenny Opera*. That 'gestic' approach marked the Weill-Brecht collaboration from its very beginning and constitutes one of the main principles of Brecht's theory about theatre and music. Nadar points out that Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* was, for Weill and Brecht, an excellent prototype of the use of 'gestic' music as a means of characterization and quotes as an instance that Mozart *'chose anachronistic baroque operatic forms for the arias of the Queen of the Night in order to point out her emotionless and unsympathetic qualities whereas in contrast, Sarastro's arias by their utilization of simpler idioms of folk music demonstrate his humane, sincere and sympathetic character'*.²

The idea of gestic music in Brecht's dramatic theory originated from the 'Gestus' (everything an actor does in terms of gesture, intonation, posture, in order to reveal the significance of a scene), which constitutes one of the main features of Epic theatre. According to the playwright, whereas 'conventional' music creates emotional effects, gestic music should provoke thought and show the audience the right intellectual response to events. The spectators must be constantly reminded that epic theatre gives a report of events. The actor/singer becomes *'a reporter, whose private feelings must remain a private affair'* (Willett, 1964: 38).

Here, the songs function as part of the use of techniques that remind the audience that the play is a representation of reality and not reality itself. In order to heighten the effect of

¹ Willett, 1984, p. 154

² Nadar, 1974, pp. 113-114

words, Brecht believed that songs should be treated as a separate theatrical element and that singing must be differentiated from speech. *'Nothing is more revolting, he wrote in his notes to the Threepenny Opera, 'than when the actor pretends not to notice that he has left the level of plain speech and started to sing. The three levels – plain speech, heightened speech and singing – must always remain distinct the actor must not only sing but show a man singing. His aim is not so much to bring out the emotional content of his song but to show gestures that are so to speak the habits and usage of the body'.*

In order to underline the split of the songs from the dramatic action – an important innovation and one of the principal characteristics of most of his dramatic works – Brecht used projections, song titles, change of lighting and change of the actor's positions before beginning a song. Thus, the song could be directed to the spectators as a commentary on the characters and on the action as well as on the general social situation. The detachment of the song from the dramatic action makes the commentary even more apparent.

Both Brecht and Weill used the word song to indicate *'a popular, cabaret or jazz kind of melodic structure as opposed to an art song or lied'* (Hirsch, 2003: 28). Brecht himself – who, already in 1926, had a growing reputation as one of the most 'vocal' of the younger playwrights – knew how to play the guitar and sang, to his own accompaniment, with clarity and rolled 'r' s.¹ Poet Carl Zuckmayer described the young Brecht singing: *'He had command of his instrument and loved complicated chords that were hard to finger: C sharp minor or E flat major. His singing was raw and trenchant, sometimes crude as a ballad-singer's, with an unmistakable Ausburg accent, sometimes almost beautiful, soaring without any vibrato, each syllable, each semitone being quite clear and distinct'.* (Willett, 1984: 152)

¹ *September songs* The music of Kurt Weill, 1997: tr. 13. SONY, SK 63046 & Kurt Weill *From Berlin to Broadway* a selection, 2000: tr. 5. PEARL, GEM 0108

His familiarity with the style of ballad-singers who performed at fairs and narrated to the public the secret crimes of notorious criminals proved to be of great use when, on the last day of the rehearsals of the Threepenny Opera, the musical comedy star Harald Paulsen requested a song (as curtain raiser) for his first entrance as Mack the Knife.

Lotte Lenya relates in *'Brecht, as they knew him'*¹ that Brecht brought the verses for the *Mack the Knife Song* and asked Weill to write the music. Weill wrote the music overnight and also found the man who would provide the barrel organ for the performance. In the Threepenny Opera, *Die Moritat von Mackie Messer* (a moritat is a medieval version of the murder ballad, *mori* meaning 'deadly' and *tat* meaning 'deed') introduces and closes the play with the story of Mack the Knife, a character based on Macheath in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. Paulsen did not sing the ballad himself but the song was given to Kurt Gerron who was also playing the role of Tiger Brown. The pleasant melody of sixteen measures with simple harmonic means: *'the added sixth chord, a few secondary triads, the intentionally wrong fourths in the bass in the third and fourth measures...and with its characteristic descending seventh shortly before the end'*², contrasts strongly with the text: 'And the shark, he has teeth / and he wears them in his face / and Macheath, he has a knife / but the knife one does not see'³. *Die Moritat* is a clear example of a phenomenon frequently found in the works of Brecht-Weill where music and text do not seem to fit together correctly. This song – which starts with the same four notes (but in a different key) as the refrain of another famous Weill-Brecht song, 'Surabaya Johnny' – has become a hit all over the world and so has the 'Alabama Song', a tune which marks the 'gestic' approach in their works from their very first collaboration.⁴ In an article in Schott's magazine *Melos* Weill explained how he took *'the*

¹ Witt (ed.), 1974, p. 60

² Schebera, 1995, p. 114

³ Literal translation. The best known English translation, from the Marc Blitzstein 1954 version of the Threepenny Opera is: 'Oh, the shark has pretty teeth dear / and he shows then pearly white / just a jackknife has Macheath dear / and he keeps it out of sight' <http://en.wikipedia.org>

⁴ Weill composed the Alabama Song for the prologue of Mahagonny Songspiel, which was the start of the Brecht-Weill exceptionally productive partnership.

*gestic rhythm of the refrain to the Alabama Song, as Brecht originally sang it in his wholly personal and inimitable way of singing’ and gave it ‘a far broader melodic appeal’ leaving the melody of the verse practically untouched.*¹

The monotonous rhythm of the verses, which are built around a three-note melody (‘Oh, show us the way...’) that is answered by a second, equivalent three-note melody (‘Oh, don’t ask why..’), is accompanied by Weill’s harmony which alternates between two chordal blocks (C minor and C-sharp minor). As the verse evolves *‘there is a staccato punctuation, a brief transitional riff and then we are launched into the tune of the chorus (Oh, moon of Alabama), expansive, musically conventional, everything the verse tune was not’.*²

Through the construction of the song – verse, chorus, repeat – as well as through the orchestration with its emphasis on brass, woodwinds and American jazzlike percussion, Weill leads us, as Hirsch points out, to a journey through bars, dollars and boys. The strongly syncopated Alabama song which launched Lenya’s career as the greatest interpreter of the Brecht-Weill repertoire, can also be found in the later *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* where, once again, the poet and the composer use music as a means of characterization and commentary showing the plaintive character of the exploited (in the case of *Aufstieg*...the song is more associated with Jenny whereas in *Mahagonny Songspiel* it is sung by the two whores, Jessie and Bessie, following the moon of Alabama on their way to the new city). The lyrics are in English and are always performed in that language, even when the work is performed in its original German.

When we look at the vocal line in Alabama Song³ the first thing we remark is the difference in the notation between the verses (‘Oh, show us the way...’) and the chorus (‘Oh, moon of Alabama...’).

¹ Willett, 1984, p. 154

² Hirsch, 2003, p. 28

³ Brecht-Weill, *Mahagonny Songspiel*, vocal score, Universal Edition



In the verses, the rhythm is fixed very precisely and it is written in note values (yet not in real notes) thus suggesting a kind of spoken melody similar to *Sprechgesang* although – unlike the *sprechstimme* in Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*, where the performer must reach the exact pitch at the beginning of each note and immediately abandon it by of falling or rising – Weill’s objective is not the achievement of an unrealistic half-sung effect but rather a sort of heightened speech. On the other hand, in the chorus, the composer uses ‘ordinary’ notation to write a haunting, ‘hummable’ popular melody with legato phrasing and an almost ‘bel canto’ line.

Although in some editions (e.g. Hal Leonard Corporation)¹ ordinary notation is used throughout the whole song, the vocal result remains the same since Weill’s musical language goes beyond notation and his intention of obtaining an almost ‘spoken quality’ in the voice (in the verses) is clearly indicated by the use of a simple three-note melody and its – equivalent three note melody – musical answer.

How is it possible to obtain a ‘spoken quality’ in the voice while singing a song and is there a real difference between speaking and singing?

When studying the vocal score of ‘Alabama-Song’, the actor must first identify the different principles that rule the production of a spoken and a sung tone and work separately on each technical area. The achievement of this task is of great importance to the interpretation not only of the majority of the Brecht-Weill works but also of Brecht’s later collaborations with Hans Eisler and Paul Dessau, since, as we saw at an earlier stage of this article, the differentiation of the three levels – plain speech, heightened speech and singing –

¹ Weill Kurt, *From Berlin to Broadway*, vocal score, Hal-Leonard Corporation

constitutes one of the main characteristics of Epic theatre.

The next step in order for the actor to acquire a strong, flexible, homogeneous and controlled sound that will enable him / her to move freely throughout his / her entire vocal range is to put all the different aspects of vocal technique together and to bridge the gap between speaking and singing by realizing that the basic difference between the two lies in the balance of sound and word. Only then the actor will perceive the voice as a single instrument capable of many actions, as complex as the actor himself.

In both ordinary and heightened speech as well as in singing, the main vocal functions are fundamentally the same, with only slightly different energy which basically affects the two key areas of vocal production: breathing and the use of resonating cavities.

Patsy Rodenburg, when analyzing the breathing mechanism, describes breath as the *'true foundation stone of life and the powerhouse of the voice'*.¹ Breath is closely connected to the attack of the sound (the sound starts with the air hitting the vocal folds when they are drawn together, causing them to vibrate and, consequently, to produce sound waves), which determines the quality of the voice, and also to the support, which provides steady, optimal levels of breath flow and minimizes the risk for pressure injuries to the vocal folds.

In the first part of Alabama Song, the body of the actor must be free and relaxed enough to allow frequent inhalations of small quantities of air – a great exercise for the abdominal muscles – that match the short phrases and the syncopated rhythm, whereas in the chorus, where the phrases are longer and the sound needs to be more sustained, the ability to draw in quiet and deep inhalations is essential.

Another element that determines significantly the quality of the sound as well as the 'timbre' (color) and the range of the voice is the use of the various resonating cavities. In

¹ Rodenburg, 1992, p. 142

theory the whole body resonates the voice but *'the more obvious and important resonators are in the chest, throat, face, nose and head. Each human resonator acts as an amplifier'*.¹

Nowadays, we tend to limit our 'conversational' voice to the low register, keeping the pitch down and mostly using the chest and throat resonators. When it comes to singing (where we invest more in the head, nose and face cavities), there is a danger of overbalance of head resonance, which can make the voice sound disembodied and 'false' and may lead to a lack of communication with the audience since an overbalance of head tone does not reinforce the Word. Yet, it is in the word that the energy of the actor lies...

Seen in the context of Alabama Song, the transition from the spoken quality of the verse to the singing voice of the refrain must be done in such an intelligent way that the, almost grotesque, switch from chest to head tones will be minimized and a *real*, simple and warm voice may be heard. This 'well-modulated actor sound' can be produced by balancing all the resonators together and such a result may only be achieved through muscular awareness of the breathing system, support, clear and effortless diction (which involves the lips, tongue, teeth, hard palate, facial muscles, soft palate) and correct placing of both vowels and consonants.

To sum up, performing a Brecht-Weill song can be a fascinating experience since the search of practical solutions to the specific technical and aesthetic requirements of their musical theatre may liberate the actor and lead him / her towards a new perception of the voice as a 'whole' instrument placed widely throughout the body where the barrier between speaking and singing no longer exists. The primary function of this new perception is – as Núñez points out in his *'Anthropocosmic Theatre'*² – to qualify the performer-human being to master his instrument, which in this case happens to be his own organism with all its states and this, is a principle of development and knowledge, a step towards evolution.

¹ Rodenburg, 1997, p. 92

² Núñez, p. 40

Lotte Lenya recalled that when she performed for the first time the ‘Alabama-Song’ for Brecht, she began to sing moving responsively to its strong rhythm, looking vaguely in the direction of an imaginary audience and when she reached the refrain *‘she stood still, her hands folded behind her’*. Then, Brecht directed her to *‘take in the whole audience, asking them to help her find the next whiskey bar’*. When she got to the chorus he told her to do *‘exactly the opposite of what she had done, to forget the audience and pour out her sorrow to the moon...’*¹ Yet, was the song written originally for her?

To emphasize their attack on opera (which they thought was out of key with the modern society) Brecht – whose first wife was an opera singer – and Weill decided to cast their ‘antiopera’ with opera trained singers, placing them in unaccustomed contexts.

In ‘Alabama-Song’ *‘the contrast between its sunnily diatonic refrain and the non-tonal dissonance of its purely declamatory verses epitomizes tensions fundamental to the entire work, while the refrain presupposes the belcanto possibilities...’*². It was only when the work was already in rehearsal that Lenya stood in for the indisposed opera singer who had been engaged as one of the prostitutes and Weill made changes to the vocal score specifically to accentuate the contrast between the opera singer and the untrained voice of Lenya. But only a year later Weill began to write songs expressly composed for mostly untrained singers and, to his surprise, he realized that writing music that could be sung by actors proved to be *‘no restriction but an immense enrichment’*.³

This new form of song had great influence on singers, actors, musicians, of both opera and operetta as well as on the corresponding techniques of acting and singing.

On June 4, 1928 Weill wrote to his publisher on the subject of The Threepenny Opera: *‘the show is in a very light, singable style, since it is to be performed by actors’*.⁴

¹ Hirsch, 2003, p. 30

² Drew, 1990, p. 13

³ Willett, 1984, p. 156

⁴ Hirsch, 2003, p. 35

Indeed, for the cast of *Dreigroschenoper* – a revival of Gay’s *Beggar’s Opera*, a ballad-opera that in 1728 brought street songs and ballads to the opera stage – emphasis was given on actors and actresses who also sang rather than on performers whose primary strength was singing. In the voices of Kurt Gerron and Rosa Valetti (popular cabaret performers), Harald Paulsen (an operetta star), Erich Ponto (a dramatic actor) and Lotte Lenya, there was no operatic trace. This talk-sing style, as a rejection of operatic belcanto, together with the musical score which ‘*incorporates Baroque elements, which it uses in the parodying finales to attack the institution of opera; shabby flourishes from light music; ballads and Moritat forms, all blended with Weill’s own great melodies*’¹ made the first production of the Threepenny Opera a memorable experience for the audience and the critics. Nadar relates that even Alfred Kerr, the most ‘difficult’ of all the Berlin critics ‘*was delighted with the production*’.²

For both Brecht and Weill it was of decisive importance that every word could be heard clearly above the music. The orchestra played not in the pit but on-stage (in a prominent position in the center) since Brecht wanted the musicians to be visible throughout the performance. To achieve this purpose, he asked Caspar Neher to create a space upstage for the band and Neher ‘*placed the band on the steps of a large fairground organ, and on each side of the organ were large screens on which the title of each song was projected in bold letters*’.³

The strict separation of the music from all the other non-literary elements – décor and choreography – is one of the most important innovations in accordance with the Epic theory. For Brecht, the music and the dramatic action ‘*should each make the other appear strange*’ and ‘*songs are not used to heighten emotion at moments of climax but serve as commentaries generally leading to a V-effect*’.⁴

¹ Schebera, 1995, p. 113

² Nadar, 1974, p. 215

³ Hirsch, 2003, p. 37

⁴ www.universalteacher.org.uk/drama/brecht.htm, 13.03.2006

‘Verfremdung’ – as one of the main features of the ‘epic’ method – ‘*is not simply the breaking of illusion and does not mean alienating the spectator in the sense of making him hostile to the play*’ but ‘*is a matter of detachment, of reorientation*’.¹

The Verfremdungseffekt aims to make things appear under a new light through the use of various devices (placards, projections, lighting) in an experience that may be similar to reading a book with critical notes in the margin. Thus, the audience is encouraged to regard the action on stage in a critical attitude.

Certainly, *The Threepenny Opera* epitomized the principles of the Brecht-Weill epic theatre but many of the aspects of their music theatre reform were already present (although not yet clearly formulated and theorized) in their first collaboration, the *Kleines Mahagonny* or *Mahagonny Songspiel*, called in this way since its basis was the song form (Weill set the five *Mahagonnygesänge* from Brecht’s *Die Hauspostille* in music, adding a prelude, a postlude and orchestral interludes and asked the poet for a new text for the finale). *Mahagonny* was presented for the first time in the ‘Neue Musik’ Festival in Baden-Baden in 1927: ‘*a boxing ring was constructed on the stage...a large backdrop was erected for Neher’s projections and the small orchestra sat on the stage, to the side of the boxing ring*’.²

Ultimately, in addition to the issues discussed throughout this article – the contribution of the Brecht-Weill repertoire to the vocal training of the actor, the role of song and its primary functions in their music theatre and the innovations that both Brecht and Weill introduced throughout their highly productive collaboration – another topic that also needs to be considered is the educational dimension of the Brecht-Weill works and theory.

Brecht, as a great teacher and methodiser, aimed – through the rehearsals and the performances of his plays – not only to entertain but mainly to educate both actors and the audience. He regarded the works as stimulators of social awareness and at the same time as

¹ Willett, 1977, p. 177

² Schebera, 1995, p. 96

technically instructing for those participating in the performance (e.g. teaching music and vocal technique to amateur groups).

Brecht believed that acting, *'must be a part of a collaborative, collective process, all the actors working towards a common goal, and the specific intention and style of performance should be allowed to emerge during this interactive rehearsal process in which the whole company participates'*.¹ When rehearsing with his actors, he avoided theory and only gave few explanations saying that during rehearsals he was 'only a practitioner'.

As Angelika Hurwicz points out in *Brecht's Work with Actors* (1955)², Brecht's work with young and weaker actors (theatre, he thought, could not be dependent upon great talents) is of the greatest educational importance. He trained actors to be responsible *'with regard to their parts and the whole play, without forcing them'*³ and manipulated them into having to make a decision. Part of his method was to demand that the participants discuss the work before performing it.

Brecht had a predilection for *'unusual and daring distribution of parts'* thus expanding the range and ability of his actors (Hurwicz, 1955: 133).

The didactic ideas of Brecht and more precisely the *Lehrstücke* (short, parabolic works written between 1928 and 1930) were first shaped in 1929 when Hindemith proposed to center that year's Baden-Baden Festival on a new musical-dramatic form, the Didactic Play. The initial aim of the *Lehrstücke* was *'to promote community spirit among those taking part'*⁴ by including non-musical elements to the performance.

The music of *Der Lindberghflug* – a radio play performed in 1929 – was written by Hindemith and Weill and the leading role was to be read from a script by each listener at home! Neither, Weill or Hindemith wished their scores to be published and, in the fall of

¹ Eddershaw, [n.d.], p. 36

² Witt (ed.), 1974, p. 133

³ Witt (ed.), 1974, p. 133

⁴ Willett, 1984, p. 158

1929, Weill re-wrote the entire piece as a fifteen-part cantata for soloists, chorus and orchestra.

A few years before his death, Weill turned once more to this didactic form that he and Brecht had created during their collaboration. The 'school opera' *Down in the Valley* (a dramatization of an old folk song) was written to be performed by and for students. The work was first performed at Indiana University in 1947 and it has since become one of the most frequently performed 'school operas'.

Both Weill and Brecht were fortunate enough to experience great success during their lifetime. Their collaboration had an enormous impact on the musical theatre and an extended literature deals with the many issues concerning the works of the two masters of the Twentieth Century. Yet, completing this article, I would like to underline that Brecht and Weill never underestimated the *'pleasurable side of the theatrical experience'*¹ and I shall leave the final word to Brecht who, in a comment made to Lotte Lenya², said: *'I wonder if all the critics who are writing such solemn studies of Dreigroschenoper and Mahagonny have any idea what fun it all was then'*.

¹ Nadar, 1974, p. 289

² Nadar, 1974, p. 289

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