KURT WEILL: A SONG COMPOSER IN WARTIME
WITH THREE RECITALS OF SELECTED WORKS OF MOZART, STRAUSS,
BACH, SCHUBERT,
AND OTHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

Susan Beth Masters Wyatt, B.M., M.M.
Denton, Texas
August, 1993
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During World War II the composer Kurt Weill was in America writing for the Broadway stage. On August 27, 1943, he became an American citizen and was eager to volunteer his talent to the American war effort. Among his many wartime musical contributions are fourteen songs, all with war-related texts, which can be divided into three distinct groups: the American propaganda songs (8), the German propaganda songs (2), and the Walt Whitman songs (4). It is the purpose of this paper to present a comparative analysis of a representative group of these war songs (two from each group) in order to illustrate Weill's musical versatility.

The American propaganda songs were written in a purely popular song style; sung by Broadway actors; directed toward an American audience; with texts by the Broadway lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II and the Hollywood movie executive Howard Dietz. The German propaganda songs were written in a cabaret song style; sung in German by Weill's wife, Lotte Lenya; directed toward a German audience behind enemy
lines; with texts by the German playwright Bertolt Brecht and the German cabaret writer Walter Mehring. The Four Walt Whitman Songs were written in a classical art song style; sung by classically trained singers; directed toward a general audience; with texts by the nineteenth-century American poet Walt Whitman.

After an initial discussion of Weill's early musical training and career in Europe, his exile from Germany, his reception in America, and his contributions to the American war effort, each group of war songs is analyzed musically, textually, vocally, in reference to the audience to whom it was directed, and with regards to vocal performance practice. Comparisons and conclusions are then drawn.

Kurt Weill's war songs are valuable for musical study, both in terms of examining his ability to write equally well in various musical styles and as an opportunity to learn more about music and society during the turbulent years of World War II.
Tape recordings of all performances submitted as dissertation requirements are on deposit in the University of North Texas Library.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, and especially Mr. David Farneth and Mr. Mario Mercado, for their kind assistance.
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School of Music
Graduate Voice Recital

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Rose Marie Chisholm, Piano

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Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
North Texas State University
School of Music

Graduate Voice Recital

SUSAN MASTERS, Soprano

Assisted by
Rose Marie Chisholm, Piano
Lee Lattimore, Flute
Gwen McLean, Flute

Monday, April 13, 1987  5:00 p.m.  Concert Hall

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Bilbao-Song

Presented in partial fulfilliment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts
presents Graduate Recital

SUSAN MASTERS WYATT, soprano

assisted by:
Rose Marie Chisholm, piano

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Obradors

El Mejjo celano

Con amores, la mi madre

Del Cabello más suave

Chiquistas la Novia

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts
University of North Texas
College of Music

presents

A Graduate Lecture Recital

SUSAN MASTERS WYATT, soprano

assisted by

Rose Marie Chisholm, piano
Robert Adams, bass-baritone

Monday, June 7, 1993  5:00 p.m.  Recital Hall

KURT WEILL: A SONG COMPOSER IN WARTIME

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Schickelgruber ...................................................... Weill/Dietz
Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib? ............................ Weill/Brecht
Wie lange noch? ..................................................... Weill/Mehring
Oh Captain! My Captain! ........................................... Weill/Whitman

Robert Adams, bass-baritone

Come Up From the Fields, Father ............................... Weill/Whitman

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
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INTRODUCTION

The composer Kurt Weill (1900-1950) is known primarily for his stage works: operas, music for plays, and Broadway musicals. A lesser known area of his music is that of his solo songs. Although primarily interested in the theater, Weill did write individual compositions, usually for a specific occasion. Several such occasions presented themselves during World War II, as Weill was making his fame and fortune writing for the American Broadway stage. Many of the songs written during this period in Weill's career can be grouped together as war or propaganda songs, some directed at an American audience, others at a distant German audience. It is the purpose of this paper to present a comparative analysis of a representative group of these war songs (six out of a total of fourteen: see the appendix at the back, page 164 for a complete list of the war songs), with texts by a number of different authors, including: a German poet and playwright, Bertolt Brecht; a German cabaret writer, Walter Mehring; an American poet, Walt Whitman; an American dramatist, Maxwell Anderson; a Hollywood movie executive, Howard Dietz; and a Broadway lyricist, Oscar Hammerstein II.

Weill is known for his ability to write in various styles, writing equally well in the genres of the German
Lied, the German cabaret song, the French chanson, and the American Broadway song. It is this versatility that will be emphasized as Weill's musical approach to each of the different authors and audiences of the war songs is discussed in an effort to reveal his different compositional techniques. The songs will be analyzed musically, textually, vocally, and with reference to the audience to whom they were directed.

Taken as a whole, Weill's solo song output is an eclectic collection of traditional German Lieder in the style of the late 19th century (the early songs, up to 1920), German cabaret songs, in the style of Weill and Brecht's Threepenny Opera (1928-1933), French cabaret chansons (1933-1935), the war and propaganda songs (1942-1947), and the songs to the unfinished musical play Huckleberry Finn (1950). Within this varied collection of compositions, the war and propaganda songs provide a unique opportunity for comparison and insight into the song style of Kurt Weill.

1. Two of the six songs to be discussed in this paper are from Weill's Four Walt Whitman Songs. It should be noted that a dissertation is in progress dealing with this group of songs: Werner Grunzweig (Berlin) has received a research and travel grant, awarded by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc., to the Weill/Lenya Archive at Yale University and the Weill-Lenya Research Center, New York, to prepare a study on the genesis of the Four Walt Whitman Songs.
Early Musical Training and Ferruccio Busoni

Kurt Weill was born into a musical family. His father, Albert Weill, was the chief Kantor at the synagogue in Dessau (1899-1919). Albert also composed liturgical music and sacred motets. His son, Kurt, was taught music at an early age and very quickly showed a remarkable musical talent. In 1915, at the age of 15, Weill started a three-year study of music theory and composition with Albert Bing, a pupil of Pfitzner and the conductor at the Dessau Opera. During this time Weill also became one of the official accompanists of the Dessau opera and traveled with some of the singers on their concert tours to smaller cities. Through this early employment in the theater Weill was able to learn much of the standard repertoire and also absorb the fundamentals of stagecraft.1

after just one semester of study, apparently finding the rigid academic atmosphere stifling. In 1919 he returned to Dessau as a coach and chorus master at the Friedrichstheater and, later that year, accepted the position of conductor at a small municipal theater in Lüdenscheid. As musical director at this small provincial theater, whose repertoire included operas, operettas, plays, and revues, Weill gained practical theatrical experience which would prove to be invaluable to him later in his life. He not only conducted performances and coached singers but also directed scenes of dialogue, did orchestral arranging and wrote incidental music. Weill felt that his time in Dessau and Lüdenscheid "represented a specific, theatrical participation and training as distinguished from deadly abstract study," and said that it was precisely at this time that he chose the musical theater as his main career concentration.  

By 1920 Weill's musical education consisted of both traditional academic training and practical theatrical and musical experience. His next phase of musical training would prove to be one of the most influential periods in his musical life. Late in 1920, on the basis of a portfolio of compositions he had submitted, Weill was accepted into

2. Ibid., 20.
3. Ibid., 21.
a master class taught by Ferruccio Busoni at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin.

Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924), a German-Italian composer, pianist and conductor, was Kurt Weill's teacher in Berlin from 1920 to 1923. As a member of Busoni's select group of students, Weill spoke of the master classes held at the Prussian Academy of Arts:

He called us disciples and there were no actual lessons, but he allowed us to breathe his aura, which emanated in every sphere, but eventually always manifested itself in music....It was a mutual exchange of ideas in the very best sense, with no attempt to force an opinion, no autocracy, and not the slightest sign of envy or malice; and any piece of work that revealed talent and ability was immediately recognized and enthusiastically received.

Weill profited greatly from this intellectually stimulating atmosphere and was profoundly influenced by Busoni's musical ideals and aesthetics. This influence is perceived not only in Weill's early works most closely based on his teacher's style, such as the Zauberabacht (Magic Night) ballet (1922) and the song cycleFrauentanz (Women's Dance, 1923), but also in the works of 1927-1933 (Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Die Dreigroschenoper) on which Weill's fame chiefly rests, and even in his later American works, including the World War II songs.

In his article on Busoni in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Helmut Wirth writes that Busoni "developed a very individual technique in matters of tone-colour, as well as an independent harmony which departed from the traditional major-minor system and made possible quite novel sound combinations through the use of a new tonal structure." Busoni's harmonic language, characterized above as a "departure from the major-minor system" seems to have influenced Weill's own harmonic vocabulary. Commenting on Weill's distinctive musical style, Kim Kowalke writes: "Firmly rooted in the late romantic German tradition of Mahler and Reger, his music attained new dimensions of harmonic freedom as a result of his experimentation under Busoni's tutelage." Much of Weill's harmonic language in the World War II songs can thus be attributed to Busoni's influence.

In his article "Weill's Debt to Busoni" John Waterhouse discussed the important musical influence Busoni exerted on Weill's formative years:


A cursory glance at Weill's scores will reveal that one of the most persistent characteristics of his harmony is what could be called "semitonal instability," whereby one chord or harmonic complex dissolves into the next through the chromatic shift of a semitone by one or more of its notes. The result is a continual hovering between major and minor keys, and a constant threat to tonality itself, which is, however, usually maintained by a clear tonal focus in the melodic line, and by such devices as pedal points or ostinato basses.

Waterhouse goes on to draw a connection between Weill's harmonic characteristics and those of Busoni:

Here we see perhaps the single most important thing that Weill inherited from his teacher; for semitonal instability is also one of the commonest features of Busoni's mature music...Its ultimate roots can perhaps be traced back beyond Busoni to the extraordinary late music of Liszt (e.g., the piano pieces Nuages Gris and Le Lugubre Gondola), but Busoni must take most of the credit for developing it into the many-sided technical principle that Weill learned from him.

Waterhouse lists a number of Busoni's works which exhibit semitonal ambiguities: Berceuse Elégaque (1910) for chamber orchestra, the Sonatina Seconda (1912) for piano, and the operas Die Brautwahl (1906-12), Turandot (1904-1917), and Doktor Faust (1916-24). In his book Kurt Weill in Europe, Kim Kowalke takes issue with Waterhouse's conclusion that Weill "inherited" this stylistic element.

8. Ibid., 898.
from Busoni. Kowalke argues that progressions between adjacent sonorities by semitone-slide are integral to both the String Quartet in B minor and the Cello Sonata, works that predate Weill's association with Busoni. He goes on to say that this shared feature with Busoni's music may have been one of the factors which motivated Weill to join Busoni's class in the first place.  

Although Weill apparently did not learn this semitonal technique from Busoni, he most likely solidified his usage of it in Busoni's masterclass. As will be discussed in chapters three and four, there are many instances of "semitonal instability" in Weill's war songs.

The constant vacillation between major and minor, both with and without semitonal movement, is another stylistic feature shared by Weill and Busoni. Stuckenschmidt writes:

The rapid and frequent changes from major to minor key are also typical of Busoni, and correspond with his theory, that the latter is merely a sort of psychological variant of the former, "they are really two versions of the same thing; one more light-hearted, the other more serious; a light stroke of the brush is enough to transform one into the other," he says in his Outline for a New Musical Aesthetics.


Weill and Busoni also shared a common musical aesthetic. Having completed his studies with Busoni, Weill embraced the neoclassical ideal of simplicity and conciseness coupled with his own emerging "populist" tendencies. Such an aesthetic orientation was in opposition to the elitist viewpoints of many of his fellow twentieth-century composers who believed in "art-for-art's-sake," whereby an artist and his art had become increasingly isolated from society as a whole. Weill did not want to write for posterity but for his contemporary audiences. Therefore much of his music, especially that which was written for the war effort, was to be performed for and understood and appreciated by the audiences of his day. This can explain his eagerness to adapt his musical style to such varied groups as American factory workers, German emigrants, Germans living in Europe, and classical art song lovers everywhere.

Weill's interest in arriving at a simplified yet expressive musical language is explained further by Micheal Morley:

"But whereas Brecht arrived at his ideas [of simplification] through his own practice and his fondness for the "lower" forms of theater - circuses, music hall, the cabaret - Weill seems to have come"

at it from another angle: through his own studies of and experiments with opera and the influence of his teacher, Busoni. Many of Weill's views on opera and on the relationship between music and theater echo some of Busoni's pronouncements on these issues. Both men saw in Mozart and Bach the ideal models of the composer in whose works theatrical and absolute music were indivisible...

Weill himself was well aware of Busoni's influence when he wrote:

My teacher, Busoni, at the end of his life, hammered into me one basic truth which [he] had arrived at after fifty years of pure aestheticism: the fear of triviality is the greatest handicap of the modern artist... Instead of worrying about the material of music, the theory behind it, the opinions of other musicians, my main concern is to find the purest expression in music for what I want to say, with enough trust in my instinct, my taste and my talent to always write "good" music, regardless of the style I am writing in.

Busoni's ideal of simplicity influenced Weill's music throughout his life. Weill quoted Busoni as having said, "Don't be afraid of banality. After all, there are only twelve tones in the scale!"

---


Although it is entirely probable that Weill would not have written "Buddy on the Nightshift," "Schickelgruber," or, for that matter, "Mack the Knife," or "September Song" for a Busoni masterclass, nevertheless Busoni's ideals of musical simplicity and Weill's desire to write music for contemporary appreciation are most certainly evident not only in the war songs, but also throughout Weill's body of works.

Exile From Germany

Kurt Weill's musical career began to flourish in Berlin in the 1920s. It was here that he studied with the modernist composer Ferruccio Busoni, wrote his avant-garde concert works and one-act operas, and began his famous collaboration with Bertolt Brecht. Not only was Weill experiencing great changes in his own life and career, but the world around him seemed to move from one crisis to another. In 1920, Berlin was beginning its "Golden Decade," a decade which saw the city rise to become one of the great cultural centers of the world. At the same time, Berlin and Germany were recovering from the devastation of World War I. The economy was in shambles, inflation was the worst Germany had known, and the political climate was extremely volatile. It was in just such an environment that Hitler and the Nazis were able to come to power.
Between the wars Berlin became a gathering place for artists and intellectuals from across Germany and Europe. There was an attitude of extreme tolerance and acceptance of anything new and different, as well as much support for the artistic community. Weill found the atmosphere stimulating, and, influenced by his teacher, Busoni, produced a series of compositions which brought Weill recognition as one of the leading German avant-garde composers of his generation. Shortly before the beginning of his collaboration with Bertolt Brecht in 1927, Weill began to simplify his musical style. From both a free-tonal classicism and a non-tonal expressionism, he returned to traditional tonality, incorporating jazz idioms, dance rhythms such as the tango, and the popular song style.\(^{15}\)

Weill had always been interested in making moral and social statements through his stage works. Especially in his works with Brecht, these statements became thinly-disguised political statements, a fact not lost upon the Nazis. Upon their rise to power, the Nazis waged their "Kulturkampf" (Cultural Fight), which included the defamation of Jewish artists as "cultural bolsheviks" and the labeling of their art as "decadent" and "Jewish asphalt art." Ever since the premiere of Die Dreigroschenoper

(The Threepenny Opera) in 1928, Weill had been a prime target in the Cultural Fight. The 1930 premiere of the Weill-Brecht opera Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny (The Rise and Fall of the City Mahagonny) only escalated the Nazis' attack on Weill. During a visit to Augsburg in 1930, Weill, out of curiosity, attended a Nazi mass meeting at which Hitler spoke of the alien influences rampant in Germany. In his speech, the "Führer" singled out such menacing forces as Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, and, to Weill's surprise and dismay, the composer Kurt Weill. Unnoticed, Weill quickly left the meeting, fearing that someone in the howling mob might recognize him and even attack him.16

Between the years 1930 and 1933 Weill continued to face opposition and harassment from the Nazis. His opera Die Bürgschaft (The Pledge: Caspar Neher, librettist) premiered at the Städtische Oper in Berlin on March 19, 1932 - three days before the presidential election in which Hitler won more than eleven million votes and the National Socialists became the largest party in the Reichstag. The opera, which dealt with government's misuse of its citizens' trust and took a harsh stand against totalitarianism, understandably became the target of a

political campaign led by Goebbels and his press. Most of the announced productions never took place.

Weill's last composition to be both composed and premiered in Germany was the musical play Der Silbersee (The Silverlake; Georg Kaiser, librettist). On January 30, 1933, while Der Silbersee was still in rehearsals, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. The play opened as scheduled and was well received by the audience. However, those newspapers which had become mouthpieces for Hitler and the Nazis denounced Der Silbersee as subversive to the German people and their Fuhrer. F.A. Hauptman, the music critic of the official Nazi propaganda newspaper, the Völkischer Beobachter, wrote:

As is well-known, Kurt Weill is responsible for the music of Bert Brecht's Die Dreigroschenoper and the opera Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, which experienced a properly unambiguous rejection in March 1930. An "artist" who concerns himself with such subject matter, who writes "music" for licentious texts that consciously undermine art and the sense of genuine art, who lowers himself to the quality of the libretto, must be treated with mistrust since, in addition, as a Jew he has taken the liberty of using the German operatic stage for his own "anti-national" (unvölkischen) purposes!

Der Silbersee included a song entitled "The Ballad of Caesar's Death," a pointed indictment of a tyrannical dictator, and the play was not allowed to continue very long. On March 4, 1933 Der Silbersee was performed for

17. Ibid.
the last time during Weill's lifetime. It would not be long before all performances in Germany of Weill's music would be prohibited until 1945.

It was now clear to Weill that, as a Jewish artist who had collaborated with a man like Brecht, life in Nazi Germany was not only difficult but also dangerous. On February 27, 1933 the Reichstag building mysteriously went up in flames, signalling Hitler's suspension of the people's constitutional rights. The next day many left-wing sympathizers, writers and artists, including Brecht, left Germany. Weill hung on a little longer, perhaps because he still had work in Berlin, working on what would have been his first original sound track for a film. However, on March 21, the so-called "Day of Potsdam," when Hitler and Hindenburg sealed their alliance, Weill received word from a well-placed friend that he was about to be arrested by the Gestapo. Promptly packing a few of their belongings, Weill and his wife Lotte Lenya fled to Paris by automobile. This would be the last time that Weill would be in his homeland.

When he arrived in Paris, Weill was already well known in France. A December 1932 concert in Paris of the Mahagonny Songspiel and Der Jasager had been an outstanding success. In his memoirs, Darius Milhaud recalls:

I was lecturing in Holland at the time the concert was given and, in the train that was bringing us back
to Paris, I told Madeline that we should no doubt find that the city had been taken by storm. Little did I know how true this was, for the delirious enthusiasm aroused by these two works lasted for several days. The Montparnasse set used the concert as a pretext for political diatribes; it saw in it an expression of the moral bankruptcy and pessimism of our time. Smart society was as carried away as if it had been the first performance of a Bach Passion. 18

Forced to flee Germany with little of his money or belongings, Weill at least could count upon a receptive audience upon which he could rebuild his fortune. His future in France, however, was not to be so bright. Weill’s first major work during his two years in Paris was Die sieben Todsünden der Kleinburger (The Seven Deadly Sins of the Petits Bourgeois), a ballet with songs written with Brecht. The work was not a success. The critics were disappointed with the new Weill-Brecht collaboration, and the Paris audience, usually avid lovers of ballets, found the Marxist themes in the ballet to be distasteful. Weill’s next work, a symphony commissioned by the American-born patroness of new music, the Princesse de Polignac, fared no better. Other misfortunes faced him. Weill increasingly encountered the anti-semitism that was growing in France. His bank accounts in Germany were frozen, and his publisher, Universal Edition in Vienna, was forced under political pressure to release Weill from his contract and discontinue

his monthly advance. It must have been much to Weill's relief that about this time the established publishing firm of Heugel et Cie signed him to a multi-year contract. Weill began working on a musical adaption of Jacques Deval's sentimental novel, Marie Galante. Premiered on December 22, 1934, the play was not a success, but one of its songs, "J'attends un navire" (I am waiting for a ship), became extremely popular and was later used by the French Resistance during the war as their theme song. The "ships" they were "waiting for" were those of the Allied forces.

The songs from Marie Galante, along with two chansons written for the popular French cabaret singer Lys Gauty ("Complainte de la Seine" and "Je ne t'aime pas"), display Weill's remarkable musical versatility. These songs are purely French sentimental songs, sounding as if they were written by a native Parisian composer instead of a German composer from Berlin. Weill's flair for discovering and using the stylistic earmarks of popular music would prove to be invaluable to him in his years in America.

Weill's last work written while in Paris, Der Kuhhandel (Horse-Trading) was, by his own admission, the biggest failure of his career to date. In a review of the play's English adaption, called A Kingdom for a Cow, the critic for the London Times wrote: "It is not stated whether [Kurt Weill's] recent departure from Germany was occasioned by his partiality for politically tendentious satirical texts
like this one or for the kind of music he writes, but the music would be the German authorities' most valid justification."

After Weill's string of disappointments in France, the opportunity to go to America and work on a new project must have seemed very attractive to him. This new project, entitled Der Weg der Verheissung was eventually known in its English translation as The Eternal Road. The work, a monumental pageant depicting the history and fate of the Jewish people, was the brainchild of Franz Werfel, a Polish-born Jew who had grown up in America and who was a passionately committed Zionist. Werfel was to write the play, Max Reinhardt would direct, and Weill would compose the music. The premiere, scheduled for early 1936, was to take place in New York and was to be conducted by Weill. In September 1935, he and Lotte Lenya sailed for New York to prepare for the premiere. He would only return to Europe once more in the remaining fifteen years of his life.

Arrival and Reception in America

Weill's music was not generally known by the American public at the time of his arrival in the United States on September 10, 1935. Of all his works, only

The Threepenny Opera had been staged before 1935. After its 1932 premiere on Broadway, the American version of The Threepenny Opera had only eleven more performances. Misunderstood by critics and audiences alike, its failure was due in large part to the clumsy English translation. Contrary to his initial enthusiastic reception in France, his arrival in America was inauspicious.

Nevertheless, Weill was not unknown by academics, musicians and theater professionals. Many knew of his European works and had admired The Threepenny Opera on Broadway. The 1930 film version and record album were highly appreciated in knowledgeable circles. Weill wasted little time in making contacts within the American music scene. For example, George and Ira Gershwin, who had already met Weill several years earlier (1928) in Berlin, were great admirers of Weill's music and, a few weeks after his arrival in America, they invited him to attend a dress

20. Gifford Cochran and Jerrold Krimsky were credited with the English translation. Cochran and John Krimsky, Jerrold's brother, were the two novice producers who had successfully obtained the stage rights for an American production of Die Dreigroschenoper. Although little is known about the particulars of the English adaptation (no copy of the script seems to have survived), Weill wrote in a 1942 letter to Brecht that he believed "one of the principal reasons for the failure in 1933 was that [Krimsky and Cochran] had made a literal translation" instead of an adaptation geared for the American theater. Kim Kowalke, "The Threepenny Opera in America," Kurt Weill: The Threepenny Opera, ed. Stephen Hinton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 78-79.
rehearsal of *Porgy and Bess*. It was a memorable experience for Weill, who was highly enthusiastic about the freshness of George Gershwin's music and who was very eager to collaborate with Ira someday, which in fact he later did (The Broadway musicals *Lady in the Dark*, 1940, and *The Firebrand of Florence*, 1945, and the Twentieth Century Fox film *Where Do We Go From Here?*, 1944). In December 1935 a New York concert of Weill's music was promoted by the influential League of Composers. The leading critics, composers, producers, and publishers were invited to hear Lotte Lenya, along with two pianists and a choir of ten singers, perform selections from Weill's stageworks, from *Mahagonny* to *Marie Galante*. However, at the intermission nearly half of the audience of one hundred and fifty had left, and by the end of the program it was clear that the concert had been an unqualified failure. Weill understood from this failure that he would accomplish little in America by promoting his European works. He would need to take a different musical path in order to achieve success. He did not wish to teach, as many of his fellow refugee composers did. There were relatively few opera houses in America, and the existing houses were producing little but 18th and 19th century repertoire. Weill decided early

on that he would have to enter Broadway and the mainstream of American musical theater.

Weill and Lenya initially had intended to stay in America for only a few months, until The Eternal Road was premiered at the beginning of 1936. However, The Eternal Road production, with its lavish preparations and enormous costs, was experiencing many problems and delays, and Weill found himself having to search for work in order to stay in America until the show was finally produced. Aware of Weill's European legacy, the left-wing Group Theater of New York commissioned a score for Johnny Johnson, a musical play by Pulitzer prize winner Paul Green. Johnny Johnson, an anti-militaristic satire, was Weill's first American musical and, although it was not a success in Broadway's terms (it ran for sixty-eight performances), it did much in gaining exposure for Weill among the theater professionals and the audience. On January 7, 1937, only seven weeks after Johnny Johnson's premiere, The Eternal Road finally opened at the Manhattan Opera House. The four-act play, which ran until three o'clock the following morning, was met with great enthusiasm by both the critics and the audience. Although all one hundred and fifty-three performances were sold out, the costly mammoth production was a financial disaster. Sets, costumes, and properties were sold at an auction to satisfy creditors. Again, Weill's name was put forward to the theater community and
The seeds of familiarity were sown, which would later grow into greater successes and financial rewards for the composer.

The Americanization of Weill and Lenya

By the summer of 1937 Weill and Lenya had decided not only to stay in America but also to become American citizens. In order to fulfill immigration requirements and establish immigrant status (at the time they had temporary visas), the couple had to leave the country, reenter, and have their passports stamped. In August 1937 Weill and Lenya traveled to Canada and then crossed back over into the United States, obtaining the all-important stamp in their passports. Six years later, on August 27, 1943, Weill and Lenya were sworn in as American citizens.

Weill and Lenya's decisions to become American citizens were made for several reasons. Naturally, with Hitler in power, returning to Germany anytime in their near future had ceased to become an option. The political tension throughout Europe, not to mention Weill's mediocre artistic track record in France, did not make a return to Paris seem attractive either. Most importantly, however, was the fact that Weill's future career in America looked very promising. Although not as successful as her husband, Lotte Lenya was also continuing her acting career in America. Her real success, her "second" American career,
would take place after Weill's death, beginning in the 1950s.

Perhaps more than any other European composer who came to the United States in the Thirties and Forties, Weill was willing and able to adapt to the new culture and to make a successful transition from European composer to American composer.²² It was not only his music that became "Americanized," but the man himself. His strong interest in America had already been evident throughout his works with Brecht in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Weill was well acquainted with American music, both classical and popular. While still in Europe he was already quite familiar with the arts and the popular culture of America. Lotte Lenya described their arrival in America as "almost like a return home. In Berlin we could buy books by American authors and see American films. The skyline of New York was as familiar to us as the Stars and Stripes."²³ When the couple arrived in New York on September 10, 1935, they excitedly made their way around the city, finding themselves right in the middle of the landscape of skyscrapers which they had seen in movies and photographs. As Lenya recalled:


²³. Michael Nott, "Weills Kontakte zur amerikanischen Literaturszene," Vom Kurfürstendamm zum Broadway; Kurt Weill (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1990), 75.
We were ardent readers of people like Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald, and we saw all the movies. So when we arrived, we dropped our bags and went to Broadway into a movie. We saw *The Dark Angel* with Ronald Coleman and Vilma Blank [sic]. That was the first thing and from then on there was really nothing strange or unfamiliar.24

Once he decided to stay in America, Weill also made up his mind not to look back. After his first few years in America, he spoke and wrote exclusively in English, even to his fellow refugees, such as Brecht. When asked on the application for United States citizenship in 1938 about his nationality, Weill replied: "None. Formerly German."25 Several years later, in a letter to *Life* magazine, dated March 17, 1947, Weill wrote:

Thanks very much for the kind words about *Street Scene* (*Life*, February 24, 1947). However, I have a gentle beef about one of your phrases. Although I was born in Germany, I do not consider myself a "German composer." The Nazis obviously did not consider me as such either, and I left their country (an arrangement which suited both me and my rulers admirably) in 1933.

I am an American citizen, and during my dozen years in this country have composed exclusively for the American stage, writing the scores for Johnny Johnson, *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus*, *The Firebrand of Florence* (ouch!), and


In Weill's mind, he was no longer German.

Upon immigrating to America, Weill showed little interest in promoting any of his European works. Instead, he dedicated himself to the idea of creating a new kind of American opera. In an interview with William King of the New York Sun, Weill described his vision:

You hear a lot of talk about the "American opera" that's going to come along some day. It's my opinion that we can and will develop a musical-dramatic form in this country, but I don't think it will be called "opera," or that it will grow out of the opera... It will develop from and remain a part of the American theater - "Broadway" theater, if you like. More than anything else, I want to have a part in that development.

Weill did not feel he was sacrificing his musical integrity by writing for the Broadway stage rather than the classical operatic stage. He observed:

I'm convinced that many modern composers have a feeling of superiority toward their audiences. Schoenberg, for example, has said he is writing for a time fifty years after his death. But the great "classic" composers wrote for their contemporary audiences.


They wanted those who heard their music to understand it, and they did. As for myself, I write for today. I don't give a damn about writing for posterity...I have never acknowledged the difference between "serious" and "popular" music. There is only good music and bad music.  

In his first two Broadway musicals, **Johnny Johnson** (1936) and **Knickerbocker Holiday** (1938), Weill's European musical grounding is still evident, while at the same time his American musical style was beginning to emerge. It was only a few years later that his popular "Broadway" style was perfected, with the box-office hit **Lady in the Dark**. As David Drew wrote: "After Knickerbocker Holiday and its charmingly gawky attempts at the Broadway manner, the sophistication and sheer élan of the popular songs in **Lady in the Dark** is indeed startling." 29 Weill did challenge the Broadway norm, taking considerable risks in his remaining American works. (The one possible exception is **One Touch of Venus** in which he came closest to the routine musical comedy.) **Street Scene** (1947) was actually a Broadway opera, with its musical continuity and operatic idioms. **Love Life** (1948) was innovative in its form, as a series of vaudeville-like scenes, and controversial in its theme, critical of the American

28. Ibid., 290-291.  

industrial society. And *Lost in the Stars* (1949) was unusual in that it offered a tragic story with a controversial theme - the racial prejudice and inequality of South African apartheid policies. Weill wanted to elevate the subject matter, change the structures and enrich the musical language of the American Broadway musical. Even so, Weill's commitment was now to the Broadway system, which consequently meant a commitment to popular success. Drew comments:

The pre-1934 composer had been acutely conscious of his roots and responsibilities as a German artist in postwar society; had felt himself to be a part of the modern movement and one of its leaders in the younger generation; and was accustomed to measure his talents and achievements against those of the most eminent of his German contemporaries, Paul Hindemith. The post-1940 composer was one who asserted that he had never thought of himself as a German composer, that his only roots were those he had now established in the USA, and that his responsibilities were to the American musical stage in its popular form. The composer whom he now saw as his chief rival was Richard Rodgers.

Kurt Weill had become both culturally and musically "Americanized."

**Weill and the War Effort**

**Weill's Contributions to Patriotic Organizations**

There was a strong sense of purpose and unity within the entertainment community throughout the years of World

30. Ibid.
War II. Hollywood produced numerous anti-Nazi films; radio personalities broadcast patriotic programs; musicians made inspirational recordings; and the Broadway community organized many benefit performances. Weill was eager to volunteer his talent to the American cause. Weill's responses were swift and enthusiastic when presented with opportunities to contribute to the war effort, and he was involved with all the major entertainment branches: film, radio, recordings, and Broadway.

The Hollywood film industry produced both commercial war movies, taking advantage of the surge in American patriotism, and films for the War Department, some for training troops and others for propaganda purposes. Weill, in collaboration with the lyricist Ira Gershwin, wrote the soundtrack for the 1944 musical film, Where Do We Go From Here?, a wartime "escape" comedy about a man (played by Fred MacMurray) who, having flunked the military medical exam, enlists the help of a genie to find a way into the army. That same year Weill wrote incidental music for the propaganda film, Salute to France. Written by Maxwell Anderson and narrated by the actor José Ferrer, the film was one of a series of the United States Office of War Information films made during the months preceding the opening of the "Second Front" in Western Europe on June 4, 1944. Made in conditions of top secrecy, Salute to France was a bilingual production designed for American
and Free French forces involved in the liberation of France, and also for the French populace itself.

Weill was the composer for two special radio broadcasts, both with texts by Maxwell Anderson. The cantata *The Ballad of Magna Carta* was broadcast in February 1940 on Norman Corwin's Sunday afternoon program called *Pursuit of Happiness*. The cantata, fashioned after the extremely popular *Ballad for Americans* which Paul Robeson had recently premiered on Corwin's program, was a celebration of American liberties and a protest against tyrants, with veiled references to Roosevelt as well as the obvious ones to Hitler. Weill wrote incidental music for the half-hour radio program entitled *Your Navy*, broadcast in February 1942 and narrated by two popular actors of the time, Frederic March and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

Weill composed music for several wartime recordings. He paraphrased several patriotic songs as background to Helen Hayes' recitations of various inspirational verses. The 1942 RCA recording was entitled *Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory*. The Office of War Information in Washington commissioned Weill to write a companion piece to his propaganda song "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?," originally written for an anti-Nazi rally. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" (Brecht, librettist) and its companion piece, "Wie lange noch?" (Mehring, librettist) were recorded
in 1944 by the War Department and broadcast to Germany.

In addition to his contributions in film, radio, and recordings, Weill worked within the Broadway community to contribute to the war effort. He wrote several songs and became the production manager for the American Theater Wing's "Lunchtime Follies," the variety show productions which took place within war-related factories for the workers' entertainment. For the Broadway-based organization Fight for Freedom, Weill contributed music for its pageant, *Fun to be Free*, which took place in October 1941 at Madison Square Garden. Written by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, the pageant presented a sweeping history of America from the Declaration of Independence to the present, with such personalities as Tallulah Bankhead and Burgess Meredith serving as narrators. Also for Fight for Freedom, Weill set three Walt Whitman Civil War poems to music in 1942. Along with several other theater personalities in his neighborhood some thirty-five miles north of New York City, Weill volunteered his talent for the 1942 Rockland County fund-raising revue entitled *Rockland Riot*, intended to assist the Russian War Relief organization. And finally, in 1943, Weill composed the music for Ben Hecht's Madison Square Garden pageant, *We Will Never Die*, labeled as "a memorial, dedicated to the two million Jewish dead in Europe." The news of the Nazi atrocities against Jews was slowly reaching the United States, and Hecht wrote
the pageant in hopes of arousing some kind of action against the slaughter. Its two performances drew crowds of twenty thousand people each time, and involved such luminaries as Billy Rose (producer), Moss Hart (director), and actors Paul Muni and Edward G. Robinson. The enormous production included a chorus of two hundred rabbis and two hundred cantors.

Kurt Weill's main contributions to the American war effort were accomplished through his music. However, one additional patriotic duty for which he volunteered was as an enemy plane-spotter. Along with his friend and neighbor Maxwell Anderson, he was always ready to be summoned to the observation tower some three miles from his home. Lotte Lenya also volunteered for a similar duty as a United States Air Force observer. Whatever their reasons, whether enthusiasm for their newly adopted country, impending American citizenship, or the comraderie of fellow entertainment professionals who were also volunteers, Weill and Lenya willingly gave of their time and talent to help America and her allies defeat the couple's former homeland.

The War Songs

Within Kurt Weill's total musical output in relation to the war effort are fourteen separate songs. These fourteen war songs can be divided into three distinct groups (see appendix, page 164). One group of eight songs falls
under the category of American propaganda songs. These songs were written for various organizations dedicated to promoting America's presence in the war and encouraging patriotism. Although it is difficult to determine the specific event for which most of these propaganda songs were intended (there is no record of performance for many of these songs), the music and lyrics of the songs give strong evidence of their intended purpose. Six of the eight songs were most likely written for the Lunch Time Follies productions: "The Good Earth" and "Buddy on the Nightshift" (Oscar Hammerstein II), "We Don't Feel Like Surrendering Today" and "Oh Uncle Samuel" (Maxwell Anderson), "Toughen Up, Buckle Down, Carry On" (Dorothy Fields), and "Song of the Inventory" (Lewis Allan). Only "Song of the Inventory," mentioned in a 1943 newspaper article about the Lunch Time Follies, can be placed in this group with certainty. 31 "Schickelgruber" (Howard Dietz) was probably meant for a Fight for Freedom program, while "Song of the Free" (Archibald MacLeish) was included in a revue that opened at the Roxy Theater in New York on June 4, 1942.

The second group of two war songs was written as a propaganda tool aimed exclusively at a German-speaking audience, both in Germany and in America. The two songs,

"Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" (Bertolt Brecht) and "Wie lange noch?" (Walter Mehring) were written in German by Germans. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" was performed at an anti-Nazi program in New York, sponsored and largely attended by members of the German emigrant community. The Office of War Information commissioned Weill to write a companion piece, and Weill responded with "Wie lange noch?" Both songs were broadcast behind enemy lines in the spring of 1944.

The third group of songs, the Walt Whitman Songs, were originally written for the singer Paul Robeson and were later offered to the Fight for Freedom organization.
CHAPTER II

THE AMERICAN PROPAGANDA SONGS

The Lunch Time Follies

When America entered the war in December 1941, Kurt Weill and Moss Hart were enjoying the tremendous success of their Broadway musical, Lady in the Dark, which had opened in January of that same year. Now that America was beginning its war preparations, one of Weill and Hart's primary concerns was how they could contribute to the effort. In his essay, "A Coke, A Sandwich, and Us!," Weill wrote:

I was sitting at lunch with Moss Hart and we were talking about the one problem which was on everybody's mind during that period: How can I find my place in the nation's war effort. Somehow we felt that those who were young enough to serve in the armed forces had at least one slight advantage, because somebody else decided for them what they could do for the country. We had to go out and find a place where we could be useful.

The opportunity for both men to serve their country presented itself in the spring of 1942. It was then that the American Theater Wing decided to fund a program

modelled on the Entertainments National Service Association, a British government-sponsored enterprise for providing entertainment both to service men and to factory workers. Many of the leading talents of Hollywood and Broadway, including Weill and Hart, volunteered their time and energy to what became known as the "Lunch Time Follies:" Harold Rome, Frank Loesser and Oscar Hammerstein II for the east-coast troupes, and Ira Gershwin, Groucho Marx and Jerome Kern for the west-coast troupes. The Lunch Time Follies personnel would enter war-related factories during lunch breaks that took place around the clock (at noon, 8 p.m., midnight, and 4 a.m.) in order to entertain and boost the morale and the productivity of the workers. The performing conditions were less than ideal, with equipment limited to a piano, two microphones, and a small platform stage placed into any available space that could be found amid the machinery of war production. Standing around the stage or sitting on machinery and munching sandwiches, the workers watched comedians, singers, and lines of chorus girls perform. Lasting anywhere from fifteen to fifty minutes, depending upon the length of the lunch hour, the shows included a mixture of songs, dance numbers, and sketches. All the material was very topical, relating directly to the workers and to the daily headlines and war developments.
Weill, who became the chairman of the Lunch Time Follies production committee, found it one of the most thrilling experiences of his life and delighted in the immediacy of the audience contact which these shows afforded. He described his experience at the Wheeler Shipyard in Brooklyn as follows:

We arrived at the shipyard with a group of about ten performers. The workers had built a little outdoor stage in a square overlooking the sound, against the background of a victory ship which was just ready to be launched. It was one of the most exciting moments of my theatrical life when at noon, with the sound of the lunch whistle some 1400 men rushed into the square and watched the show while eating lunch. The show consisted of some singing and dancing, with the Kaufmann and Hart sketch "The Man Who Came to Russia" as the centerpiece. We felt immediately that the idea was what Broadway would call "a natural." It had the informality, the unfeigned popular touch and immediate contact between audience and performers that one experiences when a traveling circus arrives in a small town. Strangely enough, whenever I went out with our shows, I experienced the same excitement at the sound of the whistle, the same feeling that this was theatre in the oldest and best sense, comparable to the theatre of ancient Greece, China, or the mystery plays of the Middle Ages.

Not only was Weill the Follies production manager but also one of its songwriters. The songs he wrote for these factory shows were popular and patriotic, and the lyrics incorporate colloquial and slang expressions of the workers. The performers in the shows were theater and Broadway actors, and the limited ranges and

2. Ibid.
uncomplicated melodies of these songs, typical of the
Broadway song style of the 1930s, were designed specifically
for these singing actors. The most representative song
of this group is "Buddy on the Nightshift," with lyrics
by Oscar Hammerstein II.

Oscar Hammerstein II

Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960) came from a successful
show business family. His grandfather, Oscar Hammerstein
I, was a leading American opera impresario of the late
nineteenth and early twentieth century, building and
managing many New York opera houses, including the Manhattan
Opera House. His father William and uncle Arthur were
also managers and producers of musical shows. By 1942
Oscar Hammerstein II had already experienced considerable
theatrical success, teaming up as lyricist with such leading
theater composers as Vincent Youmans (*Wildflower*, 1923),
Sigmund Romberg (*The Desert Song*, 1926) and Jerome Kern
(*Showboat*, 1927). His most famous and successful
collaboration with Richard Rodgers would begin the next
year, in 1943, with *Oklahoma*. Hammerstein's work with
Rodgers established him as the most important and
influential author of musical plays during the 1940s and
1950s.

In writing his lyrics, Hammerstein used simple
vocabulary and phrases of everyday speech, in a direct,
uncomplicated and sentimental manner. In his column following the opening night of *The Sound of Music*, *Variety* theater critic Hobe Morrison wrote: "As always, Hammerstein's lyrics have the deceptive simplicity, the seeming effortlessness and naturalness of painstaking artistry. The lyricist seems increasingly to be writing about ordinary things, with an eloquence that lends universality and throat-catching impact." His songs had a folksy and at the same time elegant quality about them. Songs such as "Ol' Man River" (Jerome Kern, *Showboat*, 1927), "Oh, What A Beautiful Morning" (Richard Rodgers, *Oklahoma!*, 1943) and "Edelweiss" (Richard Rodgers, *Sound of Music*, 1959) immediately became a part of the American song treasury and achieved folk-song-like popularity.

Some of the war-related activities that occupied Hammerstein in 1942 were his works for the Writers' War Board, the Stage Door Canteen and the American Theatre Wing War Service. It was through this last organization that Hammerstein established his brief collaboration with Kurt Weill, providing the lyrics for the Lunch Time Follies songs "Buddy On the Nightshift" and "The Good Earth."

"Buddy on the Nightshift" Analysis

Hello there, buddy on the nightshift.  
I hope you slept all day  
Until the moon came out and woke you up  
And sent you on your way.

Hello there, buddy on the nightshift.  
I hope you're feeling fine.  
I left a lot of work for you to do  
On a long assembly line.

I wish I knew you better,  
But you never go my way.  
For when one of us goes on the job,  
The other hits the hay.

Goodbye now, buddy on the nightshift  
And push those planes along.  
And when the sun comes out I'll take your place  
All wide awake and strong;  
I'll follow you, you'll follow me,  
And how can we go wrong.

In "Buddy on the Nightshift" Hammerstein speaks directly to the war factory workers. Many of these factories, especially at the beginning of the war, would operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In this song the worker on the dayshift speaks to his or her "buddy on the nightshift" with words of encouragement to "push those planes along" the "long assembly line." The lyrics are organized within a simple rhyme scheme, so that the second and fourth lines of every stanza rhyme (abcb). Hammerstein's use of slang expressions and simple, conversational phrases was well suited to the targeted audience and in keeping with his Broadway style of writing lyrics.
The Music

Weill's choice of a popular Broadway musical style was also well suited to an audience of factory workers, as well as to Hammerstein's lyrics. Weill wrote two versions of "Buddy on the Nightshift," one in C major and the other in E flat major. Both song versions share the style and format of the standard American popular song (thirty-two measures, a-a₁-b-a²), with a four-measure extension of the final phrase (a² = twelve measures) to accommodate Hammerstein's two additional lines of text. As is standard in this popular song form, the first eight measures form an antecedent phrase with an open cadence, answered by the next eight measures (consequent phrase) and a closed cadence.

The first version of the song begins in C major with four identical measures of introduction. These four measures of music represent the factory whistles signaling a shift change (Example 1).

4. It is not clear why Weill chose to set the lyrics twice other than to experiment melodically and harmonically. The vocal ranges and demands are similar in both songs, so it is not likely that he was writing the second version to accommodate another singer.

Each measure consists of a half note $ii_7$ chord moving to a half note $I_7$ chord, with four quarter notes played above in a higher register. Already in the introduction can be found important features that will occur throughout the rest of the song. The $ii_7$ chord appears frequently and is emphasized by its placement on the downbeat. Nearly every chord in the song is an extended tertian sonority, either a seventh, ninth, eleventh or thirteenth. Many of the important melodic notes, those on downbeats and longer held notes, constitute the added sixth, seventh, eleventh or thirteenth note of the underlying chordal structure, a feature illustrated in the quarter notes in the introduction.

As the voice enters, the dotted and syncopated rhythms of the melody and the accompaniment, along with the seventh, ninth and eleventh chords, reinforce the popular song style of the introduction. The accompaniment is chordal and
functions strictly as a decorative background to the vocal melody, which is doubled in the treble line of the accompaniment (Example 2). As is typical in Broadway songs, the melody and its text dominate the overall musical structure. It is evident that Weill, already a veteran of the theater, understood this stylistic feature of Broadway songs, as he sets Hammerstein's lyrics in syllabic style, carefully following the natural inflections and stresses of speech (Example 2).

Of particular note is the manner in which he sets the words "Hello there." He uses an ascending second followed by a downward leap of a seventh in the C major version (Example 3a), musically interpreting the natural speech inflection of this phrase. In addition, he follows the rhythm of the words by giving the unaccented first syllable, "Hel-," an eighth note and placing the second, accented syllable, "-lo," as a quarter note on the downbeat. The E flat version of the song incorporates a similar musical gesture, with a leap of an octave, followed by a descending third and the same rhythmic setting as in the C major version (Example 3b).


a. 4-5, C major version

```
Hello there buddy on the night-shift!
```

b. 44-45, E flat major version

```
Hello there, buddy on the night-shift
```

Melodic contour is once again affected by speech inflections and textual meaning in the following example (Example 4). Here an ascending melodic line reaches its peak at the climactic words, "hits the hay," of the textual phrase.

Additional examples of how Weill's musical rhythms are based upon the rhythms of the text occur at the end of each line, where he extends the rhythmic values (half notes and dotted notes) to emphasize the conclusion of thoughts and phrases.

Another common stylistic feature of Broadway songs, rhythmic and melodic repetition, is prevalent throughout "Buddy on the Nightshift." Example 5 demonstrates this feature.


The measures of chromaticism and parallel chordal movement (for example, measures 8 and 12, shown in Example
2) occur between the vocal phrases throughout the song and Weill also uses this idea to end the first version of the song. It should be noted that the final two measures of the song in Weill's manuscript are replaced by a two-measure modulatory passage in the published version (The Unknown Kurt Weill, European American Music Corporation, ed. Lys Symonette). These measures were added by Richard Woitach, the pianist for The Unknown Kurt Weill recording (with soprano Teresa Stratas), who provided this passage for the recorded version of the song so that Ms. Stratas could sing both versions as a single song; consequently, the printed version incorporated these two measures to match the recorded version. In his arrangement Woitach builds upon the chromatic descent of parallel chords in the corresponding passage in Weill's manuscript.  


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Kurt Weill's manuscript</th>
<th>b. Richard Woitach's arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. The information pertaining to the Woitach arrangement and the copy of Weill's manuscript were provided by
Weill's use of augmented chords, particularly the $V_7^+$ (measure 11), $V_9^+$ (measure 28), and the added sixth chord (measure 12) once again adds a special popular flavor to the music (Example 7).


The second version of the song, in E flat major, can be thought of as a very loose arrangement of the first version. The E flat major version is similar to the C major version in its form (a-a' b-a') and in its predominant use of extended tertian chords. The melody and harmony are varied, but the rhythm remains fundamentally the same. Except for the difference in key, the b sections in both versions are very similar. Weill's main avenue for variation throughout the song occurs in the accompaniment.

The chromatic idea so prevalent in the C major version

Mr. Mario Mercado and Mrs. Lys Symonette, both from the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music in New York.
is highlighted at the end of the E flat major version (Example 8).


The vocal demands of the two versions of "Buddy on the Nightshift" are moderate, due to their popular styles and the abilities of the performers for whom they were written, namely singing actors from the Broadway stage. In both song versions the melodies are basically diatonic, the melodic movement is predominately conjunct or arpeggiated, and the vocal ranges limited (C major: b-e\(^2\); E flat major: b flat-f\(^2\)). The style of singing called for here is what might be called a "croon," represented by such popular singers as Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and other 1940s Big Band singers. This singing style involves a continuous legato vocal line and limited use of vibrato. The style also involves relaxation of the rhythm and some use of portamento. For example, in the first vocal phrases of both the C major and the E flat major versions a slight portamento may be used to connect the downward leaps in the vocal lines (Example 9). In
these phrases the eighth notes can be sung as dotted eighth notes instead of straight eighth notes.


a. 4-8
written

\[
\text{Hel- lo there buddy on the night-shift! I hope you slept all day until the}
\]

performed

\[
\text{Hel- lo there buddy on the night-shift! I hope you slept all day until the}
\]

b. 44-48
written

\[
\text{Hel- lo there buddy on the night-shift! I hope you slept all day until the}
\]

performed

\[
\text{Hel- lo there, Buddy on the night-shift! I hope you slept all day— until the}
\]

In addition to rhythmic alterations the singer may also add vocal ornaments in several places in the song (Example 10).

a. 16-17 written performed

b. 47-48 written performed

Fight for Freedom

The mobilization of the Broadway community manifested itself not only in the Lunch Time Follies productions but also in the organization Fight for Freedom. Established before America's official entry into the war, Fight for Freedom was initially dedicated to the fight against isolationism, and consequently to the United States' total involvement in the war. This was a cause strongly supported by Kurt Weill and by many other German refugees, whatever their political leanings might be. Therefore, the Fight for Freedom programs were aimed at a mixed audience that included not only American patriots but also members of the German emigrant community. After the attack on Pearl Harbor and America's declaration of war, Fight for Freedom's goal changed to one of morale-boosting.
Weill contributed his talent to the organization's cause through several projects: the Madison Square Garden pageant *Fun to be Free*, the first three *Walt Whitman Songs*, and the RCA recording of patriotic melodramas recited by Helen Hayes, entitled *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*. It is also quite probable that Weill's song "Schickelgruber" was written for *Fight for Freedom*. Composed to lyrics by Howard Dietz, who was known for his clever and sophisticated writing style, "Schickelgruber" was a scathing indictment of Hitler. Full of references to Hitler's questionable genealogy, his youthful ambitions, and his rise to power, the song would have been appreciated and understood much more by an audience who had a more personal knowledge of Hitler, such as a *Fight for Freedom* audience, than the average American factory workers to whom the *Lunch Time Follies* shows were directed.

**Howard Dietz**

Howard Dietz (1896-1983) grew up in New York City and attended Columbia University at the same time as Oscar Hammerstein II and Lorenz Hart. His first job after college was as a copywriter for an advertising agency. One of the agency's accounts was the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, and one of Dietz's first assignments was to give the new company a trademark (Leo the Lion, inspired by the mascot of Columbia University) and a slogan (*Ars Gratia Artis*).
Samuel Goldwyn later appointed him director of advertising and publicity, and when, in 1924, the Goldwyn company merged with Metro and Mayer, he continued with the new company in a similar capacity. Dietz, who was director of publicity for MGM for over thirty years, moonlighted as a lyricist and librettist for twelve Broadway musicals, in addition to writing the English version of *La Bohème* and *Die Fledermaus* for the Metropolitan Opera.

Howard Dietz's greatest Broadway successes were achieved in collaboration with the composer Arthur Schwartz. During the 1930s the two men were the acknowledged masters of the revue form in the tradition of the Ziegfeld Follies productions. First collaborating in 1929 for the revue *The Little Show*, Schwartz and Dietz went on to produce a number of sophisticated entertainments such as *The Band Wagon* (1931) and *At Home Abroad* (1935). In describing the team's works, musical theater historian Stanley Green wrote:

> Within the revue framework, Schwartz and Dietz turned out pieces that stood out – dark, compelling minor-key torch songs, emotionally charged lyrical ballads, and briskly rhythmic numbers, all mated to lyrics noted for their delicate imagery, inventive rhyme schemes, and silkily subtle humor. Since both men were very much a part of the fashionable New York scene, their creations reflected the romantic and racy attitudes of an affluent worldly society - just as they also
required listeners to know the people, places, and playthings that make up that society.

When Dietz composed his lyrics, he often assumed a certain amount of sophistication and knowledge on the part of the audience. This is certainly the case with "Schickelgruber." Dietz's heavy-handed but witty attack on Hitler could only be appreciated by those familiar with the Führer's background, of which naturally the German emigrants and others who supported the Fight for Freedom programs were all too aware.

Analysis of "Schickelgruber"

The Text

In a hamlet in the Tyrol an old lady is not virile, She is languishing and heavy is her heart.
For she thinks about her baby who, had he been christened Abie,
Maybe might have never played the monster's part.
If her son had only married, if her lust had not miscarried,
Who can say for certain what might not have been.
In her somber weeds of sorrow she is hopeful some tomorrow
Will undo the passion that produced a sin.

Schickelgruber! Schickelgruber!
You were born a child of shame.
You have always been a bastard,
Even though you changed your name.
Came the headlines, then the breadlines,
As your will to power grew.
Schickelgruber, Schickelgruber!
What a pretty how-dy-do.
Though a mother, I can smother
Mother love at thought of you.

6. Stanley Green, record jacket notes for At Home Abroad (The Smithsonian Collection, RCA DPM1-0491).
In his youth his one obsession was to practice a profession,
And he dabbled with the palette and the paint.
But the art he couldn't master, so he went from paint to plaster,
And today he calls himself a plaster saint.
Is he good or evil fairy? All his pals have now grown wary,
That is, those of them who didn't rate the purge.
And the scent will ever linger, how he gave his friends the finger
Just to gratify and culminate an urge.

Schickelgruber! Schickelgruber!
Once the dew was on the rose.
Where you'll end up in the wind-up,
Schickelgruber, Heaven knows.
Ever ruthless, ever truthless,
When the judgment day is due.
Repercussions from the Russians,
Schickelgruber, say you're through.
Every village that you pillage
In revenge will turn on you.

Dietz's lyrics are a tongue-in-cheek account of Hitler's background. The title of the song, "Schickelgruber," is a reference to Hitler himself, and reinforces the fact that Hitler's father, Alois Schickelgruber, was illegitimate. Hitler's ancestors lived in the Waldviertel, an Austrian border area inhabited mostly by poor peasants. Here Hitler's father was born in 1837 as the illegitimate son of a 42-year-old peasant woman, Maria Anna Schickelgruber. Although conclusive evidence is lacking, it is probable that the father of Alois was Johann Hiedler (also spelled Hütter and Hitler), to whom Maria was married five years later, in 1842. However, the theory has been suggested that Alois' father, Adolf
Hitler's grandfather, was Jewish, as Maria once worked in a Jewish household and afterward supposedly received maintenance payments for the child from her former employer.  

It was not until 1876, when he was thirty-nine years old, that Alois Schickelgruber legitimized himself in a local church register and adopted the name of Alois Hitler. In 1885 Alois Hitler married Klara Poelzl, his third wife, and in 1889 their third child, Adolf, was born in the town of Braunau am Inn.

During the 1930s several enterprising journalists in Vienna, digging into parish archives, discovered the facts about Hitler's ancestry and tried to discredit the Nazi leader by calling him Adolf Schickelgruber. Knowing that his German audience would appreciate the reference to Hitler's illegitimate past, Dietz played up this fact as a means of mocking the despised German leader.

The song begins with the phrase "In a hamlet in the Tyrol," referring to Hitler's birthplace in Austria, the small town Braunau am Inn. This "hamlet" is located across the border from Bavaria, in a province of northeastern Austria called Oberösterreich (Upper Austria), not, as Dietz suggests, in the western province of Tyrol. Dietz takes literary license here, most likely because it was

easier to come up with a catchy phrase rhyming with "Tyrol" rather than with "Upper Austria."

The town of Braunau lies on the right bank of the Inn river, opposite the Bavarian town of Simbach, to which it is linked by a bridge. Hitler's place of birth, on the Austrian-German border, proved to be significant, for even as a youth Hitler became obsessed with the idea that there should be no border between the two German-speaking countries and that they should be united into one nation. His book, Mein Kampf, begins with these words:

Today it seems to me providential that fate should have chosen Braunau am Inn as my birthplace. For this little town lies on the boundary between two German states which we of the younger generation at least have made it our life-work to reunite by every means at our disposal...This little city on the border seems to me the symbol of a great mission.

In the first stanza Dietz again takes literary license by portraying Hitler himself, rather than his father, as the illegitimate child. The phrase "For she thinks about her baby who, had he been christened Abie" (i.e. Abraham) is a reference to the theory of Hitler's possible Jewish heritage, an accusation which most certainly would have been the ultimate insult to Hitler. The refrain continues to emphasize Hitler's illegitimate past.

The second stanza begins with an allusion to Hitler's failure both as an artist ("he dabbled with the palette and the paint") and as an architect ("he went from paint to plaster"). His failure to graduate from high school prevented him from entering architectural school, and twice he was refused entry as a painting and drawing student into the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. Regardless of this, Hitler continued throughout his life to consider himself an artist. His ruthlessness ("All his pals have now grown wary, that is, those of them who didn't rate the purge") and his duplicity and lust for power ("he gave his friends the finger just to gratify and culminate an urge") are next alluded to. With the return of the refrain, Dietz warns about the "repercussions from the Russians," a timely subject in 1942, as the German army occupying Russia was facing stiff resistance from the Russian army, and would ultimately be defeated in January 1943.

In "Schickelgruber" there is rhyme both within and at the end of the verses (abcb):

In a hamlet in the Tyrol an old lady is not virile,
She is languishing and heavy is her heart.
For she thinks about her baby who, had he been christened Abie,
Maybe might have never played the monster's part.

However, there are not as many predictable rhymes and clichéd phrases as in "Buddy on the Nightshift." Dietz's use of rhyme is more an integral part of the lyrics,
occurring sometimes unexpectedly, as compared to the predictable end rhymes in Hammerstein's "Buddy on the Nightshift." This difference in text construction can be attributed both to Dietz's and Hammerstein's different writing styles and also to the different audiences for which the songs were written; Hammerstein's more predictable, easily grasped lyrics were intended as light entertainment for factory workers wishing to relax on their lunch breaks, whereas Dietz's lyrics, full of unexpected rhymes and word associations, were intended for an audience who would have to assimilate a great amount of information within a short period of time.

Dietz underscores his satirical and comical account of Hitler by his use of awkward, often forced rhymes. An example of this is the phrase "In a hamlet in the Tyrol an old lady is not virile." There was probably a more eloquent way in which to express the fact that Hitler's mother was rather frail, but Dietz deliberately chooses the word "virile" in order to rhyme with "Tyrol." Other forced rhymes occur throughout the text: "For she thinks about her baby who, had he been christened Abie, maybe might have never played the monster's part;" "As your will to power grew. Schickelgruber, Schickelgruber! What a pretty how-dy-do."
"Schickelgruber" is in a two-part song form (AB). Both stanzas and refrains are sung to the same music with the exception of a varied and slightly expanded second ending. The A section consists of a four-measure introduction followed by thirty-six measures grouped as follows: a (ten measures) - b (eight measures) - c (ten measures) - a¹ (eight measures). The irregular phrasing in section A (the stanzas) is contrasted by the more regular phrase groups in section B (the refrains), which consists of four eight-measure phrases plus a fifth phrase of ten measures (eleven measures in the second ending). By deviating from the predictable succession of eight-measure phrases, Weill creates a song with more variety than the typical popular song form.

"Schickelgruber" begins in d minor in a brisk tempo (Allegro non troppo, \( \frac{1}{4} = 184 \)). A four-measure introduction consists of the progression iv-i-vi\(_7\)-i, which is repeated twice (Example 11). The vi\(_7\) chord is essentially decorative in nature and lacks strong harmonic function, since the fundamental harmonic progression is a simple i-iv-i sequence.

The crisp rhythms set up the entrance of the vocal line, which demands a quick and precise delivery of the text. The quickness and cleverness of the text and its rhyme scheme give the text a satirical and even a comic quality, which Weill reflects in his musical setting (Example 12). For instance, the repetition of the three quarter notes on the pitches d, e and f creates a mesmerizing, comical effect, as does the intentional monotony of the succession of quarter notes. Similarly comical is the placement of whole notes at the end of these phrases, creating a sudden lull in the verbal action and a much needed rest for the singer.

By the eighth measure the tonality begins to change from d minor to f minor. The first V-I progression of piece is found in measures 10-11, confirming the modulation to f minor (Example 12, measures 10-11). The scarcity of true dominant-to-tonic progressions is typical of much of Weill's music. After the key of f minor is confirmed the four-measure introduction (Example 11) reappears, transposed into f minor. These four measures, or parts of them, occur throughout the first half of the song, functioning somewhat like a unifying element. The voice enters with music similar to the first phrase, and once again modulates after the first four measures, this time from f minor to F major. The key change, as before, is confirmed through the only V-I progression in that section of music. The tonality switches from F major to d minor and back again to F major to end the first stanza.

The numerous key changes and frequent modulations in the predominantly minor stanza contrast with the tonal stability (F major) and strong harmonic functions in the refrain (Example 13). In addition, the melodic line changes in the refrain from primarily stepwise movement to a more disjunct motion, accompanied by a slowing down in the rhythm from quarter notes to mostly half notes. These changes occur when the text shifts from the narration of Hitler's past to addressing him directly as "Schickelgruber." The wider leaps in the vocal line create a more emphatic, and one might say a more accusatory tone. Weill also uses these vocal leaps to emphasize certain words, most notably the name "Schickelgruber." Weill adds another satirical touch here with his rhythmic setting of "Schickelgruber," emphasizing the wrong syllable of the word by placing it on the downbeat of the measure and giving it a longer note value. The result is Schickelgrüber instead of the correct accent, Schickelgruber, and a deliberate distortion of Hitler's illegitimate name (Example 13).

The second stanza repeats the music of the first stanza. The refrain is also repeated with a slightly expanded ending. At the conclusion of the song the introductory motive occurs one last time, bringing the song around full circle (Example 14).


As in "Buddy on the Nightshift," many stylistic characteristics of Broadway songs are evident in "Schickelgruber." The melody is highlighted against a chordal accompaniment, which doubles the melody in its treble line. The speech inflections of the text, in addition to its inherent rhythm, are a determining factor in the pitch contour and musical rhythms. For instance,
in the first phrase of the song (Example 12) the factual statement "In a hamlet in the Tyrol an old lady is not virile" is set lower in the voice, centering around the notes d-e-f. With the text "She is languishing and heavy is her heart" the pitches rise higher in the voice ("She is") and then descend ("languishing and heavy"), emphasizing the emotional content of this phrase. The natural rhythm of the text is deliberately altered by Weill throughout much of "Schickelgruber" for comic effect. This contrasts with his rhythmic setting of "Buddy on the Nightshift" which, because it was not intended to be comical, closely follows the rhythms of speech. The limited vocal range restricts the gamut of vocal colors and demands a more speech-like delivery. A further feature typical of a Broadway style is the frequent repetition of melody, harmony and rhythm, demonstrated in all of the musical examples above.

The performers for the Fight for Freedom organization, like those for the Lunch Time Follies, were Broadway actors, and Weill wrote "Schickelgruber" with their vocal abilities and special talents in mind. The vocal range is modest (b-f²) and the melody is predominantly diatonic, with a combination of conjunct and disjunct motion (the widest leap is a downward leap of a minor ninth). The actors' training in and experience with clear, precise stage diction was most certainly called upon in their rendition of
"Schickelgruber." The rapid delivery of the text and Weill's musical setting give this song its comic quality and should be performed as a kind of Broadway "patter" song. As Kim Kowalke commented: "Weill packaged the forced rhymes and awkward turns of phrase as a routine comic novelty number. The strophic setting is no more subtle than the lyrics, but then neither was Hitler." 10

CHAPTER III
THE GERMAN PROPAGANDA SONGS
The Office of War Information

The Office of War Information, the main propaganda vehicle of the United States government, enlisted the aid of many German emigrants, including many in the artistic community. Kurt Weill, Lotte Lenya, Bertolt Brecht, and Walter Mehring all became involved with the Office of War Information in the spring of 1944 with the recording by Weill and Lenya of two anti-Nazi songs, "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" (And What Did the Soldier's Wife Receive?) by Weill and Brecht and "Wie Lange Noch?" (How Much Longer?) by Weill and Mehring.

Weill, Lenya, Brecht and Mehring were all among the leading artists in the realm of German cabaret of the 1920s and 1930s. Thus it was logical that the two German propaganda songs, written and performed in the style for which the four had become famous, would strike a sympathetic chord among the intended German audience. The cabaret had flourished in Europe ever since the founding of the Parisian Chat Noir in 1881. Paris and Berlin became the most important centers of cabaret. Conceived as a place where freedom of thought, experimentation and improvisation
could take place, the cabaret was open to avant-garde influences from the literary and musical fields. Many classical composers became involved with the cabaret, among them Debussy, Milhaud, Satie and Schoenberg. Satie composed more than fifty pieces when he was the pianist at the Chat Noir and the Auberge du Clou. Schoenberg conducted the orchestra at the Überbrettl in Berlin from 1901 to 1903 and composed seven Brettllieder. In his biography of Schoenberg, Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt writes about one of the Brettllieder, "Nachtwandler:"

[The "Nachtwandler"] displays a musical appearance which has little in common with the novelties and boldness of Schoenberg's style of that time...It shows how cleverly Schoenberg - who was then living in the elevated world of the "Gurrelieder" - knew how to meet the demands of the popularization of literature and music which he also was striving for.

In Berlin in the late 1920s and early 1930s Kurt Weill became the most successful and typical representative composer of the German cabaret, primarily through The Threepenny Opera, Rise and Fall of the City Mahagonny, and Happy End. Bertolt Brecht and Walter Mehring led the


3. Wachsmann, 571.
names of those in the literary field who played active roles in the cabaret, while Lotte Lenya, Marlene Dietrich, Rosa Valetti and Trude Hesterberg were among the leading cabaret performers.

The text for "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" was enclosed in one of Brecht's letters to Weill (March 1942), soon after Brecht emigrated to America. Weill, at the time deeply involved in the American war effort, realized the poem's potential for propaganda and set it to music. The song was premiered by Lenya with Weill at the piano on April 3, 1943 at a mammoth anti-war program against Nazi Germany sponsored by German refugees. The program was produced by Ernst Josef Aufricht, the famous Berlin theater producer who had commissioned The Threepenny Opera, and by Manfred George, the editor of New York's German-language weekly newspaper, Aufbau. Under the slogan "We Fight Back," the four-hour-long program took place at Hunter College in New York, and included German and American anti-fascist music, poetry, speeches, slides, and both drama and comedy acts. Brecht attended the program, which included several readings of his poems, as well as Weill and Lenya's performance of "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" and songs from The Threepenny Opera and Happy End.

As a result of the effectiveness of "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" as an anti-war song and its enthusiastic reception at the Hunter College program, the Office of
War Information (OWI) became interested in including the song on one of its overseas broadcasts to Germany. In the early forties the OWI, often in conjunction with the BBC and the Voice of America, beamed dozens of foreign-language broadcasts each day to various countries. In the early spring of 1944 Weill was called to the OWI office in Washington and asked to supply, at very short notice and in strict secrecy, another anti-Nazi song to be broadcast along with "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" The urgency and secrecy of the request were due to the impending Allied invasion of Normandy; the U.S. government wanted to step up its propaganda efforts in anticipation of the massive military initiative scheduled for June. For this new song Weill chose to collaborate with Walter Mehring, the famous Berlin cabaret writer who had come to America in 1941. As Kim Kowalke wrote: "In searching for a poet to rekindle the spirit of the golden years of pre-Nazi Germany in the hearts of those behind enemy lines, Weill's choice could not have been better. Nor could the War Department's judgment in selecting Weill's music have been more perceptive." In other words, the combination of Weill and Mehring, two of the most popular artists of Berlin's golden era in cabaret, was certain to produce

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a powerful nostalgic and sentimental reaction among the oppressed German population.

The resulting Weill/Mehring song was entitled "Wie lange noch?" Whether because of the limited time frame or because of the appropriateness of the music to the situation, Weill chose not to compose new music but rather to adapt his 1934 song "Je ne t'aime pas" (I don't love you) for the OWI broadcast. It may have been the latter reason that Weill chose to reuse the music from his 1934 chanson, composed during his exile in France. As Kowalke commented: "As always, Weill's sure sense of his audience drew him back to a melody composed when the pain of Hitler's cruelty was still vividly personal."5 "Je ne t'aime pas," with words by the French novelist Maurice Magre (1871-1941), was written for the popular French cabaret singer Lys Gauty and was published as sheet music with Gauty's picture gracing its cover. The music of this torch song, typical of the Parisian cabaret chanson, was used almost verbatim for "Wie lange noch?" The sentiments of lost love and betrayal in "Je ne t'aime pas" were matched by Mehring in "Wie lange noch?," which casts the German people in the role of a betrayed lover, with Hitler as the betrayer. Mehring's adaptation of the original French song into German is remarkable. The German text is idiomatic, with no

5. Ibid.
compromises to indicate that this German cabaret song was originally a French cabaret chanson. Weill made only a few minor rhythmic and melodic changes in order to accommodate the German text.

These two German propaganda songs were recorded by Weill and Lenya sometime in the spring of 1944 and broadcast shortly thereafter behind enemy lines. Until the war ended the songs were to be kept confidential, and both remained unpublished until their inclusion in the 1982 song collection The Unknown Kurt Weill.

Lotte Lenya

Karoline Blamauer (1891-1981), whose stage name was Lotte Lenya, was born in Vienna and at a very early age became involved with the theater, learning to dance and tightrope walk at the age of four in order to perform in a small neighborhood circus. At age sixteen, after graduating from high school, she left Vienna to study ballet and drama in Zurich, Switzerland. As a member of both a repertory company and a ballet company, Lenya performed in many different genres, from ballets and plays to operettas. She moved to Berlin in 1920 and joined a Shakespeare repertory company, playing all the Shakespearean roles suitable for a young actress.

It was in 1922, in Berlin, that Lotte Lenya's path first crossed that of Kurt Weill's. Lenya recalls:
My first audition was for a children's ballet, Die Zaubernacht [The Magic Night], and though I was hired, my teacher, who had applied as director was not. Out of loyalty I refused the part. Incidentally the composer of that work was Kurt Weill. He was in the orchestra pit and saw me - I did not see him...Our meeting was to come some years later.

Their first actual meeting took place in 1924. Lenya once again recalls:

The first time I saw him was at the end of a lake on the outskirts of Berlin. I was staying at the summer house of Georg Kaiser, the playwright; he asked me to row across the lake and pick up a young composer waiting at the station who wanted Kaiser to write a libretto for him. There he was: five feet, three and a half inches tall - an inch taller than I - with his hairline already receding, and thick, thick glasses. But the face was gentle, poetic, warm. That is how I first remember Kurt Weill.

The couple were married in January 1927. Lotte Lenya was not only Kurt Weill's marital partner but also his artistic partner. She premiered many roles in Weill's stage works: Jenny in The Little Mahagonny, 1927; Jenny in The Threepenny Opera, 1928; Jenny in the film The Threepenny Opera, 1930; Jenny in the Berlin production of Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, 1931; Anna I in The Seven Deadly Sins, 1933; Miriam and the Witch of Endor in The Eternal Road, 1937; and the Duchess of Medici


7. Ibid., 42.
in The Firebrand of Florence, 1945. In addition to the stage roles, Weill also wrote several songs for Lenya: "Nanna's Lied," written for Lenya as a special gift for Christmas in 1939; "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" in 1943; and "Wie lange noch?" in 1944.

In her article "Enmeshed in His 'Inner' Music," Lys Symonette writes:

It was an ever recurring miracle to witness the effortless creativity of a composer who was so totally enmeshed in his "inner" music that he could create an entirely new musical phrase, melody or orchestral effect and put it on paper while something entirely different in sound or rhythm was going on around him on stage. Forever present in this "inner" music was the voice of Lotte Lenya. "Whatever melody comes to me, I first hear it as sung by Lenya," he once remarked.

It is clear that Lotte Lenya was an important influence in many of Weill's works and that he, in turn, was a major contributor to her career. Her voice, although not a trained voice nor even a pretty voice, was a very unusual voice, full of expression and character. Lenya's voice changed rather dramatically throughout the course of her career. In the late 1920s and early 1930s recordings of the Weill-Brecht classics The Threepenny Opera, Rise and Fall of the City Mahagonny and Happy End, Lenya's voice

was a relatively high, light soprano voice. After hearing her perform in London in 1933, Virgil Thompson wrote, "Madame Lenja [sic] has a tiny voice, seemingly untrained, with no resonance, no placing and no power."\(^9\) At one of the first parties that Weill and Lenya attended in New York in 1935, the host George Gershwin told his two German guests that he was very fond of the recording of *The Threepenny Opera*, which he played often, but that he had never liked the "squeaky voice" of the leading lady. Only later did he realize his faux pas - Lotte Lenya was that leading lady.\(^10\) A more flattering assessment of Lenya's voice from this period was made by Michael Morley: "What strikes one most of all about the young Lenya's rendition of 'Seerauber Jenny,' for example, is its lightness, its deftness, its grace."\(^11\)

During the years 1943-1944 Weill and Lenya made two recordings which offer both the rare opportunity of hearing the composer accompanying his own songs at the piano and the opportunity of hearing Lenya's voice at this stage in her life. In these two recordings, one a collection

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11. Michael Morley, "Nor In the Singer Let the Song Be Lost," *Kurt Weill Newsletter*, II, no. 2 (Fall 1984), 7.
of six Weill songs (two each from his German, French and American works), the other a recording of the two propaganda songs for short-wave transmissions to Germany, Lenya's voice is decidedly more mature and lower in range, yet still soprano in quality. It was only in the 1950s and 1960s, after her husband's death, that Lenya's voice developed the quality described by Lenya herself as "one octave below laryngitis."\textsuperscript{12} Her voice became much lower and developed a raspy quality, most likely caused in large part by her advancing age and her habit of chain smoking.

Lenya's freedom of movement on stage, a product of her training as a dancer, and her outstanding acting ability, acquired through her intensive training in classical theater, more than compensated for her lack of vocal endowment. Her talent lay in her dramatic interpretation of the text and her manner of switching back and forth from singing to quasi-speaking. Virgil Thomson described her as "a diseuse of most extraordinary personality,"\textsuperscript{13} correctly linking her to the performing tradition of the diseuse in the cabaret.\textsuperscript{14} He continued:


14. The diseuse, a woman who recited verse or other text to music (the most famous example being Yvette
She sings, or rather croons, with an impeccable diction that reaches to the farthest corner of any hall and with an intensity of dramatization and a sincerity of will that are very moving. She is, moreover, beautiful in a new way, a way that nobody has vulgarized so far, and her simple costumes are admirable. It will not be long, I imagine, before some movie-gang gets hold of her and stuffs her down our throats like Garbo.

Lenya's voice was ideally suited to cabaret songs, and much of what Weill wrote in this style, especially the songs in *The Threepenny Opera*, *Mahagonny* and *Happy End*, became inseparably linked with her. However, as Kim Kowalke has noted, Lenya's interpretations of Weill's music have often been inappropriately imitated:

Lotte Lenya's comeback as an interpreter of Weill's music was also double-edged. On the one hand, her participation was indispensable, her stylistic interpretations authoritative. On the other, her greatly diminished vocal capabilities prompted imitators with insufficiently compensating talents to claim for their cabaret acts music originally intended for lyric sopranos. Very soon, musically unworthy versions of the songs, even of whole theatrical works, displaced what Weill had originally composed and zealously protected.


These misinterpretations of Weill's music can be explained in large part by the fact that the voice that Weill "heard" as he wrote songs for Lenya was her singing voice from the 1920s to the 1940s - that is to say, a soprano voice. The recordings from these years have only recently begun to become more widely available and to be reissued on compact disc. In the recordings of Weill's music that Lotte Lenya made in the 1950s, in addition to her concert performers in the 1950s and 1960s, her voice had taken on its lower, harsher quality. Many believed this to be the way her voice had always been and assumed that Weill's music should be sung in such a manner, which consequently necessitated downward transpositions of many of his songs. In his article "Nor In the Singer Let the Song Be Lost," Michael Morley warns against this frequent practice:

Such transpositions inevitably cloud the musical texture and obscure the relationship between melody and accompaniment; the voice hangs heavy or plods along underneath the accompaniment instead of floating on top of it. This practice too frequently goes hand in hand with an interpretative approach which accepts the primacy of the message over the musical vehicle for conveying it, instead of insisting on the interdependance of the two. Taken to its logical conclusion, it leads to a semi-rhythmical speaking of the verses over an instrumental accompaniment which

often highlights the melody as well. This surely cannot be what Weill or Brecht envisioned.

In order to be authentic in their renditions of Weill's songs, particularly the classic Weill-Brecht songs from the 1920s and 1930s, singers should become familiar with the recordings of the original cast and the recordings by Lotte Lenya from this same period.

After Kurt Weill's death in 1950, Lotte Lenya was instrumental in promoting Weill's music and in perpetuating his legacy. She recreated her role as Jenny in the historic run of The Threepenny Opera on Broadway. Also on Broadway Lenya starred as Fraulein Schneider in Cabaret. In the 1950s she made a series of recordings for Columbia Records of Weill's music. Besides her performances, recordings and concerts of her late husband's works, she also appeared in numerous Brecht plays; on television; and in movies, including the James Bond movie From Russia With Love as Rosa Kleb, and the Tennessee Williams film The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone as the Contessa, for which she received an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actress.

Bertolt Brecht

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) is regarded as one of the greatest German writers of his generation and a major figure.

18. Michael Morley, "Nor In the Singer Let the Song Be Lost," Kurt Weill Newsletter, II, no. 2 (Fall 1984), 7.
in twentieth-century theater. As a poet and a playwright Brecht was an innovator whose ideas have influenced many dramatists and composers. He was a very complex human being, with an extremely dry, sardonic wit and a ruthless irreverence for the traditions of society. His wit and irreverence are evident in nearly all of his works. Brecht's shabby dress and personal habits were his means of announcing an anti-middle-class stance, not unlike the counter-culture movement of the sixties. He always appeared with an ill-shaven face, closely cropped, unkept hair, baggy trousers and an old flannel or denim jacket. Despite his often arrogant and abrasive personality, Brecht was respected as a brilliant man whose use and command of the German language and its idioms were impeccable. Brecht's social consciousness and left-wing political orientation strongly influenced his writing. Music played an important part in a large number of his works, and the most important of his musical collaborators were the composers Kurt Weill, Paul Dessau and Hanns Eisler.

The collaboration of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht was an extremely successful professional relationship for both men. From 1927 to 1933 Brecht and Weill produced a number of stage and concert works that have established them as one of the more notable collaborations in twentieth-century music. Their personal relationship, however, was never very close. In his book *Kurt Weill: Composer in*
a Divided World, Ronald Taylor wrote that neither man ever addressed the other by the familiar German du (you), but rather used the more formal Sie (you). Differences in their artistic, political and personal views eventually led to the end of their collaboration. Artistically, Weill resented the strict limitations on his music in Brecht's plays, while Brecht was wary of Weill's serious musical ambitions. With Weill, Brecht felt he was too close to performing the role of traditional librettist, a role that satisfied Weill's intentions but not those of Brecht's. Brecht fought for the priority of the text, Weill for that of the music.

Politically, Brecht was a Marxist, with a complete disdain for the status quo, while Weill, although often committed to making protest and political statements on the stage, was not a Marxist, and in fact was much more interested in his art than in any political affiliation. When asked why Weill and Brecht parted ways, Lotte Lenya recalls, "It was because Brecht at that time got more political by the minute, you know. And Kurt said, 'I'm not interested in composing Karl Marx; I like to make music.'"20 Weill's view of America, even before his exile


in that country, was less harsh than that of Brecht's. Brecht's America was a sinister though fascinating land, full of unsavory characters, where capitalism corrupted the entire society. Weill, who loved contemporary American music, with its elements of jazz, and also appreciated the country's openness to Jewish emigrants, had a much more benign attitude toward America. Weill was continually struggling with Brecht to soften the anti-American sentiments in their works.

In their personal demeanors Weill and Brecht were very different. Weill was more congenial and diplomatic than Brecht in his dealings with people. He was basically a quiet and unassuming man, less strident in manner and appearance than Brecht. In contrast to Brecht's unkempt appearance, Weill was always neat in his physical appearance and clothing.

Weill, as a composer and an intellectual, could understand and appreciate the genius of Brecht, but the latter's unbending and temperamental nature, along with his different views and goals, eventually proved to hasten the end of their working relationship. After their last work together, The Seven Deadly Sins in 1933, the strain of their relationship proved too great. Several attempts to revive their partnership when the two men were exiled in America failed, with the exception of Weill's setting
of two Brecht poems, "Nanna's Lied" in 1939 and "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" in 1943.

Analysis of "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?"

The Text

Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib
Aus der alten Hauptstadt Prag?
Aus Prag bekam sie die Stöckelschuh,
Einen Gruss und dazu die Stöckelschuh.
Das bekam sie aus der Stadt Prag.

Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib
Aus Oslo über dem Sund?
Aus Oslo bekam sie das Kräglein aus Pelz.
Hoffentlich gefällt's das Kräglein aus Pelz!
Das bekam sie aus Oslo am Sund.

Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib
Aus dem reichen Amsterdam?
Aus Amsterdam bekam sie den Hut
Und er steht ihr gut, der holländische Hut.
Den bekam sie aus Amsterdam.

Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib
Aus Brüssel im belgischen Land?
Aus Brüssel bekam sie die seltenen Spitzen.
Ach, das zu besitzen, so seltene Spitzen!
Die bekam sie aus belgischem Land.

Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib
Aus der Lichterstadt Paris?
Aus Paris bekam sie das seidene Kleid.
Zu der Nachbarin Neid, das seidene Kleid.
Das bekam sie aus Paris.

Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib
Aus dem südlichen Bukarest?
Aus Bukarest bekam sie das Hemd
So bunt und so fremd, ein rumänisches Hemd.
Das bekam sie aus Bukarest.

Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib
Aus dem weiten Russenland?
Aus Russenland bekam sie den Witwenschleier.
Zu der Totenfeier den Witwenschleier.
Das bekam sie aus Russenland.
"And What Did The Soldier's Wife Receive?"

And what did the soldier's wife receive from the ancient capital Prague? From Prague she received high-heeled shoes - a greeting and high-heeled shoes.

And what did the soldier's wife receive from Oslo across the sound? From Oslo she received a little fur piece and the hope that it would please.

And what did the soldier's wife receive from wealthy Amsterdam? From Amsterdam she received a hat - she looks good in that Dutch hat.

And what did the soldier's wife receive from Brussels, Belgium? From Brussels she received the rarest of lace - oh, to own Belgian lace.

And what did the soldier's wife receive from Paris, the city of light? From Paris she received a silken gown - it was the talk of the town.

And what did the soldier's wife receive from Bucharest in the south? From Bucharest she received a smock, a strange, gay, Rumanian smock.

And what did the soldier's wife receive from vast Russia? From Russia she received the widow's veil for the funeral. 21

Brecht's poem which he sent to Weill in 1942 consists of seven stanzas, each beginning with the phrase, "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" In each stanza, what follows is a description of the various gifts the soldier's wife received from her soldier husband during the war. In the first six stanzas, the soldier's wife receives such gifts as a fur piece from Oslo, rare Belgian lace from Brussels, and a silken gown from Paris. However, the last gift,

in typical Brechtian irony, is a widow's veil. The final version of this poem, published in 1964 by Suhrkamp in Volume 6 of Brecht's *Gedichte*, differs considerably from the version set by Weill. The final version has an additional stanza, for a total of eight stanzas, and the order of the stanzas is different. Three other settings of the poem were made during Brecht's lifetime. The first setting was by Hanns Eisler and the second by Paul Dessau. The third setting was by Mischa Spoliansky, who had been a leading composer of cabarets and revues in Berlin before 1933.

The only poetic rhyme that occurs is an internal rhyme between the third and fourth lines of each stanza:

Aus Prag bekam sie die Stöckelschuh
Einen Gruss und dazu die Stöckelschuh
Aus Amsterdam bekam sie den Hut
Und er steht ihr gut, der holländische Hut

These instances of rhyme, intentionally forced and even somewhat comical, add to the irony of the poem.

**The Music**

Weill organized the seven stanzas of the version sent to him by Brecht into three groups, resulting in an overall form similar to the German Bar form, AAB. The two A sections, Group 1 (stanzas 1-3) and Group 2 (stanzas 4-6), are themselves in an aab form, thus resulting in a
bar form within a bar form. Weill switches from b minor to B major in the seventh and final stanza (Group 3).

The final stanza consists of a melody similar to the first two stanzas, now stated in a major key with an accompaniment which varies considerably from the preceding accompaniment.

Following is a diagram of the musical form of Weill's setting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2_1</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5_1</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7_2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melody</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a_1</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a_1</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompaniment</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>b-------D</td>
<td>b-------D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Form</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much of "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" is set in strophic variation form. In the 1944 recording with Weill at the piano, he varies the accompaniment considerably more than what is written, with added piano flourishes, octave displacements, rhythmic changes, and even deleted measures from passages of introduction and interlude.

Weill's embellishments are indicative of the improvisatory character of cabaret, while the idea of strophic variation is clearly related to his music in The Threepenny Opera and Happy End. In these works the musical settings of what Weill and Brecht called Song-form and Ballade-form are strophic variations - successive stanzas of poetry set to music which preserves the melodic, harmonic, and
phrase structure of the first strophe but which varies or embellishes the tune or accompaniment or both.\textsuperscript{22}

In setting Brecht's text, Weill returned to a style which recalled his Berlin cabaret music of the 1920s and 1930s. This can be seen not only in his choice of form but also in his choice of keys and modes. Weill musically underlines Brecht's ironic intent, choosing to set the first six stanzas primarily in a minor key, even though the text, the listing of the wife's gifts, is not sad or ominous. When the real tragedy occurs suddenly in the last stanza, Weill switches to a major key, underscoring Brecht's ironic commentary on the widow's last gift, the widow's veil. John Waterhouse wrote about the match between Brecht's words and Weill's music:

More and more people are realizing what should have been obvious all along: that the popular elements in Weill's style are little more than a convenient framework within which to express a very individual message. And it is at last generally recognized that his harmonic idiom rarely has much connection with that of light music - but rather, a strange, disturbing instability, with something mysterious and sinister lurking just beneath the hard surface, which is the main reason for the extraordinary ironical 'edge' that makes it so perfect a counterpart to Brecht's words.\textsuperscript{23}


The song's melodic contour closely follows the textual emphasis. Within every stanza each successive phrase rises higher until its peak is reached at the high point of the text, the naming of the gift that the soldier's wife received. Thereafter, the melody gradually descends back to its beginning note, b. The rhythmic setting of the text also follows the textual rhythm; long and short syllables are represented with corresponding long and short rhythmic values and textual pauses are recreated musically by rests and longer note values. This union of musical and verbal rhythm ensures the intelligibility of the text. (Example 15).

Example 15. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?," measures 3-13, vocal line.

In his 1933 article "Most Melodious Tears," Virgil Thomson comments upon the union of words and music in Weill's songs:
The songs have a perfection of prosody that is unequaled by any European composer. Without degenerating into mere sprechstimme, keeping at all times the formal contour of a popular song, there is a union of words and tune that, once made, is indissoluble. No one who has heard Mahagonny [sic] can recall either element of O moon of Alabama without recalling something of the other.

The song begins with a progression made up of several diminished chords which add a colorful and pungent quality to the music (Example 16). This progression occurs throughout the song. The chord sequence iv\(_7\)-i-VI\(_7\)-i is very similar to that of the introduction of "Schickelgruber" (iv-i-vi\(_7\)-i), which also occurs throughout that song.

Example 16. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?," measures 1-3.

The simple chordal accompaniment in measures two and three is typical of the cabaret style which, similar to the Broadway style, emphasizes the text by simplifying the accompaniment. Except for its first four measures,

the melody is doubled in the accompaniment, again another shared feature with Broadway music.

There is a mixture of major and minor tonalities throughout the song. Not only does the key change from b minor to the relative major, D major, and from b minor to the parallel major, B major, but there are also frequent changes between major and minor chords and passages within the key centers. These frequent changes are not necessarily related directly to the text on a local level but instead are an integral part of Weill's musical language. The example below (Example 17) shows Weill's emphasis on the minor tonic and the major submediant.

Example 17. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?,, measures 4-10.
The following example demonstrates the frequent fluctuation between major and minor tonalities within a single musical phrase (Example 18).

Example 18. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?", measures 28-33.

The continual vacillation between major and minor tonalities is a hallmark of Weill's music and was also a feature of his teacher Busoni's music (Chapter I, page 8). As Ian Kemp wrote in his article "Harmony in Weill: Some Observations:"

Although Weill's music tends to favour the minor mode (presumably because of its greater versatility and lesser stability) it seems, nevertheless, to be often on the point of slipping into the major; and when it really is in the major, it often has a minor colouring.
This is one of his most personal and deeply considered ironies.

As he does in "Schickelgruber," Weill strengthens the tonality of the major key by simpler chordal structures and by chords closely related to the tonic. The D major passage in Example 18 (measures 31-32) emphasizes the dominant and tonic while the D major in Example 19 (measures 25-27) emphasizes the subdominant and the tonic.

Example 19. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?," measures 22-27.

The last stanza differs not only in key but also in the nature of the accompaniment, preserving, however, the main outline of the melody, here presented in B major.

(Example 20). This last section is set off from the rest of the song by a march-like accompaniment which changes into an arpeggio-like figuration when the "widow's veil" is mentioned (Example 20, measures 41-42), underscoring the sadness and grief the soldier's wife experienced when she received this final "gift." By setting this final verse entirely in a major key, Weill underscores the irony of Brecht's satirical representation of the widow's veil as a final "gift" from her husband (Example 20).

Example 20. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?", measures 36-42.

The manuscript of "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" contains no indications of dynamics or phrasing. Since Weill himself played the piano part, there was no need
for him to produce a definitive copy. Therefore, any phrase, dynamic or tempo indications in the published version are purely editorial.

The limited range (b-e\textsuperscript{2}) and low tessitura of the song are typical of the cabaret style, which is primarily speech-oriented, and well suited to Lotte Lenya's voice and her special abilities as a singing actress. Weill wrote this song with his wife's voice in mind, even though he had to transpose the song down a half step for her, from b minor to b flat minor, for its premiere on the Hunter College program. As in the majority of cabaret songs, the text and its interpretation are important, not the technical merits of the singer. This song should be performed in the 1920s and 1930s Berlin cabaret style, cultivated by Lenya, Marlene Dietrich and others, a style for which Weill and Brecht were so famous. The cabaret singing style includes limited use of vibrato, textually-motivated dynamic, tempo and rhythmic changes, the use of portamento between certain notes, and the use, in selected passages, of Sprechstimme, a type of voice production halfway between song and speech. The 1944 recording of this song by Weill and Lenya, in addition


27. The original 1944 recording is available on the compact disc released in 1990 entitled Kurt Weill Songs: Oh Moon of Alabama (Capriccio 10347).
to the more recent recording in 1982 by Teresa Stratas, 28 
exhibit these characteristics. Example 21 illustrates 
selected passages from Lotte Lenya's rendition of "Und 
was bekam des Soldaten Weib?," while Example 22 illustrates 
several passages from the Teresa Stratas recording. In 
measure 45 (Example 21e), Lenya sings a g sharp instead 
of the notated g natural, and Weill, as the accompanist, 
accordingly changes the chord underneath. (Teresa Stratas 
and Richard Woitach also make these changes.) The published 
version, which may or may not have been Weill's preference, 
does not reflect this change, and in fact, the more 
dissonant sound of the g natural seems to better reflect 
and intensify the irony of the last stanza.

Example 21. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?," measures 
9-10, 17-18, 25-26, 41-44, 44-46 (Lotte Lenya's 
recording).

a. 9-10
written performed (rhythmic change)

28. The Unknown Kurt Weill, Teresa Stratas, soprano, and 
Richard Woitach, piano (Nonesuch D-790019). Teresa 
Stratas' interpretations of Weill's music were admired 
and "sanctioned" by Lotte Lenya herself. After hearing 
Stratas sing the title role of Jenny in the Metropolitan 
Opera's 1979-1980 premiere production of Rise and Fall 
of the City Mahagonny, Lenya wrote to her: "Nobody 
can sing Weill's music better than you do." "Review 
of Records: The Unknown Kurt Weill," Music Quarterly, 
LXVII, no. 2 (1982), 295.
b. 17-18
written

performed (rhythmic change)

c. 25-26
written

performed (rhythmic change)

d. 41-44
written

performed (use of portamento)

e. 44-46
written
(Example 21e continued)
performed (pitch change)

Example 22. "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?," measures 3-5, 20-21, 46-48 (Teresa Stratas' recording).

a. 3-5
written

performed (use of portamento)

b. 20-21
written

performed (rhythmic change)

c. 46-48
written

performed (use of portamento)

Lenya makes limited use of Sprechstimme, while Stratas does not use it at all. In both recordings the tempo of the final verse is slowed down considerably, contrary to the written tempo marking, "a tempo, ma piu tranquillo."
Similar to jazz, cabaret is improvisatory in nature (in regards to rhythm, pitch and ornamentation) and "earthy" in style. Also like jazz, the performer must have a solid knowledge of his or her technique and of the style involved so as to avoid improvising merely for the sake of improvising. Lenya's strength lay in her extensive theatrical training and experience, in which she developed a sure sense of drama and an eloquent, moving manner of expression. Weill knew that his song would come alive in a performance by this great diseuse.

It is clear that Weill composed this song, directed at the German people, in a style that would speak to them. As Kim Kowalke commented: "Once again, speaking to his fellow émigrés in America and to those left behind in Germany, Weill reverted to his former musical dialect, far removed from Gertrude Lawrence's and Danny Kaye's in Lady in the Dark." 29

Walter Mehring

Walter Mehring (1896-1981) was one of the most brilliant and prolific of the Berlin cabaret writers. The cabaret was sharply political, satirical, and left-wing in orientation, setting the tone for the witty critique of current affairs which was typical of the period.

Mehring's mastery of quick, witty and earthy verses in the Berlin dialect made him a great success. Mehring often performed his own works, reciting or singing his songs in a variety of locales, from army barracks to Kurfürstendamm Kabaretts. He even acted as a conférencier or master of ceremonies, at many of the more popular Berlin cabaret establishments.

Although his beliefs and sympathies were always left-wing, he maintained a position of unaffiliated independence, criticizing the Communists as well as the Fascists. From early on in the 1920s, he devoted his energy and his verbal wit to attacking the policies of the rising Nazi party. In 1922 Mehring's "Casino Song of the Free Corps" exposed the barbarism and the abuses of the Free Corps, the forerunners of the S.S. His 1924 song "Lied der Hakenkreuzler," or Swastiker's Song, exposed the hatred and the tactics of the Nazis. These and other activities, along with the fact that he was Jewish, forced him to flee from Germany in 1933, stopping first in France (1933-1940) and then traveling to America, where he remained until after the war.

Analysis of "Wie lange noch?"

The Text

Ich will's dir gestehen, es war eine Nacht,  
Da hab ich mich willig dir hingegeben.  
Du hast mich gehabt, mich von Sinnen gebracht.  
Ich glaubte, ich konnte nicht ohne dich leben.
Du hast mir das Blaue vom Himmel versprochen,
Und ich habe dich wie 'nen Vater gepflegt.
Du hast mich gemartert, hast mich zerbrochen.
Ich hätt' dir die Erde zu Füssen gelegt.

Sieh mich doch an! Sieh mich doch an!
Wann kommt der Tag an dem ich dir sage:
Es ist vorbei!
Wann kommt der Tag, ach der Tag nach dem ich bange?
Wie lange noch? Wie lange noch? Wie lange?

Ich hab dir geglaubt, ich war wie im Wahn,
Von all deinen Reden, von deinen Schwüren.
Was immer du wolltest, das hab ich getan.
Wohin du auch wolltest, da liess ich mich führen.

Du hast mir das Blaue von Himmel versprochen,
Und ich, ach ich hab nicht zu weinen gewagt.
Doch du hast dein Wort, deine Schwüre gebrochen.
Ich habe geschwiegen und hab mich geplagt.

Sieh mich doch an! Sieh mich doch an!
Wann kommt der Tag an dem ich dir sage:
Es ist vorbei!
Wann kommt der Tag, ach der Tag nach dem ich bange?
Wie lange noch? Wie lange noch? Wie lange?

"How Much Longer?"

I will confess there was a night when I willingly gave myself to you. You took me and drove me out of my mind. I believed that I could not live without you.

You promised me blue skies, and I cared for you like my own father. You tormented me, you tore me apart. I would have put the world at your feet.

Look at me, will you! Look at me! When will I ever be able to tell you: It's over. When that day comes...I dread it. How much longer? How much longer? How long?

I believed you. I was in a daze from all of your talk and your promises. I did whatever you wanted. Wherever you wanted to go, I was willing to follow.

You promised me blue skies, and I - I didn't even dare to cry. But you have broken your word and your vows. I have been silent and tortured myself.
Look at me, will you! Look at me! When will I ever be able to tell you: It's over. When that day comes...I dread it. How much longer? How much longer? How long?

In keeping with the political and satirical themes used in his Berlin cabaret days, Mehring constructed a set of lyrics for "Wie lange noch?" which portrays a woman whose lover has betrayed her, with the clear underlying message being Hitler's betrayal of the German people. The message behind Mehring's metaphor (the betrayed lover represents the German people, the betrayer is Hitler) was undoubtedly clearly understood by the Germans who heard "Wie lange noch?" and perhaps was even more powerful in stirring up emotions than other more blatant propaganda pieces.

In the first verse, the woman remembers a time when she believed she could not live without her lover and would have done anything for him. He had promised her "blue skies," but the promise proved to be empty, and now she feels tormented. In the refrain, she asks him to look at her and tell her "how much longer" (Wie lange noch) she must endure this pain.

The second verse is a more pointed indictment of Hitler. Here the woman tells her betrayer that she had believed him and had been in a daze from all of his talk

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and promises, much like the throngs of people who listened to Hitler's speeches. She was willing to do whatever he wanted and follow wherever he led, just as so many of the German people were willing to do for the Führer. The woman next complains, "But you have broken your word and your vows. I have been silent and tortured myself." This was probably the strongest propaganda in the entire song, as it was meant to strike a nerve with the Germans who, with their silence and passivity, were allowing a tyrant to lead their nation and commit his atrocities. The song ends with a repeat of the refrain and its question, "Wie lange noch?," a very pertinent question in 1944 Nazi Germany.

The Music

Except for different endings Weill sets both verses of the poem to the same music. Each verse itself is in a through composed form, with three contrasting sections: A (f minor) - B (F major) - C (d minor). The song begins simply enough, with f minor tonic chords in root position (Example 23). Almost immediately, however, the harmony takes an unexpected turn, to a submediant seventh chord in f minor. All of the notes of this chord then shift down a half step to produce a dominant seventh of f minor. This semitonal movement, a feature commonly found in Weill's music, has been dubbed the "semitonal sideslip" by Ian
Kemp\textsuperscript{31} and is an example of the halfstep shifts influenced by Busoni.\textsuperscript{32} The expected resolution to the tonic is delayed by a surprising chord, a sharp mediant seventh chord in f minor. This passage is an example of Weill's prediliction for what Kemp describes as "a sudden, even violent, switch of direction from and to points of relative harmonic stability."\textsuperscript{33}

Kemp continues:

[These progressions] surprise by the remoteness of the relationship while at the same time they soothe by the flow of the part-writing and the consonance of the chords themselves: it seems as if the progressions were in fact controlled by the most convincing of intermediate harmonic functions... The organically related contours of the melodic line, and the part-writing, especially for the bass, assume the decisive cohesive functions.\textsuperscript{34}

This observation holds especially true in measures 6-9 in Example 23, where the sudden harmonic shift is approached and left smoothly by Weill's part-writing in the accompaniment and by his melodic construction.


\textsuperscript{32} Chapter I, pages 7-8.

\textsuperscript{33} Kemp, 13.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.

As in "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" Weill vacillates between major and minor modes, here between f minor and F major until finally settling upon d minor. The song begins in f minor and the first four lines of text in each verse remain in f minor. Midway through the fourth line a mode shift occurs, from f minor to F major (Example 24).

After the key of F major is established both the first
and second verses continue with the phrase "you promised
me blue skies." The added major sixth to the tonic chord
gives this particular passage a special harmonic flavor
and was perhaps Weill's way of musically coloring the words
"Blaue" (blue) and "Himmel" (sky, heaven) (Example 25).


Immediately before the refrain, the key changes from
F major to d minor, accomplished once again by semitonal
movement (Example 26).

At the climatic moment in the refrain, to the text "Look at me! When will the day come when I will be able to tell you it's over," Weill uses a D pedal in the bass, above which the harmonies change every measure. This is a technique frequently used by Weill. The insistence on D, in addition to an inner voice which steadily ascends chromatically, emphasizes the passion in this outcry. The pedal and the tension of the ascending chromatic line are released appropriately after the word "vorbei" (over) (Example 27).

Example 27. "Wie lange noch?," measures 26-33.

The first verse ends in the low tessitura of the voice, to the text "Wie lange noch?" The melody alternates between two notes, d¹ and e¹; when sung forcefully the passage creates a "gut-wrenching" effect. The second verse ends with these same words, now an octave higher, as the impassioned pleas of the singer end the song in dramatic fashion (Example 28).

Example 28. "Wie lange noch?", measures 38-47.

In his notes to the recording The Unknown Kurt Weill Kim Kowalke writes:

While remaining unmistakably "Weillian," "Je ne t'aime pas" adopts many stylistic features of the Parisian cabaret chanson. The setting has none of the duality or irony of his best German theater songs, but its unforgettable lyricism and memorable melodic turns
explain why Weill reused the music almost verbatim for "Wie lange noch?".36

The text of "Wie lange noch?" is only loosely based on that of "Je ne t'aime pas." Both are torch songs, with the emphasis upon unrequited love. In the French version the melody line consists of a rhythmic pattern, similar to a slow tango rhythm, which is repeated with few deviations (Example 29a). In the German version Weill is forced to change this rhythm occasionally in order to accomodate the German text (29b).

Example 29. "Je ne t'aime pas" and "Wie lange noch?", measures 1-9, vocal line.

a. "Je ne t'aime pas"

b. "Wie lange noch?"

36. Kim Kowalke, Record jacket notes to The Unknown Kurt Weill, Teresa Stratas, soprano and Richard Woitach, piano (Nonesuch D-790019).
There is a passage in "Je ne t'aime pas" (Example 30a) in which Weill indicates that the text is to be spoken instead of sung, while the melody is carried by the treble line in the piano accompaniment. In the corresponding passage in "Wie lange noch?" (Example 30b) Weill sets the text to specific pitches instead of using Sprechstimme.

Example 30. "Je ne t'aime pas" and "Wie lange noch?," measures 34-37.

a. "Je ne t'aime pas"

b. "Wie lange noch?"

Although Weill and Mehring closely followed the French model in their adaptation, features of the German cabaret

37. Several of Weill's German cabaret songs have similar passages where Sprechstimme is specifically indicated: "Die Muschel von Margate (1928), "Der Abschiedsbrief (1933?), and "Nanna's Lied" (1939).
song are also apparent in "Wie lange noch?," particularly in its ending. "Je ne t'aime pas" ends quietly, with the singer singing the broken phrases "Retire ta main...Je ne t'aime pas..." ("Take away your hand...I don't love you...") and forcefully speaking the last phrase, "Je ne t'aime pas!...," after which the piano accompaniment softens to a pianissimo on the final chord. On the other hand, "Wie lange noch?" ends much more dramatically, with the voice and accompaniment shifted to a higher register, the dynamic level marked forte and fortissimo to the end of the song, and the reiteration of the question "Wie lange noch? Wie lange noch? Wie lange?" This more dramatic and intense quality inherent in German cabaret songs is discussed by Lisa Appignanesi in her book The Cabaret:

A plastic medium, the cabaret would in Germany lose some of the playful tone of its French originators and take on the more serious and more satirically aggressive impetus of its German makers. 38

In the original 1944 recording of "Wie lange noch?," which Lenya sings down a fourth in c minor, she performs the entire song without using Sprechstimme, while Teresa Stratas, in her 1982 recording, uses Sprechstimme only in the phrase "Es ist vorbei!" It therefore seems appropriate to be judicious in the use of Sprechstimme

in Weill's cabaret songs, since he clearly intended his songs to be sung, not spoken. Michael Morley writes:

Too often the cabaret/theatrical approach leads to an over-stressing of the text's formulations at the expense of the music's own, less obvious emphases. Any performance of Weill's songs which ignores the notes and delivers the text as a type of Sprechgesang against a distant, often doctored, orchestral obligato will always miss the irony which is so crucial to the balance of words and music in the settings and will disregard the dialectic of tough text and seductive strains.\(^{39}\)

Lotte Lenya also cautioned against the overuse of Sprechstimme. In a taped interview with Edwin Newman, Lenya responded to the statement that her style of singing had been described as "talking against the music:"

"...I really sing. I sing the melody, sometimes I speak in between when the emotion needs it, but there's every note there, even if I speak."\(^{40}\)

Since Lenya used Sprechstimme with discretion, singers should also apply this technique only when its use would be truly effective, as in Stratas' example, to the text "Es ist vorbei!"

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Stylistic features common in cabaret songs are
Stylistic features common in cabaret songs are evident in "Wie lange noch?" They include: a homophonic texture with a chordal accompaniment subordinate to the melody in the vocal line; a doubling of the vocal line in the treble line of the accompaniment; and a melody which mirrors the meaning of the text and is predominantly speech-like in quality. The latter is manifested in the song's moderate vocal range (c-f\(^2\)) and in its rhythmic setting, which conforms to the rhythm of the text. The melodic line follows the changing emotions expressed in the text. In the first line of text the melody dips into the low and sultry regions of the voice ("I will confess there was a night when I willingly gave myself to you."). The melody suddenly ascends into a higher register as the singer's emotions and resentment overwhelm her ("You took me and drove me out of my mind."). The melody descends back to the lower register as the singer, with a sense of resignation, expresses the thought "I believed that I could not live without you."

In the 1944 recording of "Wie lange noch?," Weill embellishes the notated accompaniment, similar to his performance of "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" "Wie lange noch?," just as its companion piece, should be performed in a cabaret style, incorporating the stylistic features outlined above.
CHAPTER IV

FOUR WALT WHITMAN SONGS

Genesis

During the war years, Weill found many opportunities to express his patriotism for his newly adopted country. His musical contributions to the various civilian and government propaganda organizations were written in a popular style, as was appropriate to the wide audiences for whom they were targeted. There is, however, a group of four songs that depart stylistically from the rest of the songs written during the war years. These songs, the Four Walt Whitman Songs, are among Weill's most classically-oriented American compositions and have been characterized as being "midway in style between German Lieder and the best type of American theater songs."¹ Unlike Weill's other war songs, the Four Walt Whitman Songs were written for trained singers to poetry written not by Weill's contemporaries, but by one of the great nineteenth-century American poets, Walt Whitman. Whitman's poetic style and choice of words naturally dictated a more serious, classical approach to text setting. Compared to the American and

German propaganda songs, the Four Walt Whitman Songs are more serious in every way: textually, musically and vocally.

The Four Walt Whitman Songs do not constitute a song cycle textually or musically, but rather constitute a group of four songs set to poems of the same author, Walt Whitman. Except for stylistic similarities that result from setting similar texts by the same author, there is no conscious musical connection between them, nor is there any textual connection between the songs other than the common theme of war. The four poems are from Whitman's Drum-Taps, a collection of poetic vignettes based upon Whitman's experiences during the Civil War.

Walt Whitman was a favorite poet of Kurt Weill’s, as well as other Europeans. In his reading of Whitman, Weill must have realized that the American poet was an excellent choice to draw upon for war-related texts. As Stephen Hinton wrote, "Whitman must have seemed to Weill, who was soon to become a naturalized American, as a prophet of the democratizing trend in the Western world and an enthusiast of the common man." Whitman's war poems are powerful, since he lived during, and wrote about, one of the bloodiest and most devastating wars of history, the American Civil War. Their potential for propaganda was

not lost upon Weill, and he set the first three of the
Four Walt Whitman Songs in January 1942 for voice and piano,
later orchestrating them. These three songs were first
published in 1942, with a dedication to Weill and Lenya's
good friends, Mab and Maxwell Anderson. The set was
intended for the bass-baritone Paul Robeson, but his
reactions to it are not recorded and he never sang them.
Instead, Weill offered the songs to the Fight for Freedom
organization. A few months later, in March 1942, Weill
adapted one of the Whitman songs, "Beat! Beat! Drums!," for a Fight for Freedom-sponsored recording of patriotic
melodramas, recited by the actress Helen Hayes.

The fourth song of the set, "Come Up From the Fields,
Father," was written in 1947 to complete the set for a
recording with piano accompaniment by the tenor William
Horne. In 1956 Carlos Surinach orchestrated the song for
the same forces Weill had used in his orchestration of
the first three.

In a critique of the Whitman songs, Hinton comments
that these settings cast doubt on the mutual exclusivity
of the European and American creative personalities:

Here, at least, Weill strives for a synthesis. Away
from the commercial arena of American theater, he finds
time and a fitting opportunity, especially in the 1947
song, partially to revive the European Lied tradition,
with resonances from such disparate sources as Schumann,
Puccini, Debussy, and even Mahler. The settings employ
free strophic variation within a sectionalized, usually
ternary formal scheme...the foundation of the musical
language is a floating and extended tonality, making use of dramatic, text-based dissonance.

Taken as a group, the Four Walt Whitman Songs were conceived as classical songs and are best sung by trained singers who can meet the more strenuous vocal demands, the rhythmic and melodic complexities, and the subtle interpretive nuances. When performing the entire group, the singer must address the question of transposition, since the first three songs were written for a baritone, the fourth for a tenor. In the 1947 Horne recording, two of the original three songs were transposed upward in order to accommodate the singer's range:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Original Key</th>
<th>Horne Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh Captain! My Captain!</td>
<td>F major</td>
<td>A-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat! Beat! Drums!</td>
<td>d minor</td>
<td>d minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirge for Two Veterans</td>
<td>G major</td>
<td>A-flat major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come Up From the Fields,</td>
<td>F major</td>
<td>F major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a more recent recording (1988) by the baritone Steven Kimbrough, the original keys of the first three songs are used, while "Come Up From the Fields, Father" is transposed down a whole step, from F major to E-flat major.

In the William Horne recording, supervised by Weill himself and released on two 78 discs, the four songs appear in a different sequence (2,1,4,3), which would seem

3. Ibid., 20.
to indicate Weill's preference in the order of the songs. The Kimbrough recording follows this same order. Since the Four Walt Whitman Songs do not really constitute a song cycle, this change in order does not alter the musical or textual effectiveness of each song, but was most likely made for programmatic effect.

Another question is the suitability of the text for either male or female voices. The texts of the first three songs are masculine in quality and better suited to male singers. The fourth song, "Come Up From the Fields, Father," could be sung by either a male or female, as there is nothing particularly "masculine" about this text and, in fact, the poem begins from the daughter's point of view.

Walt Whitman

Walt Whitman (1819-1892) was a leading literary figure of his time and is today regarded as one of America's greatest poets. His rough clothes, shaggy beard, slouch hat, and his many friendships with uneducated workers symbolized his identification with the common people. And yet this same man loved Italian opera, recited Shakespeare from memory, and spent hours in museums and libraries. He is regarded as one of the originators of "free verse," exemplified in his first major book of poems, Leaves of Grass (1855). The unconventional form of the verse, without rhyme or meter, the realistic imagery,
and the personal tone of the poems in *Leaves of Grass* were quite innovative and shocking for their time.

The poems in Whitman's volume of poetry entitled *Drum-Taps* (1865) were written during the Civil War, and include a group of poems concerning the death of President Lincoln. Throughout the war Whitman wrote poems, and his writings on the Civil War were eyewitness accounts, arising out of personal experiences. For three years he served as a voluntary visitor and medical assistant to the wounded soldiers in Washington hospitals, with occasional trips to the battlefront. He would write down his thoughts and his poems often in haste and under particularly trying circumstances: they were set down in his diaries, in hospital notebooks, or even on small scraps of paper, wherever he happened to be - in camp, by the bedside of a wounded sufferer, or on the street. His observations are personal, vivid, concise, and powerful. In the majority of Whitman's poems there is an absence of such conventional poetic techniques as rhyme, meter, and stanzas. In *Drum-Taps*, however, the poems are for the most part more conventional, less boldly imaginative, and less characteristic of his poetry as a whole.

All four Whitman poems from Weill's *Four Walt Whitman Songs* come from *Drum-Taps*. "O Captain! My Captain!" number one in the set, belongs to a small group of poems in *Drum-Taps* entitled "Memories of President Lincoln." Whitman
was a devoted admirer of Abraham Lincoln. Although he never met the President personally, the poet would often see him in Washington as Lincoln traveled through town. The assassination of President Lincoln at the end of the war affected Whitman more deeply than any event in the war itself, and he later wrote one of the greatest elegies on Lincoln ever written, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard bloom'd." In "O Captain! My Captain!," the dying Captain of a ship is a metaphor for the slain President. The poem contains the traditional poetic devices of rhyme, meter, and stanzaic form. Not considered one of his better poems, it nevertheless became one of his most famous, very often recited by school children.

Whitman wrote number two in the set, "Beat! Beat! Drums!," soon after the outbreak of the Civil War. This poem expressed the poet's patriotic fervor before he had seen the battlefield and the war hospitals. The incessant tom-tom rhythm of its meter was appropriate for its function as a recruiting poem and a call to arms. Each of its three stanzas is introduced by the same line: "Beat! beat! drums! Blow! bugles! blow!"

"Dirge for Two Veterans," number three in the set, was written near the end of the Civil War, after Whitman had experienced firsthand the horrors and incredible tragedies of the war. The two veterans in this poem were father and son who fell in battle side by side. It is
likely that Whitman knew of several father-and-son pairs who died during the war. "Dirge for Two Veterans" is less traditionally poetic and more prose-like in form than the first two poems.

"Come Up From the Fields, Father" re-enacts the common drama of a family receiving news of the death of their son in the war. This poem is narrative in character, without rhyme or regular meter, and is also characteristic of Whitman's usual poetic style.

Paul Robeson

Paul Robeson (1898-1976), the black American bass-baritone and actor, achieved his greatest success with his singing of negro spirituals. Robeson was an articulate and intelligent man of many talents. Besides his musical and theatrical talents, he graduated with a law degree from Columbia University, was an all-American athlete, wrote numerous articles expressing his political views, and spoke over thirty foreign languages and African dialects.4

In order to support himself during his law studies, Robeson began singing and acting on the side. In his first job out of law school Robeson experienced such widespread racial prejudice that he knew he would never achieve any

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real success in that field. Consequently, he turned to
the theater and to the concert hall. His acting credits
ranged from film to stage, both in America and in Europe.
He packed theaters in London by his majestic presence and
his singing (especially of "Ol' Man River") in Show Boat
(1928). He also was a huge success as Shakespeare's
Othello, both in London (1930) and later in America. In
the end, however, it was Robeson's incredibly rich and
resonant bass voice, and particularly his singing of negro
spirituals, that brought him fame and critical acclaim
throughout the world. To hear him sing spirituals was
described as a truly moving and memorable experience.

From the mid 1920s to the mid 1940s Robeson, along with
his accompanist Larry Brown, performed sold-out concerts
throughout the world. In addition to spirituals, Robeson's
programs would often include folk songs from various
countries. He felt that folk songs, like the spirituals,
were "the music of basic realities, the spontaneous
expression by the people for the people of elemental

5. Martin Bauml Duberman, Paul Robeson (New York: Alfred

6. Max de Schauensee, "Robeson, Paul," The New Grove
Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 20 vols., ed. Stanley
emotions," and identified especially with Russian and Hebrew folk music.\(^7\)

Robeson's voice, despite its extraordinary warmth and richness, had a limited range. He was constantly asking composers and accompanists to transpose songs downward, sometimes as much as five keys lower. He wrote, "I always try to pitch my songs in the range of my speaking voice. Therefore practically all of my songs have to be transposed to lower keys, since my natural voice is a deep bass."\(^8\)

It was his somewhat limited range and his admitted disinterest in classical music that kept him from concentrating his efforts on opera and art songs. When asked why there were relatively few art songs in his concert programs, Robeson claimed he had no desire "to interpret the vocal genius of half a dozen cultures which are really alien to me."\(^9\) Commenting on opera, Robeson declared, "I will not go into opera, where I would probably become one of hundreds of mediocre singers, but I will concentrate on negro music, which has never been properly handled. I may sing a little opera in the morning, but only in the bathroom."\(^10\)

8. Ibid., 647, no. 7.
9. Ibid., 176.
10. Ibid., 111.
It seems that Robeson sometimes deliberately cultivated the image of a natural-born actor and singer who had been deprived of technical training. Martin Duberman, the author of an extensive Robeson biography, wrote:

...he let others think he was stumbling through his roles on instinct as a hedge against being judged by standards he himself, with almost knee-jerk modesty, felt unable to meet...In regard to his singing, too, he sometimes adapted this same double-edged defensive posture, on the one hand studying lieder diligently, on the other allowing the view to take hold that "Joshua Fit de Batle of Jericho" marked the outer limit of his range.\(^\text{11}\)

In fact, Robeson did receive considerable musical and theatrical training throughout his life from drama and vocal coaches.\(^\text{12}\)

Although after World War II Robeson was roundly denounced as a Communist and as un-American, during and immediately preceding the war Robeson was regarded as just the opposite - a genuine American patriot. His contributions during these years did much to promote this opinion. The November 1939 radio broadcast of his rendition of Earl Robinson's Ballad for Americans, an upbeat salute of democracy for soloist and chorus, created a sensation throughout America. During the war years, Robeson appeared at war bond rallies, participated in programs for the Office

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 270.

\(^{12}\) Robeson's voice teachers included Flora Arnold, Frantz Proschowsky, Teresa Armitage and Jerry Swinford.
of War Information and the Russian War Relief Effort, and took part in a USO overseas tour.

It was after the war that Robeson's "fall from grace" with the American people took place. After President Roosevelt's death, Robeson perceived a shift in emphasis away from civil-rights reform, and he was quick to criticize the Truman administration. He also continued to support the Soviet Union, even as American sentiment began to run against the former ally. Robeson's outspoken views on racism and his suspected ties to the Communist party eventually brought a halt to his career, which was revived only briefly in the late 1950s.

When Weill composed his first three Walt Whitman songs in January 1942, Paul Robeson was at the height of his popularity in America. Weill was quite aware of Robeson and his talent. In fact, Weill's *The Ballad of Magna Carta* was patterned after the *Ballad for Americans*, made popular by Robeson. It is not surprising that the patriotic fervor created by Robeson's singing of the *Ballad for Americans* influenced Weill to compose his Walt Whitman songs with Robeson's voice in mind. However, Robeson never sang these songs. It was not the first time that Robeson failed to perform a work written for him by Weill. In 1939 Weill and Maxwell Anderson began work on a musical adaptation of Harry Stillwell Edwards' historical novella, *Eneas Africanus*. Both Weill and Anderson wanted Paul Robeson
for the lead role of Eneas, the ex-slave who wanders through the South for eight years in an effort to relocate his former plantation. Robeson declined their offer, feeling their portrayal of the slave was condescending. In 1945, Weill and Anderson began to revise the work, now renamed *Ulysses Africanus*, since Robeson suddenly evinced interest in it. However, he became unavailable a second time. Although *Ulysses Africanus* was never completed, Anderson and Weill used much of its material for their 1949 musical drama, *Lost in the Stars*. The lead role of the black South African preacher, Stephen Kumalo, was seemingly tailor-made for Paul Robeson, but by the late 1940s Robeson's increasingly radical political stance alienated Maxwell Anderson, a staunch anti-communist. Robeson was never offered the role.

Analysis of "Oh Captain! My Captain!"  

The Text

Oh Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,  
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;  
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring.  
   But O heart! heart! heart!  
O the bleeding drops of red,  
Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

13. Ibid., 230, 645 no. 41.

14. Weill changed Whitman's "O Captain!" to "Oh Captain!": the text is printed as in Whitman's *Drum-Taps.*
Oh Captain!  my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;  
Rise up - for you the flag is flung - for you the bugle trills,  
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths - for you the shores a-crowding,  
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;  
Here Captain! dear father!  
The arm beneath your head!  
It is some dream that on the deck,  
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,  
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,  
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,  
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won.  
Exult 0 shores, and ring 0 bells!  
But I with mournful tread,  
Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
Fallen cold and dead.

Whitman's poem, written after President Lincoln's assassination, underscores the tragedy of Lincoln's death at the end of the war, before he could enjoy the fruits of peace for which he had so ardently fought. The "Captain" in this poem is, of course, Lincoln, and his "ship" is America.

In the first stanza, which begins "O Captain! my Captain!," the narrator, a sailor aboard ship, addresses the Captain: "...our fearful trip is done, the ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won..." In other words, the Civil War was over, the Union had survived, and peace between the North and the South had been won. The mood suddenly shifts as the narrator looks down "on the deck" where his "Captain lies, fallen cold and dead."
The second stanza also begins with the phrase, "O Captain! my Captain!" Here the Captain is urged to "rise up and hear the bells" and the bugle trills, to see the flags, bouquets and wreaths - all for him. This description is a metaphor for Lincoln's funeral and a nation in mourning. The phrase "for you the shores a-crowding, for you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning" refers to the masses of people who lined the train route of Lincoln's funereal procession from Washington D.C. to Springfield, Illinois. As in the first stanza, the focus now shifts midway in the second stanza, with the poignant verses "Here Captain! dear father! This arm beneath your head!" The second stanza ends with a phrase similiar to that of the first stanza: "It is some dream that on the deck, you've fallen cold and dead."

The third stanza begins quite differently from the first two stanzas: "My father does not answer, his lips are pale and still, my father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will..." Now the death of the Captain (Lincoln) is fully acknowledged. The poem ends with the familiar refrain of the first two stanzas: "But I with mournful tread, walk the deck my Captain lies, fallen cold and dead."
The Music

Each stanza of Whitman's poem consists of eight lines. There is a distinct difference in content and mood between the first four lines and the second four lines. Whitman indents the last four lines to set them apart from the rest of the stanza. Weill also sets these lines apart from the first four lines with a change of key (F major to A flat major) and by shifting the voice to a higher register.

The form of Weill's song, AA^1B, follows the form of Whitman's poem, in which stanzas one and two are contrasted with stanza three. Within each A section a smaller aa^1b form also occurs. Except for a few rhythmic changes, the melodies of the first two stanzas are virtually the same. The accompaniment of the second stanza varies the material of the first stanza's accompaniment, but follows its harmony very closely. An exception occurs in the last four measures of each stanza, where Weill repeats his accompaniment verbatim. This corresponds to Whitman's repetition in both stanzas of the words "...on the deck...fallen cold and dead."

The third stanza is completely different in melody, harmony and accompaniment until its last four measures. Weill transposes the accompaniment of the first two stanzas up an octave, to the words "deck...fallen cold and dead." Thus Whitman, poetically, and Weill, musically, use this
refrain-like phrase to unify their compositions (Example 31).


b. Second stanza, measures 52-55.

c. Third stanza, measures 78-81.
Not only does Weill follow Whitman's poetic form in the overall shape of his musical setting but also in his phrase and harmonic structures. The regularity of poetic meter and ending rhymes are reinforced by Weill's regular four-measure phrases and dominant or tonic cadences:

Phrase
1. Oh Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done.
2. The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;
3. The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
4. While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring.
5. But O heart! heart! heart! O the bleeding drops of red,
6. Where on the deck my Captain lies, fallen cold and dead.

From the song's outset elements borrowed from popular music are combined with a harmonic idiom that is a hallmark of Weill's style. The persistent dotted rhythms and chromatic melodic line which invoke the sounds of popular music of the 1940s are combined with Weill's usual mixture of major and minor harmonies (Example 32).

Example 32. "Oh Captain! My Captain!" measures 1-4.
After the alternation of f minor and F major tonalities in the introduction, the voice enters. The key of F major is finally confirmed by the V₉-I progression in measures 7-8 (Example 33). As mentioned before (Chapter II, pages 59-60), the scarcity or the delaying of true dominant to tonic progressions is a feature of much of Weill's music.

Example 33. "Oh Captain! My Captain!," measures 4-8.

The vocal line and the accompaniment consist of a mixture of popular and classical song styles. The first two stanzas (sections A and A¹) feature a vocal line that, similar to popular music, is a combination of stepwise and triadic movement, primarily diatonic and in a moderate vocal range (c-f²). The accompaniment, which is primarily chordal and arpeggiated, takes on a supportive role to the melody, as in popular songs (Example 33, above). However, in the third stanza (section B), the melody and the accompaniment become more chromatic and disjunct; likewise, the accompaniment becomes more musically interesting, serving as an equal partner of the voice,
more integrally a part of the drama, as in classical art songs (Example 34a and b). This change in style is dictated by Whitman's text. The simpler, more diatonic melodies of the first two stanzas reflect the nature of the first two stanzas of poetry: the sailor addresses the Captain as if he were still alive, describing to him the scenes of a victorious ship returning home. In the third stanza, as the sailor realizes the gravity of the situation (the Captain's death), the music becomes more turbulent and chromatic. The accompaniment in the third stanza contains eight measures of an f pedal, followed by eight measures of an e flat pedal (Example 34a and b).


a. 58-59, f pedal.

b. 66-67, e flat pedal.
In the example above, the trill on the pedal represents the drum rolls of a funeral procession and also evokes the disturbing nature of the text: "My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still..." Above the $f$ pedal an $f$ sharp minor triad alternates with an $f$ minor triad, while above the $e$ flat pedal a combination of diminished seventh chords and tone clusters sound. Here the accompaniment creates an ominous atmosphere which the vocal line alone cannot adequately convey. The use of pedal points in the bass with changing harmonies above, already seen in "Wie lange noch?," is a feature frequently encountered in Weill's music.

Another feature of Weill's music found in both "Wie lange noch?" and "Oh Captain! My Captain!" is the sudden shifting of keys (Example 35). Here Weill changes keys suddenly by juxtaposing one measure of $F$ major with one of $A$ flat major. The change of key, up a minor third, along with a shift to a soft dynamic level and the register change in the accompaniment, now written an octave higher, all serve to emphasize the tenderness of the words, "But O heart! heart! heart! O the bleeding drops of red."
The third and final stanza ends like the first two, with the same recurring four-measure refrain. In the final measures of the song three whole-note chords, two of which are tone clusters, bring the song to a close on an F major triad (Example 36). These chords seem to be Weill's final confirmation of the Captain's death, and by ending the piece on a major triad, he musically emphasizes the peacefulness over the tragedy of death.

Example 36. "Oh Captain! My Captain!," measures 82-84.

Paul Robeson's deep, resonant bass voice would have been ideal for this "masculine" text. The song calls for a full, rich voice to represent the sailor addressing his dying captain.
William Horne

The tenor William Horne (1913-1983) was born in New York and started his concert career there with his Town Hall debut in 1939. After several roles on Broadway, he returned to serious music in concert, opera and radio. His opera roles include the title role in the American premiere of Benjamin Britten's Peter Grimes and the leading male role in the Virgil Thomson-Gertrude Stein production The Mother of Us All. He also was the soloist with orchestras led by such conductors as Toscanini and Stokowski.¹⁵

In 1947 Horne, along with pianist Adam Garner, produced the first recording of Kurt Weill's Four Walt Whitman Songs. Made for the Concert Hall Society, the record was originally a mail order album that was later also released to stores.¹⁶

Analysis of "Come Up From the Fields, Father"

The Text

Come up from the fields father, here's a letter from our Pete,
And come to the front door mother, here's a letter from thy dear son.


Lo, 'tis autumn,
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages with leaves fluttering
in the moderate wind,
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang and grapes on the
trellis'd vines;
Above all, lo the sky so calm so transparent after the
rain, and with wondrous clouds,
Below too, all calm, all vital and beautiful, and the farm
prospers well.

But now from the fields come father, come at the daughter's
call,
And come to the entry mother, to the front door come right
away.

Fast as she can she hurries, something ominous, her steps
trembling,
She does not tarry to smooth her hair nor adjust her cap.

Open the envelope quickly,
O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd,
O a strange hand writes for our dear son, O stricken
mother's soul!
All swims before her eyes, flashes with black, she catches
the main words only,
Sentences broken -
Gunshot wound in the breast, taken to hospital,
At present low, but will soon be better.
Alas poor boy, he will never be better, (nor maybe needs
to be better, that brave and simple soul)
While they stand at home at the door he is dead already,
The only son is dead.

But the mother needs to be better,
She with thin form presently drest in black,
By day her meals untouch'd, then at night fitfully sleeping,
often waking,
In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep
longing,
O that she might withdraw unnoticed, silent from life escape
and withdraw,
To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.

"Come Up From the Fields, Father" tells the tragic
story of a family who receives a letter informing them

17. The underlining is in Whitman's poem.
that their son has been shot in battle. The boy eventually
dies from his wounds. The poem, written in free verse,
begin with the daughter summoning her father ("Come up
from the fields") and her mother ("Come to the front door")
to come read a letter which has just arrived from their
son, Pete. The story is interrupted by a description of
the family farm and of the beautiful, serene Ohio
countryside in autumn; the moderate wind blows through
the colorful autumn foliage, the apples and grapes are
ready to be picked, and the sky has just cleared after
a rainstorm. This peaceful picture is abruptly shattered
by a return to the unfolding drama. The father and mother
anxiously hurry to their daughter's side. In the next
section of the poem the family reads the letter, which
they soon discover was written by someone else and only
signed by their son. As the letter is read, the mother,
almost fainting from grief, catches the main words:
"Gunshot wound in the breast, taken to hospital, at present
low, but will soon be better." In the next few verses
Whitman, as if in an aside, tells the reader that even
as the letter is being read, the son is already dead.
The poem ends with a description of the mother's reaction
to her only son's death: she is not able to eat nor sleep
and spends her days wishing only to withdraw from life
and to be reunited with her son in death.
Whitman's poem combines various modes of address and expression: direct address ("Come up from the fields, father," "Open the envelope quickly"); narration ("But now from the fields come father"); recitation ("Gunshot wound in the breast, taken to hospital..."); and description/reflection ("Lo, 'tis autumn, lo where the trees, deeper green..."). The unfolding of the drama and the varied emotions of the boy's family are organized in a manner resembling an operatic scene. The Whitman scholar Gay Wilson Allen wrote: "Whitman said that his poetic rhythms were influenced by Italian opera, and many of his poems do contain passages resembling the aria (singing passage) and the recitative (speaking passage) of the Italian opera. 18

The Music

Weill sets this "operatic scene" in a through-composed form, alternating between recitative and aria styles in accordance with the changing rhythms of Whitman's poem. Following is an overview of Whitman's poem and Weill's musical setting:

The subject matter and pace of Whitman's poem guided Weill in his choice of musical styles. The slower rhythm and descriptive nature of the text "Lo, 'tis autumn" lent itself to an aria style, while the faster rhythm and action-oriented nature of such phrases as "Fast as she can she hurries" and "Open the envelope quickly" called for a recitative-like musical setting.

The song begins in a breathless, agitated manner. The daughter is calling her parents to come quickly and read their son's letter. Weill sets this passage in an
action-oriented aria style. The tempo indication (agitato),
the driving accompaniment and the disjunct, almost
percussive vocal line characterize the daughter's agitated
internal state as she calls out for her parents (Example
37). Centering around the key of d minor, the accompaniment
contains a three-note motive which appears, in varied forms,
throughout the first half of the song and represents
anticipation and agitation. The falling two-note triplet
figure in the right hand of the piano accompaniment in
measure one reverses itself and becomes a rising two-note
figure in measure two. Likewise, the quarter notes in
the left hand of the accompaniment descend and ascend by
thirds in arpeggio-like movement. The contracting intervals
within this motive in the first measure, a perfect or
augmented fourth contracting to a major or minor third,
become expanding intervals in measure two, a perfect or
augmented fourth expanding to a perfect fifth (Example
37, measures 1-2). The intervals of a third and a fourth,
introduced in the accompaniment, are taken over by the
voice part and become an important part of the melody.
The rising fourth that initiates the melody, to the words
"Come up," acts as a musical gesture which imitates the
natural speech inflection of this phrase (Example 37,
measures 2-3).
Example 37. "Come Up From the Fields, Father!," measures 1-6.

To differentiate the daughter's calls to her father from those to her mother Weill sets the first six measures ("Come up from the fields, father...") in d minor and the next six measures ("And come to the front door, mother...") in d flat minor. This key change is accomplished by an immediate downward transposition of a half step, another example of Weill's "semitonal sideslip" and of his practice of sudden harmonic shifts (Example 38).
A one-measure accelerando leads directly to the next section of the song, indicated by a sudden slowing of tempo, a subito piano, a change from 4/4 to 3/4 time, and a change of tonality (Example 39, measures 12-11). In setting this "scenic" passage, Weill changes to a more lyrical aria style. A rolled chord along with an arpeggiated flowing accompaniment and a more conjunct and vocally-oriented melodic line all signal a change of mood motivated by a bucolic description of Ohio's countryside in autumn. Throughout this nature scene Weill emphasizes such descriptive words as "Lo," "sweeten," "wind," "vines," and "clouds" by their placement on higher notes and their longer note values. The ambiguity of key is especially striking in this section. The bass line of the accompaniment and the vocal line seem to indicate a C mixolydian tonality, while the top line of the accompaniment centers around F major (Example 39).

The music of the opening returns as the initial lines of text are reiterated ("But now from the fields come, father, come at the daughter's call; And come to the entry, mother, to the front door come, right away."). Measure 48 (Example 40) signals the beginning of two sections in recitative style (Sections C and D) in which much of the drama unfolds. The agitated accompanimental figure indicates the mother and father hurrying to read the letter, while the intervals of this motive widen as the mother approaches. The vocal line becomes much more chromatic.
and its rhythm conforms closely to the text. Weill especially makes effective use of rests to create a sense of urgency.


The opening of the envelope is accompanied by a diminished triad in the form of eighth-note triplets which are continually repeated. A short, accented figure appears periodically in the left hand of the accompaniment. With each appearance this figure is transposed up a half or whole step. Weill hints at a number of keys and creates
ambiguity and instability through the use of diminished and augmented chords. This extremely turbulent and chromatic passage is representative of the anxiety and volatile emotions felt by the soldier's family (Example 41).


With his insistence upon the pitches $c^2$ and $b^1$ Weill sets the actual reading of the letter in an almost monotone fashion to simulate the sounds of the letter being read out loud (Example 42).
In the passage above there are pitch discrepancies between Weill's manuscript and the 1947 William Horne recording, which the composer supervised. It may be that
Weill preferred the recorded version and neglected to make the pitch changes in his manuscript. The published version (European American Music Corporation), shown in Example 42, conforms to the manuscript. The recorded version is notated in Example 43.


After the letter is read the accompaniment becomes even more turbulent, with chromatic descending and ascending figures in the left hand (Example 42, measures 78-79).

This passage ends forcefully on a D major seventh chord with a b flat\(^1\)-a\(^1\) suspension (Example 44, measure 80-81).

It is at this point that Weill musically indicates the son's death, anticipating Whitman's text in measures 89-92: "While they stand at home at the door, he is dead already; the only son is dead." The tension of the drama is released by a recurrence of the "peaceful" second section and a return of the lyrical aria style (section B\(^7\)).

Through Weill's voice leading, the D major seventh chord in measure 81 becomes an F major triad with an added sixth and ninth in measure 82, a chord already seen earlier in the song (Example 39, measure 13). The same music which was used to depict the serenity of Ohio's countryside is
to invoke the peacefulness of death and the resignation felt by the family (Example 44).

Example 44. "Come Up From the Fields, Father," measures 80-83.

In a discussion of both the European and American influences in Weill's Walt Whitman songs, Stephen Hinton comments on this particular passage:

Weill frequently fills out the basic triad to contain both an added sixth and ninth; it is a sonority he also utilizes as a pentatonically conceived melodic cell. Such a chord points to an obvious influence of popular music. Yet it has more than just local, harmonic significance. As Weill remarked in an analogous connection, "I arrive at the sixth entirely out of 'Stimmführung' [voice leading]...so it is not used as an 'effect.'" The ninth is likewise generated contrapuntally. When the sonority reappears at the end of "Come Up From the Fields, Father," signaling a resolution after the agitated and unabashedly operatic central section, it is the Old rather than the New World that is invoked, a serenely resigned Mahler rather than a crooner's sugary ballad.

The remainder of the song (sections E and F) describes the mother's reaction to her son's death. The eighth-note triplet figures reappear and are repeated incessantly, propelling the song forward to its dramatic end. Weill uses key instability and minor keys in his description of the mother's condition. Accompanying the text "often waking, in the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep longing" are a series of rapidly changing tonalities and a chromatic vocal line, representing her disturbed sleep (Example 45).

After this turbulent passage, culminating in a measure marked *allargando* with a descending bass line (Example 46, measure 108), the key of d minor, accompanied by a d pedal in the bass, is firmly established. It is the only tonally stable passage to this point in the piece and it represents a conclusion to the drama, specifically the mother's desire to join her son in death. The d pedal in the bass represents the tolling of funeral bells. The vocal line, marked *forte* and *espressivo*, begins on f₂ and descends with a *decrescendo* to a¹. This phrase is repeated as if to represent her waves of emotion and sobs of grief. As the mother prepares to die, Weill modulates from d minor to C major through his trademark semitonal movement (Example 46, measures 113-114), once again equating death to a peaceful release from life through the use of a major key. The dynamic level drops to *piano* and the voice rises gently to a high g (g²) with the final words "To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son." The song ends with a three-measure piano postlude which recalls the lyrical "countryside" music. This same music was used when the son's death was confirmed, and now Weill musically indicates the mother's death, giving the drama a finality which is not found in Whitman's poem. The last measure consists of a C major triad with an added sixth, a, and ninth, d. This same sonority, on F major, already appeared twice in the song, both times announcing the lyrical sections
mentioned above. Weill brings this chord in one last time, musically and dramatically unifying the song (Example 46).

"Come Up From the Fields, Father" is essentially a classical art song and may even be considered an operatic scena. Weill's music becomes an equal partner with the words in conveying the meaning of the text. The accompaniment is an integral part of the drama, not a mere backdrop as in the Broadway and cabaret songs. The vocal line is not limited to a speech-like inflection of the text but rather, as a result of more disjunct movement, chromatic coloring and exploitation of the upper regions in the voice, makes use of a wide range of vocal colors.
CHAPTER V

COMPARISON OF THE THREE GROUPS OF WAR SONGS

Influences on Weill's Songs

The Singers, the Lyricists, the Audiences and Busoni

Weill's solo songs written during the years of World War II are indeed a varied group. During this time Weill composed his songs for a number of different organizations, each with a different targeted audience. He worked in collaboration with a very diverse group of lyricists and wrote music for many different kinds of singers and types of voices. All of these factors dictated Weill's compositional style and it is much to his credit that he was able to excel in such a wide variety of song styles.

The American propaganda songs were written in a purely popular song style. "Buddy on the Nightshift," written for the Lunch Time Follies, was performed in front of the factory workers during their lunch breaks and was designed as nothing more than popular entertainment with a motivational message. The great Broadway lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II wrote lyrics perfectly suited for the occasion, lyrics which are ordinary and colloquial in nature. Weill's music, with its jazz-like chord structures, syncopated rhythms and homophonic texture, is in a Broadway
song style, and his moderate vocal range and singable melody were intended for the Broadway and theater actors who sang in the Lunch Time Follies. Thus, "Buddy on the Nightshift" should be performed in a Broadway musical style, i.e. a Broadway "croon," which involves a continuous legato vocal line, relaxation of the notated rhythm, use of portamento, careful attention to diction and speech inflections, and a clear voice with limited use of vibrato.

"Schickelgruber" was written for the Fight for Freedom organization, whose patriotic programs were aimed at a mixed audience of American patriots and German refugees. Howard Dietz, the Hollywood movie executive known for his clever and sophisticated lyrics, wrote the words to "Schickelgruber." The text, full of references to Hitler's past, demanded a prior knowledge of the German leader, which the targeted audience had. The comic quality of Dietz's text was enhanced by Weill's brisk tempo and his satirical setting of Dietz's intentionally awkward rhymes. As in "Buddy on the Nightshift," Weill kept the vocal demands of the piece moderate so as to accommodate the performers, also Broadway and theater actors. "Schickelgruber" should also be sung in a Broadway musical style, here as a comic routine number with quick, precise diction.

The two German propaganda songs were written in a cabaret style for Lotte Lenya, an accomplished cabaret
singer of the period. Both of these songs, therefore, should be sung in a cabaret style characterized by subtle rhythmic changes for textual emphasis, limited use of Sprechstimme, portamento, strict attention to diction and speech cadences, and limited use of vibrato. Both songs were written in German, by Germans, and were aimed exclusively at a German-speaking audience. Bertolt Brecht, the author of the poem "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?," was a frequent collaborator with Weill, and his ironic anti-war message was matched by Weill's ironic-sounding musical setting, based upon the fluctuation between major and minor tonalities, especially the use of major tonalities for tragic circumstances. First performed by Weill and Lotte Lenya at an anti-Nazi rally, the song was written with Lenya's voice in mind, and thus is vocally undemanding and limited in range.

Commissioned by the Office of War Information, "Wie lange noch?" was written specifically as anti-Hitler propaganda for the Germans in Germany. The lyrics of the original French song, "Je ne t'aime pas," were written by the French novelist Maurice Magre. Accordingly, Weill's musical setting was French in character, sensitive to textual nuances and sentimental in nature, without the underlying irony typical of his German songs. The music of the French-inspired song was used almost verbatim by the brilliant German cabaret writer, Walter Mehring, and
he effectively adapted his German lyrics to the existing music. The German setting was written for Lotte Lenya, who transposed the original key down a fourth to accommodate her voice. Aside from the need for transposition, "Wie lange noch?" was well suited to Lenya's singing style.

The Four Walt Whitman Songs were written in a more classical style than Weill's other war songs, and can be classified as art songs. The first three of the four songs, including "Oh Captain! My Captain!," were written for Paul Robeson, a singer known for his stirring renditions of spirituals and patriotic songs and a likely choice to interpret Weill's songs based upon Whitman's strongly patriotic Civil War poems. Although Robeson never sang the Whitman songs, his deep resonant voice and broad, expressive singing style influenced Weill's compositional style. It was most likely that the songs were intended for a Robeson recording, but a recording did not materialize for several years until Weill wrote a fourth song, "Come Up From the Fields, Father," for the first recording of the song set by the tenor William Horne in 1947. Horne's more extensive classical training prompted Weill to compose a more musically complicated song to finish out the set.

Weill's intention for these first three songs was to contribute to the war effort and inspire patriotism, and in order to reach a wider audience he drew elements of popular music into their essentially classical style.
These popular elements included traditional chord progressions along with strong bass motion, homophonic texture, and diatonic melodies. Conversely, the purpose of "Come Up From the Fields, Father" was to complete the Whitman set for a recording, and direct audience appeal ceased to be the determining factor. Because it was written after the end of the war, Weill composed this song without the undertones of propaganda and was clearly aiming at a more musically literate audience. The music of this later song is more complex and essentially more classical, almost operatic in structure and character, due in large part to Weill's choice of a narrative poem that is in free-verse poetic form. In contrast, "Oh Captain! My Captain!" is set in a traditional AA'B form (Bar form), based on regular phrase structures reflecting the more traditional construction of Whitman's poem. Because of the predominately strophic setting of "Oh Captain! My Captain!" the meaning of the words is conveyed in a more general sense, whereas the through-composed setting of "Come Up From the Fields, Father" allows stricter attention to the dramatic nuances of each section of text. Some of Weill's characteristic techniques, such as major and minor key fluctuation and sudden key changes, are found in both songs. However, "Come Up From the Fields, Father" is harmonically more ambitious, with frequent modulations and passages that are tonally ambiguous. Complexity is also evident
in the treatment of rhythm (for example, there are many three against two passages) and in motivic development. The accompaniment in "Come Up From the Fields, Father" plays an integral part in the musical and dramatic presentation, while the accompaniment in "Oh Captain! My Captain!" is essentially supportive in nature.

The vocal style of the two songs is also different. "Oh Captain! My Captain!" has a recognizable, essentially diatonic melody which proceeds primarily in stepwise and triadic movement. Written for the bass-baritone Paul Robeson, the range and the robust character of the song were well suited to Robeson's naturally strong, resonant voice. The melody of "Come Up From the Fields, Father" is much more chromatic and often is in conflict with the underlying harmony. It is also more disjunct and more rhythmically complex. This song was written for the classically trained tenor William Horne, who first recorded the song.

In considering the men for whom these songs were composed, Paul Robeson and William Horne, it is obvious that Weill intended the Four Walt Whitman Songs to be sung by well-developed, trained voices, in a vocal style more akin to the performance of art-song literature than Broadway or cabaret songs.

Weill's teacher, Ferruccio Busoni, had a great influence upon Weill's compositional style and musical
language throughout his career, including not only his European but also his American works. Included in his American works are the World War II songs, which show evidence of Busoni's influence: the semitonal shifting between harmonies, the vacillation between major and minor, harmonic experimentation that was nevertheless still rooted in traditional harmony, and the neo-classical ideal of simplification along with Weill's desire for his music to be understood and appreciated by contemporary audiences.

**Similarities and Differences**

There are common compositional techniques employed by Weill in his World War II songs, regardless of their style and purpose. The vacillation between major and minor tonalities is present in all of the songs except "Buddy on the Nightshift" which, because of Weill's deliberate imitation of the 1930s and 1940s popular song style, shows less of his personal compositional style. The "semitonal sideslip," sudden harmonic shifts, and pedal points in the bass with changing harmonies above occur in "Wie lange noch?", "Oh Captain! My Captain!", and "Come Up From the Fields, Father." The delaying of a true dominant to tonic progression until later in the song occurs in "Schickelgruber" and "Oh Captain! My Captain!" In "Schickelgruber" and "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" Weill strengthens modulations to major tonalities by simpler
simpler chordal structures based primarily on tonic, dominant, subdominant and supertonic chord levels. These same two songs also share an harmonic progression, iv/iv♯-i-vi♯/VI♯-i, which is repeated frequently in both songs.

The American songs (Broadway style) and the German songs (cabaret style) are similar in many ways. Both groups are homophonic in texture, with the accompaniment primarily supporting the vocal melody. The vocal lines are dependent upon the natural inflections and cadences of speech for rhythms and pitches. The vocal ranges and tessituras are moderate and the melodies are primarily diatonic and conjunct. In both groups of songs there is room for improvisation, especially with regard to rhythm.

Just as there are similarities between the war songs, there are also many differences which make the three groups unique. "Buddy on the Nightshift" and "Come Up From the Fields, Father" are the most distinctive in their respective styles. "Buddy on the Nightshift" is an example of Weill's intentional imitation of the 1940s American popular song style: aaba form (thirty-two measures), extended tertian chords (seventh, ninth, eleventh and thirteenth), and dotted and syncopated rhythms. "Come Up From the Fields, Father," on the other hand, represents a more serious, classical song style: a descriptive accompaniment equal in musical importance to the vocal line, passages of tonal ambiguity,
an often disjunct and chromatic vocal melody which is not
doubled in the accompaniment, and a through-composed form.
The other Whitman song, "Oh Captain! My Captain!" is also
classical in nature, but with a more homophonic texture,
as in popular music. The other American propaganda song,
"Schickelgruber," is in a popular song style but, unlike
"Buddy on the Nightshift", it does not conform to a
"standardized" song form. It deviates from the normal
eight-measure phrases and contains many of the same harmonic
features as the German cabaret songs. These German songs,
"Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" and "Wie lange noch?," are different in their use of the German language and in
Weill's ironic treatment of the text, primarily through
his use of major and minor tonalities.

Significance of the Songs in Weill's Output

Kim Kowalke, in the short introductory article entitled
Recollections of Forgotten Songs included in the program
notes for the recording The Unknown Kurt Weill, comments
on Weill as a "songwriter:

Outside the theater, Weill wasn't much of a
"songwriter." Compared with Hanns Eisler, for example,
Weill wrote very few independent compositions for voice
and piano or small ensemble: omitting from the list
numbers cut from his Broadway shows, forty-five at
most have survived. The fourteen songs on this
recording document nearly twenty years of Weill's
career, 1925-1944, and capture its stunning diversity.
Written for specific occasions, commissions, or
functions, they are all, in a sense, peripheral to
his principal course: the discovery of a route for
modern music, especially for musical theater in its broadest sense, that could reach the larger community without intellectual concessions. It is all the more remarkable that each of these miniatures (none of which could have occupied Weill for more than a few days) is a gem of its particular type. And collectively they also present the most convincing argument for the reclamation of those areas of his career now swamped and forgotten.

Four of the war songs, "Buddy on the Nightshift," "Schickelgruber," "Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib?" and "Wie lange noch?" are included on this album. As Kowalke wrote, these songs probably did not occupy much of Weill's time, nor were they the main focus in his artistic career. However, these songs demonstrate in miniature form many of the compositional techniques and salient features found in his larger works, and reflect as well the incredibly diverse career of this composer. The Walt Whitman songs in particular demonstrate that even in the midst of his dedication to the American Broadway stage he desired to recall his earlier classical roots. Thus it would seem that though he did little to promote his European works in America, he did not choose to forget them.

Conclusions

The main underlying theme throughout this paper has been Kurt Weill's amazing ability to adapt his musical

style to whatever situation he was called upon to compose.

Weill's powers of assimilation and adaptation have been observed by many, including the theater director Howard Clurman. Writing about Weill, Clurman observed:

His powers of assimilation were extraordinary. He could write music in any country so that it would seem as if he were a native. He did in fact write some good "French" and "English" music during his stays in Paris and London. If he had landed among the Hottentots, he would have become the outstanding Hottentot composer of the Hottentot theater.²

It stands to reason that since Weill wrote songs in so many musical styles that the singer must be willing and able to accommodate a variety of singing styles. The classical art songs, such as the Four Walt Whitman Songs, should be sung as any other art song would be. In his article on performance practice in Weill's music, Michael Morley gives guidelines for singing Weill's European theater songs which can also be applied to his songs composed in America, both cabaret and Broadway songs:

Weill's European theater songs call for a clear voice with character and color, well focused and preferably without a wide vibrato. Clear diction is important, as is a feel for the cadences of speech, and the singer should sing when necessary and tell the story when the song calls for it. Above all, the need to project character and personality through the song should not

prompt the performer to overblown characterizations where the music is milked or the words wrung for every last drop of significance.

The diversity of the war songs serves to illuminate Weill's versatility. Whether setting music to the lyrics of Brecht or Hammerstein, writing for the concert singer Paul Robeson or the cabaret singer and actress Lotte Lenya, or directing his musical style toward American factory workers or German soldiers and civilians caught in the grips of Hitler's regime, Weill responded with equal facility to these varied occasions, living up to the ideals of Neoclassicism. Kurt Weill's war songs are important, both in terms of his musical style and as an opportunity to learn more about music and society during the turbulent years of World War II.

3. Michael Morley, "Nor In the Singer Let the Song Be Lost," Kurt Weill Newsletter, II, no. 2 (Fall 1984), 7.
APPENDIX

KURT WEILL'S WAR AND PROPAGANDA SONGS

I. AMERICAN PROPAGANDA SONGS 1942

Song of the Free - Archibald MacLeish
Schickelgruber - Howard Dietz
The Good Earth - Oscar Hammerstein II
Buddy on the Nightshift - Oscar Hammerstein II
Song of the Inventory - Lewis Allan
We Don't Feel Like Surrendering Today - Maxwell Anderson
Oh Uncle Samuel! - Maxwell Anderson
Toughen Up, Buckle Down, Carry On - Dorothy Fields

II. FOUR WALT WHITMAN SONGS 1942, 1947

Oh Captain! My Captain!
Beat! Beat! Drums!
Dirge for Two Veterans
Come Up From the Fields, Father

III. GERMAN PROPAGANDA SONGS 1943, 1944

Und was bekam des Soldaten Weib? - Bertolt Brecht
Wie lange noch? - Walter Mehring
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Dissertations


Recordings


—. This Is the Life and Other Unrecorded Songs. Steven Kimbrough, baritone, and Dalton Baldwin, piano. Arabesque Records Z6579.

Scores
