

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Faculty Publications and Creative Activity,
School of Theatre and Film

Theatre and Film, Johnny Carson School of

1995

Choices of Evil: Brecht's Modernism in the Work with Eisler and Dessau

William Grange

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, wgrange@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/theatrefacpub>



Part of the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

Grange, William, "Choices of Evil: Brecht's Modernism in the Work with Eisler and Dessau" (1995). *Faculty Publications and Creative Activity, School of Theatre and Film*. 5.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/theatrefacpub/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Theatre and Film, Johnny Carson School of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications and Creative Activity, School of Theatre and Film by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Choices of Evil: Brecht's Modernism in the Work with Eisler and Dessau

WILLIAM GRANGE

Brecht wanted composers of music for his mature work who were capable of creating an idiom complementary to his own modernist ideas of theatrical performance. That idiom he called "gestic" music, the kind capable of "conveying particular attitudes adopted by the speaker towards other men" [bestimmte Haltungen des Sprechenden anzeigt, die dieser anderen Menschen gegenüber einnimmt].¹ When playing a fascist, for example, the actor was not merely to present the character's pompousness; he or she was to illustrate a political stance toward that pompousness. Nor was the actor to reveal layers of the character's motivation, like girls in Broadway burlesque shows who peeled away layers of clothing to reveal their bodies.² Rather, the actor must instead be free, as Walter Benjamin phrased it, "to act artistically out of character." [Der Schauspieler soll sich die Möglichkeit vorbehalten, mit Kunst aus der Rolle zu fallen.]³ Brecht's conception of "attitude" [Haltung] in acting paralleled his conception of music; both were rooted in his rejection of nineteenth-century aesthetic values. Those values had animated the illusionistic devices of the Meiningen style and later, the Stanislavsky "system," whose strictures against portraying attitudes and the search for "objective truth" in character were hallmarks of the Moscow Art Theater. Although Brecht admired some aspects of Stanislavsky's theater (e.g., accurate observation of human behavior, ensemble playing, and rigorous training for actors), and later even claimed to have studied the Russian master, he rejected the illusionism and the psychological orientation upon which the "system" was based. To Brecht it was a nineteenth-century relic, hopelessly outmoded, "un-Marxist, and reactionary."⁴

He had a similar antipathy towards nineteenth-century musical values. Most "serious" music, he said, bespoke outmoded lyricism and fostered individual expression. [Die "ernste" Musik hingegen hält immer noch am Lyrismus fest und pflegt den individuellen Ausdruck.]⁵ The primary target of his musical scorn was Wagner, but he also included Beethoven because "his music always reminds me of battlefield paintings!" [Seine Musik . . . erinnert mich immer an Schlachtengemälde!]⁶ Brecht favored Bach and Mozart; their preromantic, less overtly

emotive characteristics were more attuned to his modernist consciousness. Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, for example, had numerous instances of "gestic" music, demonstrating "attitudes of social consequence" [Mozart in seinem *Don Juan* . . . drückte die gesellschaftlichen belangvollen Haltungen der Menschen aus.]⁷ When searching for music exhibiting such relationships in his plays in the 1930s and 1940s, he naturally turned away from what John Willett has called "the faintly cheap nostalgia of Kurt Weill,"⁸ the composer with whom he had enjoyed his greatest commercial success.

Two composers closely associated with Brecht's mature work were Hanns Eisler (1898–1962) and Paul Dessau (1894–1979); among the many composers with whom Brecht worked, theirs was the work most complementary to Brecht's modernist perspectives. Eisler's work with Brecht began with *The Measures Taken* in 1930 and *The Mother* in 1931. Their collaboration continued into their years of exile, although Dessau also worked with Brecht in exile and was his composer of choice for Brecht's major plays at the Berliner Ensemble in the 1950s. Eisler and Dessau shared similar political and musical viewpoints, and their belief in a Marxist interpretation of social relationships resulted (for compositions used in Brecht plays) in a unique set of polemical circumstances where "text and composition came into a fresh relationship with each other," according to Eisler. "Music is to derive its fullness and complexity from the text and—as politically responsible art with a special capacity for reaching the emotions—convey it precisely." [Text und Komposition treten in eine neue Beziehung zueinander: die Musik soll seine Fülle und Komplexität aus ihm heraus entwickeln und—qua politisch verantwortliche Kunst, die in besonderem Maß die Gefühle erreicht—präzis ausrichten.]⁹ To convey emotions "precisely" meant the relationship between words and notes should reveal the contradictions within a play's characters; both composers were what Brecht later termed "realistic artists," the kind who had always presented "the contradictions in people and their relationships to each other, showing the conditions needed for their development." [Realistische Künstler stellen die *Widersprüche* in den Menschen und ihren Verhältnissen zueinander dar und zeigen die Bedingungen, unter denen sie sich entwickeln.]¹⁰ Their "realism" espoused disparities, even dissonances, between words and music because Brecht distrusted lyricism (characterized by accord, even consonance of music with text). Brecht considered lyricism a form of "psychological manipulation" with no "directional purpose." [Die Lyrisierung sei zugleich eine Psychologisierung. . . . Für das epische Theater sei das unbrauchbar, (denn) es fehlt dann auch in der Musik die Zeigefunktion, wie Brecht das nennt.]¹¹ Brecht viewed traditional music for the theater, with its emotional intentions and lyrical connections to the text, wholly unsuited for the epic theater. He wanted what Eisler termed "applied music" [angewandte Musik].¹² It was a politically progressive idiom, the kind that forced audiences out of nineteenth-century listening habits; it also was a "practical" usage, and Eisler in particular stressed its simplicity. Eisler wanted actors to sing his music in a straightforward

manner, and his scores provided directions like “simple” [einfach], “without sentimentality” [ohne Sentimentalität], and “friendly” [freundlich]. Dessau likewise wanted to avoid lyricism, but he did not place the same premium on simplicity as did Eisler. Dessau’s music was in contradistinction extremely complicated, as the composer frequently extrapolated folk melodies, combined with rhythmic irregularities, for Brecht’s lines. Dessau’s music was a lucid departure from nineteenth-century standards, but it was formidably difficult for actors to memorize and to sing.

In the music of Eisler and Dessau, Brecht found a modernist sensibility parallel to his own. Eisler was a student of Arnold Schoenberg, whose introduction of twelve-tone serialism had initiated a modernist sensibility in European music;¹³ Dessau was trained as a violinist, but he began composing music (initially for silent movies) in the 1920s. He, too, studied twelve-tone composition systems, and their dissonances run throughout the songs he composed for *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. When Eisler, Brecht, and Elisabeth Hauptmann (who later married Paul Dessau) began their intense, daily collaborative work on *The Measures Taken* in spring 1930,¹⁴ the composer had a strong influence on Brecht as both sought “to teach not only the audience but also the performer revolutionary conduct by depicting false political conduct” [nicht nur den Zuhörern sondern auch den Ausführenden revolutionäres Verhalten lernen, indem sie falsches politisches Verhalten darstellt].¹⁵ Working with Eisler taught Brecht methods of simplifying what Benjamin called “the dialectic at work between teaching and learning . . . [namely,] the action which is shown on stage and the attitude of showing the action which is shown on stage” [die Dialektik, die zwischen Lehrenden und Lernenden . . . kommt im epischen Theater mit der steten Auseinandersetzung zwischen dem Bühnenvorgang, der gezeigt wird, und dem Bühnenverhalten].¹⁶ Beginning with the work on *The Measures Taken* and *The Mother* in the early 1930s, the association between Eisler and Brecht became more than an artistic collaboration; it was a synergism of aesthetic temperament and political ethos.

After the National Socialists came to power, both artists saw their work banned throughout Germany; they endured exile and expatriation, meeting where they could to continue their collaboration. Their work became an important source of intellectual stimulus, solace, and mutual consolation. They huddled in Denmark, France, Great Britain, and the United States in the mid-1930s to work together on projects and to see their work performed; in London they labored to finish *Roundheads and Peakheads*; in New York they worked together on the (eventually disastrous) 1935 American premiere of *The Mother*. In 1936 they returned to Denmark, where they witnessed the world premiere of *Roundheads and Peakheads* in Copenhagen. Also in that year they began work on an opera based upon the biblical character of Goliath; an antiwar cantata and numerous elegies for voice and piano; they completed a requiem for Lenin in 1937. In 1938 Eisler moved to New

York to take up a teaching post at the New School for Social Research; in Eisler's absence Brecht worked with other composers on various stage works, but upon finishing *Mother Courage* in 1939 he sent the script first to Eisler, hoping his friend would create songs for an eventual premiere in Zurich. He also sent Eisler a copy of his radio drama *The Trial of Lucullus*, as both men were interested in writing an opera together based on the tribulations of the eponymous Roman general.

By 1941, when Brecht was himself able to establish residency in California and was living near Eisler (who had by then moved to the West Coast), the tone of Brecht's work with Eisler changed. His contacts with other composers¹⁷ had taught him he needed more than political and aesthetic kinship in a musical collaborator. Brecht and Eisler saw each other frequently in Santa Monica, but during those occasions their inspiration was not to work on projects dealing with class relations, or "our appropriate struggle against fascism, for socialism," but instead to relieve "the tortuous boredom of the exiled immigrant" [die größte Inspiration in der Emigration ist nicht nur unsere Einsicht in die Klassenverhältnisse, unser echter und—ich hoffe—anständiger Kampf gegen den Faschismus, für den Sozialismus, sondern die quälende Langeweile eines Emigranten].¹⁸ Eisler continued to set Brecht poems to music, worked on the music for Charles Laughton's production of *Life of Galileo* in Hollywood, and contributed songs to *Schweyk in the Second World War* and *The Private Life of the Master Race*, but their collaboration lacked its former intensity. Eisler had tired of the effort Brecht demanded and was too independent of mind to subjugate himself unconditionally to his friend's ideas about music in the theater.¹⁹ The experience of banishment, expatriation, and being a fugitive on the run across whole continents had sharpened Brecht's political sensibility; it also confirmed within his own mind that he alone knew what was best for his plays.

He had never been an easy man to work with, and in America any willingness to concede or yield artistic points succumbed to what James K. Lyon called Brecht's "unshakable belief in his own greatness and a principled stubbornness about his views and his works."²⁰ His stubbornness as an artist was crucial to his triumphs when he returned to Berlin and secured his own theater, but that same tenacity prevented any success in American exile. He disabled the 1945 production of *The Private Life* in New York, for example, where director Berthold Viertel was well into rehearsal with a cast that included Albert and Else Bassermann. Brecht liked Eisler's music for the show, but he voiced strong objections to Viertel's direction, engaged the director in long discussions during valuable rehearsal time, and threw the cast into an uproar of dispirited confusion. Erwin Piscator, the show's original director, witnessed the production opening night; what he saw aroused in him, he told Brecht, the urge to "jump over the footlights, come backstage, and beat you. Not because I felt personally insulted when I saw the results of this work, but at the more objective harm you have done to yourself." Brecht blamed the press for the production's failure, accusing critics of "not wanting to discuss the play's content."

[Zu einer Diskussion des Inhalts kommt es nirgends.]²² When *Private Life* closed after its brief run, Brecht returned to California to continue a pattern of inflexibility; the result was an even more significant failure. Orson Welles had expressed interest in directing *Galileo*, a project to which Brecht and Charles Laughton had devoted years. The work with Laughton had been reassuring to Brecht, because the actor held Brecht in a kind of reverential awe. Brecht desired that kind of relationship with the play's director as well. Instead of Welles, therefore, Brecht insisted on Joseph Losey, who was willing to function not so much as a director but rather as Brecht's "mouthpiece."²³

Brecht experienced a similar obsequiousness in Dessau, whose music was included in the 1937 world premiere of *The Rifles of Señora Carrar* in Paris. His music was more extensive in *99%*, a collection of scenes drawn from *Master Race* which premiered in Paris a year later. Brecht encountered Dessau again in 1943 in New York City; the composer was then working on a chicken farm in New Jersey and could devote only his spare time to composing.²⁴ Their conversations convinced Brecht that Dessau possessed the devotional zeal he required; Brecht found the composer's disposition so agreeable that he urged Dessau to come out to Santa Monica and work with him.

There were many reasons for Dessau's compatibility with Brecht, even though Brecht himself admitted that Dessau lacked the experience and development of Eisler.²⁵ Eisler, however, was far more independent than Dessau and was furthermore well established as a teacher, author, and composer of film scores. In Hollywood, Eisler was indeed one of the best known and most accomplished of all German émigré composers. Yet Brecht recognized in Dessau, during the mid- to late-1940s, precisely the kind of collaborator he needed. "I have no pride," Dessau said in reference to Brecht. "When a genius says something good to me, I believe him. I work on what he gives me as if it were my own." [Da kenne ich keinen Stolz. Wenn ein Genie mir etwas Gutes sagt, dann halte ich mich daran. Das verarbeite ich sofort als mein Eigentum.]²⁶ Brecht's practice of giving composers bits of melody he wanted in a song and expecting them to flesh out the song into a full composition was at first startling to Dessau. Brecht had worked that way with Eisler and with others, but Dessau was most acquiescent in subjugating his own ego to Brecht's ideas. As they were walking down Broadway in New York City in 1943, Brecht sang a few notes for a song he wanted and Dessau spent weeks "trying to make eight bars out of Brecht's two," Dessau reported, "and he was very happy about it."²⁷ That method of working intensified when Dessau joined Brecht in California. Dessau was initially reluctant to engage in what he considered plagiarism, but Brecht convinced him otherwise; soon Dessau agreed the practice was "not only perfectly legitimate, but natural and productive." [Diese Art Plagierung war mir damals gänzlich fremd. Heute erscheint sie mir nicht nur legitim, sondern durchaus natürlich und fruchtbar.]²⁸ Dessau went on to adapt many snippets of melodies Brecht liked, fragments of folk songs, and even portions of Luther hymns for subsequent productions.

Brecht had written *Mother Courage*, *Good Person*, and *Chalk Circle* with composers other than Dessau in mind and had indeed tried to persuade others to write music for those plays. Eisler, as already noted, was his first choice for *Mother Courage*; he had interested Kurt Weill in *Good Person* as a “half-opera,” and in 1943 Weill purchased an option on the work for eventual opening on Broadway. He turned to Eisler again for *Chalk Circle*, although Katherine Griffith’s music had been used for the play’s April 1948 “world premiere” production with students from Carleton College in Minnesota. That production resembled the premieres of *Mother Courage* (1941) and *Good Person* (1943) in Zurich, for which the Swiss tunesmiths Paul Burkhard and Huldreich Georg Früh, respectively, had written songs; political circumstances far beyond Brecht’s control prevented his presence at any of these premieres (he had left the United States after his appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947). The Carleton College production set a precedent, however, since “for the next two decades Brechtian productions in America would be done largely by university theaters or experimental troupes.”²⁹ When Brecht returned to East Berlin and began staging the plays the way he wanted, Paul Dessau was his composer of choice. That is not to say Eisler was out of the picture; in the early 1950s he worked intensively with the company on *Katzgraben* by Erwin Strittmatter and on a reworking of *The Mother* for performance in Leipzig. Brecht also worked with Carl Orff and Rudolf Wagner-Regeny on projects at the Berliner Ensemble, but he remained committed to Dessau through the mid-1950s, completing a total of ten premieres with him and insisting on Dessau’s performance rights to *Mother Courage*, *Good Person*, and *Chalk Circle* for any production of those plays in West Germany, Austria, or Switzerland.³⁰ In return, Dessau remained devotedly loyal to Brecht; he worked long hours with actors individually on their songs, pounding out each note in music whose unfamiliar melodic and rhythmic patterns made it arduously difficult for them to learn and to perform.

The difficulty of Dessau’s music, especially in *Good Person* and *Chalk Circle*, was a result of Brecht’s interest in non-Western musical forms. He wanted music like that of the Chinese, based on a five-tone scale; it sounded neutral to most Western ears and, Brecht thought, enabled audiences to remain detached, “lingering on the surface and not moving a person deeply” [an der Oberfläche blieb und nicht tiefer berührte].³¹ The composer’s background and interest in the same kind of music “predestined” Dessau to be composer of choice for those plays.³² Dessau came from a family of synagogue cantors, and his knowledge of Jewish liturgical music complemented Brecht’s search for a “cold beauty” in music. Dessau’s use of “dissonant chords and cumbersome rhythms, combined with ornamentation and melodic elaboration derived from [the] Jewish synagogue” gave the music what Brecht wanted. [Die von Brecht, gewünschte “kalte schönheit” . . . erzielte Dessau durch weitgehendes Abweichen vom klassisch-abendländischen Musik- und Harmonie-Ideal, durch dissonante Akkorde, sperrige Rhythmen und eine aus der

jüdischen Synagogalmusik übernommene Ornamentik und Melismatik.]³³ Dessau's songs used rhythms that differentiated a character's actions from his words or illustrated a political point by running competing rhythms within the same song; they are good illustrations of Brecht's modernist, nonlyrical thinking in music and demonstrable instances of the dialectical "contradictory connections" at work in Brecht's epic theater practice that should, Brecht said, "be reinstated in dramatic composition." [Die Dialektik (widersprüchliche Verknüpfung) . . . soll in die dramatische Dichtart wiederhingebracht werden.]³⁴ For *Chalk Circle* Dessau used quotes from Azerbi melodies of the trans-Caucasus and scored parts for traditional instruments of the region to reemphasize the disconnection between notes and text. He even invented an instrument specifically for the play, called the Gongspiel; it was an arrangement of eight gongs set at different pitches, played with a piano keyboard mechanism.

Dessau's music was not always popular; as noted earlier, the actors had difficulty singing it; Party members in East Germany publicly excoriated it, and audiences judged it aggravating to hear. Piscator said it was "completely against the style of applied music" which Brecht had long advocated, and rather than help to clarify things in the plays, it left relationships and ideas "unclear, bewildering, and obscure" [ganz gegen den Stil der Gebrauchsmusik, (die Musik vom Kreidekreis) macht nicht klar, erklärend, sondern unklar, verwirrend, verwischend].³⁵ John Willett termed it "gingered-up folk or pseudo-folk styles of the early Stravinsky. . . . The fact that the music is difficult may be a reflection of how closely Dessau worked with Brecht. Yet the music, while it illustrates the plays, blurs the text and the music seems to be exotic where it ought to be precise."³⁶ Gingered-up, difficult, or imprecise it was not to Brecht; he judged Dessau's music both aesthetically modern and "epically" correct. Furthermore, the triumph of *Mother Courage* in 1949 was an "absolute, complete vindication"³⁷ of values he had championed since the mid-1930s. Herbert Ihering called *Mother Courage* comparable in German theater history "to Otto Brahm's production of Hauptmann's *Before Sunrise*. [Es ist nicht übertrieben, wenn ich (*Mutter Courage*) mit der Uraufführung von Gerhart Hauptmanns *Vor Sonnenaufgang* am 20. Oktober 1889 gleichsetze].³⁸ The triumph ten months later of *Puntilla and Matti*, again with Dessau's music, further vindicated Brecht's choice and stimulated inquiries from theaters in the West about performing these and other Brecht plays, all paying royalties in convertible currencies.

Their accomplishments, however, did not mitigate disputatious controversies which plagued Brecht and his collaborators in both German republics throughout the early 1950s. Although Eisler had written the national anthem of the German Democratic Republic in 1949 (setting music to a poem by Johannes R. Becher titled "Auferstanden aus Ruinen," or "Resurrected from the Ruins") and was considered that republic's semi-official composer laureate, he suffered intense criticism in 1953 for his work on a project treating the "pre-Goethe" figure of Dr. Johannes Faustus. Eisler went into voluntary exile in Vienna, returning only when Brecht

convinced him that renewed work on *Schweyk, Galileo*, and Becher's *Winterschlacht* at the Berliner Ensemble would "rehabilitate" his standing among Party critics. Dessau encountered problems with cultural mandarins in the German Democratic Republic (though he was sincerely committed to the East German republic's political agenda) when the Socialist Unity Party (SED) attacked his music for a lack of conformity to the Party's increasingly strident demands for socialist realism.

Those attacks came to a head in 1951 in the quarrel over the Brecht-Dessau opera, *The Trial of Lucullus*, at the State Opera. Only four performances were scheduled, and the opening night audience was restricted to those considered "reliable" by the Party. Many of those reliables however, had sold their tickets to West Berliners eager to see a Brecht/Dessau premiere, and thus the reception of the work was not what the Party expected. After regime loyalists in the audience obediently booed as instructed when the final curtain came down, they were drowned out by sudden bursts of applause from West Berliners.³⁹ Both playwright and composer were summoned before the Party Politburo for an eight-hour interrogation, from which Brecht emerged to ask Western reporters, "Where else in the world is there a government showing such an interest in and concern for its artists?" [Wo sonst in der Welt gibt es eine Regierung, die so viel Interesse und Fürsorge für ihre Künstler zeit?]⁴⁰ The Party's official organ, *Neues Deutschland*, accused Dessau of emulating

Igor Stravinsky, a cosmopolitan living in the USA, a fanatical destroyer of the European musical tradition, [and] a chieftain of the formalist school [who] attempts to remove any content from music and leaves it as some kind of rhythmic exercise. . . . [Thus] Dessau betrays his own gifts and robs himself of the possibility of allowing his compositions to inspire the masses in the struggle against a new war of conquest.

[Igor Strawinsky, ein in den USA lebender Kosmopolit, ist ein fanatischer Zerstörer der europäischen Musiktradition. Als Häuptling der formalistischen Schule bestreitet er, daß die Musik einen anderen "Inhalt" als rhythmische Spielereien haben könnte. . . . Dessau beraubt sich auf diese Weise selbst der Möglichkeit, die Massen durch seine Kompositionen zum Kampf gegen einen neuen Eroberungskrieg zu begeistern.]⁴¹

The remaining performances of *Lucullus* were canceled, and a new "improved" version (titled *The Condemnation of Lucullus*) premiered seven months later, again at the State Opera. Once more influential critics of the SED disapproved, and again it disappeared from the State Opera's repertoire.

Attacks on Dessau from East German authorities were perceived in some West German circles as attacks on Brecht, and they may have worked, ironically, to improve Brecht's standing in the West. Brecht needed help with his image in the West after 17 June 1953, when workers revolted against the East German regime. Because Brecht was cited publicly as expressing support for Walter Ulbricht and the party leadership during the uprisings, boycotts against his works were initiated throughout West Germany. The West German premiere of *Good Person* (under

director Harry Buckwitz, with assistance from both Brecht and Dessau), for example, had taken place in Frankfurt am Main in 1952; yet the West Berlin premiere of the play was delayed until 1967. When Buckwitz made arrangements for a Frankfurt production of *Chalk Circle* in 1955, there was intense pressure on him in Frankfurt to withdraw the play and to cancel plans for subsequent Brecht productions. When Buckwitz announced that Dessau would assist with the music, the difficulties Dessau had experienced at the hands of East German authorities won sympathy for him, and by extension for Brecht. Criticism leveled at Dessau in the East probably helped to get the production staged in Frankfurt in 1955, for when Brecht entertained suggestions that he contact other composers (among them Eisler) for *Chalk Circle*, publisher Peter Suhrkamp urged Brecht to stand by Dessau and allow the public's sympathy to build support for the play in Frankfurt.⁴²

The Eisler-Brecht collaboration regained a portion of its former intensity shortly before Brecht's death in August 1956, when both artists attempted to complete *Days of the Commune* (world premiere 17 November 1956 in Karl-Marx-Stadt [Chemnitz]), *Galileo* (Berliner Ensemble premiere 15 January 1957), and *Schweyk* (world premiere on the same evening, but in Polish at the Theatre of the Polish Army in Warsaw). Brecht did not live to see any of these performances; how the two men might have continued working together, having rediscovered their accustomed collaborative vitality, must remain a topic of historical conjecture. Dessau's collaboration was not the symbiotic relationship with the playwright Eisler had experienced, nor did it create works of widespread popularity (as with Kurt Weill); but Dessau, as Thomas Nadar has noted, "composed music for more of Brecht's dramatic works and adaptations than did any other composer."⁴³ The basic weakness of Dessau's music may also rest, as Willett said, in his subservient, almost obeisant attitude toward Brecht. But history will conclude, as Michael Gilbert has done, that Dessau's music most clearly reflects, for better or worse, "a belief in Brechtian aesthetics and an unwavering commitment to politically progressive art."⁴⁴

NOTES

1. Bertolt Brecht, "Über gestische Musik," in *Schriften zum Theater*, ed. Siegfried Unseld (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968), 252.
2. Bertolt Brecht, "Über die Verwendung von Musik für ein episches Theater," in *Schriften*, 243.
3. Walter Benjamin, "Was ist das epische Theater?" in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991), 2, pt. 2:538.
4. Martin Esslin, *Brecht: A Choice of Evils*, 4th ed. (London: Methuen, 1984), 189.
5. Brecht, "Verwendung," in *Schriften*, 244.
6. Hanns Eisler, "Bertolt Brecht und die Musik," in *Erinnerungen an Brecht*, ed. Hubert Witt (Leipzig: Philip Reclam, 1966), 128.

7. Bertolt Brecht, "Über Bühnenmusik," in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Werner Hecht (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968), 15:486.
8. John Willett, "Brecht: the Music," in *Brecht: a Collection of Essays*, ed. Peter Demetz (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 167.
9. Albrecht Betz, *Hanns Eisler: Musik einer Zeit* (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1976), 70.
10. Bertolt Brecht, "Über sozialistischen Realismus," in *Gesammelte Werke*, 19:547.
11. Hans Bunge, *Fragen Sie mehr über Brecht: Hanns Eisler im Gespräch* (Munich: Rogner and Bernhard, 1970), 218.
12. Betz, *Hanns Eisler*, 69.
13. Bunge, *Fragen Sie mehr über Brecht*, 228. Eisler defended his teacher during the "anti-formalist" debates in the German Democratic Republic in the 1950s; in countries throughout the Soviet orbit Schoenberg's music was considered not only formalist but, like Stravinsky's, both cosmopolitan and decadent. Eisler considered such attacks narrow-minded and self-serving, even while acknowledging Schoenberg's bourgeois appeal; his teacher was one of the twentieth century's greatest composers, he said, and "the history of music is unthinkable without him. The decline and fall of the bourgeoisie, certainly. But what a sunset!" [Aus der Geschichte der Musik ist er nicht wegzudenken. Verfall und Niedergang des Bürgertums: gewiß. Aber welch eine Abendröte!] (Betz, *Hanns Eisler*, 200).
14. Hanns Eisler, *Gespräche mit Hans Bunge* (Munich: Rogner and Bernhard, 1976), 105.
15. Betz, *Hanns Eisler*, 91.
16. Benjamin, "Was ist das epische Theater?," pt. 2:529.
17. Among the composers with whom Brecht worked from 1933 to 1941 were the Finn Simon Parmet, whose music Brecht wanted for *Mother Courage* and *Puntilla*, and the Dane Heinar Rosenberg, who worked with Brecht on the *Lucullus* project. The Swiss Paul Burkhard composed music in Brecht's absence for the world premiere of *Mother Courage* in Zurich, and Brecht did not work with him directly; Dessau's music appeared in Paris productions of *The Rifles of Señora Carrar* and in 99% (scenes from *Private Life of the Master Race*).
18. Bunge, *Fragen Sie mehr über Brecht*, 195.
19. Albrecht Dümling, *Laßt Euch nicht verführen: Brecht und die Musik* (Munich: Kindler, 1985), 518.
20. James K. Lyon, *Bertolt Brecht in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 89.
21. Quoted in *ibid.*, 140.
22. Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal*, ed. Werner Hecht (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), 2:744.
23. Lyon, *Bertolt Brecht*, 185.
24. Paul Dessau, "Composing for BB: Some Comments," *TDR* 12 (Summer 1968): 153.
25. Dümling, *Laßt Euch nicht*, 526.
26. Paul Dessau, *Aus Gesprächen* (Leipzig: VEB, 1975), 64.
27. Dessau, "Composing," 152.
28. Paul Dessau, "Wie es zur Lukullus kam," in *Erinnerungen an Brecht*, ed. Hubert Witt (Leipzig: Reclam, 1966), 179.
29. Lyon, *Bertolt Brecht*, 141.
30. Dorothea Baumann, *Musiktheater: zum Schaffen von schweizer Komponisten im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bonstettin: SGT, 1983), 241. Paul Burkhard's music for the 1941 *Mother*

Courage world premiere in Zurich had been used in other productions before the 1949 performance in East Berlin. Brecht and Weigel accepted Burkhard's invitation to hear his *Mother Courage* music in 1949, as Burkhard was hopeful they would accept his work for productions elsewhere. He prefaced his presentation to them by playing some of his popular tunes, among them "Oh My Papa," which later became a hit for the American crooner Eddie Fisher. Brecht found Burkhard's music altogether unsuitable for his plays and refused to consider Burkhard's music for productions in Switzerland or anywhere else.

31. Dümpling, *Laßt Euch nicht*, 526.
32. Ibid., 598.
33. Ibid., 605.
34. Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal*, 2:808.
35. Erwin Piscator, Diary no. 15, 27 October 1955, Piscator Center of Akademie der Künste Berlin (West), unpaginated.
36. Willett, "Brecht: the Music," 168.
37. Ronald Hayman, *Brecht, a Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 331.
38. Herbert Ihering, *Bert Brecht hat das literarische Antlitz Deutschlands verändert* (Munich: Kindler, 1980), 227.
39. Jürgen Rühle, *Das gefesselte Theater* (Cologne: Kiepenhauer and Witsch, 1957), 240.
40. Quoted in *ibid.*, 243.
41. Elimar Schubbe, *Dokumente zur Kunst-, Literatur-, und Kulturpolitik der S. E. D.* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1972), 187.
42. Dümpling, *Laßt Euch nicht*, 604.
43. Thomas Nadar, "The Music of Kurt Weill, Hanns Eisler, and Paul Dessau in the Dramatic Works of Bertolt Brecht" (Diss., University of Michigan, 1974), 48.
44. Michael John Tyler Gilbert, *Bertolt Brecht's Striving for Reason Even in Music* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 239.