



AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER
Carey Perloff, Artistic Director Heather Kitchen, Executive Director

PRESENTS

WORDS ^{on} PLAYS

INSIGHT INTO THE PLAY, THE PLAYWRIGHT, AND THE PRODUCTION

Happy End

LYRICS BY BERTOLT BRECHT

MUSIC BY KURT WEILL

ORIGINAL GERMAN PLAY BY DOROTHY LANE

(ELISABETH HAUPTMANN AND BERTOLT BRECHT)

BOOK AND LYRICS ADAPTED BY MICHAEL FEINGOLD

DIRECTED BY CAREY PERLOFF

CHOREOGRAPHY BY JOHN CARRAFA

MUSIC DIRECTION BY CONSTANTINE KITSOPOULOS

GEARY THEATER

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 **A.C.T.**
american conservatory theater





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OPPOSITE Costume for The Fly. **NEXT PAGE** Bill Cracker.
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CHARACTERS, CAST, AND SYNOPSIS OF *HAPPY END*

The original German production of *Happy End* opened at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin, September 2, 1929. Michael Feingold's English translation was first performed in the United States at Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut, April 6, 1972, and subsequently opened on Broadway at the Marin Beck Theatre, May 7, 1977.

CHARACTERS AND CAST

THE GANG

BILL CRACKER

Peter Macon

An aging gangster-as-hero, late 30s, handsome in a battered way. He means business and looks it.

A LADY IN GREY (“THE FLY”)

Linda Muggleston

A handsome woman of indeterminate age. Tough and a good planner.

DR. NAKAMURA (“THE GOVERNOR”)

Sab Shimono

The Fly's second-in-command. A pickpocket by trade. Always polite and fastidious. Utterly ruthless.

SAM “MAMMY” WURLITZER

Jack Willis

A con man, voluble and sweaty; the gang's “front” man.

JIMMY DEXTER (“THE REVEREND”)

Charles Dean

The gang's safecracker and explosives expert. He used to be a tent-show preacher and a carnival pitchman. A thorough-going cynic.

BOB MARKER (“THE PROFESSOR”)

Rod Gnapp

The gang's mechanical expert. Can fix or repair any kind of gadget and is always fiddling with something. He always tries to get a word in and never can.

JOHNNY FLINT (“BABY FACE”)

Justin Leath

A large, young, ex-pug. Brain not inherently bad, but knocked silly from years of pummeling in the ring. Dumbly loyal, instinctively sees force as the answer to everything. Idolizes Bill.

MIRIAM, *the barmaid*

Celia Shuman

Common, but a beauty. Devoted to Bill, who barely knows she exists.

THE SALVATION ARMY**MAJOR STONE**

Joan Harris-Gelb

An imposing middle-aged woman. Comic only in that she takes herself and her job with such seriousness. Not a society dowager and not a cartoon bureaucrat.

CAPTAIN HANNIBAL JACKSON

Steven Anthony Jones

A few years older than the Fly. Not so much prissy as respectable. Has amnesia; prone to attacks of disorientation and migraine as the result of a blow on the head several years ago.

LT. LILLIAN HOLIDAY (“HALLELUJAH LIL”)

Charlotte Cohn

Young, beautiful, and intelligent. Tends to keep her emotions out of the way except when preaching.

SISTER MARY

René Augesen

A city girl. Raised decent and rather a snob about the fact. Late 20s, not beautiful. Dedicated in an officious way.

SISTER JANE

Lianne Marie Dobbs

A country girl, a few years younger than Mary. Pretty in a somewhat dumb way, sweetly pious, naive.

BROTHER BEN OWENS

Jud Williford

Youngish. Just joined and anxious to make good. Takes an instant liking to Miriam.

ENSEMBLE (COPS AND MEMBERS OF THE FOLD)

Jackson Davis, Dan Hiatt,
Drew Hirshfield, Wendy James,
Stephanie Saunders, Colin Thomson

They certainly are a scruffy lot—streetwalkers, vagrants, drunks, the respectable unemployed and homeless. They come mainly for the free soup and a few hours of warmth, but they do enjoy hearing Lillian preach a good rousing sermon—it’s an age when public speaking is a form of entertainment.

Michael Feingold’s character descriptions are excerpted from *Happy End: A Melodrama with Songs*, published by Samuel French, Inc. (1972).

THE SETTING

Chicago, December 1919.

SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE: The company sings praises to Saints Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, and J. P. Morgan, an ode to moneymakers and capitalism.

ACT 1: *Bill's Beer Hall ("a way station on the road to hell"). December 22.* The Reverend and Baby Face, members of a Chicago gang, are terrorizing Mr. Prinzmeier, president of the local Mercantile Association. The Governor explains to Prinzmeier that, to earn protection from criminals, he must pay the gang a weekly fee. If he refuses, one day a lady dressed in grey will stop him on the street and ask him to light her cigarette, which is the signal that he has been marked for execution. The gang shows Prinzmeier a wall of hats representing people who have perished at the hands of the notorious gangster Bill Cracker. As The Reverend fumbles with the lights and is scolded by The Governor, we realize that the gang is actually rehearsing their act for later that night, and that the man playing the part of Prinzmeier is actually The Professor, another gang member.

The gang members discuss plans for the evening, and Baby Face wonders where Bill is. The newspaper arrives and Baby Face reads aloud from the headlines that a rival gang, led by "Gorilla" Baxley, has robbed a train carrying more than \$20,000. The Governor assures them that a big job of their own is coming their way. The Reverend praises their competitor, until Bill Cracker arrives to announce that Baxley is dead. Bill claims that, with Baxley out of the way, Bill's Beer Hall will now be the center of the Chicago underworld.

A police officer carries a fainting woman into the bar. The gang recognizes her as The Fly, their boss, and hustles the officer outside so they can strategize the bank job they have planned for Christmas Eve. The Fly accuses Bill of skimming money from their last job. She asks Bill to light her cigarette, which he does readily, to the horror of the rest of the gang, who realize the act's deadly implication. They finalize the details of the Prinzmeier job, and The Fly faints again as the cop returns to help her out of the bar. Bill rebuffs the gang's concern and leaves. The Governor informs the gang of a plan to plant Bill's revolver at that night's crime scene, to implicate Bill and lead the police to get him out of the way.

The Salvation Army, led by the tenacious Lillian Holiday, has mobilized outside of the bar, singing hymns and selling salvation. They enter the bar singing, and the gang immediately harasses them, with Hallelujah Lil getting the worst of it as the men grope and taunt her. As she continues bravely with her sermon, the men become more forceful, until Bill commands them to leave her alone. The Army leaves with Miriam, the bartender, as their newest convert. Lillian stays behind with Bill as the rest of the gang shuffles off to do the job. Bill offers Lillian a drink as she continues to preach.

Later that night, after many glasses of whiskey, Lillian is still preaching to Bill, only now with less religious fervor and more romantic insinuation. To prove her point about the Salvation Army bringing happiness through music, Lillian sings for Bill. As she reaches the end of the rather bawdy song, the rest of the Army returns to take her back to the Canal Street Mission. At the same time a police officer arrives to arrest Bill, as they have found his gun at the scene of the Prinzmeier murder committed earlier that night. When asked by the officer if she was with Bill during the crime, Lillian lies and says that she left with the others. The Army drags Lillian back to the mission and Bill is hauled off to jail.

INTERMISSION

ACT II: *The Salvation Army Mission, Canal Street. December 23.* Major Stone upbraids Lillian for consorting with criminals—she is creating a scandal that could make the Army look bad; Lillian insists that it is necessary to preach to potential converts in their own language, on their own turf. The cop arrives to get Lillian's statement about the evening's events. Realizing the seriousness of the charge against Bill, Lillian now tells the truth, that she *was* alone with Bill when the murder was committed, which means he has an alibi. Horrified, Major Stone relieves Lillian of her Army duties and orders her to leave the mission. While Sister Jane and Sister Mary help Lillian pack, Miriam and Brother Ben care for Hannibal, who keeps blacking out. Lillian leaves, heartbroken.

Sam arrives at the mission and tries to sell Major Stone a stolen organ. Hoping to persuade her of his sincerity, he stays for the service, putting on the face of a pious man.

Back at Bill's Beer Hall, Baby Face regrets framing Bill for the murder, while The Governor explains The Fly's real motivation for getting Bill out of the way: she had been planning a merger with the Baxley gang, a plan Bill ruined when he killed Gorilla.

At the mission, just as the service is nearing its conclusion, Bill arrives, looking for Lillian. Sam runs back to the gang to tell them Bill is free.

Back at the bar, Lillian arrives searching for Bill. Just as Sam arrives to confirm that Bill is out of jail, Lillian lets slip that she provided Bill with an alibi. Lillian tries to leave, but Baby Face holds her back, and The Governor exits, on his way to find Bill at the mission.

Sister Mary, who has just been promoted to take Lillian's place, tries to give the sermon Lillian was supposed to deliver, to disastrous effect. The crowd calls for Hallelujah Lil, and Major Stone announces that Lillian has been dismissed. The Governor arrives and escorts Bill out of the mission at gunpoint. We hear the sounds of a scuffle, a gunshot, and splash. Bill re-enters triumphantly with the gun, indicating to the Army to keep singing to cover his escape. He disappears out the window just as Lillian arrives and calls out to him.

INTERMISSION

ACT III, SCENE ONE: *Bill's Beer Hall. Christmas Eve.* The gang prepares for the bank job. The Professor is fiddling with one of his inventions when Sam walks in, dressed as a woman for the robbery. Sam rallies the gang with a song. The Professor's machine sputters, and the voice of The Fly comes out of it, specifying assignments for the job. She reminds Bill that he is on a short leash after the previous day's events. They all get their alibis for the night straight and the gang departs, leaving Bill morosely drinking alone.

Lillian walks into the bar, downcast and rejected. She tells Bill that she has nowhere to go and chastises him for what he did to The Governor, though he claims it was self-defense. She sings Bill a song, and he begins to cry. Bill responds with a song of his own, about being tough and never letting one's guard down. The Fly has come in through the back entrance, and when Bill sees her, he realizes that he has missed the robbery. She asks him to light her cigarette, but his match won't ignite. He runs out, leaving Lillian to make her way back to the Salvation Army.

The gang returns after what they believe has been a successful robbery, but they soon discover that Bill is nowhere to be found and assume that the money is gone. The Fly reassures them that their take is safe, but she insists that they do one more thing before claiming their share: kill Bill Cracker.

ACT III, SCENE ONE: *The mission. Later that night.* The Salvation Army is preparing for their Christmas celebration. Lillian comes in and sits with the fold, telling her former fellow Salvationists that she is now just a poor soul like the rest of them. As she argues with Major Stone, Bill walks in, drunk, and asks to stay, too. The Major is trying to get them to leave, which Lillian adamantly refuses to do, when the rest of the gang saunters in. The gang surrounds Bill, demanding to know where he was during the robbery. When Bill pulls his gun, prompting the rest of the gang to do the same, Lillian steps between them to keep them from killing each other.

A police officer enters and begins to interrogate the gang about their whereabouts during the robbery. Each member provides a bogus alibi. When the cop turns to question Bill, however, he wants to know about the disappearance of Dr. Nakamura the day before. Just as Bill is confessing, The Governor appears with a head wound and announces that the canal is not as deep as they had suspected.

The Fly appears suddenly and all guns are drawn and turned on Bill. At that moment, Captain Hannibal Jackson recognizes The Fly as his long-lost wife. They embrace, and while Lillian is trying to convince Bill that they should get engaged, The Fly offers the

money from the bank robbery to Hannibal, who turns it over to Major Stone for the Army. The cop leaves, outmaneuvered, and the Salvation Army and the gang decide to fight together against their common enemy—the rich. It is a “happy end.”

MUSICAL NUMBERS IN *HAPPY END*

PROLOGUEThe Company

ACT I

Bill’s Beer Hall, December 22

“The Bilbao Song”The Governor, Baby Face, Bill & The Gang
 “Ballad of the Pirates”The Fly & The Gang
 “Lieutenants of the Lord”Lillian, The Army & The Fold
 “March Ahead”The Army & The Fold
 “The Sailors’ Tango”Lillian

ACT II

The Salvation Army Mission, Canal Street, and the Beer Hall, December 23

“The Sailors’ Tango” (Reprise)Lillian
 “Brother, Give Yourself a Shove”The Army & The Fold
 “Song of the Big Shot”The Governor
 “Don’t Be Afraid”Jane, The Army & The Fold
 “In Our Childhood’s Bright Endeavor”Hannibal
 “The Liquor Dealer’s Dream”Hannibal, The Governor, Jane,
 The Army & The Fold

ACT III

SCENE 1: The Beer Hall, December 24

“The Mandalay Song”Sam & The Gang
 “Surabaya Johnny”Lillian
 “Song of the Big Shot” (Reprise)Bill
 “Ballad of the Lily of Hell”The Fly

SCENE 2: The Mission, Later That Night

“Song of the Big Shot” (Reprise)The Governor & Bill
 “In Our Childhood’s Bright Endeavor” (Reprise)Hannibal & The Fly

EPILOGUEThe Company

A TRUE STORY WITH A “HAPPY END”

BY MICHAEL FEINGOLD

In 1928, the young writer-composer team of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill reached the height of its interwar fame. The success of *The Threepenny Opera* had converted Brecht, the outspoken avant-garde poet, and Weill, the intensely serious atonal musician, into Brecht-&-Weill, the clever musical comedy duo whose smash hit (within a year of its opening, *Threepenny Opera* had received over 30 European productions) had the whole continent whistling its seductive pop tunes and quoting its cynical couplets.

This kind of middlebrow popular success actually sat rather awkwardly with the two men, and both were soon occupied with more serious projects. Brecht, who had recently embraced Marx's economic theories, was working on his giant capitalist tragedy, *St. Joan of the Stockyards*, while Weill had returned to his most ambitious theater project to date, the full-length opera *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. For the moment, they thought, they were through with commercial theater.

But the ebullient producer Ernst Josef Aufricht was eager to follow up on his huge *Threepenny* success. Aufricht proposed that, for the fall of 1929, Brecht and Weill write him a contemporary sequel to *The Threepenny Opera* (which had been based on John Gay's 18th-century *Beggar's Opera*), to be produced with the same cast, at the same theater in Berlin (the cozy Schiffbauerdamm, now the home of the Berliner Ensemble), opening on the first anniversary of *Threepenny's* memorable opening night.

The promise of redoubled fame and fortune made Aufricht's offer hard to resist, and Brecht quickly started casting about for a suitable story to adapt. Elisabeth Hauptmann, his faithful secretary, had the answer, discovered in the course of her exhaustive English-language reading. (She was the one who had translated *The Beggar's Opera*, after its triumphant London revival by Nigel Playfair, and proposed it to Brecht in the first place.) To this day no one is certain exactly what Hauptmann's English source was; to avoid copyright problems the story was credited to a mythical "Dorothy Lane" and described as having appeared in the nonexistent "*J. & L. Weekly*, St. Louis." The similarity to the plot of *Guys and Dolls* has led many to speculate that Damon Runyon was the source of *Happy End*, but Runyon's story "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown," from which Frank Loesser's musical is taken, was not published until the early 1930s.

The idea of a romance between a Salvation Army worker and a street tough, however, was not new. In *Major Barbara* (1905), by Bernard Shaw, one of Brecht's early idols, the aristocratic Barbara has an intense confrontation with a surly dockside laborer, Bill Walker

(note the similarity to the name Bill Cracker). And *Major Barbara*, reset in Chicago with details lifted from Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, was Brecht's starting point for *St. Joan of the Stockyards*. Another likely source for *Happy End* was Edward Sheldon's *Salvation Nell* (1908), an early triumph of the American realist movement, in which the popular actress Minnie Maddern Fiske starred as a good-hearted slum girl saved by Army preaching, who struggles to rescue her common-law husband from gin and fisticuffs. One of Nell's cohorts is a popular hellfire preacher nicknamed Hallelujah Maggie, and the first act is set in a saloon on Christmas Eve.

Brecht and Hauptmann, in any case, embroidered freely on whatever they took from their source or sources, inventing with their politics, their complexly European vision of America, and the specific abilities of their actors in mind. A sinister Oriental modeled on the silent film roles of Sessue Hayakawa was an obvious role for Peter Lorre, who had worked well with Brecht at Munich in *The Jungle of Cities*; a gangster who robbed banks in women's clothes, improbably, was an amusing one for the portly Kurt Gerron, who had made a hit as Tiger Brown in *The Threepenny Opera*. Carola Neher, who had given up the lead role of Polly Peachum in *Threepenny* at the last moment to be at her dying husband's bedside, would play the heroic Salvation Army lass, while the gang would be filled out with other Brechtian favorites such as Oscar Homolka and Theo Linggen.

Kurt Weill's wife, Lotte Lenya, whose performance as Jenny in *Threepenny* had made her the toast of Berlin, was not available for *Happy End*, but Brecht's wife definitely was. Helene Weigel, whom he had recently married and who shared both his new communist beliefs and his aesthetic militancy, was cast as the Lady in Grey. She had regarded *The Threepenny Opera* (in which she played the small role of the brothel madam) as a severely



Grosstadt (Urban Debauchery), by Otto Dix (1927–28). Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, Germany / The Bridgeman Art Library International.

compromised work from a political point of view and was determined to see that no such compromises afflicted *Happy End*. Needless to say, this was not what Aufricht and his crew had in mind. The script [of *Happy End*] turned out to be a jolly escapist romp with a few leftist gibes along the way, its acid undercurrent getting lost in the “collaborative” bedlam that accompanied any Brecht rehearsal, and Weigel apparently grew more and more dissatisfied.

Accounts of what actually took place on opening night of *Happy End* (September 2, 1929, exactly a year and two days after the opening of *The Threepenny Opera*) differ markedly. We know that the first two acts passed without incident and were favorably received. Lenya remembered Weill telephoning her backstage at intermission, to say he was sure they had a hit. In the third act, however, the audience erupted: The Lady in Grey’s final speech, which seems harmless enough in the text, aroused violent booing and whistling from the expensive seats, which in turn sparked shouts and counterarguments from the gallery, precipitating a near riot. Some assert that Brecht had rewritten Weigel’s speech privately with provocative intent, others that she improvised a diatribe against capitalism, still others that she pulled a notorious Communist Party broadside from the pocket of her costume and began to harangue the audience with excerpts from it. To make matters worse, Brecht and director Erich Engel had contrived to follow the speech with an ironic hymn to capitalism (now traditionally used as the Prologue) that called for mock stained-glass windows representing Saint Rockefeller, Saint Henry Ford, and Saint J. P. Morgan. To a German bourgeois audience with a sizeable respect for both religion and money, this was the last straw, and the first-nighters responded with yells, threats, and what one reviewer described as a “concert of whistling.”

The critics gave the show a thorough shellacking in the next day’s papers. Brecht’s arch enemy, the staid and influential Alfred Kerr, mocked the work’s derivative nature with the phrase “*Happy entlehnt*” (“happily borrowed”—Kerr had accused Brecht of plagiarizing François Villon in the *Threepenny* lyrics) and suggested that Engel would do better to write plays himself than to get them from such as Brecht. Other critics followed Kerr’s lead, with even Brecht’s loyal supporter Herbert Jhering complaining that the last tableau appeared to belong to an entirely different play. (He was not far wrong: its lyric, along with several other key sections of *Happy End*, turned up the next year in *St. Joan of the Stockyards*). The ticket-buying public, dismayed by the notices and fearful of riots, shunned the work, which closed two days later in ignominious failure.

Brecht subsequently repudiated the script, in his notes to *St. Joan* crediting it entirely to Hauptmann. When *Happy End* was finally revived in 1958, she followed suit, instructing the German publisher to use only the name “Dorothy Lane” on the title page. (At the

request of her heirs, her name was reinstated following her death in 1977.) Indeed the original version, despite some amusing moments, is desperately makeshift, but just happens to serve as a dramatic setting for some of the greatest theater songs ever written. The present version is a free adaptation, which treats the “Dorothy Lane” script as loosely as the collaborators of 1929 treated their mysterious source. Only the lyrics, whose authorship Brecht never denied, have been kept in more or less literal translation.

If *Happy End* was a setback for Brecht, it was pure victory for Weill. The songs, as interpreted by Lenya and countless other artists, are among the keystones of his reputation and have kept the idea of the show alive even when its script seemed totally unfeasible. Over the years, the score has served as a sort of reservoir from which people could draw music for other Kurt Weill shows: in 1956 “The Bilbao Song” was interpolated into an off-Broadway production of *The Threepenny Opera*, anglicized by Marc Blitzstein as “Our Bide-a-Wee in Soho.” The lyric of the “Mandalay Song” was given a new setting by Weill for the “Loving” scene of *Mahagonny*, and several of the Salvation Army hymns turned up in Weill’s Paris musical *Marie Galante*, four years later, as decidedly profane French dance-hall tunes. After the present adaptation was commissioned by Robert Brustein’s Yale Repertory Theatre in 1972, many American productions appeared, including one on Broadway in 1977 (which earned three Tony and three Drama Desk award nominations), featuring Yale Rep alumni Meryl Streep and Christopher Lloyd. In this version, *Happy End* has found its way to Canada, Australia, and Wales, to British and American regional theaters and universities, and to London’s West End. Despite its stormy beginnings, *Happy End* is now thriving, to use a word Brecht coined for the occasion, *happyendlich*.

Michael Feingold, author of the English-language version of *Happy End*, has been chief theater critic for the *Village Voice* in New York since 1983. An earlier version of this essay is printed as an introduction to the published script.

THE CREATORS OF *HAPPY END*

BERTOLT BRECHT (1898–1956)

Born in Augsburg, Bavaria, Bertolt Brecht was publishing poems in a local newspaper by the age of 16. His first produced play, *Drums in the Night*, was performed at the Munich Kammerspiele in 1922. In 1924 he moved to Berlin, where he worked as a theater critic and as Max Reinhardt's assistant and dramaturg at the Deutsches Theater while writing a number of plays. His early works include *In the Jungle* (1923) and *Life of Edward II of England* (1924), but his first

real success came with *The Threepenny Opera* in 1928, followed a year later by *Happy End*. He began reading Marx's *Das Kapital* in the mid 1920s; the influence of this work is already noticeable in his first collaboration with Kurt Weill, the song cycle *Mahagonny* (1927; also the full-length opera *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, 1930).



Marxism did not become a driving force in his work, however, until the late 1920s/early 1930s, when he wrote *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* (1929) and a number of short didactic plays.

Brecht was forced to flee Germany in 1933 with his wife, Helene Weigel, and their two children, and after living in Switzerland, Denmark, and Finland he settled in California in 1941, where he remained during the war. During these years, he wrote what are generally considered his most important plays: *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1939), *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1940), *The Life of Galileo* (1943), and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1944).

In 1947, having been called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, Brecht left the United States for Switzerland, and in 1949 he was asked by the government of East Germany to form a state-financed theater company. He moved to East Berlin and founded the Berliner Ensemble, taking up residence in 1954 in the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm (where *Happy End* had premiered in 1929), which he ran until his death.

Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill in conversation in the courtyard of the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin during rehearsals of *The Threepenny Opera* in 1928 (Akademie der Künste Berlin-Brandenburg, Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv, Berlin)

KURT WEILL (1900–50)

Born in Dessau, Kurt Weill began his earliest attempts at composition at the age of 10, and by 11 had written his first opera, based on a play by Karl Theodor Körner. He soon became an official accompanist of the Dessau Court Theater, and by 15 was already employed in the craft of the theater. Weill moved to Berlin in 1918, where he studied under Engelbert Humperdinck. Stifled by the academic atmosphere, however, Weill left Berlin in 1919 to work as a chorus master in Dessau and as director of the municipal theater in Lüdenscheid. In 1920 he returned to Berlin and devoted himself to composition as a student of Ferruccio Busoni. Weill first became known with the production of two short, satirical surrealist operas with texts by Georg Kaiser, *The Protagonist* (1926) and *The Czar Has Himself Photographed* (1928). He began his famous collaboration with Brecht in 1927 with a *Songspiel* titled *Mahagonny*, followed by *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), *Happy End* (1929), *Man Is Man* (1931), the ballet *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1933), and the radio cantatas *The Berlin Requiem* (1929) and *Lindbergh's Flight* (1929).

With the increasing persecution of the Jews and the condemnation of his work as “degenerate” by the Nazis, Weill left Germany in 1933; he settled with Lotte Lenya in the United States in 1935. During his 15 years in this country, he collaborated on several sophisticated stage musicals, including *Johnny Johnson* (with lyrics by Paul Green, 1936), *Knickerbocker Holiday* (written with Maxwell Anderson, 1938), *Lady in the Dark* (with Moss Hart and Ira Gershwin, 1941), *One Touch of Venus* (with S. J. Perelman and Ogden Nash, 1943), *Street Scene* (Weill’s “American opera,” written with Elmer Rice and Langston Hughes, 1947), *Love Life* (with Alan Jay Lerner, 1948), *Lost in the Stars* (based on Alan Paton’s novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*, 1949), as well as the Old Testament pageant opera *The Eternal Road* (1937). Weill’s instrumental works include choral music, chamber music, and a violin concerto. Weill died of a heart attack while he and Maxwell Anderson were working on a new musical version of *Huckleberry Finn*.

DOROTHY LANE

Dorothy Lane was the pen name of writer/translator Elisabeth Hauptmann (1897–1973), who was Bertolt Brecht’s longtime editorial assistant and sometime mistress before his exile from Germany. She risked her life to smuggle most of his manuscripts out of the country before she herself emigrated to America, where they continued their collaborative relationship. In 1946 Hauptmann married German-Jewish composer Paul Dessau, who had succeeded Weill as Brecht’s main musical collaborator, and in 1948 she returned with Dessau to East Berlin and the Berliner Ensemble, where she worked as a translator and dramaturg and later oversaw the publication of Brecht’s collected works.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

BY MICHAEL PALLER

In 1928, Bertolt Brecht had his first major commercial success with *The Threepenny Opera*. His process for creating that work included drawing heavily on eclectic sources and adapting them, making something startlingly new out of familiar material. As Lotte Lenya, one of the stars of *Threepenny*, wrote in 1956:

This always has been Brecht's procedure. As his admirers have it: to adapt, reinterpret, re-create, magnificently add modern social significance; or, in his detractors' eyes: to pirate, plagiarize, shamefully appropriate—to borrow at will from the vanished great like Marlowe and Shakespeare and Villon, and even from his actual or near contemporaries like Kipling and Gorky and Klabund.

The method succeeded so well with *Threepenny* that he employed it again when he and his collaborator, Elisabeth Hauptmann, tried to repeat their success later that year. Officially, they credited *Happy End* as adapted from a short story by Dorothy Lane that had been published in the *J&L Weekly* of St. Louis. The *J&L Weekly*, however, wasn't located in St. Louis or anywhere else, and "Dorothy Lane" existed only as a pseudonym for Brecht and Hauptmann. Indeed, *Happy End* was largely written by Hauptmann (referred to by Lenya as Brecht's "vigilant shadow") with lyrics by Brecht. Brecht supplied Hauptmann with a general plot outline, on which she embroidered (and our English translation has been liberally adapted from the original by Michael Feingold).

While some of the actual sources of *Happy End* are hard to identify, others are obvious. The most obvious is George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara* (1905), which Hauptmann and Brecht would have known through Siegfried Trebitsch's German translation, although Hauptmann knew English well and may have read it in the original. Shaw was popular in Germany and *Major Barbara* especially so. He was also one of Brecht's favorite authors. In an essay written in honor of Shaw's 70th birthday in 1926, Brecht wrote, "[T]he reason why Shaw's own dramatic works dwarf those of his contemporaries is that they so unhesitatingly appealed to reason." This may be arguable, but nonetheless, in this tribute Brecht pays Shaw the ultimate compliment of turning him into a Brechtian.

Brecht had already borrowed a scene from *Major Barbara* in his first play with a Chicago setting, *In the Jungle*, in 1922–23. In scene two, the young man Garga spits in the eye of a Salvation Army worker who replies, "I thank you in the name of my mission." The original was a moment in *Major Barbara's* Act II, where the ruffian Bill Walker recalls how

he spit in the eye of Todger Fairmawls, a recent Salvation Army convert, who replied to him, "Ow, that Aw should be fahund worthy to be spit upon for the gospel's sike!" For lyrics in the second act finale of *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht again borrowed from *Major Barbara*. The millionaire arms merchant Andrew Undershaft admits that honor, justice, truth, love, and mercy are "the graces and luxuries of a rich, strong, and safe life" and can't be afforded by the poor. A few pages later, Barbara says of her charges, "How are we to feed them? I can't talk religion to a man with bodily hunger in his eyes." In *Threepenny*, Ginny Jenny sings (in Eric Bentley's translation): "All you who say what neckline is decreed us / And who decide when ogling is a sin / Your prior obligation is to feed us / When we've had lunch, your preaching can begin." (This was not a uniquely Shavian notion; Hauptmann and Brecht almost certainly also knew it from the first modern German playwright, Georg Büchner, who expresses it in *Woyzeck*.)

For *Happy End*, Hauptmann and Brecht apparently adapted from *Barbara* the cockney roughneck Bill Walker's name and turned him into Bill Cracker, beer house proprietor and criminal. Further, they adapted Shaw's Act II situation, in which Major Barbara, a young Salvation Army worker, takes the gospel into the city's worst neighborhoods. She succeeds with some of the downtrodden, although not as well with Bill Walker as *Happy End's* Sister Lillian Holiday does with Bill Cracker. Both Barbara and Lillian walk unafraid into dens of vice; both are unafraid to confront their respective fearsome adversaries named Bill.

MAJOR BARBARA

BARBARA: The devil, Bill. When he gets round people, they get miserable, just like you.

BILL: Aw ain't miserable.

BARBARA: Well, if you're happy, why don't you look happy, as we do?

BILL: Aw'm eppy enaff, Aw tell you. Woy cawnt you lea me alown? Wot ev I dan to you? Aw ain't smashed your face, ev Aw?

HAPPY END (FEINGOLD TRANSLATION)

LILLIAN: I'm not worried about His happiness. I'm worried about yours.

BILL: I'm happy! I'm as happy as I can be!

. . . P.S.: I can have any broad in Chicago. So what have I got to be unhappy about?

LILLIAN: I don't know. Why are you unhappy?

BILL: I ain't! And I don't need an unemployed hallelujah tootsie telling me how to run my life.

A couple of other examples from Act II of *Major Barbara* and *Happy End*:

MAJOR BARBARA

CUSINS: You do not understand the Salvation Army. It is the army of joy, of love, of courage . . . it marches to fight the devil with trumpet and drum, with music and dancing, with banner and palm, as becomes a sally from heaven by its happy garrison.

HAPPY END (FEINGOLD TRANSLATION)

LILLIAN: You're wasting your life. You don't need murder and thefts and hard liquor to keep you happy. The Army is always happy. It's music and light and joy. That's why I came to work there, for the joy.

Another source may have been Edward Sheldon's 1908 melodrama *Salvation Nell*, which starred the American actress Minnie Maddern Fiske. It features "Hallelujah Maggie," a Salvation Army girl who ventures into one of New York City's most dangerous slums. On Christmas Eve, Maggie converts the hard-working but not entirely virtuous Nell Sanders to the gospel. In the subsequent acts, Nell becomes a "hallelujah lass" herself and brings her reprobate, violent lover, Jim Platt, to the Lord, saving him from a further life of crime. Certainly, one thing Hauptmann picked up from her reading, and also might have seen firsthand in Berlin, was the breathtaking bravery of these Salvation Army women, who moved into the worst neighborhoods in cities like London, New York, and Berlin, entering the lowest slums and roughest saloons with nothing to protect them but an unshakable belief in their mission.

By 1928, Brecht had long rejected Expressionism, the style perfected in Germany before World War I that emphasized characters' emotions above most other theatrical values. Still, he was influenced by it early in his career. Hauptmann and Brecht certainly knew *From Morn to Midnight*, one of the most famous Expressionist plays by the most successful Expressionist playwright, Georg Kaiser. In this 1918 work, a bank teller embezzles 60,000 marks. After being rejected by the woman for whom he impulsively stole the money, he embarks on a daylong journey throughout a nightmarish Berlin, each stop representing a station of the cross on the modern man's torturous road to Golgotha. Finally, he arrives at a Salvation Army meeting, where several witnesses testify to the ways in which the Army has saved their souls. Inspired by their stories, the clerk rises to his feet and proclaims that he has learned from the others' examples how, "Free from dross [the soul] mounts in praise, purified in these two red-hot crucibles: confession and penance." Money, he declares, is the worst of all evils, and the Salvation Army hall "is the hot fur-

nace heated by your contempt for all mean things.” He hurls the money into the air and it flutters to the feet of the stunned audience. A mad panic for the 60,000 ensues, as the audience of the purified scrambles for whatever it can get, and salvation be damned. One can hear, in a different key, this scene replayed near the end of *Happy End*.

Other source material was drawn from newspapers and fieldwork, some of which had been collected previously for other work. Brecht and Hauptmann were inveterate newspaper readers, and Hauptmann, according to the Brecht scholar John Willet, “gathered news cuttings and other reports of crime, commerce, and natural disaster [and] herself went out to report on Salvation Army meetings.” Brecht also read up on the lives of famously wealthy businessmen.

Finally, Europeans were very familiar with American popular culture—music, films, and plays flooded Europe during the 1920s. Hauptmann and Brecht imbibed these imports as eagerly as other Europeans, sifted them through their own sensibilities, and wove these strands together for the text and lyrics of *Happy End*.

THE WEILL PARTY

The 20th century's most influential composer turns 100.

BY MICHAEL FEINGOLD (2000)

Fill in the missing term that links each of the following pairs: Ferruccio Busoni and Fred MacMurray; Jean Cocteau and Lee Strasberg; Fritz Lang and Langston Hughes. Hint: It's a composer whose music has been recorded by rock groups, avant-garde ensembles, lounge acts, Broadway stars, opera houses, and Anjelica Huston's grandfather. Second hint: I'm writing this on his 100th birthday. Final hint: Most people, misguidedly, only think of his name as coming immediately after "Bertolt Brecht." A hundred years ago, on March 2, 1900, Kurt Julian Weill was born in Dessau, a midsize city in eastern Germany.

Since another of Brecht's major musical collaborators was a composer named Dessau, you might say that the ironies and confusions around Weill began at his birth. But Paul



Kurt Weill (© Bettmann/CORBIS)

Dessau did not write the tune of "Mack the Knife"—nor, for that matter, did Bertolt Brecht, though in later life he enjoyed hinting he'd had a hand in it. That sums up, in a way, the struggle Weill's had establishing his reputation: His tremendous force and originality as a composer were only equalled by his ability to subsume himself, as any theater artist must, in the collaborative act. He changed the face of theater music, and permanently altered the way we think about music in general, but people still think first of "Brecht and Weill." And yet he wrote for over 25 other lyricists, an astonishing array that includes everyone from Cocteau and Hughes to the Berlin cabarettist Walter Mehring and the Tin Pan Alley scribbler Sam Coslow. Brecht's may be the most lasting theatrical voice among Weill's librettists, but the others—Georg Kaiser, Franz Werfel, Jacques Deval, Maxwell Anderson, Alan Jay Lerner—make up a list from which you could easily build a course on the modern history of the popular stage. Wherever you go in music theater, from mass

spectacle to surrealist caprice, Weill was there ahead of you, humanizing the didactic and bringing depth to the divertissement. “He was an architect,” Virgil Thomson wrote when he died, “a master of musico-dramatic design, whose works, built for function and solidity, constitute a repertory of models.” And he did it all in 50 years: The centennial of Weill’s birth is also the 50th anniversary of his death (April 3, 1950, of heart failure). The ongoing celebration of his work is both a birthday party and a memorial.

Which is appropriate, because one reason Weill’s career now looms so large in retrospect is that he himself appears as a model of sorts: the composer who survived everything. Born into the Wilhelmine Empire at its ostentatious peak, he lasted long enough to see the atom bomb and the Cold War. A principal target of the Nazi campaign against “degenerate art,” he had to relearn theater practice and backstage jargon in three foreign countries and Hollywood to boot. His catalog teems with missing and unexplained items: One reason commentators wax pompous about “the two Kurt Weills” is that in America he downplayed some of his German achievements, under the impression that the scores had been irrecoverably destroyed by the Nazis; it isn’t every tunesmith who gets personally singled out by Hitler as “a menace to Aryan culture.” Two Weills? The miracle is that we have one. Besides, given the range of his creative personality and the number of situations in which he worked, the number is more like six.

And this, too, is part of what makes Weill the quintessential modern musician. His is the art of a man who saw that no institution was permanent, that instability was the structural center of modern life. A lover of Bach and Mozart, Busoni’s prize pupil, he was educated to carry on the German classical tradition in symphony and opera; instead, he disrupted it with tango recordings, Dada libretti, and knotty, polytonal scoring. The final blow to his career in the traditional forms was Brecht, whose poetry lured him to attempt, through the marriage of cabaret and classical expectations, a political disruption to match the aesthetic one for which he was already becoming notorious. Commissioned to compose a chamber opera, he obliged with a plotless “songplay” (*Songspiel*) made of six poems linked by orchestral interludes. When he and Brecht built it into a full three-act opera, *Mahagonny*, the evening opened with a truck driving onstage. And when the word “opera” actually appeared in the title of a Brecht-Weill work, it played in an ordinary theater and had in its principal roles an operetta tenor, a singing actress, a cabaret diseuse, and a dancer whom nobody but Weill thought could sing at all—until opening night made Lotte Lenya the toast of Berlin and, soon after, the definitive performer of Weill’s songs.

The Threepenny Opera, a work that can feel at home anywhere from dark subbasements to vast amphitheaters (including opera houses), is the unlocalized *locus classicus* of Weill’s brilliant indeterminacy. Its form is as hard to pin down as its setting, which would be

London at the time of Queen Victoria's coronation (1837), except for the 1890s costumes and Kipling quotations, the passages drawn from the work's 1728 source (John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*), and the intermittent lapses into 1920s Berlin slang usage. Weill's score moves from scraps of realized folk song through long verse and chorus ballads to extended choral finales that are meant to remind you of Bach. And it's all orchestrated for a peculiar combination of instruments that happened to belong to one of Berlin's more popular dance bands.

Threepenny made so much money that its now famous authors inevitably attempted a sequel, *Happy End*, which did nothing for Brecht's reputation but enriched Weill's with a set of perhaps even greater songs. But even as Weill was immersed in Brecht texts, the two men's collaboration cracked open. It was partly a matter of contracts, on which Brecht notoriously took unfair advantage of even his closest friends; but it was nearly as much a question of music versus words. There may also have been a third issue in the contrast between Weill's firm but soft-spoken, invariably courteous behavior and the colleague-alienating tantrums that were such an important part of Brecht's tactical arsenal. The first word everyone who knew Weill personally uses about him is "gentle." But gentleness is often the velvet glove that masks an iron determination; under enough pressure, worms will turn. Gilbert and Sullivan wrote 14 stage works together, Rodgers and Hart over 20, Brecht and Weill barely half a dozen. By the last of these, the masterful sung ballet *Seven Deadly Sins* (1933), they were on strictly formal terms. After that, Weill often helped Brecht out, and planned new works with him, but always guardedly.

Purest in structure and musically the most fully achieved of his works, *Seven Deadly Sins* is probably Weill's masterpiece. It's also a pivotal midpoint that seems to sum him up: Written in Paris, it's a German work set in America; it uses the form of traditional religious parables to transmit secular economic ideas through an image derived from Freudian psychology. For all its purity it's a hybrid work—a ballet with principal roles for soprano and male a cappella quartet. For all its somber gravity, its central image has a trashy, popular source: The two sisters, practical singing superego and impulsive dancing id, are the good and evil twins of a thousand horror movies. Weill transfigures the tawdriness with his distinctive blend of objectivity and compassion: When dancing Anna's heart gets broken, her singing twin (who caused the break) gives the word "*Schwester*" (sister) a downward portamento, on a major sixth, that carries your ears straight back to Countess Almaviva's sorrows in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. Tawdriness can't beat that.

Nor could tawdry America beat Weill's classicism. Fascinated by his adopted country's roiling, emergent culture, he turned each of his Broadway projects into an experiment in form—Thomson's "repertory of models" with a vengeance. While ideologues like

Theodore Adorno moaned over his pursuit of commercial success, and highbrows like Elliott Carter fretted over his abandoning art music for hit tunes, he was stretching Broadway's modest tolerance for innovation to the limit: a satirical operetta about the corruption of democracy (*Knickerbocker Holiday*); a psychological drama interrupted by short surrealist operas (*Lady in the Dark*); a musical burlesque on modern art's dilemma of self-awareness (*One Touch of Venus*); a pageant of American history told vaudeville style, as the story of one marriage's failure (*Love Life*); a naturalistic social drama transmuted to Puccinian heights (*Street Scene*); a choral cantata on the tragedy of racism (*Lost in the Stars*). If that's the track record of a "commercial" composer, then Emma Goldman was Cole Porter in drag. Lenya was right: There is, as she insisted to her dying day, only one Kurt Weill.

And who is he, exactly? Easier to say what he is in musical terms. He's that sighing downward sixth. He's the sensuous English horn solo in *The Eternal Road*. He's the unexpected D natural that nobody except Lenya gets right when they sing "Foolish Heart." He's the upsetting contrapuntal trombone in the last chorus of "Surabaya Johnny." He's the tango rhythm that crops up everywhere, the Mozart figured bass that shocks you awake in the hurricane scene of *Mahagonny*, the pennywhistle sound that slices through the lush train-station chorale in *Lost in the Stars*. Where there's a bittersweet tune, a rhythm that clutches your heart, a propulsive sense of something big being built, and a startling flash of orchestral color, there's Kurt Weill. "Everything he wrote," Thomson's obituary said, "became, in one way or another, historic." He literally didn't know the half of it. Fifty years later, on his 100th birthday, we're still discovering Kurt Weill.

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OF POOR B.B.

BY BERTOLT BRECHT

I, Bertolt Brecht, came out of the black forest.
My mother moved me into the cities as I lay
Inside her body. And the coldness of the forests
Will be inside me till my dying day.

In the asphalt city I'm at home. From the very start
Provided with every last sacrament:
With newspapers. And tobacco. And brandy.
To the end mistrustful, lazy, and content.

I am polite and friendly to people. I put on
A hard hat because that's what they do.
I say they are animals with a quite peculiar smell
And I say: Does it matter? I am too.

Before noon on my empty rocking chairs
I'll sit a woman or two, and with an untroubled eye
Look at them steadily and say to them:
Here you have someone on whom you can't rely.

Towards evening it's men that I gather round me
And then we address one another as "gentlemen."
They're resting their feet on my table tops
And say: Things will get better for us. And I don't ask when.

In the grey light before morning the pine trees piss
And their vermin, the birds raise their twitter and cheep.
At that hour in the city I drain my glass, then throw
The cigar butt away and worriedly go to sleep.

We have sat, an easy generation
In houses held to be indestructible
(Thus we built those boxes on the island of Manhattan
And those thin aerials that amuse the Atlantic swell).



Of those cities will remain what pass through them, the wind!
The house makes glad, die the eater: clears it out.
We know that we're only tenants, provisional ones
And after us there will come: nothing worth talking about.

In the earthquakes to come, I very much hope
I shall keep my cigar alight, embittered or no
I, Bertolt Brecht, carried off to the asphalt cities
From the black forests inside my mother long ago.

From *Bertolt Brecht: Poems 1913–1956*, edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim with the cooperation of Erich Fried (New York: Methuen, 1976).



CAREY PERLOFF ON *HAPPY END*

Remarks made to the cast at the first rehearsal of the A.C.T. production, May 8, 2006.

The genesis of this particular project is in the production we did in 2000 of *The Threepenny Opera*. My mother is Viennese, so I grew up with this music—in German, of course. So, I directed *Threepenny* as an homage to her. At the time we also started talking about *Happy End*, because it is in a way the heir to *Threepenny*. *Threepenny* came at an interesting moment in Brecht’s development as an artist, the beginning of his exploration of what he later came to call “epic theater.” And it was the first time he had really worked with Kurt Weill, who at the time was not yet known as a theater composer; he was a classical composer.

They were terribly different people, Brecht and Weill. Brecht was a self-created punk, long before there was such a thing in popular awareness. He was from Augsburg, in the German countryside, but he was highly educated, and a remarkable poet. He was an interesting playwright, sometimes a great playwright, and sometimes not a great playwright, but he was one of the truly great poets of the 20th century. His poems are vernacular, written the way people speak, but they’re heartbreakingly romantic and at the same time very bitter, very tough, very personal, very specific, unbelievably theatrical. He used his poems like a diary. He wrote dozens of poems a day and then turned many of them into songs.

In the late 1920s, Brecht was feeling his way toward a kind of theater that would matter to him. You have to understand what was going on in Weimar Germany during this period. On the one hand, there was cabaret, cross-dressing, vaudeville, dance halls . . . American jazz was coming into Berlin in a very big way, as were spirituals. People in Berlin were just beginning to understand the American black experience. But the theaters were still full of a very bourgeois kind of boulevard drama. So when we talk about Brecht being antisentimental, wanting to “break the frame,” it’s not because he was didactic or academic or any of those things you learn in your theater courses about the alienation effect. It is that he was bothered by the kind of sappy sentimentality of typical turn-of-the-century German drama. He loved the muscular heritage of playwright/poets like Schiller and Goethe, but he wanted to create theater that woke people up. He liked to say that if theater were as good as boxing, people would come to see it. The central theatrical idea for him was virtuosity: that theater should be muscular and demonstrative and unsentimental. On the other hand, he was fantastically romantic and in love with many women—whom he then corralled into writing plays for him, without crediting them. He was a terrible man! [*laughter*]

Brecht was a musician, himself, and music was very important to him. There are pictures of him as a young man with his guitar; he often set his writing to music and could typically be found in coffee houses playing his own songs. Then in the early to mid twenties, he met Kurt Weill, his opposite: a nice Jewish boy, beautifully trained, very ambitious, impeccably dressed, very serious about his work, never stayed up past ten, married to Lotte Lenya, etc. Here again, is one of the many things that need to be debunked. We think of Kurt Weill's music as something that you "sing like this" [*spoken in a rough, rasping voice*], because that's what Lotte Lenya sounded like, when she sang Weill's music, after a lifetime of smoking cigarettes. So that's what we think his songs should sound like, but it's totally wrong. That's why we cast such extraordinary singers in this production.

So Brecht and Weill worked together on *Threepenny*, and to their deep humiliation, it was a huge commercial success. I say humiliation, because, you have to know, during this period Brecht was starting to read Karl Marx and Walter Benjamin (the brilliant Marxist critic), and beginning to analyze the political situation in which Germany found itself. Imagine being a 25-year-old man in Berlin between the wars. Your country has just been

decimated in the First World War, and it has been forbidden to re-arm. Yet, slowly, incrementally, in the late twenties, Germany begins to secretly re-arm. Everyone knows it, but nobody can talk about it. The armament industry begins to rise, just as National Socialism, which is still a small party and at first is brushed aside, starts to show its face. We have to remember, because it's chilling, that Nazism didn't simply emerge fully developed in 1938. Its presence was definitely already felt in Berlin in the twenties. Partly that's because the poverty in Germany after World War I was devastating. And yet, before 1929, there was also a lot of money being made. And, as always, part of the fuel for anti-Semitism was Jewish success in banking. Much of the banking industry in Berlin during this period, as well as manufacturing and



"Lill Bilbao"

textiles and other industries, was in Jewish hands. So the tension between economic classes was palpable. People were streaming into Berlin from the countryside, where nobody could make a living anymore as farms were confiscated or lost, looking for a way to survive, and literally starving on the streets. Brecht's famous motto, "Bread first, morality later," was something he believed long before he ever read Marx. He was incredibly cynical about political theories that didn't deal with practical issues, like how people got fed.

Moreover, during this period there was no safety net, which was also true in the United States, pre-Roosevelt. So there was no mechanism for saving people who were falling off the edge, except, interestingly, home-grown organizations like the Salvation Army. It was one of the few places to turn for people who couldn't feed themselves and couldn't find a place to live. And it was a very tough place. The Salvation Army set itself up in the neighborhoods where people actually lived. It wasn't some fancy relief organization uptown; there were Salvation Army missions in the worst parts of the city. And people in need were taken in and put to work right away, made part of the Army.

The 1920s in Berlin were also a fantastic period artistically. There were all those incredible theater posters, those collages, that came from Russia, this was the beginning of montage and of Expressionist film. Brecht was a fanatic filmgoer, and he loved Jimmy Cagney. Baby Face in *Happy End*, the young wanna-be who hopes to grow up to become the real-life gangster Bill Cracker, comes right out of Cagney's *The Public Enemy*—well, not exactly, since that movie came out in 1931 and *Happy End* was written two years earlier, but it's the same idea. Brecht also worked with Peter Lorre, who played Nakamura in the first production of



"Hallelujah Lil"

Happy End, and he loved that kind of acting. Brecht was also close to Charlie Chaplin, and he thought Lillian Gish was mysterious and fascinating in those early D. W. Griffith silents—he named *Happy End*'s Hallelujah Lil after her.

Brecht was also obsessed with America, although he had never been here. He set several plays in Chicago, including *St. Joan of the Stockyards*, which is another good play to look at as source material for this, because it explores a somewhat similar idea. It's about a girl who goes up against Pierpont Mauler, a meat-packing executive, and tries to close down his slaughterhouse. Brecht had read several books about Chicago, including Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. Chicago was to artists in Berlin something like Hollywood was to a writer like [Anglo-American novelist/playwright Christopher] Isherwood. It was the place of all extremes where anything could happen. Extreme poverty, extreme wealth. Extreme violence, extreme beauty. Everything collided.

This play is also a fantasy. Even the neighborhood where it is set can't be found on a map of Chicago. It's Brecht's creation. The Polish critic Jan Kott said that in Poland, when they want realism they do Beckett, and when they want fantasy they do Brecht. I've always thought about that because that's how I direct Beckett, too. I think Beckett is much more realistic than people think. But Brecht is utter fantasy, and so he frees you from a certain kind of theatrical realism. He imagined what these gangsters and the world of Chicago would have been like. And these characters have very active fantasy lives, because they've never been out of that crummy downtown Chicago environment.

It is difficult for Americans to understand the paradoxical nature of Brecht-Weill musicals. The lyrics and the music just don't sit easily together. Where the lyric is bitter and aggressive and violent, the music is often at its most lyrical; and, where the lyric is romantic and filled with longing, the music is often very tough. You have to allow both of those things to happen. For instance, the contrast between The Fly's lyrical soprano and her tough-ass lyrics is very unnerving.

Dancer



It's interesting to me that Weill did that. I think it's because he understood about Brecht that beneath the aggressive, tough, fuck-you stance is a person filled with huge longing: for a more utopian world, for a different kind of art, for undying love. Longing to escape. It's very bittersweet. So the songs are fantasies that go to exotic places like Bilbao, which is a remote, beautiful place on the north coast of Spain, or Mandalay, in the South Seas. Places that nobody in his world had been. In imagining their escape, these gangsters can for just a moment fill themselves up with the possibility of another world. That's why it has to be very romantic. During these songs, the lights change, bringing lush, exotic colors to the grey, mundane world of Bill's Beer Hall, and a tin moon descends. The moon is a significant image in Brecht, and it's usually made of tin. When it's lit, it's beautiful and glowing and fantastic, and then when the house lights come up again you can see it's just a tin moon taped to the wall, and all illusions are broken. That's a recurring theme in Brecht's work: if you light it just right, for a minute you believe; then the lights come up again and you see it's just a piece of shit, and everybody has to go on with their lives.

The songs in *Happy End* are unbelievably beautiful. The privilege of singing this music cannot be overestimated. Within two weeks of the opening of the original production,



these songs could be heard in every bar in Berlin. People often say that the songs in Brecht musicals don't advance the story, but I think that's wrong. They're not character songs like the songs in, say, *Oklahoma!*, and they're not sung through, but they do accomplish very important things. For example, in *Happy End*, when Sam comes out dressed as Mammy in his pearls and dress and blonde wig, and he sings "Mandalay," that is the only way to get that down-and-out group of guys revved up enough to go out on Christmas Eve and do that robbery. That's the point of the song. And, whenever Lillian sings, Bill cries. He is very suspicious of music, because it makes him cry. There is something about her singing that cracks him open, and that is terribly important. It's how she makes love to him. He tries to combat her

Baby Face

by being tough, when he sings “Song of the Big Shot,” just as Nakamura tries to win his battle in the gang by singing the same song.

Music was also terribly important to the Salvation Army, because singing was the thing that unified all these people. Brecht wrote hilarious riffs on Army songs, like “Brother, Give Yourself a Shove.” These are Brecht’s parodies of Salvation Army tunes, but they’re not that far from the real thing.

So, how to approach this piece? It seems to me, these people are terribly real. But this isn’t naturalism. It’s a very interesting challenge. The stakes are very high, because the situation is so desperate. The needs are very great, and the music comes out of those needs, and the sexuality is enormous, because it comes out of Brecht’s own sexuality and appetite. The fear underlying it all is also great, because they could feel the culture falling apart around the edges. And I think the regret is tremendous. Brecht and Weill must have known by the time this piece was produced that the city they knew and loved was disappearing. The setting is a fantasy of Chicago, but it’s actually Berlin. So I think this piece is really about what it is to be a young person coming of age in a city that is filled with hate and confusion and great art and great beauty that is about to be lost.



Model of the set for *Happy End* designed by Walt Spangler

This is also a big dance show. The music is all dance music, and Weill called it that. It starts with a fox trot, it's filled with tango, and I think that's because there is a huge yearning for escape. It's also dangerous dancing. Men tangoing. I think this is going to be a great adventure, especially with [choreographer] John Carrafa, who did *Urinetown*, with us. His specialty is working with actors who dance, as opposed to professional dancers, so his work is very character specific—just as the choreography in *Urinetown* was so beautifully specific.

I think these characters are all beaten-down people with big dreams. The gangsters each have their own dreams. The Professor really wants to be Marconi; if only he could invent something that really worked he could get out of this shitty gang. Baby Face longs to be Bill Cracker, and Bill longs to be Jimmy Cagney in the movies. None of them can quite escape. But it isn't that their dreams aren't big enough.

Lillian (and Sister Jane and Sister Mary are a little bit like this, too) longs to be the visionary who transforms people's hearts. Public speaking was very important during this period. People stood on soapboxes on street corners and spoke with great vision about the Apocalypse and what would happen if you didn't convert. I think Lillian really believes that it's possible to change someone's soul. It's partly awakening love, it's partly awakening desire, it's partly triggering someone's imagination; it's all of those things that make someone transform. Sister Mary's speech about the telescope is so fabulous. She gets a little confused because she's a speaker in training and she can't quite remember how it goes, but the metaphor about seeing God through the telescope is powerful. This is the kind of speech people actually gave and took very seriously. Brother Ben would also be in training to do this. Hannibal Jackson, too.

Nakamura is the most ambitious. All he wants to do is get rid of Bill, and then he's going to conquer the world. And he almost does it. He's a good example—Sab [Shimono, the actor who plays Nakamura in this production] and I talked about this when we met—of one of Brecht's favorite techniques, which is to fully commit to a stereotype in order to play through it. So Nakamura is the cliché of the Oriental villain as seen in Hollywood movies of the time, but with an underbelly that is very particular. That is true for all of the characters—you can't be scared to go for that stereotype. The Fly, as another example, is the quintessential hard-smoking tough ass, but Brecht subverts her at the end by giving her the best love song. So you have to be willing to grab the stereotype, in order to subvert it, and not be shy about it. I know that's a hard thing to do today, because we're so careful, so politically correct, but that is the landscape of this play, as well as part of its pleasure.

It is important to remember that this gang is not Al Capone. These guys are pathetic, just trying to make a measly \$75 a month putting the squeeze on pharmacists. They're the bottom feeder version of a gang, which is part of the humor of the piece. And they are as

desperate for cash as the Salvation Army is. By the end of the play, in fact, the gang becomes the Salvation Army and the Salvation Army becomes the gang. That is something Brecht was very cynical and knowing about—in my reading of this piece, anyway. It's not at all sentimental. It's a "happy end" as long as you're willing to accept that religion and money are always going to go hand in hand, a theme we are all too familiar with today.

The ending of this play has been interpreted in many different ways, and the interpretation depends on the music one chooses to sing at the end. In Weill's score, the last song of the piece is "Hosanna," which is a kind of fake hymn to money. (We keep wanting to change it to "God Bless Halliburton." [laughter]) Michael [Feingold]'s script, however, ends with a reprise of "Look All Around You." I'm more interested in going back to "Hosanna," because I love the fact that everybody—the gang, the cops, the Army—all sing together. Why are they so happy at the end? They're perfectly happy to take stolen money, because they finally have their fifty thousand bucks and have found love, and, for a moment, all contradictions are reconciled. The fact is, this gang of amoral looney tunes has simply linked up with another kind of gang led by this fanatic chick. Major Stone is no more generous of spirit than The Professor, really. She's a very tough character, she runs a really tight ship. She should have been a CEO, but she's running the Salvation Army. And there she is in league with The Fly's gang.

The point is, unless the whole culture shifts, the only way the Salvation Army can survive is to be in league with the gang. That is the critique the play offers. I think the last thing we will see at the end of the performance is everybody passing the cash. Everybody has a piece of the action and everybody is tainted in the same way. That's the "happy end." It's very sardonic. The ending has often been done very earnestly, which is how it was done at the Shaw Festival [in Canada], with the actors stepping out of character and singing together as themselves, as actors, as if to say, You see, if we all stand together, things will get better. But it makes me nervous when people do that with Brecht. I suppose that's one way to make it work. We'll have to see. It is important, however, that we think about what the play says at the end, because we, too, live in a culture where religion has been co-opted by big business, so much so that we don't even think about it anymore.

One of Brecht's primary sources for *Happy End* was Bernard Shaw's play *Major Barbara*. And what saves the mission at the end of that play? The munitions manufacturer, Undershaft, agrees to fund it, and the idealistic young Barbara is in despair because she realizes that everybody in the mission is quite happy to have his money, which was made on the sale of weapons. This is a contradiction we live with today. [Nonprofit organizations are] willing to take Philip Morris's money, even knowing that it comes off the backs of those who have died from cigarettes. Somebody has to take the money. So we take it.

A COMPOSITION OF OPPOSITES

An interview with music director/composer Constantine Kitsopoulos on Kurt Weill and *Happy End*

BY JESSICA WERNER (MAY 11, 2006)

On the centennial of Kurt Weill's birth in March 2000, Happy End adaptor Michael Feingold wrote in the Village Voice, "Wherever you go in music theater, from mass spectacle to surrealist caprice, Weill was there ahead of you." Feingold described Weill, notwithstanding his many contradictions—orthodox Jewish cantor's son, ambitious atonal musician, introverted intellectual, both a classicist and a populist—as "the quintessential modern musician." Weill is an inspiration to Constantine Kitsopoulos, music director and conductor of A.C.T.'s production of Happy End. Kitsopoulos hears in Weill's enigmatic, ear-catching style a composer adroitly (and courageously for his day) integrating a diverse range of compositional styles—jazz, ragtime, tango, and classical orchestration—in a way they had never before been combined and performed in the popular theater. "His style is a hybrid," says Kitsopoulos. "He created the unexpected, so his music doesn't always go where you expect it to go." Kitsopoulos spoke with us during the first week of Happy End rehearsals at A.C.T.

WHAT DO YOU FIND COMPELLING ABOUT *HAPPY END* MUSICALLY, AND ABOUT WEILL'S MUSIC GENERALLY?

I come from an operatic background, but I have done a ton of musical theater work, on and off Broadway. The thing that attracts me to Kurt Weill's music is that his style of composition is really hybrid. He was a classically trained composer, and actually had written several orchestral works, but he also was very affected by jazz and ragtime, and those American influences are very apparent in his theatrical works with Brecht. Later, when he came to the United States [in 1935], he accentuated those influences, and other jazz-based techniques, becoming what you might even call an American composer. His music, in *Happy End* and over the course of his career, is incredibly varied, with many different coherent styles. Yet, the way he applies those styles to his own work was always unique. He would do things like, where there would conventionally be a four-bar phrase, he would write a three-and-a-half-bar phrase. That creates the unexpected; his music doesn't always go where you expect it to go.

IT'S INTERESTING HOW MUCH AMERICAN MUSIC HAD ALREADY FILTERED INTO WEIMAR GERMANY BY THE LATE 1920S. THERE'S A PASSAGE IN A WEILL BIOGRAPHY IN WHICH HIS ASSOCIATES DESCRIBE HIM GOING TO HEAR AMERICAN JAZZ BANDS IN BERLIN. HIS FRIEND FELIX JACKSON SAYS, "WE ALL WENT TO HEAR PAUL WHITEMAN AT THE GROSSES SCHAUSPIELHAUS IN 1926, AND WE HEARD GERSHWIN'S *RHAPSODY IN BLUE*—THRILLING, A TERRIFIC EXPERIENCE, BECAUSE NOBODY HAD EVER HEARD THIS KIND OF THING: A SYMPHONY USING JAZZ." AND WEILL'S PUBLISHER HANS HEINSHEIMER SAYS, "WE WENT TO NIGHTCLUBS WHERE SOME AMERICAN JAZZ BANDS—NEGROES, COLORED PEOPLE—PLAYED SOMETHING WE HAD NEVER HEARD; IT WAS LIKE SOMEBODY IN AMERICA HEARING A TUNE FROM THE ESKIMOS."

This exportation of jazz is so interesting. Jazz is music that came out of the cotton fields essentially, and we have to remember those are its origins in the American South. And if you think about the way black people were treated in the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s, it's interesting to think about what some of their experiences would have been if and when they made that journey to Europe, where Europeans tended to be a little more open and tolerant, listening to different sounds and more accepting of different groups. To



think that at home in the United States, these black artists couldn't sit at the same restaurant as white people, and there were segregated black theaters and white theaters . . .

AND LITTLE DID KURT WEILL KNOW THAT WITHIN A FEW YEARS [IN 1933], HE WOULD HAVE TO FLEE EUROPE HIMSELF BECAUSE OF ANOTHER VIRULENT KIND OF INTOLERANCE AND HEAD WEST, TO AMERICA.

It's a fascinating subject.

WHILE THE JAZZ INFLUENCE IS FELT IN *HAPPY END*, DO YOU ALSO FIND EVIDENT THE CLASSICALLY TRAINED WEILL?

The way the classical background fits into this is in the way he's taken jazz and made it his own. I don't think there are sections of the score that you might actually be able to label "classical" in style. Rather, it's an integrated whole, and I think his ability to integrate everything so well comes from his classical training and sensibility. It's a technical thing, to be able to put all those elements together, and that he writes so well for the instruments he chooses. The part he wrote for each instrument is idiomatic to that specific instrument.

THE HYBRID STYLE YOU DESCRIBE IN WEILL'S WORK CAN MAKE SOME PEOPLE THINK OF HIS MUSIC AS DIFFICULT, BOTH TO LISTEN TO AND TO PERFORM, BECAUSE OF ITS CONTRADICTIONS AND COMPLEXITIES.

This is true, and one thing I find very interesting about approaching Kurt Weill's music in 2006 is that we have had over the course of so many years the benefit—I think it's largely a benefit, but there are also some downsides to it—of an extensive catalog of various artists recording Weill's music. Weill is dead now, so it is hard to say how he would have wanted things performed, other than to look at the printed page and get it directly from the source. That is my approach—to actually look at what he wrote in the score, in the tempo markings and dynamics and breaks, and do my very best to follow those very specifically. Because one of the downsides of this incredible recording history is that there have been an awful lot of people who have recorded his music and distorted it. People tend to play and sing his music much more slowly than it's written. It's the same thing that happens with Puccini, whose music gets stretched out because it sounds like it should be romantic, so the slower the better, right? One of the major challenges of performing Weill's work is having the courage to do just what he wrote. He was very specific.

WHAT ABOUT THE POINT THAT CAME UP IN THE FIRST REHEARSAL ABOUT THE MUSIC BEING SO “PUNISHINGLY HIGH”? IS THAT HOW WEILL WROTE IT? Indeed, the whole score is really high, and it is very difficult for performers. When I say high, I’m not talking about high cs, but it is scored in a relatively high range of the human voice. It’s what we call the second break of the female human voice, around es and fs and gs, which is where the female voice usually becomes a little bit unstable. And to be able to sit up there in that range the whole night is a real challenge for performers.

WHY DO YOU THINK WEILL MADE THAT DECISION? WHAT DOES IT GIVE US? The sound of the voice is certainly brighter [in that range]. And it certainly gets your attention. There may also be an element of influence from the actual way *Happy End* was written—Weill and Brecht didn’t even speak to each other much about it as they worked, and they wrote it separately while living in different places [Weill in the south of France; Brecht in Berlin]. So we don’t know if Brecht’s idea of a “theater of alienation” influenced Weill in his decision to work at a higher pitch. Or maybe it was simply the fact that when Weill wrote the piece, he wrote parts for specific people he had in mind for the premiere production. It could be something as simple as that, and we never know these things. Musicologists and performers, we all can make a big deal out of historical decisions and [dramaturgical] details that in their inception could have been rather simplistic and benign.

ONE INTERESTING CHARACTERISTIC OF *HAPPY END* IS THAT THE MUSIC AND THE LYRICS CAN SEEM CONTRADICTORY AND BE AT ODDS WITH EACH OTHER, THAT VIOLENT LYRICS CAN HAVE A LYRICAL ACCOMPANIMENT, AND VICE VERSA.

Yes, it’s wonderful and unique to *Happy End*. It’s a composition of opposites. So a love song can have a more jarring accompaniment, which is not what a listener (or performer) expects. In the middle of “The Sailors’ Tango,” there is a gorgeous lyric melody, and yet the accompaniment underneath it is almost angular. You have these contrasts throughout.

IT’S AN INTERESTING STRATEGY TO KEEP OUR ATTENTION. YOU CAN’T GET LOST IN THE MUSIC WHEN IT’S FILLED WITH THOSE INCONGRUITIES, THE WAY YOU CAN WITH SOME EASIER, MORE TRANSPORTING MUSIC.

That’s the thing! When you take a conventional four-bar phrase and make it into a three-and-a-half-bar phrase, it becomes something that holds your interest. Then the music doesn’t do what you expect it to do. The other distinctive thing is the orchestration, which was written for a very odd combination of instruments. Weill once again scored for the

same kind of band as in *The Threepenny Opera*, and it's an unusual band. It has trumpet, trombone, and two saxophones. That's conventional enough, but then you add piano and harmonium, which is an odd reed organ instrument. To include it in an orchestration is an odd choice, an odd sound. And the percussionist plays conventional instruments, but at some point in the show he's also required to play trumpet, as well. There are a lot of *really* strange instrumental doublings.

ARE THERE PARTICULAR CHALLENGES TO WORKING WITH ACTORS AS WELL AS SINGERS?

It is a challenge, but in fact I always approach singers and singing anyway from the point of view of the text—because if the text is clear, it technically helps your voice come out clearer. I do a lot of work with breathing, no matter who the performers are. To me, singing is learning to do two things: to move air and to make clear vowel sounds. There are a combination of techniques to use, but I always start from the breathing and the text.

If I'm working with an actor who's not an expert singer, we might break things down and have the actor speak the lyrics as if they are lines in a play. Then I'll underscore them with just an outline of the accompaniment. And then gradually we integrate the parts, and I'll say, "Let's add some pitch to this." It's a more natural way for the actors to sing without being quite so aware of singing, so to speak. It's great to start with what they're familiar with, and build on their strengths.

HOW IS THE *HAPPY END* BAND INVOLVED THROUGHOUT THE SHOW? IT LOOKS [FROM THE SCENIC DESIGN] LIKE AN UNUSUAL INTEGRATION OF MUSICIANS AND CAST, SINCE THE BAND WON'T BE IN AN ORCHESTRA PIT.

Yes, we're going to be on a platform upstage. It does present some challenges. If the band were just in the pit, I would have direct eye contact with the stage and with all the singers, and there's a great advantage to that. In this case, the cast is going to be watching me on monitors on the balcony rail. They will be able to see me, but I won't be able to prompt them if anything goes wrong [*laugh*]. But I do think that actually having the band integrated into the set provides many more advantages than disadvantages. It was something Carey wanted to do from the beginning, to have us up there and visible. I think it's a great choice because the music is such an integral part of this production. The band is not just a separate musical entity, but is very wrapped up in everything that makes this *Happy End*.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE OUR AUDIENCE TO KNOW EITHER ABOUT *HAPPY END* OR ABOUT YOU AS MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR?

If you take a look at my bio, you'll see that my entire career is an exercise in doing a great variety of things. My career itself has been kind of a hybrid career, in the sense that I grew up in the opera house, and was classically trained, yet I've done a lot of musical comedy, a lot of work on Broadway. I continue to do all of it: Broadway, symphonic work, operatic work, etc. People always ask me, "What's your favorite kind of music?" Well, I kind of loosely quote Duke Ellington, who was asked the same question. He said, "There are really only two kinds of music. There is good music, and there's bad music. I like the good music." [*laugh*]

Opera is my first love, but I love such different sorts of music, and I feel pretty lucky to be able to work in so many different styles. I think that means I bring great flexibility and versatility to this production.

THAT SEEMS FITTING GIVEN OUR DISCUSSION OF THE HYBRID NATURE OF THE MUSIC IN THIS SHOW, AND WEILL'S OWN INTERDISCIPLINARY BACKGROUND AND INFLUENCES.

My mother was an opera singer and she sang quite a bit of Weill's music. So I've been familiar with his music all along the way, but this is the first one [of his shows] I've done. It's very exciting. I'm really looking forward to performances. Rehearsals so far are feeling great. We're getting a lot of work done, and we're also having an awful lot of fun doing it. It's great it's finally coming together. Time to play.

THE SALVATION ARMY

BY MARGOT MELCON

The Army was part of the discursive world of 19th-century evangelical Protestantism; family was central, the Bible was literal, and society was ordered and hierarchical. Yet even as Salvationists cleaved to these principles and asked others to do the same, they acted on a more pluralist and modern understanding. They were tolerant of others' faiths, inclusive in their delivery of services, and circumspect in sharing their witness. Aware of the need to distinguish private faith from public religion, the Army modeled a new form of Christianity which, as the century progressed, became increasingly distant from its militant evangelical roots—and more at home in the modern world.

Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army,
by Diane Winston

The Salvation Army, as an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

The Salvation Army Mission Statement

The Salvation Army was founded in 1865 in London by William and Catherine Booth as an evangelical organization called the Christian Revival Association, the primary purpose of which was to improve the spiritual and material conditions of London's hungry and homeless. The Booths and their followers became the Salvation Army in 1878, when the organization evolved on a quasimilitary pattern. Booth became known as "the General," and officers' ranks were given to his ministers. The Salvation Army first arrived in the United States in 1880 when Commissioner George Scott Railton and seven young women arrived



in Philadelphia ready to pursue their charitable work and save souls, starting in New York but soon stretching out across America. In 1885, Captain and Mrs. William Evans were commanded to establish Salvation Army operations in Chicago.

The Salvation Army is arranged in a militaristic hierarchy. People who identify the Salvation Army as their community of worship are called Adherents. Lay people who have ascribed to the doctrines of the Salvation Army and devote themselves to volunteer service for the Army are called either Salvationists or soldiers. Although soldiers play a large part in the social service operations of the Army, they are supervised by officers.

One is not born a Salvationist. Those who join the church do so willingly and by choice. To become an officer, one must complete a two-year course of study at a Salvation Army college. The curriculum combines theory and field practice, including Salvation Army doctrine, sociology and social work, psychology, Salvation Army regulations, Bible studies, church history, community relations, business administration, and vocal and instrumental music. Upon completion, graduates are commissioned as captains and ordained as ministers. Elevation in rank is determined by length of service, character, and devotion to duty. Officers are devoted to full-time Army work. If an officer marries, he or she must marry another Salvation Army officer or relinquish his or her status as an officer, although in that case membership in the church may be maintained.

Early 20th-century Salvation Army officers were often young and idealistic individuals called to service, largely due to a desire to help those most in need. Margaret Troutt, a female captain just 21 years old when assigned to the Army's Skid Row Corps in Chicago, describes her experiences:

[I]t was wonderful! We held meetings every night, with midnight open-air meetings in front of the burlesque houses in the district. Our hall was packed every night with men who often came in

OPPOSITE Evangeline Cory Booth (1865–1950) Giving Toys to Children (© CORBIS). Born in London in 1865, Eva Booth was the daughter of William Booth, who soon afterward became the founder of the Salvation Army. Assuming a position of responsibility in the Army at 17, she became known for both her musical talent and her striking personal appearance and was soon nicknamed "White Angel of the Slums."

In 1904 she became commander of the Salvation Army in the United States. During her administration, new forms of social service were instituted, including hospitals for unwed mothers, a chain of "Evangeline Residences" for working women, homes for the aged, and, during World War I, canteens featuring "doughnuts for doughboys."

Under her personal supervision the Salvation Army quickly developed disaster relief services following the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. She abandoned the organization's tradition of street begging and set up instead an efficient system of fundraising. Booth was successful in enlisting the open support of a great many distinguished and wealthy public figures, and the first national drive in 1919 raised \$16 million.

In 1934 Booth became the fourth general of the Salvation Army and the last member of the Booth family to hold world command. She retired five years later.

<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9125389>.

for a bed ticket or “coffee and . . .” but many of them were led to the penitent form before the meeting ended. Later they testified in service as to how they had been changed from drunkards to sober men, from gamblers, liars, thieves, even murderers to men who loved the Lord and wanted to live uprightly.

The officers were at the mercy of the Army for service assignments. Often they were sent to undesirable locations, low-income urban and rural areas, where their safety and well-being could not be guaranteed. These were precisely the locations where the Salvation Army could do the most good, but such assignments often made the lives of the officers and their families difficult.

One of the Salvation Army’s marked characteristics has always been its insistence on remaining an urban organization. While many religious sects have charitable branches that reach out to the poor, they preserve distance between the righteous and the broken and blighted members of society, forcing the needy to ask for assistance and offering the already saved a refuge from the rest of the city. The Salvation Army, since its earliest days in London, has taken salvation to the streets, blending the sacred with the secular, making



every street corner a place of worship and every bar and brothel a church ready to accept the converted.

As the number of Salvationists in the United States grew, their critics increased, as well. The spectacle of Army officers on street corners preaching in the slums was amplified by detractors arriving to throw garbage, pepper the sermons with brazen comments and obscenities, and hurl lewd remarks toward the holy lassies. Salvationists were routinely attacked and occasionally arrested during their demonstrations. Early on, the government saw the Army’s American membership as just another group of do-gooders and maintained the requisite state-church distance. As the Army grew in number and reputa-

tion, however, and its work proved invaluable through depression, disaster, and war, both the public and the government began to rely on the assistance it provided and began to increasingly respect its services.

The Salvation Army used whatever means it could to attract a crowd, and brass bands were one of its most recognizable symbols, able to be heard over the din of hostile city slums. The bands would often adopt popular tunes and rewrite the lyrics, transforming familiar music into hymns. The music evolved over the years, gaining sophistication, and became a large part of the Army's identity. By providing music and entertainment, as well as food and shelter, the Army made the idea of salvation palatable for those who had previously shunned religion. In a commercial culture, the Army learned to "sell" salvation.

The Army tailored itself to fit the times, an era of competition, expansion, and profit. To keep the organization growing, the Army offered services and entertainment, the price of which was the sinner's attention during a sermon—a small price to pay for those in need. But even with the lure of a meal or a bed for the night, the performance was often the primary draw, and a crucial tool for introducing people to a new relationship with religion. Writes Diane Winston, in *Red-Hot and Righteous: The Urban Religion of the Salvation Army*: "Redeeming the world, according to the Army's founder, William Booth, meant facing its challenges (poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, and prostitution) and turning its secular idioms (advertisements, music, and theater) into spiritual texts."

The Salvation Army also became a well-known haven of comfort in the poorest urban neighborhoods. Army soup kitchens and overnight hotels began showing up in the grittiest parts of town, offering hope to people who had had none before. In keeping with Christian doctrine, the Army also opened alcohol rehabilitation programs, hospitals and homes for unwed mothers, employment centers, and food and clothing donation centers. Salvationists were on every street corner banging drums and singing hymns, but they invited those who listened back to their missions for shelter and food, which was an enticing tradeoff for people who hadn't seen kindness or a meal in a while.

As a service organization, the Salvation Army became an invaluable asset when fires, earthquakes, and other catastrophes hit urban areas. During the Great Depression and both world wars, the Army was a powerful force recognized by both the government and the church.

Before World War I, Salvation Army officers had occasionally been dispatched to European countries to offer humanitarian aid. Once American soldiers were sent over to fight, the Salvation Army continued its service with its famous "doughnuts to doughboys" program, traveling with the front lines. The Army's outreach continued and missions were established across the European continent. Continuing to expand as its resources have grown, the Salvation Army today operates in 111 countries.

ABOUT CHICAGO

BY MICHAEL PALLER

Happy End is set in Chicago. Why there? Chicago had held a privileged place in Bertolt Brecht's imagination since 1920. That year, he wrote, "How boring Germany is! It's a good, average country, its pale colors and surfaces are beautiful, but what inhabitants! . . . What's left? America!" At the same time, he was reading Upton Sinclair's muckraking novel about the meatpacking business, *The Jungle*, and the Danish writer J. v. Jensen's *The Wheel*. Both set in Chicago, these novels profoundly influenced the plays Brecht wrote just before and just after *Happy End*: a revision of *In the Jungle* (now called *In the Jungle of Cities*), in 1927, and *St. Joan of the Stockyards*, in 1929. Also at this time, Brecht worked on a play, never finished, about the wheat market in Chicago, called *Wheat* and later *Joe P. Fleischhacker of Chicago*. In 1941, he would return to Chicago once more with *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*. The Chicago in these plays is very much that of Sinclair and Jensen—a brutal and unforgiving place, where men fight to the death over power and profits. Brecht added to this vision an exoticism he picked up from other writers, including Kipling, Verlain, and Rimbaud.

Politically, Chicago may also have been attractive: Brecht had begun reading Marx about 1926, and Chicago had long been a major industrial center as well as a locus of the American labor movement. It was the site of the 1884 Haymarket Riot and the Pullman Company strike, as well as the location of the founding of the radical union the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

The *Happy End* plot summary that Brecht gave Elisabeth



Hauptmann specifies that the action occurs in Chicago, but this Chicago is a tamer place than it is in either Brecht's own plays or in Sinclair and Jensen. It is a city where good can triumph over evil, and where evil isn't really so bad. This Chicago could be any city where organized crime and crusading evangelicals exist side by side: it could be Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Kansas City. It could be Berlin, a city that had seen innumerable serious disturbances of the peace in the unstable years of the Weimar Republic. In a program note accompanying a production of *In the Jungle of Cities* in 1928, Brecht wrote:

My choice of an American setting is not, as has frequently been suggested, the result of a romantic disposition. I could just have well have picked Berlin, except that then the audience, instead of saying, "That character's acting strangely, strikingly, peculiarly," would simply have said, "It's a very exceptional Berliner who behaves like that." Using a background (American) which naturally suited my characters . . . seemed the easiest way of drawing attention to the odd behavior of widely representative contemporary human types.

The same could be said not only of Brecht's Chicago dramas, but of most of his plays, very few of which are set in Berlin. For to overemphasize the importance of the Chicago setting (especially of *Happy End*) is to miss the bigger point: Brecht liked to set his plays anywhere but in the Berlin of his day, to enable the audience to distance itself from the characters, the better to judge their actions. To be able to examine everyday behavior, Brecht believed that we must be able to see it more clearly than we usually do; it must be made to seem different or strange in order to stand out. Both *Mother Courage* and *The Life of Galileo* are set in the 17th century, but the issues the characters face and the actions they take in response are very much those of Brecht's contemporaries.

A favorite drinking song in the Levee:

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Oh, the night that Paddy Murphy died, I never shall forget,
 We all got stinkin' drunk that night and some ain't sober yet.
 But the only thing we did that night that filled my heart with fear:
 We took the ice right off the corpse and put it in the beer.
 Wo, ho, ho,
 That's how we paid our respects to Paddy Murphy.
 That's how we showed our honor and our pride.
 That's how we paid our respects to Paddy Murphy on the night that Paddy
 died.

Since at least the end of the 19th century, Chicago had been known as a city where any imaginable vice could be satisfied. Until World War I, the center for this activity was a place called the Levee, part of the First Ward. The First Ward was infamous as a place of extraordinary political corruption in a town that specialized in it. (The alderman—the equivalent of a city council member or supervisor—for the Ninth Ward in this era, Nathan T. Brenner, said, “There are only three aldermen in the entire 68 who are not able and willing to steal a red hot stove.”) Chicago historian Stephen Longstreet writes of the Levee and the adjacent Tenderloin:

Vice ran wild and open on the Levee; depraved brothels, obscene concert saloons flourished. South of the Levee was created the Tenderloin, [where] the whorehouses ran double shifts, and the girls displayed themselves as window showcases. Streetwalkers moved freely through the section in infectious exuberance. In a sermon it was said that “Chicago is again the wickedest wide open town in America.”

Conveniently located for downtown businessmen near the southern fringe of the Loop and high-toned Prairie Avenue, the Levee district was just a few blocks square, but it was home to more than 200 brothels of varying quality and honesty, catering to most every heterosexual male taste. The most elaborate and famous house was the Everleigh Club, run by two dedicated and highly successful sisters, Ada and Minna Everleigh. They carefully selected each woman they employed. “I talk with each applicant myself,” Ada later said. “She must have worked somewhere else before coming here. We do not like amateurs. Inexperienced girls and young widows are too prone to accept offers of marriage and leave.” Some of the Levee bordellos were high-class establishments like the Everleigh; a great many were low-down dives where men were as likely to be rolled as serviced.

Drugs were a large part of life in the Levee, and many women who became prostitutes there became trapped thanks to the habit. One druggist in the Levee sold 500 tablets of morphine sulphate a week, while four others each sold four pounds of morphine and six ounces of cocaine, mostly to prostitutes, every month. The women were sometimes called “air walkers,” thanks to another easily available drug, an inexpensive cocaine substitute called encaine.

The Levee was also the midwestern corridor for traffic in white slavery (girls who were kidnapped and forced into prostitution), according to historian Richard Lindberg. During a two-month period in 1907, 278 girls under the age of fifteen were rescued from white slavery dens in the Levee. Indeed, the Mann Act, which made it illegal to transport women across state lines for immoral purposes, was named for Congressman James Mann of Chicago.

“Disorderly saloons” (establishments that allowed prostitutes to ply their trade openly) and gambling dens could operate with impunity because they paid considerable protection money, not only to the police, but also to the wardheelers and aldermen, all loyal members of the Democratic party machine that ran the city. The two aldermen who presided over the First Ward were legendary figures in Chicago: a bathhouse and saloon operator named John Coughlin, known as Bathhouse John, and Michael “Hinky Dink” Kenna, a saloon and gambling-joint kingpin (Michael Feingold named The Professor’s alibi location, the “Hinky Dink saloon,” for Kenna). Brothel owners had to buy insurance from a company owned by Bathhouse John, purchase all their liquor from one of the Levee’s most notorious whorehouses, Freiberg’s Dance Hall (half of which Bathhouse owned), and obtain supplies from one of four grocery stores that were also part of Bathhouse and Kenna’s fiefdom. Bathhouse and Kenna won election after election by buying every vote, from fifty cents to a dollar apiece. The yearly ball they threw to raise money for the Democratic party was a notorious event; on at least one occasion a patron was killed on the dance floor.

There were efforts at reform, of course. Year after year, political efforts proved useless: there was too much money involved and no profit in virtue. Religious reform was also attempted from time to time; there was plenty of raw material for such organizations as the Salvation Army and individual evangelists to work with. The most famous evangelist to try his hand at reforming the Levee was the Englishman Gipsy Smith.

Hauptmann and Brecht set *Happy End* before World War I, around 1910. Michael Feingold’s adaptation of the original text takes place in 1919, a particularly colorful year for Chicago. It was by then a city of about 2.6 million people, and every third day, according to the *Chicago Crime Report*, one of those people was murdered. In January, the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed, commencing Prohibition, and the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages was suddenly rendered illegal (although technically, consumption was not). Prohibition took effect in Illinois on July 1.

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In June, the Illinois legislature approved the Nineteenth Amendment, and became the first state in the union to approve women’s suffrage. Two of the three votes against the amendment, however, came from wards in Chicago. A month-long drought raised tensions in the city’s poorer districts, and in July three days of race riots killed 26 and injured more than 300. Also in July, a Goodyear dirigible called the *Wingfoot* burst into flames above downtown and plunged like a firebomb through the skylight of the Illinois Trust and Savings building at Jackson and LaSalle, killing 13. In August, there was a pitched battle in the street between the cops and members of the IWW, who struck the popular

Weeghman restaurant chain for higher pay and an eight-hour day. And in October, the scandal that came to symbolize all that was crooked, not only in Chicago but in the United States, erupted when the White Sox threw the World Series to the Cincinnati Reds.

In a bit of doggerel that Brecht might have admired, the sportswriter Ring Lardner wrote:

I'm forever blowing ballgames,
 Pretty ballgames in the air,

I come from Chi,
 I hardly try

Just go to bat, and fade and die,
 Fortunes coming my way,

That's why I don't care
 I'm forever blowing ballgames,

For the gamblers treat me fair.

By 1919, the Levee was a thing of the past, as was the segregation of vice into a single neighborhood. Bathhouse John and Hinky Dink Kenna had passed on to the great Levee in the sky, their places taken by other crooks, and, as Prohibition got underway, by organized crime. The next crime lord, Big Jim Colosimo, got his start as a First Ward Democratic precinct captain (a lower-level party official). His take from his various criminal enterprises, which included bordellos, white slavery, and gambling, often surpassed \$50,000 a month. Once the Levee had finally been closed in 1912, Colosimo saw that there was room for vice across the entire city and nearby suburbs, and within a few years he managed to control most of it, thanks to threats, extortion, and payoffs to police and public officials. He was assassinated in 1920, when his rackets fell into the hands of his second in command, Johnny Torrio (who is still suspected of planning the unsolved crime).

Torrio built a fiefdom of vice much larger than had been seen in Chicago before, yet he himself lived a quiet life of rectitude and culture. While overseeing the expansion of his empire into the suburbs and making more than \$100,000 a year, he spent most of his evenings quietly at home, in slippers and a smoking jacket, playing cards with his wife or listening to records. He would occasionally go out to a concert or the theater, and was known as an authority on classical music. His wife called him "the best and dearest of husbands," and said that their marriage was "like one long, unclouded honeymoon."



Gangsters in a Chicago Police Lineup. “It is reported that gangsters have been imported from New York, St. Louis, and San Francisco in the recent gang war that was revealed in Chicago yesterday. Machine guns were found in the Atlantic Hotel, trained on a cigar store across the street which was known to be frequented by Al Capone and Antonio Lombardo, leader of the Unione Siciliana. Police say the two men were marked for death. Leaders of the opposing faction, Michael Bizarro, Joseph Aiello (leader of the gang that opposes Capone), Joseph Rubinello, Jack Monzello, and Joseph Russo (l to r) were rounded up by police and brought downtown. All have long criminal records, and police orders are now to kill them if they resist one bit.” Photographed November 22, 1927 (© Underwood & Underwood/CORBIS).

Ever aware of the way the wind was blowing, by the time *Happy End* takes place, Torrio was, according to Chicago crime historian Herbert Asbury, “holding long conferences with the leaders of the principal criminal gangs and persuading them to abandon bank robbery, burglary, and banditry, for the time being at least, in favor of bootlegging and rum-running.” The smaller-time activities were left to people like The Fly and her gang—while Torrio divvied up the territory among various gangleaders. As long as these alliances held, he controlled the actions of 700–800 gunmen, and it wasn’t long before he and his partner, Al Capone, controlled all the illegal beer and liquor business in Chicago and for miles around. Their lieutenants and gunmen invented and perfected most of the techniques of murder that were soon made famous in dozens of films, including the car ride that ends with a bullet-ridden victim. Indeed, one of Torrio’s and Capone’s most feared gunmen, Hymie Weiss, was said to have coined the term “take ’em for a ride.” This ruthless approach to crime soon outstripped the seemingly more innocent capers of the gang from *Happy End*.

A FEW REFERENCES IN *HAPPY END*

ISAIAH 66:17

In Act I, Lillian refers to a passage in the biblical book of Isaiah: “The abomination and the rat, they shall come to an end together, saith the Lord.” She is adapting for her own purposes the verse which, in the King James version of the Old Testament, states:

They that sanctify themselves, and purify
 themselves in the garden
 Behind one tree in the midst,
 Eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination and the mouse,
 Shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.

The chapter is largely concerned with salvation; Christians believe that the book of Isaiah as a whole prophesies the coming of Jesus Christ.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Lillian compares Bill to the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (605–562 B.C.E.), who was known in his day for conquering Jerusalem and rebuilding Babylon, including its famous hanging gardens. In 586 B.C.E. he captured and destroyed Jerusalem, sending thousands of Israelites into exile in Babylonia, beginning the Jewish diaspora. They remained there until 539 B.C.E., when Cyrus the Great set them free.

The biblical book of Daniel recounts how Nebuchadnezzar built a great golden idol and demanded that everyone in Babylon bow down to it. Three Jews whom Nebuchadnezzar had placed in powerful administrative positions—Shadrach, Mesach, and Abed-nego—refused, and he had them cast into a “burning fiery furnace.” They emerged unscathed, however, and on seeing this, Nebuchadnezzar commanded that anyone who spoke amiss of their God “be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no other god who can deliver after this sort.”

Nonetheless, some time later, God punished Nebuchadnezzar for his pride by depriving him of his reason. He was found in the fields eating grass like the oxen, but after seven years, his mind was restored.

MOTHER GODDAM

In Act III, Sam, dressed as Baby Face’s “mother,” proclaims, “You can do whatever you like to me—but I’ll still be Mother Goddam!” Later, the brothel in “The Mandalay Song” is

referred to as “Mother Goddam’s.” In John Colton’s 1926 play *The Shanghai Gesture*, Mother God Damn, as she is styled in the text, is the pipe-smoking owner of a bordello in Shanghai. (Josef von Sternberg made a film of the play in 1941, and Mother God Damn’s name was changed to Mother Gin Sling.)

SURABAYA

Surabaya is the capital of Jawa Timur province on the island of Java, Indonesia. Since the 14th century, the city has been Java’s principal trading center. It derives its name from two native words: *sura* (shark) and *buaya* (crocodile). Local mythology has the two locked in battle to determine which is the strongest animal in the area (an image Brecht would have loved). They can be found today circling one of Surabaya’s local monuments, on the city’s modern-day official logo. Surabaya is a sensually rich place, as its major exports include sugar, coffee, tobacco, teak, cassava, rubber, and spices.

“PRAISE TO THE FORDS AND ROCKEFELLERS—HOSANNAH!”

Happy End’s stage directions describe caricatures of “saints” Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, and J. P. Morgan as part of the set. Henry Ford (1863–1947) founded Ford Motor Company, using assembly line manufacturing to massproduce affordable automobiles. John D. Rockefeller (1839–1937) was the founder of Standard Oil (the largest descendent of which is ExxonMobile). Standard Oil made him one of the wealthiest men in the United States. Much of his money was later given away, establishing Rockefeller as a philanthropist. J. P. Morgan (1837–1913) was a banker whose financial prowess allowed him to greatly influence the American economy.

“Hosannah” is a variant of “hosanna,” a cry of praise or adoration of God. It comes from the Hebrew *h’oshl’ah-nna* (save us), from *hosia* (to save) and *na* (an injunctive).

“PLUS A CRATE OF GREAT CIGARS: ‘HENRY CLAY’”

Henry Clay is a type of cigar originally from Cuba, known for its medium-bodied taste. It is named for Henry Clay, a great American political compromiser, who held several important government positions during most of the first half of the 19th century, including U.S. senator and Representative from Kentucky, speaker of the house, and secretary of state. The cigar is mentioned in the Rudyard Kipling poem “The Betrothed” (1898), about cigars coming between men and women:

There’s peace in a Larranaga, there’s calm in a Henry Clay;
But the best cigar in an hour is finished and thrown away.

“SISTER MIRIAM WILL FIX YOU A SEIDLITZ POWDER.”

Seidlitz powder, dissolved in water, is used as mild purging agent. Comprised of tartaric acid, sodium bicarbonate, and potassium sodium tartrate, it takes its name from its resemblance to the natural waters of the village of Seidlitz in Bohemia.

“BEST THING I’VE HEARD SINCE WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN”

William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925) was a Populist politician, known for his great oratorical skills. A lawyer by training, Bryan represented Nebraska in Congress and was three-time Democratic nominee for president. He supported women’s suffrage and Prohibition and was an outspoken critic of evolution theory.

“NOT GOOD TO WAVE A GAT”

A gat is a gun, usually a pistol. It is short for Gatling gun, an early rapid-firing machine gun invented by Richard Jordan Gatling and patented in 1862.

“WHERE DID YOU THINK THEY WAS TAKING HIM, THE PALMER HOUSE?”

The Palmer House Hilton is an historic hotel in Chicago. The first Palmer was built by Potter Palmer as a wedding present for his bride, Bertha Honore. It opened in September 1871, only to burn down 13 days later in the great Chicago fire. Palmer rebuilt the structure primarily out of iron and brick and dubbed it the “World’s Only Fire-Proof Hotel.” It was bought by Conrad Hilton in 1945.

“COME ON, MARCONI, SHAKE A LEG.”

Guglielmo Marconi (1874–1930) was an Italian physicist and the inventor of a successful wireless telegraph system (1896). In 1909 he received the Nobel Prize for physics (shared with German physicist Ferdinand Braun). Marconi later worked on the development of shortwave wireless communication, the basis of nearly all modern long-distance radio.

To “shake a leg” means to hurry up or go faster. It originally meant to wake up and get out of bed. The phrase comes from the navy, where officers trying to rouse their sailors from sleep would tell them to “show a leg,” i.e., to stick a leg out of the hammock in which they were sleeping to prove they were awake.

“I’M GONNA GET ME A LAB THAT MAKES MENLO PARK LOOK LIKE A PHONE BOOTH!”

Menlo Park is an unincorporated community in northeastern New Jersey, the site where Thomas A. Edison (1847–1931) maintained his experimental laboratories 1876–86 and where he perfected many of his inventions (including the electric light bulb and the phonograph).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Consider the way women are portrayed in *Happy End*. Several women hold positions of authority. Compare and contrast: Hallelujah Lil and Major Stone; Major Stone and The Fly; Halleluiah Lil and The Fly. How are they similar and/or different? What is the source of their respective power? What effect does each of these women have on Bill Cracker? Based on this production, what do you think Brecht thought of women?
2. What are the goals and methods of The Fly's gang? What are the goals and methods of the Salvation Army? How are they similar/different?
3. Does Hallelujah Lil do the right thing in telling the truth to the police, thereby setting Bill free? Why does Major Stone want her to lie? What would you do in Lil's situation? Lil seems very comfortable in the Salvation Army mission as well as in Bill's Beer Hall and on the streets of the city. What do you think was her background before she became a Salvationist? How has she been changed by her experiences working for the Salvation Army, particularly the events of this play?
4. What do you think of the combination of Brecht's lyrics and Weill's music? Do they seem compatible? Do the songs move the story forward? How? How is *Happy End* like other musicals you have seen? How is it different?
5. Brecht wrote *Happy End* in Berlin in 1929, having never been to the United States. What do you think of Brecht's depiction of Chicago and of American gangsters? How accurate do you think he was?
6. What do you think of the design for this production of *Happy End*? How do the design elements (sets, costumes, lighting) affect your perception of the story and how it is told? If you were designing a production of this play, how would your design be different? Why?
7. Brecht was becoming a committed Marxist when he worked on *The Threepenny Opera* and *Happy End*. What evidence do you find in *Happy End* of Marxist concepts such as dialectical materialism (that change occurs as problems are resolved through conflict), distrust in capitalism, and desire for a classless society?
8. What is the "happy end" that concludes the play? Do you find it to be "happy"? In what sense? Who is happy in the end? Will their happiness last? What kind of statement do you think Brecht wanted to make with this play?
9. How do you think this play would be similar/different if it were set in 2006 instead of 1919? In San Francisco, instead of Chicago?

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