

Frederic Wood Theatre

# Happy End



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Frederic Wood Theatre  
Presents

# Happy End

By  
Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht

Directed by  
Arne Zaslove

March 6 - 16  
1985

Frederic Wood Theatre  
Program Magazine

**PUBLISHER**

**Joseph G. MacKinnon**

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## BERTOLT BRECHT: A CHRONOLOGY

- 1898 Bertolt Brecht born in Augsburg (Germany); son of wealthy businessman
- 1904 Enters school of Evangelical Franciscans
- 1915 Pacifist essay causes disciplinary action
- 1918 Recruited into army; first play BAAL
- 1919 Assassination of socialist leaders, among them Rosa Luxemburg; growing sympathy for leftist causes; work as journalist, balladeer; first publications (drama, poetry, prose)
- 1922 series of successful productions; establishes himself as leading playwright of German language; various literary prizes
- 1923 Adolf Hitler stages abortive coup d'etat; Brecht on black list of right-wing groups
- 1924 Hitler writes "Mein Kampf"; Brecht begins systematic study of Marxism; writes *A Man's A Man*
- 1929 Stock-market crash; Brecht's *Three Penny Opera* brings him international recognition; translation of his works into major languages; First performance of *Happy End* in Berlin
- 1933 Adolf Hitler comes to power; Brecht's plays banned; his books publicly burned; charged with high treason and stripped of his passport; escapes from Germany, exile in Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark
- 1939 Outbreak of World War II; *Mother Courage*
- 1941 Germany declares war on U.S. Brecht settles in Hollywood; works on films and *Galileo*; collaboration with Charles Laughton; friendship with Aldous Huxley, W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood; above all with Charlie Chaplin
- 1947 Called before Un-American Activities Committees; decides to leave U.S.; temporary stay in Switzerland
- 1949 Secures Austrian passport; returns to Germany at the invitation of communist government; settles in East Berlin; founds "Berliner Ensemble"; now primarily works as a director; in the next few years he shapes the "Berliner Ensemble" into the leading theatre troupe of Europe
- 1956 Uprising in communist Hungary; Brecht dies

# KURT WEILL: A CHRONOLOGY

- 1900 Born in Dessau (Germany)  
His father is the cantor of the local synagogue
- 1911 Writes music for school plays
- 1919 Begins study of composition under Humperdinck and Busoni
- 1922 Chamber music, orchestral pieces, cantatas
- 1928 Becomes very active in the German 'Cabaret' movement,  
contributing some of his best known tunes
- 1929 Premier of his greatest success *Three Penny Opera*
- 1930 Collaborates with Brecht on *Mahagonny* and *Der Jasager*
- 1933 Adolf Hitler comes to power; Weill condemned as a Jew and  
a composer of "decadent" music; by now his songs have  
become part of the international repertoire;
- 1935 Forced into exile; settles in U.S.A.
- 1948 *Down in the Valley*, opera inspired by U.S. folk songs
- 1949 Broadway musical *Lost in the Stars*
- 1949 *Street Scene* makes him one of the most popular composers  
of musical theatre
- 1950 Dies in New York on April 3rd

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# The First Night of HAPPY END

In 1928 two relative newcomers had created the smash hit of the Berlin theatre season. With their *Threepenny Opera* Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill not only conquered the German stage but created a musical that within a year received over forty productions in Europe alone, and that was to become one of the classics of the modern theatre. Brecht and Weill, who both had grown within the circles of the artistic avant garde, were stunned by this sudden commercial success. In disbelief, yet with pride they watched the unexpected box-office draw of the *Threepenny Opera*.

It is not surprising that producers now wanted to follow up and profit from this unprecedented triumph. Both author and composer were approached by at least a dozen agents and producers, who all tried to explore and exploit the newly found goldmine.

Both, but particularly Brecht with his growing Marxist convictions, was in a true dilemma. Should he give in to the temptation of the box-office? Wouldn't he, by economic definition, become a prostitute? And the crucial question: could he adhere to his convictions and be commercially successful at the same time? Being a born pragmatist, Brecht wanted to test this crucial question, and so after careful consultation with Weill he consented to another musical on the lines of the *Threepenny Opera*.

The producer E.J. Aufricht, who had already supervised the earlier work, insisted on as much duplication as possible: once again gangsters played a dominant role; once again a series of snappy songs entertained the audience; and once again the parts were taken by the cream of the acting/singing profession. All the ingredients were there; success seemed secure.

*Happy End*, as the new venture was to be called, opened on September 2, 1929 in Berlin. The house had been packed hours before with the curious, the trendy, and critics from all the leading German papers. It was an event to equal, or hopefully outrival, the team's former hit. But what had been so carefully planned as a firework ended in a near-riot. The production was repeatedly interrupted by waves of booing. To observers it seemed clear that these interruptions had been meticulously orchestrated. Brecht the Communist and Weill the Jew had become the chosen target of fascist activists. These Nazi troopers were determined to prevent another smash hit along the lines of the *Threepenny Opera*, and they succeeded. Fearful of riots that could have easily turned violent, the ticket-buying public stayed away, and after two further performances the show was pulled.

This early failure of *Happy End* has unfortunately always made it one of the neglected pieces by the Brecht/Weill team. Unfortunately, because it shows Brecht the lyricist and Weill the composer at their very best. The ideological base of the piece might be muddled; the plot construction might be negligent; but the songs are so potent that they make us forget any dramatic deficiency the play might have. Here, in the songs of *Happy End*, the dramatic skill and musical genius of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill come to full blossom. Indeed, one could argue, their collaboration has never been better.



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Bertolt Brecht

Directed by  
Arne Zaslove

Costume design by  
Brian H. Jackson

Set design by  
David Fischer

Lighting design by  
Ian Pratt

Musical direction and arrangements by  
Adam Jonathan Con

## CAST

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Assistant Director . . . . . Tanja Dixon-Warren  
Camera Man . . . . . Tom Jones  
Script Girl . . . . . Sarah Rodgers  
Crew . . . . . Don Robinson, Katey Wright, Johnna Wright

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Baby Face . . . . . Dion Luther  
Sam . . . . . Lyle Moon  
Professor . . . . . Christopher Beck  
Reverend . . . . . Bruce Harwood  
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Major Stone . . . . . Kathryn Bracht  
Cops . . . . . Patrick Blaney, Chris Rosati  
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There will be two 10 minute intermissions.

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# Y END

Music by  
Kurt Weill

Original libretto attributed to "Dorothy Lane"  
Book and lyrics adapted by Michael Feingold

## PRODUCTION

Technical Director ..... IAN PRATT  
Properties Mistress. .... SHERRY DARCUS  
Lighting Execution ..... ROBERT EBERLE  
Set Construction ..... JOHN HENRICKSON, DON GRIFFITHS  
Costume Supervisor. .... ROSEMARIE HESELTON  
Show Drop Executed by ..... DON S. DAVIS  
Cutter. .... CHRISTINA McQUARRIE  
Asst. Scenic Artist. .... BARRY KOOTCHIN  
Properties Assistant ..... MELODY ANDERSON  
Wigs ..... TERRY KUZYK

Scenic Artist ..... DAVID ROBERTS

Stage Managers ..... KATHLEEN MEASURES, CHRISTINE PLUNKETT,  
LAURA JANESHEWSKI  
Asst. to the Set Designer ..... NANCY FORD  
Asst. to the Costume Designer ..... ALLISON DAWSON  
Asst. to the Lighting Designer ..... ROBERT HAMILTON  
Hats Executed by ..... SHEILA WHITE  
Wardrobe ..... OWEN LOCK  
Crew ..... CYNTHIA BURTINSHAW, JACQUELINE KING,  
SIOBHAN RYAN, DEBBIE STARR

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Box Office ..... CAROL FISHER, MARK HOPKINS,  
LINDA HUMPHRIES  
Program Co-ordinator. .... JOYCE TINNIION  
House Manager ..... DEBRA BARRS  
Production ..... NORMAN YOUNG

Vocal Coach. .... STEVEN THORNE

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Producer ..... WADE FERLEY  
Director ..... JOHN KALMAN  
Director of Photography ..... PAUL GUENETTE  
Operator/Asst. Camera ..... DAVID WARNER  
Assistant Director ..... CATHY GOLF  
Editor/Continuity ..... VANESSA BARKER  
Gaffer/Grip ..... GEOFF RODGERS  
Grip ..... PETER FUERSENGER  
Make-up ..... LAVONNE GIRARD

## HAPPY END

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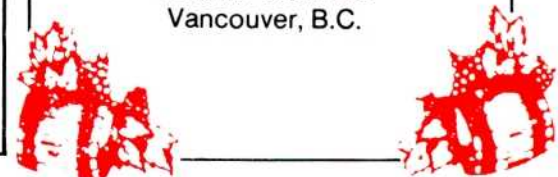
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★ ★ ★

Mr. K. preferred City B to City A. "Why?", asked a neighbor. Mr. K. answered: "In city A they loved me; but in City B they were my friends. In City A they gave service; but in City B they needed me. In City A they invited me for dinner; but in City B they asked me into the kitchen."

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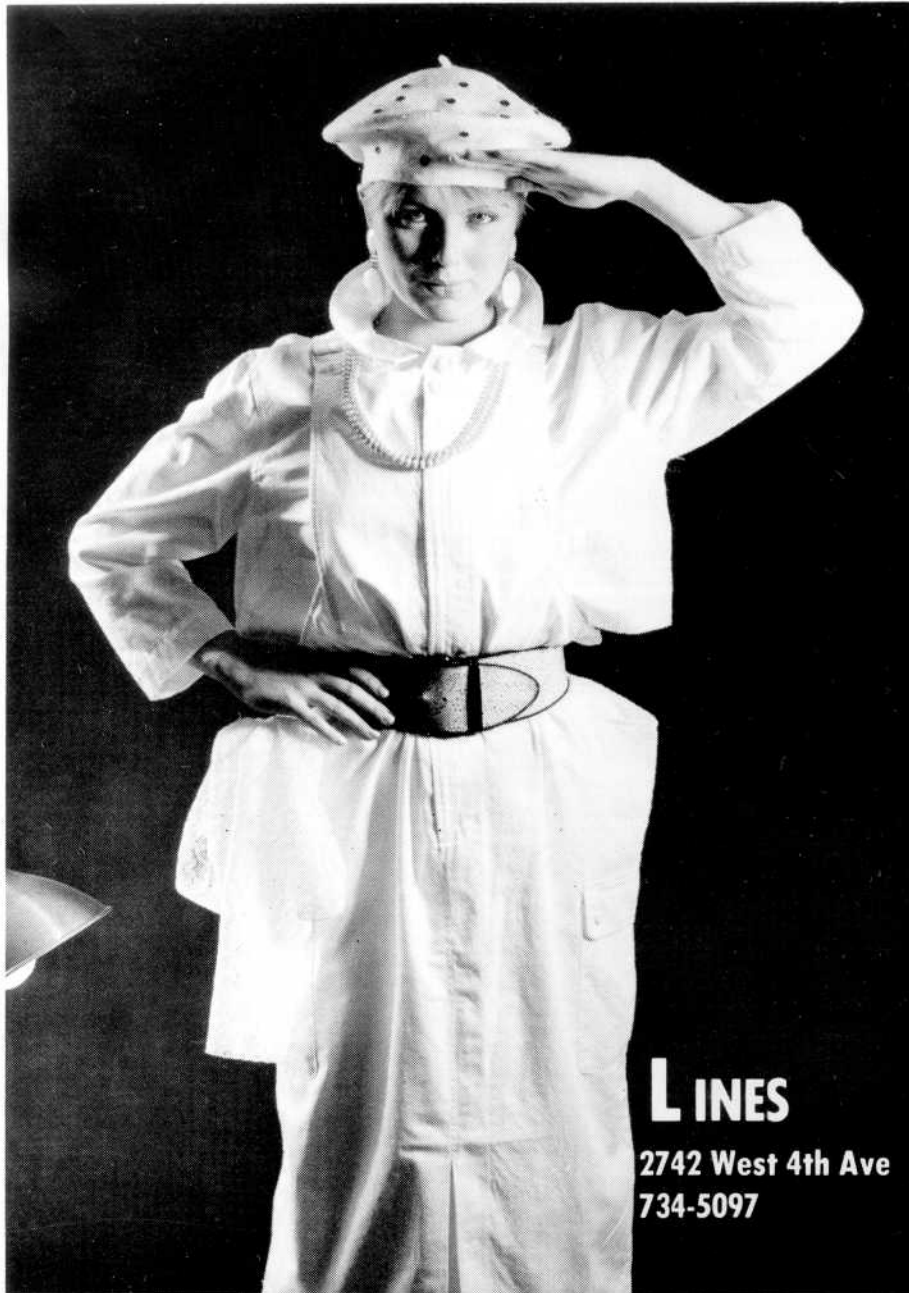
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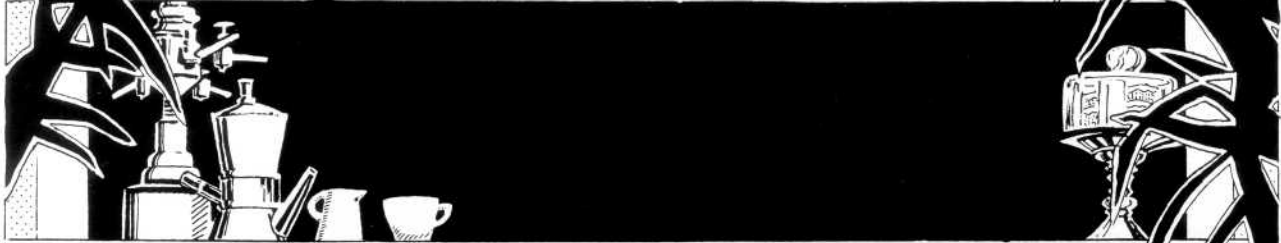
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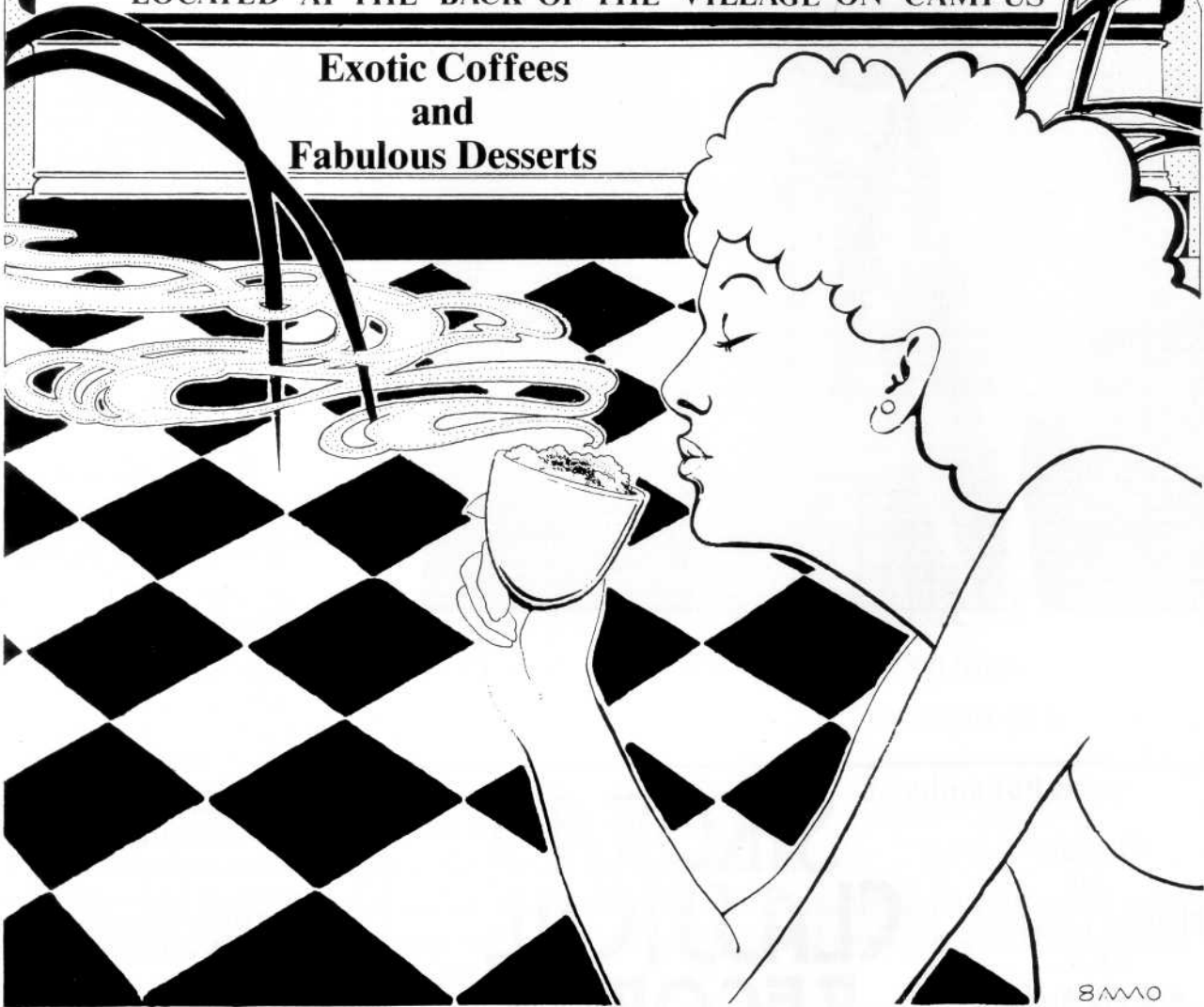
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