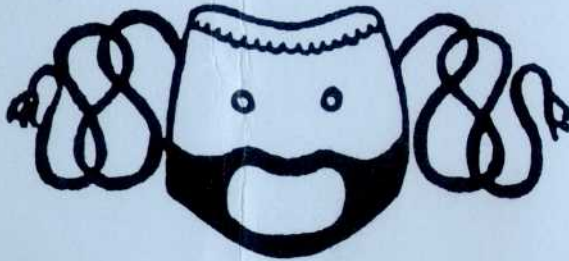


Frederic Wood Theatre

**HERR PUNTILA  
AND HIS  
SERVANT MATTI**



*it's*  
**TIME** *for a*  
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Frederic Wood Theatre  
presents

# **HERR PUNTILA AND HIS SERVANT MATTI**

By BERTOLT BRECHT

Directed By  
Arne Zaslove

March 7 - 17  
1990



**Bertolt Brecht**  
1898 - 1956

## **BRECHT: A Short Chronology**

- 1898 Brecht born in Augsburg, Germany
- 1917 Enrolls in Medical School at Munich University
- 1918 Orderly at Military Hospital.  
Writes *Baal*, his first play
- 1924 Works as *dramaturg* in Berlin.  
Begins systematic study of Marx.
- 1926 *Man is Man*.
- 1928 *The Threepenny Opera*.
- 1933 Hitler comes to power. Brecht is forced into  
exile: Switzerland, Denmark, Finland
- 1940 HERR PUNTILA & HIS SERVANT MATTI.
- 1941 Brecht arrives in the U.S.A.  
Occasional work in Hollywood. *Mother Courage*.
- 1943 *The Good Woman of Setzuan*.
- 1945 *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.
- 1947 Brecht is questioned by the Committee on Un-American  
Activities. Returns to Europe. Settles in East Berlin.
- 1949 Forms "The Berlin Ensemble."  
All energies devoted to running this company.
- 1956 Brecht dies in Berlin.

*A Note*  
*on*  
**HERR PUNTILA AND HIS SERVANT MATTI**

Written in 1940, this boisterous folk comedy is a product of Brecht's years of exile from Hitler's Germany. For a dramatist whose life and work were imbued with contradictions it is a fitting paradox that his isolation from his homeland and from the theatre was at once the most difficult and the most artistically fruitful period of his career. The rollicking farce of *Puntila*, its delight in nature, its earthy humour and its roughhewn vigour, have made it one of Brecht's most accessible and frequently performed plays. Recent critics and biographers have argued that it also deserves a more serious place among the great works of the artist's maturity: *Mother Courage* (1938), *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1940) and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1944). Though the play itself may be less substantial than those masterpieces, the character of Puntila is surely one of Brecht's inspired creations.

It is usual to trace the initial idea to Hella Wuolijoki, a Finnish landowner and would-be dramatist on whose estate Brecht was staying during the summer of 1940. The name of Puntila, his changes from kindly intoxication to nasty sobriety, and the episode in which he acquires multiple fiancées derive from Wuolijoki's draft for a play. Aware of the inadequacies of her script, she urged Brecht to collaborate with her in rewriting it for a local folk competition. Brecht had no belief in romantic notions of artistic originality and was used to borrowing material and working with collaborators. What was original was that he always took over anything he borrowed or collaborated on, making it entirely his own. Wuolijoki saw little of her work in the final version, aside from the basic premise.

So it is with other influences that critics have discerned, most notably Chaplin's film *City Lights*, which Brecht had reviewed when it opened in Berlin in 1931. The film's sequences with the millionaire,

who is affable when intoxicated but who throws The Tramp out when he sobers up, are a striking parallel to the play. But the millionaire, is basically a foil for Chaplin's Tramp, and the sequences between them are subordinate to the main plot. Brecht moves the secondary figure into the very center of his play. In contrast to both Chaplin and Wuolijoki, it is the split character and behaviour of the wealthy man, together with the implied class conflict, that are of primary interest to Brecht.

They are also what relate *Puntila* to his other great plays. Puntila's shifts between intoxication and sobriety are a comic variation on Brecht's preoccupation with split personalities as metaphors for the human condition. The causes of that divided nature are in Brecht's view not psychological but materialistic. They are rooted in social and economic circumstances which make human spontaneity and goodness incompatible with self-interest or survival, and which alienate people from their better nature and their fellow beings. Puntila's drunken vitality emphasizes not only his own frustrated impulses but those of others, especially Matti and Eva, who also yearn to break free of class and convention and realize their humanity. Circumstances overpower human aspirations, revealing them as utopian dreams and giving this comedy tragic undertones and a less than happy ending.

Doug McCallum

*Doug McCallum is Ph.D. candidate in the Theatre Department.*

# HERR PUNTILA AND HIS SERVANT MATTI

by BERTOLT BRECHT

Directed by Arne Zaslove  
Set Design by Ronald Fedoruk  
Costume Design by Mara Gottler  
Lighting Design by Don Griffiths  
Music Composed and Directed by Adam Jonathan Con

## CAST

Puntila .....	Michael O'Donnell
Eva Puntila .....	Michelle Porter
Matti .....	Peter Wilds
The Judge .....	Bill Melathopolous
The Attaché.....	Guy Fauchon
Sly-Grog Emma .....	Kathleen Duborg and Susan C. Bertoia
The Chemist's Assistant.....	Lois Anderson
The Milkmaid .....	Eliza Green-Moncur
The Telephonist .....	Lisa Beley
Red Surkkala .....	Barry Levy
Fina .....	Michele Melland
The Lawyer .....	David Mackay
The Parson .....	Roger Haskett
The Parson's Wife .....	Kathleen Duborg and Susan C. Bertoia
Workers .....	Damon Calderwood Pierre Elrick Michael Johnson Ben Lubinizki Richard Rigby David Vaisbord Christopher Wanjoff

## PRODUCTION

Technical Director .....	Ian Pratt
Properties Supervisor .....	Sherry Milne
Costume Supervisor .....	Chelsea Moore
Set Construction .....	Don Griffiths, John Henrickson Robert Moser
Costume Cutter .....	Jean Driscoll-Bell
Seamstress .....	Linda Findley
Stage Manager .....	Darryll Patterson
Assistant to Director .....	Gerald Vanderwoude
Assistant Stage Managers .....	Dean Debiene, Kristen Johnson
Wardrobe Mistress .....	Jo Howitz
Set Design Assistants .....	Jo Howitz, Tania Lazib
Costume Design Assistants.....	Nancy Canning, Celine Boucher
Lighting Design Assistant .....	Mark Classen
Lighting Operator .....	Kevin McAllister
Make Up .....	Nick Davis
Head Electrician.....	Glen Winter
Lighting Crew .....	Jeff Rankin, Nik von Schulmann
Box Office .....	Carolyn Preiswerck, Mariascha Wright Lisa Beley
House Manager .....	Nancy Lyons
Business Manager .....	Marjorie Fordham
Production Manager .....	Robert Eberle

There will be one 15 minute intermission.

## HERR PUNTILA AND HIS SERVANT MATTI

If collage itself is, as Max Ernst once defined it, “a pictorial entity composed of disparate constituents, pasted together and possibly also worked over with brush or pen”,<sup>1</sup> then the design principle in costuming *Puntila and his Servant Matti* falls naturally into place. The overall look is a pastiche of images and plays-on-words which paints an unpleasant veneer over the characters: the masks are reminiscent of Hannah Höch’s collaged faces; the makeup and wigs suggest the gross colourations of Otto Dix; and the clothing silhouettes replicate the distorted lines and exaggerated shapes of George Grosz’s satiric sketches.

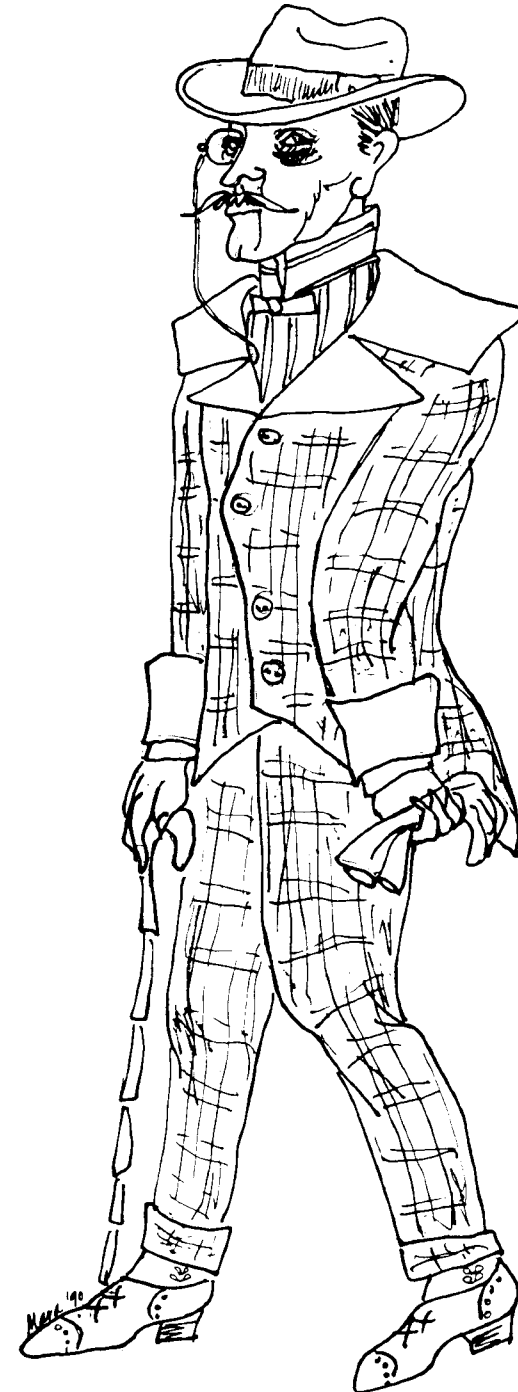
The Novembergruppe of which Brecht, Weill, Höch and Grosz were members, collected other “revolutionaries of the spirit” and addressed certain issues in attempting to bring together art and the people. One of the questions posed in the 1918 Manifesto relates directly to a concern found in Brecht’s play: “Will not the Germany of the conquering middle class once again make shameless use of the workers’ strength and humble the poor even further?”<sup>2</sup> In attempting to rectify such indecencies, many of the artists in the Novembergruppe resorted to cruel visual statements attacking the “pillars of society”. Collage became an experimental form for those members with dadaistic or surrealistic leanings: plundering dreamscapes and automatic states of being for their inspiration, they created patterns and images of association which “held up a mirror to the age through a variety of materials presented in chaotic disorder.”<sup>3</sup>

Costuming *Puntila and his Servant Matti* in this collaged manner is my attempt to project both the essence of Brecht’s political statement and to pay homage to the disturbing, artificial and fragmentary visions depicted by the Novembergruppe.

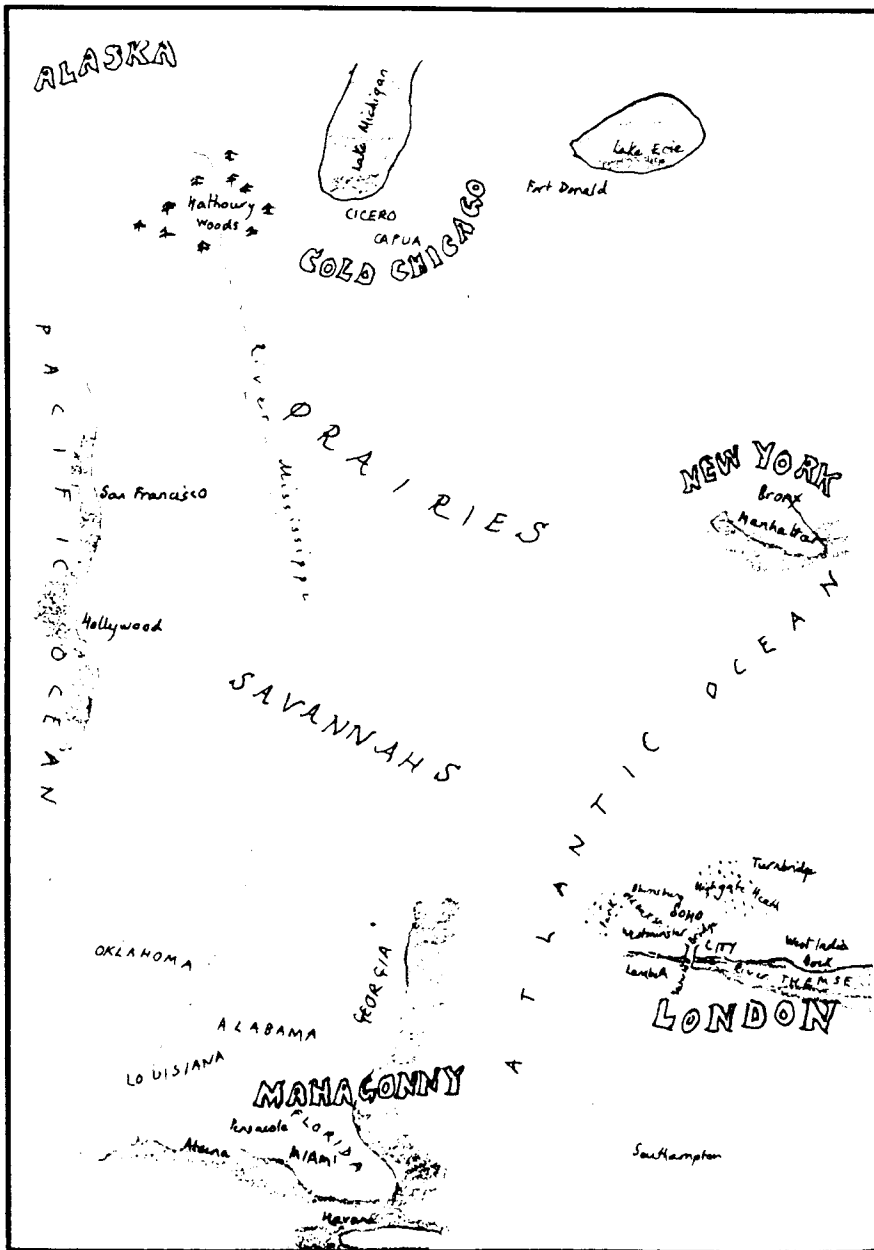
<sup>1</sup> Uwe M. Schneede, *The Essential Max Ernst*: (Thames and Hudson; London, 1972), p. 29

<sup>2</sup> Wolf Von Eckhardt and Sander L. Gilman, *Bertolt Brecht’s Berlin* (Anchor Books; New York, 1975), p. 69

<sup>3</sup> *The Essential Max Ernst* p. 29

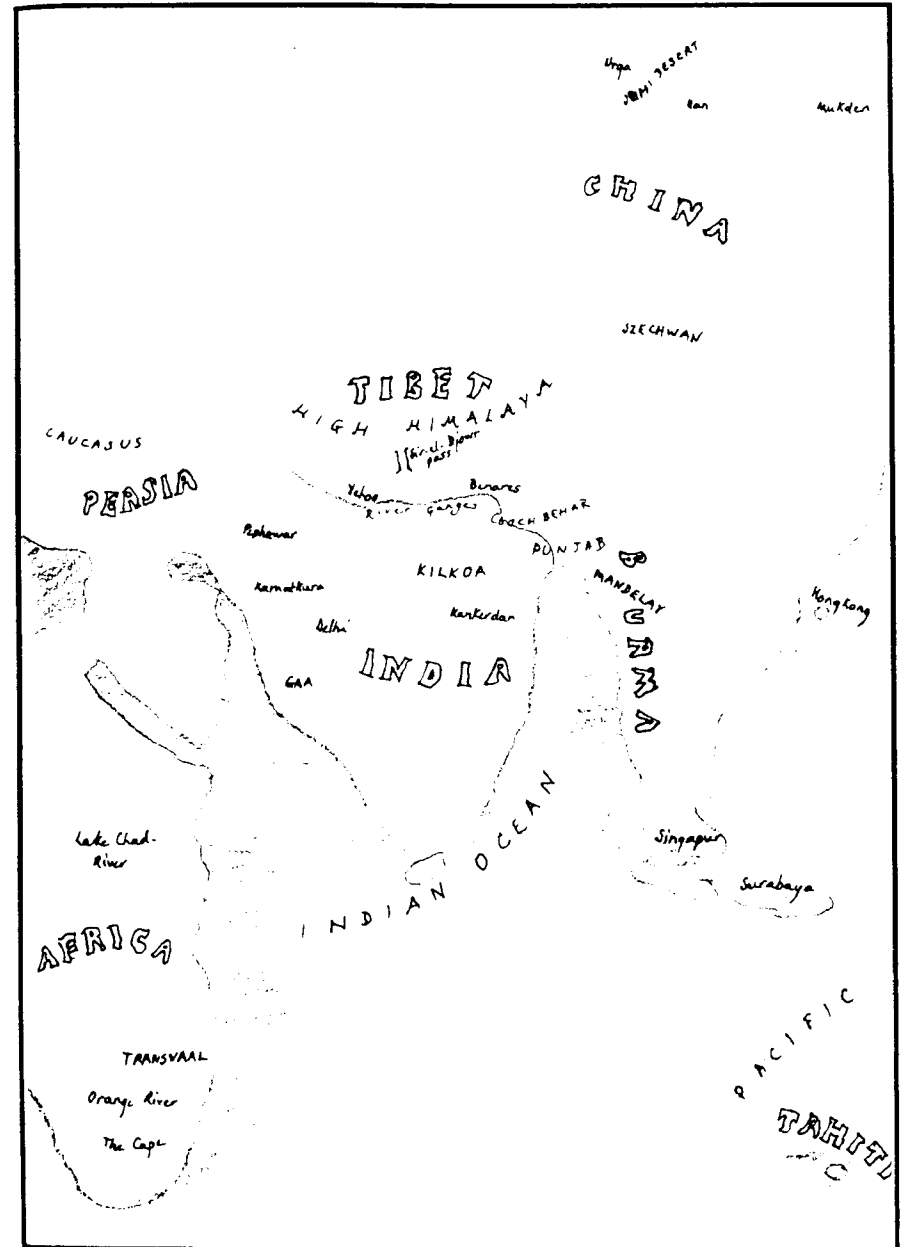


The English-speaking World according to Bertolt Brecht  
*On Willett's Projection, 1983*



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