



Lotte Lenya

Preface by Lotte Lenya, Gottfried Wagner's book **Weill and Brecht**, March 1977:  
Among all the great musical phenomena of the 20th century, KURT WEILL played and still plays an outstanding role, yet at the same time is subject to fierce controversy. The contradiction is not based on the nature and objective of his art, but is directed against the validity of the recognition he has received. While the extraordinary successes of his early years in Germany were affected by the tragic political events of those days, his early fame after his death was shadowed by uncertainty and lack of understanding, perhaps even exacerbated by a lack of accessible and reliable information sources. The latter factor did not make it easy for Gottfried Wagner, as he himself declares, to carry out his work. Moreover, I would like to point out something I have never kept secret during all the years of my public activity: reading music is a skill I have never learned. Weill always refused to reveal the secrets of counterpoint and harmony to me. He was convinced that my good ear was more reliable than any talent in music theory I might develop. For that reason it has hardly been possible for me to actively support musical biographers and musicologists. My task was to sing Weill's music in the way my instincts led me. I also made it my task to collate his many manuscripts from all corners of the world, so that they could be performed in the best possible way. I was always convinced that Weill's music should be the one and only source of knowledge about his work. For me it was a special pleasure and gratification, that Gottfried Wagner, independently of any contact or request from me, came to the same conclusion, that is, that Weill the musician and the man himself can be found only in his music; any critical appraisal and analysis can only be undertaken on the basis of his music. I must admit that Gottfried Wagner has succeeded in this approach so excellently that, I as a mere laywoman, was able to read and absorb the analysis with great interest. I am glad to take this opportunity to thank Gottfried Wagner from the bottom of my heart and express my admiration for his achievement. March 1977.