



INVENTING AMERICA: ERNST KRENEK, KURT WEILL, AND “JAZZ” IN WEIMAR GERMANY

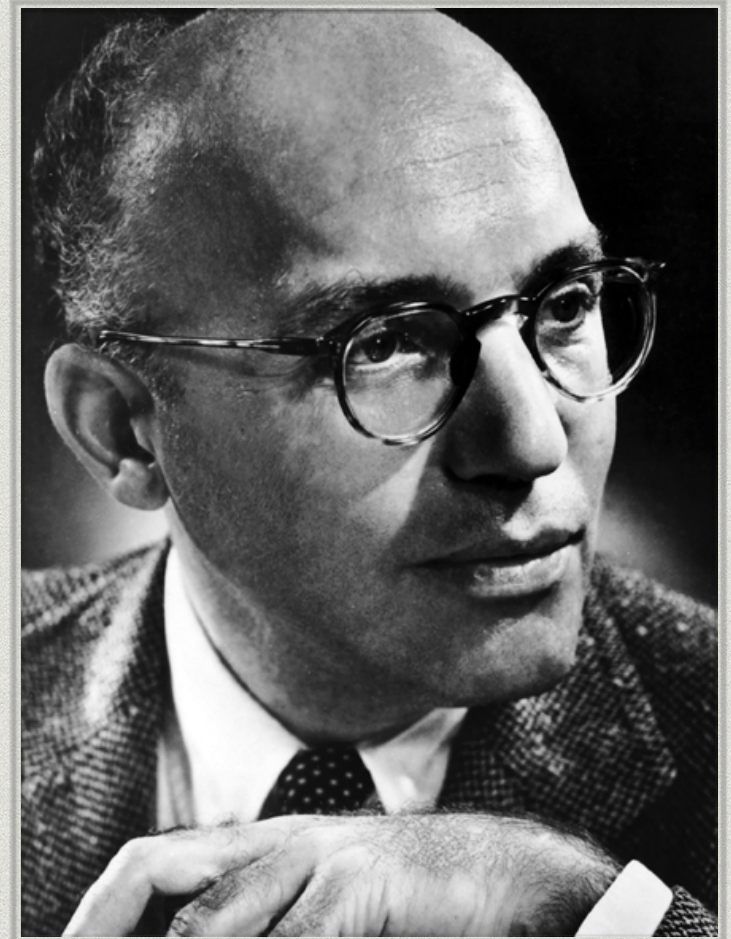
Recapping Epic Theater

- * Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht
- * Alienation
- * Goals:
 - * Awareness of the constructed (i.e. not real) nature of theater
 - * Awareness of the constructed nature of one's own reality



Mahagonny-Songspiel

- * Short opera by Kurt Weill
- * Setting of texts by Brecht
- * Non-operatic singers
- * Written for Baden-Baden music festival in 1927
- * Weill's "Songstil"
 - * Song style
 - * Music in the form of popular songs
 - * *Partly* about alienation technique
- * "Alabama Song"
 - * One of two English language songs in the work



The Threepenny Opera

- * Based on John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728)
- * Text: Bertolt Brecht
- * Music: Kurt Weill
- * Premiered: Berlin, 1928
- * Jazz inspired music
- * Non-operatic performers
- * Story a critique of capitalism, society

The Threepenny Opera

- * “The Ballad of Mack the Knife”
 - * Die Moritat von Mackie Messer
 - * Murder deeds

Connecting the Dots

- * Jazz in Weimar Germany very much a product *of* Weimar Germany
 - * “Invented” by German musicians based on whatever information they could find on American jazz
- * These “invented” jazz styles often used in Weimar operas
- * Jazz represented a number of things
 - * African-American-ness
 - * America
 - * Modernity
- * Krenek’s use of jazz in *Jonny spielt auf* for plot reasons
- * Weill’s use of jazz in *Mahagonny-Songspiel* and *The Threepenny Opera* was part of program of social critique