

# BENTLEY ON BRECHT



## Songs and Poems of Bertolt Brecht Adapted and Performed by Eric Bentley

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The music is by Hanns Eisler, Kurt Weill, Stefan Wolpe, Paul Dessau and, possibly, Bertolt Brecht himself.

FOLKWAYS FH 5434

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

BENTLEY ON BRECHT

ABOUT POOR B.B.  
BALLAD OF THE DEAD SOLDIER  
MEMORY OF MARIE SANDERS  
A VISIT TO THE EXILED POETS  
EASTER SUNDAY, 1935  
THE BALLAD OF MARIE SANDERS  
TO THE LITTLE RADIO  
TO MY COUNTRYMEN  
HYMN OF THE GREAT BALL AND ORGEL'S HYMN  
A MAN'S A MAN  
MAG THE KNIFE  
BALLAD OF SEXUAL SENSATION  
THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD BE  
SONG OF A GERMAN MOTHER  
BALLAD OF THE WISE WOMAN AND THE SOLDIER  
KENNER ODER ALLE!

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# BENTLEY

# ON

# BRECHT

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Pete Seeger writes: "A good song is often a bitter-sweet combination of sadness and humor, farce and pathos. So Bertolt Brecht was naturally a great song-writer. Like folk songs, his songs also rest on a bed-rock of blunt reality. Eric Bentley does a fine job of presenting them in all their angularity."

BENTLEY ON BRECHT was cited for Special Merit by Billboard. "Marvellously right" was the verdict of the New York Times' hi-fi critic, while the Time reviewer added: "captures the clattering, frightening spirit of Brecht's Berlin better than Columbia's virtuosi recording (of Brecht on Brecht) . . . (Bentley) is totally convincing and totally true to his master's idea of a winning performance."

Reviewing a later Bentley album (Songs of Hanns Eisler, FH 5433) Escapade's reviewer summed up both albums:

"What could be odder than a noted University professor and drama critic suddenly staking out an entire new career for himself as a singer of songs? Only the fact that he does it so unreasonably well. Eric Bentley's first record of Brecht songs and poems, many in his own translation, accompanied (by himself) on prepared piano and harmonium, was a brilliant and inspired collection. The gruff, "untrained" voice and impeccable musicianship made something unforgettable of these bitter, angry, ironic, strangely lyrical songs. One's only complaint was that other numbers which Bentley had performed on the radio and publicly were omitted. The new record, a particularly abundant one (with 28 songs), includes several of these. Some are Brecht songs and some have lyrics by other writers, but all were set to music by Hanns Eisler, who is revealed as a composer absolutely as striking in his own right as Kurt Weill, Brecht's better known collaborator. Eisler's tunes have a stringency and directness that even Weill's great work lacks; they are amazingly without rhetoric yet no less effective for that. Eric Bentley's performances, one need hardly add, are magnificent. They are so moving, in fact, that it is hard to believe he has spent much of his life in a classroom—yet there he remains. Folkways should be encouraged to record a sequel."

BERTOLT BRECHT (1898-1956) was the leading German playwright, and one of the leading poets, of his day. Lillian Hellman has said: "The Threepenny Opera and Mother Courage are the great plays of our time." Charles Laughton called Brecht the greatest figure of the contemporary theatre. Peter Lorre called him "the poet of our time."

All Brecht's principal works have been published in America by the Grove Press under the general editorship of ERIC BENTLEY (Born 1916) whose

adaptation of Brecht plays are well-known in theatres of the whole English-speaking world. A cast album of the Off Broadway production of A Man's a Man has been issued by Spoken Arts. Folkways has issued three Brecht-Bentley albums to date: the present one, plus Songs of Hanns Eisler, FH 5433, and Brecht Before The Unamerican Activities Committee, FD 5531.

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BENTLEY ON BRECHT: Notes on the contents of the album.

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#### Side I:

1. Bertolt Brecht was born in 1898 in Augsburg, Bavaria.

ABOUT POOR B.B.<sup>2</sup>

(*Vom armen B.B.*)

I, Bertolt Brecht, come from the black forests.  
My mother took me to the cities while I lay  
Inside her. The coldness of the forests  
Will be with me till my dying day.

The asphalt cities are my home. From the very first  
They supplied me with every last sacrament:  
Newspapers, tobacco, brandy—  
Suspicious, lazy, and when all's said, content.

I am friendly with people. I stick  
A bowler hat on my head as they do  
"They are beasts," I say, "with a particular odor."  
"So what?" I also say, "I am too."

In the morning, sometimes, I take some girls and sit them  
In my empty rocking chairs. Whereupon I  
Look them nonchalantly over and declare:  
"In me you have a man on whom you can't rely."

Toward evening I gather some fellows around me.  
We address each other as: "Gentlemen."  
They put their feet up on my table and remark:  
"Things will improve." I don't ask when.

Toward morning, in the grey of dawn, the pines are pissing  
And their bugs, the birds, begin to weep.  
In the city I empty my glass, throw away my cigar stub, and  
Go unhappily to sleep.

We have been living, a light generation,  
In houses that were thought beyond destruction.  
(The lanky buildings of Manhattan Island and the fine antennae  
That amuse the Atlantic Ocean are of our construction.)

Of these cities will remain that which blew through them: the wind.  
A full pantry rejoices the guests: they eat it bare.  
Our tenancy, we know, is transient. After us will follow  
Nothing worth a dare.

As for the earthquakes to come, when they ask me if I  
Will get bitter and let my cigar go out, I answer: No!  
I, Bertolt Brecht, who came from the black forests  
To the asphalt cities inside my mother long ago.

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#### Side I:

2. Bertolt Brecht was just old enough to be drafted into the German army during World War I. He became a medical orderly. And

he wrote a poetic comment on the war which is said to have circulated among the soldiers, spreading a very healthy defeatism.

BALLAD OF THE DEAD SOLDIER  
(*Legende vom toten Soldaten*)

When the fifth spring came and still the war  
Made ne'er a pause for breath,  
The soldier, who knew what a soldier's for,  
Died a hero's death.

But war for battle is a synonym  
And the Kaiser was most upset  
That his soldier had gone and died on him.  
He shouldn't have done that yet.

Without the Kaiser's permission, though,  
The summer rolled in like a wave,  
Then came a medical commission, oh,  
To that young soldier's grave.

The medical commission said  
A little prayer to their maker,  
Which done, they dug with a holy spade  
The soldier from god's little acre.

When the doctor examined the soldier gay  
Or what of him was left,  
He softly said: This man's I-A,  
He's simply evading the draft.  
The soldier was then reintroduced.  
The night was blue and dry.  
If one hadn't had a helmet on, one might have detected  
The Fatherland's stars in the sky.

They filled him up with brandy  
Though his flesh had putrefied,  
And kept two nurses handy  
And his half-naked wife at his side.

A priest led a handsome procession there,  
And knowing corpses well  
He swung some incense in the air  
To cover up the smell.

Behind the priest there beat and blew  
Trumpet and kettledrum.  
Our soldier could do what he had to do:  
He kicked out his legs from his bum.

Zing boom, zing boom, that was the sound  
As down the dark streets they did go  
And the soldier with them reeling round  
Like a stormswept flake of snow.

The cats and dogs, they squeal and prance,  
Rats whistle far and near,  
For none could bear to belong to France  
O fie! the mere ideal!

The women came out to see the sight  
In the villages near and far.  
Trees bowed their heads and the moon shone bright  
And everyone cried "hurrah!"

What shouts, what drums, what trumpet-peals,  
Women and priestly flunkey!  
And in the midst that soldier reels  
Like a drunken monkey.

And up and down, and down and up,  
They jostled him till soon  
You just couldn't see him except from on top,  
And there's no one there but the moon.

But the moon won't stay there the whole day through  
For the sun won't pause for breath.  
The soldier did what he'd been taught to do:  
He died a hero's death.

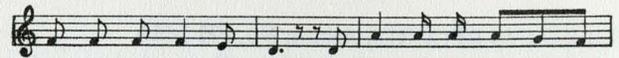
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LEGENDE VOM TOTEN SOLDATEN

Anon.



Und als der Krieg im fünf-ten Lenz kei-nen



Aus-blick auf Fric-den bot, da zog der Sol-dat sei-ne



Kon-se-quez und starb den Hel-den-tod.

Side I:

3. The tune here set by Stefan Wolfe is that of a sentimental ballad of around 1900.

MEMORY OF MARIE  
(*Erinnerung an Marie A.*)

Upon that day, a day of blue September,  
Silent and still beneath a young plum tree,  
I held my silent, still, and pale beloved:  
And in my arms a golden dream was she.  
And in the wide and lovely summer heavens  
There was a cloud, I saw it fleetingly.  
It was pure white and, oh, so high above us:  
When I looked up, it vanished suddenly.

And since that moment, many a September  
Came sailing in, then floated down the stream.  
The plum trees doubtless are no longer living  
And if you ask what happened to my dream?  
I shall reply: I cannot now remember  
Though what you have in mind I surely know.  
And yet her face: I really don't recall it.  
I just recall I kissed it long ago.

Even the kiss would have been long forgotten  
If that white cloud had not been in the sky.  
I know the cloud, and shall know it forever,  
It was pure white and, oh, so very high.  
Perhaps the plum trees still are there and living,  
Perhaps by now the woman has six children too.  
But that white cloud, it only lived one moment:  
When I looked up, it vanished in the blue.

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Side I:

4.

1929-1933. The Wall Street crash. World Depression. The rise of Hitler. Brecht's poem, "Faded Glory of the Giant City of New York," would be very *à propos*. Instead, here is a poem about the faded glory of his own country. Of the author of such a poem it might be said that he must either be converted to religion or to Communism.

DOOMED GENERATIONS  
(*Gezeichnete Geschlechter*)

Long, long before the bombers appeared in our skies  
Our cities were already  
Uninhabitable.  
No sewer drained off our garbage.  
Long, long before we fell in the countless battles,  
Still walking through our cities (which were still standing)  
Our wives were already  
Our widows,  
And our children  
Our orphans.  
Long, long before they who themselves were doomed  
Threw us in our graves,  
We were already  
Friendless.  
Those bits of us that the quicklime ate away at  
Were no longer  
Faces.

Side I:

5.

1933. Brecht left Germany the day after the Reichstag fire. His own books were on a fire not long afterwards. He was now an exile.

A VISIT TO THE EXILED POETS  
(Besuch bei den verbannten Dichtern)

When in a dream he entered the hut of the exiled poets  
Which is next to the hut where the exiled teachers live  
(From the latter he heard quarrelling and laughter)  
Ovid came to meet him in the doorway and said in an undertone:  
"You'd better not sit down now, you're not dead yet. Who knows,  
You might still go back, and without anything having  
changed, except you."

But with comfort in his eyes Po Chu-i approached and said  
with a smile:  
"Anyone who has called injustice by its name as often as once  
Gets what's coming to him. And his friend Tu Fu quietly added:  
"Exile, you understand, is not a place where Pride is unlearned!"  
Earthier than these, the tattered Villon approached and asked:  
"The house you live in, how many doors has it?" and Dante  
Took him aside, and grasping him by the sleeve, murmured:  
"Your verses bristle with mistakes, my friend, think of all  
the enemies you've made!"

And from the other side Voltaire shouted:  
"Look after your pennies or they'll starve you to death."  
"And work a few jokes in," cried Heine. "It won't help,"  
Shakespeare complained; "When James came, even I wasn't  
allowed to write."  
"If they put you on trial, get a crook for your attorney,"  
Advised Euripides, "He'll know the holes in the net of the law."  
The laughter still resounded through the place when from  
the farthest corner  
Came a cry: "You, newcomer! Do they know your verses by  
heart, too?"

And those who do, will they escape persecution?"  
"It is the forgotten," said Dante softly,  
"Not only their bodies, their works, too, were destroyed."  
The laughter broke off. None dared to look. The newcomer  
Had turned pale.

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Side I:

6.

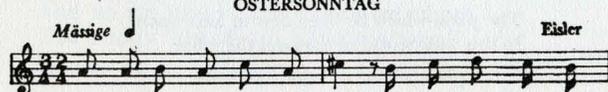
Many of the poems Brecht wrote in the Thirties are simply political, baldly social. But occasionally we catch a glimpse of the poet inside the politics. Here is Brecht on Easter Sunday, 1935.

EASTER SUNDAY 1935  
(Ostersonntag)

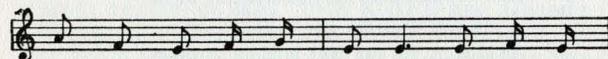
Early on this Easter Day  
An impetuous snowstorm  
Swept through the island;  
Between the budding hedges lay snow.  
My little son dragged me out  
To see a little cherry tree  
By the house wall  
From my writing table,  
Where I was writing verses in which  
I pointed at the men  
Who were preparing a war  
Which would destroy this island  
And my people, and this continent of Europe,  
And my family, and me.  
Silently we placed a sack  
Round the freezing tree.

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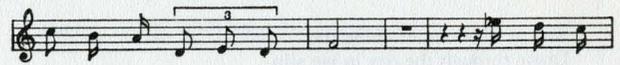
OSTERSONNTAG



Heu-te, O-ster-sonn-tag früh, ging ein plötz-li-cher



Schnee-sturm ü-ber die In-sel, zwi-schen den



grü-nen-den Hek-ken lag Schnee. Mein jun-ger



Sohn hol-te mich zu ei-nem A-pri-ko-sen-bäum-chen



an der Haus-mau-er von ei-nem Ver-se weg, in



dem ich auf die-je-ni-gen mit dem Finger deu-te-te,



die die-sen Krieg vor-be-rei-te-ten, der die-sen



Kon-ti-ent, die-se In-sel, mein Volk und mei-ne Fa-



mi-li-e und mich ver-til-gen muss.



Schwei-gend leg-ten wir ei-nen Sack



um den frie-ren-den Baum.

Side I:

7.

1935 was the year also of the Nuremberg Laws, which among other things made a *Judenhure* of any German girl with a Jewish boyfriend.

THE BALLAD OF MARIE SANDERS  
(Ballade von der Judenhure Marie Sanders)

In Nuremberg they made a law  
Giving women cause to weep  
Who had been sleeping with the wrong man.  
The workers crouch in their tenements  
And hear the beating of drums.  
"God above, could there be something wrong tonight?  
Listen! Here it comes!"

Marie Sanders, does your boyfriend have raven hair?  
If so, you better had make sure  
This is the end of this affair.

The workers crouch in their tenements  
And hear the beating of the drums.  
"God above, could there be something wrong tonight?  
Listen! Here it comes!"

Mother, give me the key please,  
Everything will be all right.

The moon looks like it always did.  
The workers crouch in their tenements  
And hear the beating of the drums.  
"God above, could there be something wrong tonight?  
Listen! Here it comes!"

And at nine one morning she  
Drove through the city in her slip  
With a board round her neck,  
Her head shaven,  
The crowd jeering,  
Her eyes cold.

And thousands go down and line the streets,  
For Streicher's coming! Make room!  
God above, if they only used their ears  
They would know who does what and to whom!

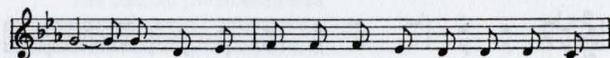
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BALLADE VON DER JUDENHURE MARIE SANDERS

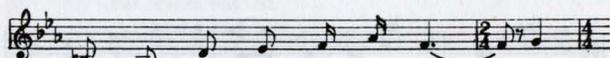
Eisler



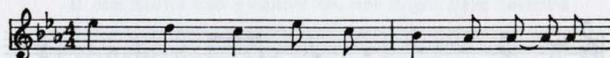
In Nürnberg mach-ten sie ein Ge-



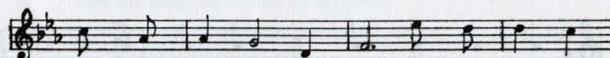
setz, dar-ü-ber wein-te man-ches Weib, das mit dem



fal-schen Mann im Bet-te lag. Das



Fleisch schlägt auf in den Vor-städ-ten. Die



Trommeln schla-gen mit Macht. Gott im Him-mel,



wenn sie et-was vor-hät-ten, wär'es heu-te Nacht.

Side I:

8. Brecht had left Germany for the Scandinavian countries but the radio-set he carried with him told him the German news. The music is Eisler's.

TO THE LITTLE RADIO

(An den kleinen Radioapparat)

O little box I carried on my flight  
So as not to break the radio tubes inside me  
From house to train, from train to boat held tight  
So that my enemies could still address me  
Right where I slept and much to my dismay  
Last thing at night and first thing every day  
About their victories (defeats for me)  
O please do not fall silent suddenly!

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Side I:

9.

In 1947, still in this country, Bertolt Brecht appeared as a witness before the House Un-American Activities Committee. At the time he had in his pocket a plane ticket for Paris, and by 1949 he was a resident of the German Democratic Republic. In 1953, on the occasion of the revolt of June 17, he confirmed his loyalty to the Ulbricht regime. At the same time he wrote a poem which circulated, unpublished, much as his "Ballad of the Dead Soldier" had circulated during World War I. When a British journalist visited Professor Georg Lukacs in Budapest in 1961 and asked the Professor what he thought of the present situation, Lukacs reached for this poem of Brecht's and said: "Read!"

THE SOLUTION

(Die Lösung)

After the rising of the seventeenth of June  
The secretary of the Writers' Union  
Had leaflets distributed on the Stalinallee  
On which one could read that  
The people had forfeited the confidence of the  
government  
And could only win it back again by doing twice as  
much work.

Would it not be easier to  
Dissolve the people and  
Elect another?

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Brecht's Communism was perhaps not quite wholehearted. Unequivocal, however, was his Pacifism. His radical attitude sprang in the first instance out of his experience in World War I. *Mother Courage* is a prophecy of World War II. And when East and West Germany began to rearm, Brecht made an antirecruiting play out of Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*. Brecht, in effect, appealed not only to West, but to East, Germans to avoid war.

TO MY COUNTRYMEN

(An meine Landsleute)

You who live on in towns that passed away,  
Now show yourselves some mercy, I implore.  
Do not go marching into some new war  
As if the old wars had not had their day,  
But show yourselves some mercy, I implore.

You men, reach for the trowel, not the knife.  
Today you'd have a roof above your head  
Had you not gambled on the knife instead,  
And with a roof one has a better life.  
You men, reach for the trowel, not the knife.

You children, that you all may stay alive,  
Your fathers and your mothers you must waken  
And if in ruins you would not survive,  
Tell them you will not take what they have taken,  
You children, that you all may stay alive.

You mothers, from whom all men take their breath,  
A war is yours to give or not to give.  
I beg you, mothers, let your children live!  
Let them owe you their birth but not their death.  
I beg you, mothers, let your children live!

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Side II.

1. Brecht's first play was *Baal*. He had finished a draft of it in 1918 but it was not produced in Germany until the Twenties -- or in New York till 1965.

The HYMN OF THE GREAT BAAL is heard on the harmonium. There follows:

ORGE'S HYMN \*

(Orges Gesang)

Orge said to me:

The dearest place on earth was not (he'd say)  
The grassy plot where his dead parents lay;

Nor a confessional, nor harlot's bed,  
Nor a soft lap, warm, white, and fat (he said).

The place which he liked best to look upon  
In this wide world of ours was the john.

It is a place where we rejoice to know  
That there are stars above and dung below.

A place where you can sit—oh wondrous sight—  
And be alone even on your wedding night.

A place that teaches you (so Orge sings):  
Be humble, for you can't hold on to things.

A place where one can rest and yet where one  
Gently but firmly can get business done.



He's seen the money in a female's hand  
 And he begins to understand  
 That woman's orifice will be his tomb.  
 His self-reproaches are uncompromising  
 But, as the night is falling, he is rising.

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Brecht-Bentley

THE BALLAD OF SEXUAL  
 SUBMISSIVENESS

K. Weill

Side II:

5. At the very center of the Brecht-Eisler Measures Taken (1930) stands the Trader's song:

**SUPPLY AND DEMAND**  
*(Angebot und Nachfrage)*

There is rice down the river.  
 In the provinces up the river  
 The people need rice.  
 If we leave the rice in the warehouse  
 It will cost them more.  
 Those who pull the ricebarge  
 Will then get much less rice.  
 For me the rice will then be even cheaper.  
 What is rice, actually?  
 Do I know, do you know,  
 What's this thing called rice?  
 God only knows what rice is  
 I only know its price.

When winter comes the coolies all need clothing.  
 One must buy all the cotton and then keep  
 A firm hold on it.  
 When the cold weather comes then  
 Clothing will cost more.  
 These cotton-spinning mills  
 Pay too high wages.  
 There's far too much cotton anyway.  
 What is cotton, actually?  
 Do I know, do you know,  
 What's this thing called cotton?  
 God only knows what cotton is  
 I only know its price.

Men take too much feeding.

That's why they are so expensive.  
 For the making of food  
 Men are needed.  
 The cooks made the food cheaper  
 But those eat it  
 Make it expensive.  
 There are too few men around anyway.

What is a man, actually?  
 Do I know, do you know,  
 What's this thing called a man?  
 God only knows what a man is  
 I only know his price.

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Side II:

6. Supply and Demand is at the center of The Measures Taken, and THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD BE is at the center of The Exception and the Rule (1930). This music is by Stefan Wolpe.

**THAT'S HOW IT SHOULD BE**  
*(Und das ist gut so)*

Sick men die  
 But strong men fight:  
 And that's how it should be.  
 All power to the strong  
 No power to the weak:  
 For that's how it should be.  
 Things that fall, let'em fall,  
 Then give 'em a kick:  
 Isn't that how it should be?  
 Who wins the battle  
 Can sit down to dine:  
 Yes, that's how it should be.  
 The conqueror's cook  
 Makes no count of the slain:  
 And that's how it should be.  
 And God up in heaven  
 God of things as they are  
 He made master and man:  
 And that's how it should be.  
 Who has good luck is good,  
 Who has bad luck is bad:  
 That's just how it should be.

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Side II:

7. SONG OF A GERMAN MOTHER appears with the English text of the play The Private Life of the Master Race, as published by New Directions in 1944. Music by Eisler.

**SONG OF A GERMAN MOTHER**  
*(Lied einer deutschen Mutter)*

My son, I gave you the jackboots  
 And the brown shirt came from me  
 But had I known what I now know  
 I'd have hanged myself from a tree.

And when I saw your arm, son,  
 Raised high in the Hitler salute  
 I did not know all those arms, son,  
 Would wither at the root.

And then I saw you march off, son,  
 Following in Hitler's train  
 And I did not know all those marchers  
 Would never come back again.

I saw you wear your brown shirt  
 And did not complain or entreat  
 For I did not know what I now know:  
 It was your winding sheet.

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Side II:

8. For the signature tune of his canteen woman Mother Courage, Brecht chose a French melody which, he says, is called "L'etendard de la pitie" -- "the banner of compassion." He had used it earlier for his poem "Ballad of the Pirates":

*Ballade von den Seeräubern*

Von Branntwein toll und Fin-ster-nis-sen, von un-cr-  
hör-ten Güssen naß. Vom Frost eis-wei-ßer Nacht zer-  
ris-sen, im Mast-korb von Ge-sichten blaß. Von Son-ne  
-nackt, gebrannt und krank, die hat-ten sie— im Win-ter  
lieb; aus Hun-ger, Fie-ber und Ge-stank, sang al-les,  
was noch üb-ri-g blieb: O Him-mel, strah-len-der A-  
zur, c-nor-mer Wind, die Se-gel bläh, laß Wind und  
Him-mel fah-ren! Nur laßt uns um Sankt Ma-rie die See!

Lied der Mutter Courage

immer bed (1:12) 1. Too many seek a bed to sleep in  
2. From Ulm to Metz past dome & steeple  
3. The war can care for all its people  
Each ditch is taken & each cave And he who digs  
My wagon always moves ahead The war can care for all its people  
a hole to creep in For all its people  
for all its people So long as there is steel and lead  
three give nothing But though it last through generations  
gave And many a man spends many a minute  
In hurrying toward some resting place  
You wonder when at last he's in it Just why the fellow forced the pace.

In applying this tune to the SONG OF MOTHER COURAGE, the composer Paul Dessau upset the regularity of consistent three/quarter time by insert-ing certain two/quarter bars as follows:

Too many seek a bed to sleep in  
Each ditch is taken and each cave  
And he who digs a hole to creep in  
Finds he has dug and early grave  
And many a man spends many a minute  
In hurrying toward some resting place  
You wonder when at last he's in it  
Just why the fellow forced the pace.

Chorus

Christians awake, the winters gone  
The snows depart the dead sleep on  
Let all of you who still survive  
Get out of bed and look alive.

From Ulm to Metz past dome and steeple  
My wagon always moves ahead  
The war can care for all its people  
So long as there is steel and lead  
Though steel and lead are stout supporters  
The war needs human beings too  
Report at once to your headquarters  
If it's to last the war needs you.

Repeat Chorus

Dangerous weapons and devastations  
The war takes hold and will not quit  
But though it last through generations  
We shall get nothing out of it  
Starvation filth and cold enslave us  
The army robs us of our pay  
But God may yet come down and save us  
This holy war won't end today.

Repeat Chorus

You wonder when at last he's in it Just why the  
fellow forced the pace  
But God may yet come down & save us  
This holy war won't end today  
Christians awake  
The winters gone The snows depart  
The dead sleep on Let all of you who still survive  
Get out of bed and look alive

Side II:

9. THE BALLAD OF THE WISE WOMAN AND THE SOLDIER is to be found in *Mother Courage* (1940), but was written long before that play and set to music originally, not by Dessau, but by Eisler. It is the Eisler version that is sung here.

BALLAD OF  
THE WISE WOMAN AND THE SOLDIER  
(*Ballade vom Weib und dem Soldaten*)

A shotgun will shoot and a jackknife will knife  
If you waded in the water 'twill drown you  
Keep away from the ice if you want my advice  
Said the wise woman to the soldier.

But the young soldier, he loaded his gun  
And he reached for his knife and he started to run  
For marching never could hurt him.  
From the north to the south we will march through  
the land  
With knife at side and gun in hand  
That's what the soldiers told the woman.

Woe to him who defies the advice of the wise  
If you waded in the water 'twill drown you  
Don't ignore what I say or you'll rue it one day  
Said the wise woman to the soldier.

But the young soldier his knife at his side  
And his gun in his hand, he steps into the tide  
For water never could hurt him.  
When the new moon is shining on shingle roofs  
white  
We are all coming back, go and pray for that night  
That's what the soldiers told the woman.

Then the wise woman spoke: You will vanish like  
smoke  
And his glorious deeds will not warm me  
And just watch the smoke fly! O God don't let him  
die!  
Said the wise woman to the soldier.

But the young soldier his knife at his side  
And his gun in his hand is swept out by the tide  
He waded in the water and it drowned him.  
And the lad who defied the wise woman's advice  
When the new moon shone floated down with the ice.  
So what could the soldiers tell the woman?

The wise woman spoke: he has vanished like smoke  
And his glorious deeds did not warm you  
You ignored what I say and you rue it today  
Said the wise woman to all the soldiers.

Side II:

10. KEINER ODER ALLE! (All or nothing!) is sung in the play *Days of the Commune* (1949) but had been written earlier and already set to music by Eisler. Eric Bentley sometimes sings it in English to the words that follow the German original here:

KEINER ODER ALLE!

Sklave, wer wird dich befreien?  
Die, in tiefster Tiefe stehen  
Werden, Kamerad, dich sehen  
And sie werden hörn dein Schreien.  
Sklaven werden dich befreien.  
Keiner oder Alle! Alles oder Nichts!  
Einer kann sich da nicht retten.  
Gewehre oder Ketten!  
Keiner oder Alle! Alles oder Nichts!

Wer, Geschlagener, wird dich rächen?  
Du, dem sie den Schlag versetzten,  
Reih dich ein mit den Venletzten

Wir, in allen unsern Schwächen  
Werden, Kamerad, dich rächen.  
Keiner, usw.

Wer, Verlorner, wird es wagen?  
Wer sein Elend nicht mehr tragen kann  
Muss sich zu jenen schlagen  
Die aus Not schon dafür sorgen  
Dass es heut heisst und nicht morgen.  
Keiner, usw.

ALL OR NOTHING?

Who, O slave, is going to free you?  
Those who stand in darkness near you  
From the lowest depths shall hear you.  
In the darkness they shall see you:  
Other slaves are going to free you.  
So it's all or nothing. None or everyone.  
One man can rescue any.  
But many can rescue many.  
For it's all or nothing. None or everyone.

Who'll avenge your scars and bruises?  
You on whom the blows descended  
Are by all the weak befriended.  
We'll decide who wins, who loses:  
We'll avenge your scars and bruises.  
So it's all or nothing. None or everyone.  
One man can rescue any.  
But many can rescue many.  
For it's all or nothing. None or everyone.

Who will dare? you ask in sorrow.  
He whose misery's past bearing,  
Finding finally the daring,  
Joins with those who are declaring:  
We won't wait until tomorrow.  
So it's all or nothing. None or everyone.  
One man can rescue any.  
But many can rescue many.  
For it's all or nothing. None or everyone.

BENTLEY

ON

BRECHT



BENTLEY

ON

BRECHT