

BERTOLT BRECHT'S

# A "MAN'S" A MAN

870

ADAPTED BY ERIC BENTLEY

Music by Joseph Raposo  
Lyrics by Eric Bentley  
Based on the production  
of The New Repertory Theatre Company  
(Konrad and Gay Matthaei)  
as directed by John Hancock  
at the Masque Theatre, New York with  
John Heffernan as Galy Gay  
Jenny Egan as Widow Begbick  
Michael Granger as Bloody Five  
Maurice Edwards as Uriah  
Ralf von Boda as First Soldier  
and Eric Bentley as Narrator  
At the piano: Joseph Raposo



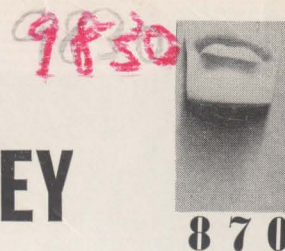
SPOKEN ARTS

Presented by Arthur Luce Klein



# SPOKEN ARTS

## BERTOLT BRECHT'S "A MAN'S A MAN" adapted by ERIC BENTLEY



Bertolt Brecht's play *MANN IST MANN* has had a unique history in the New York theatre. It was produced in two different versions and two different houses, opening on successive nights in September 1962. Both productions ran for more than a hundred and fifty performances.

There was general agreement that one of these productions was far superior to the other. This was the New Repertory Theatre's *A MAN'S A MAN*, adapted by Eric Bentley, and directed by John Hancock at the Masque Theatre. *Spoken Arts* is proud to sponsor the cast album of this show with John Heffernan as *Galy Gay*, Jenny Egan as *Widow Begbick*, Michael Granger as *Bloody Five*, Maurice Edwards as *Uriah Shelley*, and Ralf von Boda as the

*First Soldier*. Joseph Raposo, composer of the music, is at the piano, and Eric Bentley serves as *Narrator*.

*A MAN'S A MAN* is one of the liveliest of all Brecht's plays. Written in the nineteen-twenties, it presents, among other things, a tragi-comedy of brain-washing. In the Bentley version, however, the emphasis is not on the *process* of brain-washing but on something much closer to American life in the nineteen-sixties: the willingness to sacrifice personal identity for social acceptance and, contrariwise, the heavy pressure exerted upon the individual by society, to the end of making him (for example) an Organization Robot. "Why be a man when you can be a success?"



After the opening night performance of *A MAN'S A MAN* in New York, a voice was heard to observe: "This man is the biggest thing that's happened since Ibsen!" "This man" was Bertolt Brecht, 1898-1956. Long known to the American public only as the author of *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht is increasingly regarded now as the leading playwright of his day, and his *Mother Courage* and *Caucasian Chalk Circle* are part of the repertoire of world theatre. In the United States, if he is seldom seen on Broadway, he is one of the gods of Off Broadway and the college theatre circuit. And his works are standard items in the libraries and bookstores. *A MAN'S A MAN* itself has become known to a wide public through the volume *SEVEN PLAYS BY BRECHT* (Grove Press).

### MEMBERS OF THE CAST:

ERIC BENTLEY has been for the past twenty years the leading translator and interpreter of Bertolt Brecht in the English-speaking world. New York saw his adaptation of *The Private Life of the Master Race* in 1945 and 1956; of *The Good Woman of Setzuan* in

1956 and *Mother Courage* in 1963. Eric Bentley was born in England in 1916, is well known on both sides of the Atlantic as critic, historian and teacher. He was Charles Eliot Norton Professor Poetry at Harvard (1960-1961) and holds the permanent chair in Dramatic Literature at Columbia University.



JOHN HEFFERNAN (*Galy Gay*) was one of the leading members of the Phoenix Theatre Acting Company for several years and appeared in a wide variety of roles including Tony Lumpkin in *She Stoops to Conquer*, The Young Covey in *The Plough and the Stars*, Justice Shallow in *Henry IV, Part 2*, Polonius in *Hamlet* and Androcles in *Androcles and the Lion*. He also played the leading role in the recently produced film, *Time of the Heathen*.

JENNY EGAN (*Widow Leocadia Begbick*) won the Clarence Derwent award for her performance as Mary Warren in the Broadway production of "The Crucible." Her many character parts include that of the Old Woman in the American premiere of Ionesco's "The Chairs," the child in "Jack, or the Submission" and the Chinese Carpet-Dealer's Wife in "The Good Woman of Setzuan," to name but a few. She has appeared in films for Disney and Paramount Studios and on most of the major dramatic television programs. A graduate of Grinnell College, Miss Egan studied acting with Stella Adler and at the Neighborhood Playhouse under Sanford Meisner. She holds a masters degree from N.Y.U. where, in 1962, she organized with the dancer Mary Anthony the first Dance-Drama Workshop. She is Artistic Director of the Four Winds Theatre, Inc., and has her own teaching studio in New York.



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MICHAEL GRANGER (*"Bloody Five"*) was a member of the Actor's Workshop in San Francisco on a Ford Foundation grant, and appeared there in Anouilh's *Beckett*, Chekhov's *Three Sisters* and Strindberg's *Dance of Death*. He lived for several years in Hollywood and appeared in many films and television shows playing feature roles in *Playhouse 90* and *The Untouchables*.



MAURICE EDWARDS (*Uriah Shelley*) studied acting with Stella Adler, Uta Hagen and Harold Clurman, and made his Broadway debut in Leonard Sillman's *Happy as Larry*. He was in the Phoenix Theatre's production of *The Golden Apple*, played Crooked Finger Jack in *The Beggars' Opera* at the City Center, and appeared off Broadway in *The Enchanted*, *Man and Superman* and *Emanuel*. He also played the role of Mr. Peachum in *Threepenny Opera*, and appeared in *The Silver Tassie* and *Johnny Johnson*.

JOSEPH RAPOSO (Composer) studied music at Harvard and also at L'Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris, L'Ecole de Beaux Arts Fontainebleau, and privately with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. He wrote the music for *Sing Muse*, as well as for the documentary, *Orange and Blue*. He was recently musical director for the Carousel Theatre, Framingham, Mass.

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**"A 'Man's' A Man" introductory notes by Michael Bertin**

In September of 1962, a play by the suddenly resurgent dramatist Bertolt Brecht called "Mann ist Mann" began to garner attention in the New York press. That month the city witnessed two different stagings of the play and the two stagings opened on successive nights.

The legendary Living Theatre produced one of the entries and entitled it "Man Is Man;" Eric Bentley was the driving force behind the other and he named his adaptation "A 'Man's' A Man." Both shows ran for over 150 performances, with Bentley's version being adjudged the ultimate critical winner.

The Bentley version of things Brechtian has become a byword in the theater. With unerring taste and a fine commitment, Bentley shows how the change of a word or a phrase will translate into living English. In 1961, he had published a literal translation of the play; but for the 1962 production he took more liberties with the text, adjusting its vision to the times—the times being the opening of the Vietnam War era.

If you wished to study the making of a dramatist, you could do worse than look at Bentley's lyrics to "A 'Man's' A Man." He and his composer, Joseph Raposo, added several songs to the action, which transformed the play into a genuine musical entertainment. And while the lyrics are still very much in the spirit of Brecht, they also reveal the emerging spirit of Bentley's own dramatic voice.

"A 'Man's' A Man" is both an anti-war play and a play about identity theft—put the themes together and you have a drama that shows how war robs us of our humanity. What is original with Brecht is the way his action proceeds like a parable. His scenes seem to pose questions, such as: "What happens to a man who leaves his home to buy a fish for dinner?" or, "What happens to a man who is forced to deliver his own funeral oration?"

But saying that the subject is serious would be worse than saying nothing at all unless we also added that the seriousness is expressed through the brio of Brecht's inspired clowning. The setting and characters are parodies of Kipling's India. In this romantic world gone awry, you can find the waterfront village of Kilkoa, the Pagoda of the Yellow Monks and The Pass of Tibet. The characters are among the most original in world drama, and they include Widow Begbick and her jazzy daughters; a British machine-gun unit collectively known as "the scum;" and an amorous sadist whose nickname "Bloody Five" points to a most unusual tic. Then there is Galy Gay—the man who went out to buy a fish and was changed in the bargain.

(Washington, D.C., August 2003)