HANNS EISLER EDITION

Liner notes

Orchestral music (CD1 & 2)
Hanns Eisler's political awareness intensified in the Twenties, the time of the Weimar Republic in Germany. The determining factors causing this were his bitter experiences during the First World War, the new perspectives with which the October Revolution had imbued him –and many other important twentieth century artists- and finally, his growing indignation over the way in which musicians were failing to react to the ever-worsening class conflicts and the march of fascism. His radical censure of modern music led in 1926 to a rift with Arnold Schoenberg, who disapproved of the political leanings of his highly talented but refractory pupil (1919 to 1922/23), maintaining that his altered philosophy was "not perceptible in his works".

This was true, Hanns Eisler having up to that point exclusively composed instrumental and vocal chamber music, which had brought him a good deal of acclaim in the concert halls. It was outside the traditional institutions of bourgeois musical life that he developed his own "alternative" style of music-modern, yet possessing mass appeal. The crystallization of this style from 1927 onwards was in proportion to the degree in which Hanns Eisler brought his considerable talent and ability to bear in the revolutionary labour movement, with the communist orientation it then had, and in its forms of cultural organization: in the "Kampfmusik" of working-class balladeers and the new form of the "agitprop" groups as well as in the proletarian-revolutionary, antifascist practice of the arts then infiltrating every genre.

The developmental stages and individual manifestations of this alternative functional determination of music are illustrated by the choral compositions (Opp. 13-15, 17, 19), innovative in both content and form, the Ballads (Opp 18, 22), soon to be made popular by Ernst Busch, numerous "Kampflieder" and the didactic pieces created in cooperation with Bertolt Brecht, Die Massnahme (The Action), Op.20, and Die Mutter (Mother), after Gorki, Op.25.

In Hanns Eisler's concept of applied music, the composition of stage, and particularly of film music was rated especially highly. He felt the cinema better able to reach a mass public with historically important social issues than the old concert hall. Eisler, who at the time thought the composing of symphonies pointless, considered that film music provided extensive scope for the development of new forms of orchestral music in keeping with the times. Typical examples of this are the first four Orchestral Suites, Theme and Variations and the Chamber Symphony. They derived (with the exception of parts of the first suite) entirely from compositions for films.

These works differ greatly from contemporary works by Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, Richard Strauss or Hindemith. They stand in sharp contrast to the psychological traits of Expressionism, to the overheated Late Romantic works, and to the cool, mundane elegance of Neo-Classicism and the self-satisfied casual nature of ad-lib music. **Suite No.1** was commissioned in 1930 by Ernst Schoen, head of musical programmes at the Frankfurt broadcasting station. In the first movement Hanns Eisler borrowed from his first film music, written in 1927 for Waiter Ruttmann's Opus III, one of the earliest experimental sound films. When it was performed at the Music Festival in Baden-Baden during the same year, the film was first of all presented with its soundtrack, followed by Hanns Eisler conducting the music live, while the film ran without sound. While the writing in this first movement comes very close to the "complicated" twelve-note technique (the theme of the passacaglia consists of the first six notes of a "series"), the second and third movements are characterized by a succinct, refined simplicity. Particularly in the third movement, Hanns Eisler strove to create a new kind of "light music" for proletarian ears, taking up a number of songs which were very popular in the labour movement around 1930: Bells of Novgorod, Ivan, Dubinushka, In the Vegetable Patch, Song of the Taiga. After introducing motifs suggesting the workers' hymn Immortal Victims, Hanns Eisler ends the movement with an orchestral version of Warszawjanka and a quotation of the refrain from the Internationale ("Nations hark to the signals"). The fourth movement bears the title Hörfleissübung (Study in aural diligence). The twelve-note theme now appears distinctly in more sophisticated orchestral garb. All in all, the pervasion of the most sophisticated with the simplest is decisive for the formation of structures and patterning. Each of these two spheres also contains a contradiction in itself. The first orchestral suite appeared as a commercial gramophone record as early as 1931. In the mid-thirties Hanns Eisler integrated the Allegro energico into his German Symphony (third movement: Etude for orchestra).

Suite No.2 was compiled using music he had written for the pacifist war film Niemandsland (No-man's-land), produced by Victor Trivas in 1931 based upon an idea by Leonhard Frank. In the Capriccio upon Jewish folk songs, Eisler organizes familiar musical material by breaking it up in surprisingly unconventional manner through the prism of developed composing experience. In the fourth movement the exhilaratingly bouncy instrumental version of the marching song Der heimliche Aufmarsch (The secret parade, set earlier to a text by Erich Weinert and published in Op.28) contrasts with the bombastic heroism of customary military marches. Eisler wrote this music as a commentary to underlay the last scene of the film (five soldiers burst from their dugout to trample the barbed wire barricade between the fronts), quoting the refrain "Workers, farmers, strike the fascist sword and rifle from their hands ...".

Suite No.3 originated as music to the film Kuhle Wampe, made in cooperation with Bertolt Brecht, Ernst Ottwalt and Slatan Dudow in 1931 and probably the most significant document of the proletarian redeployment of the cinema. The main roles were played by Ernst Busch and Hertha Thiele. Dealing with the subject of "mass unemployment', the film is set in the Berlin working-class milieu: in internal courtyards, in the Kuhle Wampe allotments and at a workers' sports meeting. Instead of using plaintive, sentimental music, Eisler set this backyard scene in working-class Berlin to contrasting, "quick, harsh music", in order to express the idea of resistance. This principle of dramaturgical counterpoint also marks the other movements: the second bore the title "Nature" in the film music, the third "The scramble for work". The instrumental version of the Solidarity song, based upon a Bertolt Brecht text, and later to become famous all over the world, is to be heard in the fourth movement. The soundtrack also presents the instrumental version first, followed by the worker-sportsmen singing it.

Suite No.4, of which only the third and fourth movements are to be heard here, was taken from the music to Joris Iven's documentary film Heldenlied or Die Jugend hat das Wort (Heroes' song, or Youth has its say). Eisler wrote the score in 1932, powerfully impressed by the spirit with which the "Komsomolchiks" in the iron foundry combine Magnitogorsk erected a blast furnace. The composer collected industrial noises and folk songs on site, and included these in his work. The choral ballad Magnito Komsomolchiks' Song also came into being at that

time, based upon a text by Sergey Tretyakov. Its instrumental version appears in the third movement of the suite.

Theme and Variations (31 extremely short variations on a march-like theme) was written in 1938 whilst Eisler was living in exile in America. It originated in the music Eisler composed for Joris Ivens' documentary film on China 400 Millions. (Five Orchestral Pieces and Scherzo with solo violin were also taken from here). Dealing with the struggles between the "Whites" under Chiang Kai-shek and the "Reds" under Mao Tse-tung, the film also documented the Red Army's "Long March". The title page of the score bore the bracketed remark "Battle Scene", but this was later deleted by the composer.

The Chamber Symphony for 15 solo instruments was written as music to documentary film-takes of scenes in the Arctic, forming part of a research project on which Eisler worked for three years, beginning in the spring of 1940. The aim was to determine, almost experimentally, how modern music -in contrast to normal Hollywood film music practice- could be meaningfully employed in film to move the masses. Further pieces of chamber music were derived from the results of the project as a whole (Septets Nos. 1 and 2, the Quintet Fourteen ways to describe the rain). The theoretical premises and results of the project were published by Eisler and Theodor W. Adorno in their book Composing for the films (1947). Details are to be found there of relationships between the pictures and the individual movements of the Chamber Symphony.

In the first movement one theme constantly switches register, corresponding to what is taking place on the screen: the formation of glaciers is shown in various perspectives. The fourth movement (Etude for 2 solo Violins with accompanying orchestra) refers to pictures of a snow storm, while in the fifth (Finale) the structure of the sonata form movement corresponds with the changes occurring in the glaciers: exposition-rigid glaciers, development-collapse of glaciers, recapitulation-bay filled with glacial debris.

Eisler reported having used the instrumentation to express the idea of coldness in the nature scenes -especially by means of an electric piano and a Novochord. The nature of the sound and the manner of execution (trills, mordents, appoggiaturas and trill series) symbolize coldness. This in turn also stands for his experiences on the social level, to which Eisler himself referred: whilst working on the final version of the Chamber Symphony, he had followed reports on the radio about the invasion of France and Paris by the fascist troops (summer 1940). In consequence, the sharp contrasts between assaultingly shrill and lyrically tender sounds stand for his experience of the brutality of fascism and for the barbaric destruction of human relationships. The fact that the core of the references to reality in this instrumental music is to be found in Eisler's fundamentally antifascist stance, is also made clear by the extreme likeness this orchestral music bears to the vocal-symphonic German Symphony, begun in 1935, and to the many songs written during that period. The Chamber Symphony was premiered only in June 1950, for the occasion of the 24th Festival of the International Society for New Music, in Brussels.

Eisler's rejection of large-scale symphonic development in favour of constantly changing, short elements connected by a process of montage assembly had not only become necessary by virtue of his new experience with montage films. Far more, this method was for him a consequence arising out of the new quality which motivic and thematic work in the "developing variation" had achieved in Schoenberg's works, and which had led to a more intense orientation toward open, on-going forms.

Hanns Eisler's orchestral works differ in many ways from those of other important twentieth-century composers. Whereas Shostakovich, Prokofiev and Henze, for example, carried on the great symphonic tradition, Eisler could not reconcile himself to this form of concert music. His involvement with film and stage music and his politically-oriented focus upon a mass proletariat audience made composing for the bourgeois institutions of concert hall and opera a most questionable matter for him. As early as 1927/28, in his musical reviews published in the *Rote Fahne* (Red Flag), Eisler had made his views on that subject quite clear. Moreover, his special talent lay in a field he was later to call "applied music": the synthesis of music with other art forms-with poetry, with the theatre and particularly with that new mass medium, the film. Such combined forms enabled him to direct his musical creativity toward subjects of socio-historical importance, in which "even played-out topics take on new meaning, and so become usable in new ways". In contrast to the "utility music" of the twenties, Eisler at this time pursued a musical concept which departed from bourgeois musical practice. He made it his unique and contradictory purpose to create music which would to a certain extent be "rational and realistic, and yet remain music". Just how Eisler saw this task, what original music he succeeded in creating and which stylistic complications he became entangled with in the process, will be shown by these recordings.

The **Kleine Sinfonie Op.29** was composed alongside other, bigger works: the stage music to Brecht/Gorky's didactic play *Die Mutter Op.25* (composed September/October 1931, premiered in Berlin on January 17, 1932) and to Paul Schurek's popular piece *Kamerad Kaspar* (composed March 1932, premiered in Berlin on April 2, 1932). In the autumn of 1931 there had in addition been the music to the film *Kuhle Wampe*, which would later form the basis of the third Orchestral Suite Op.26.

The idea of a "little symphony" had been on Eisler's mind since the autumn of 1931. The work was finally written in the summer of 1932 in just a few days-in order, as he was later to remark, "to take a rest from other projects". Its connection with the stage musical works mentioned above is more than the usual chronological or stylistic one: sections from them were incorporated directly into the *Kleine Sinfonie*. That makes it easy in this "pure" orchestral work, given the comparison to other film-music-based orchestral suites, to "decipher" the composer's closeness to real life and his reactions to it. Eisler himself gives later pointers to the individual movements and the importance of the work as a whole. The tripartite form of the "pure" first movement (Andante-March-Andante) makes reference, in 23 variations on a six-bar theme, to the characterization of "sorrow-protest-sorrow". The second movement is likewise in three sections (Allegro assai-Sostenuto-Allegro assai); the order of characterization has now been reversed: "forceful protest-sorrow-forceful protest". This movement originates from the music to *Kamerad Kaspar*, where it served as the overture. The third movement is a strict three-part invention, "high counterpoint", as it were, but containing jazz elements: the score calls for "wow-wow" mutes on the trumpets and trombones, so that the "pp" of these instruments might "have the necessary tender quality all the way through" as the score demands. In this way, according to Eisler later, the brass would criticize the "emotion-laden" strings. This third movement is compositionally identical to the melodrama *Lob der Dritten Sache* (Praise of the third matter) from the stage music to *Die Mutter*. The final movement is a rondo with similarly contrasting basic characterization: "vigorous-pensive - vigorous - pensive - very vigorous".

Eisler wanted his music to have bite and precision. One way to serve this end was to use Arnold Schoenberg's then newly developed "twelve tone technique" which, in the first and fourth movements, Eisler fuses with his own, likewise newly founded, "Kampfmusik"style. This instrumental music was intended to "purge the emotions" and not "contaminate" them with sentimentality. Eisler's interpretation of the words "protest", "sorrow", "pensive" and "vigorous" become clear when placed in historical perspective. Eisler was to recall: "It was a bad time. Fascism was around the corner. The working class lacked

solidarity." However, the *Little Symphony* also represents a critical reaction to the then prevailing concert conventions, a "protest against opinionated, bombastic, neo-classicistic music-making". The comments Eisler made in 1962 about the *Little Symphony* become comprehensible when viewed in the light of his alternative musical concept. At the time it was for him "a kind of parody of a symphony, more or less dominated by the idea that the symphony is dead."

Five Orchestral Pieces and **Scherzo with Solo Violin** were written in exile; Eisler settled in the USA in 1938 and that was the year in which these works were composed. Both have their origins in Eisler's score for *400 Million*, a documentary film on China by Joris Ivens. Here, the concert style has indirectly been made "realistic" by decoupling the music from the action of the film. And this was successful because even film music-alongside its function of commenting on the image sequences-must "remain music". These pieces also employ serial techniques, without seeming mechanical. Each musical detail derives from the basic twelve-tone series selected for the work. The film *400 Million* used documentary material on the Chinese fight for independence during the Thirties: about the bitter struggle between the "Whites" under Chiang Kai-shek and the "Reds" under Mao Tse-tung over the Chinese Soviet territories; about the Red Army's strategically imperative "Long March", which began in October 1934 at Fukien and Kiangsi and, under almost insuperably difficult conditions, was to cover the more than 12,000 kilometres through eleven provinces to Shensi, which was reached in October 1935; finally, about the Sino-Japanese war, begun in 1937. A comparison of the individual *Five Orchestral Pieces* with the film score for references to reality gives these titles: first movement (Andante) = "Landscape"; second movement (Allegro) = "Reconstruction"; third movement (Little Passacaglia) = "Refugees"; fourth movement (Presto) = "Duststorm", concluding improvisation = "Bombardment". In this movement, the instructions to the musicians read: "The frequent 'subitos' in tempo and dynamics very sharp and 'assaulting', all very exaggerated". No image references have been found for the Scherzo with Solo Violin.

The other three works included on this CD are either ones in which Eisler combined orchestral music with texts in order to articulate his intentions more clearly, or they again derive from music for the stage –in some cases being themselves part of a stage music work. These compositions were written between 1949 and 1962.

Following the defamatory hearings before the "Committee on Un-American Activities" in 1947, and after a storm of international protest had succeeded in securing his "technical deportation" from the USA (on March 26, 1948), he initially made for Vienna via Prague. Only weeks later, in May, he represented Austria at the Second International Composers' and Critics' Congress, speaking on "The basic social questions concerning modern music". In the post-war situation he perceived that a meaningful task lay in "bringing back music-initially, perhaps, only in a small way-to a higher form of society, from the private to the public sphere.., by which means it might be possible to restore to music its native congeniality and joyfulness after this time of listlessness, trouble and self-castigation". Hanns Eisler considered that the form of music to be aimed for would be one which could combine the highest degrees of artistry, originality and quality with a genuine vernacular tone. In 1959, looking back at those first few years of his repatriation, he wrote: "For a composer returning home with trunks full of as yet unplayed music, it was an extraordinary situation. I did not want to do what I enjoyed doing, but rather felt I had to do what was necessary. And there was an abundance of this... I had to re-think my approach to composition. Long-approved methods needed revising. The simplifications acceptable thirty years earlier no longer worked. My aim of making my works accessible by new means had to be thought out anew. It was important to recognize my own mistakes... and to rectify them as best I could".

These were the aims that Eisler had pursued earlier, in the context of the opposition of the People's Front to fascism in the Thirties. At that time (1937), the basic question under debate was "can the highest form of social consciousness already be combined with the highest form of aesthetic consciousness, and *vice versa*?" The answer Hanns Eisler gave together with Ernst Bloch was that "The People's Front is necessary to artists, in order that they may ally themselves with the major social movements of our time, and not merely produce in a vacuum. The People's Front, in turn, needs the progressive artists, because it is not enough to possess the Truth: no, it is necessary to express it in the most modern, the most precise and the most colourful manner possible". What Eisler had striven for in this regard and had-not always successfully-attempted in his compositions since 1946 while still in exile was certainly not forced upon him, as is often suggested, by the influence of the dogmatic Zhdanov type of musical politics, disseminated by Moscow since February 1948 in unilateral contradistinction to "Formalism" and oriented in an equally unilateral way toward the classical traditions, which had done enormous damage in the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries up to the end of the Fifties. Having encountered in Prague this stupid aversion to anything modern, which bore fatal similarities to the "arguments" put forward by the Nazis and fascists against "degenerate art" and against "musical bolshevism", Eisler was able to contribute decisively in formulating the mediatory message of the "Manifesto" delivered by the congress mentioned earlier in this article.

In the summer of 1948, Eisler composed stage music in a very popular style to Nestroy's *Höllenangst* (Terror) for the New Scala in Vienna. In August, as the Austrian delegate, he attended the International Congress of the Intellectually Creative in Wroclaw. In October, together with Bertolt Brecht, Louis Fürnberg and Arnold Zweig, he participated verbally in the "Peace Demonstration of the Culturally Creative" in Berlin. Around that time, he composed music in Prague for the film *Treff-Ass* (Ace of Clubs) and, during later visits to Berlin, also wrote the music for the DEFA film *Our Daily Bread*. In Berlin and Vienna (January and March 1949, respectively) he lectured on the subject "Listener and Composer".

This was the backdrop against which Eisler wrote **Rhapsodie** as his contribution to the 200th anniversary celebrations of Goethe's birth. The work was originally planned in the form of a four-movement cantata. Only two movements were ever brought to completion. Eisler extracted the text from the 3rd act of *Faust*, Part 2. What decided him in his choice was the new significance the lines "Macht euch schnell von Fabeln frei..." (Free yourselves quickly from the bonds of fable...) had gained for post-war Europe. Both in the vocal and in the instrumental sections of *Rhapsodie* Eisler attempted to achieve his ideal of musically uniting superlative artistry and new simplicity. The melodic lines of the soprano part anticipate the tone of the *New German Folksongs* (this being particularly noticeable in *Heimatlied*). The pentatonic setting of the lines repeated at the end "... doch erfrischet neue Lieder, steht nicht langer tief gebeugt" (sing fresh new songs, stand no longer bowed down low) is also probably an allusion to the progress then being made by the Chinese freedom movement which, during that very year, would make the formation of the People's Republic possible. In the instrumental sections of *Rhapsodie* Eisler fell back upon the film music to *Treff-Ass*. His writing styles in the various movements extend from a relatively free tonal, motivic and thematic differentiation in the tutti as well as in the virtuoso string writing characteristic of chamber music or solo playing, through to a simple, instrumental form of melody (horns), carried purely by the orchestra, with stretches containing echoes of the popular symphonic music of the nineteenth century, of the zestful Viennese operetta tradition, of the light-hearted popular theatre and of the salon music of the cafes. In this attempt at a fresh stylistic orientation, the various elements do not quite fit together. The "real" Eisler is hardly recognizable. The new congenial, joyful tone he aimed at-and had in the USA already

achieved in an aesthetically convincing manner in, for example, the stage music to Brecht's *Galileo Galilei* or in many of his art songs – does not, it seems to me, quite come off here. *Rhapsodie* nonetheless represents a historical document of interest to us in so far as it very clearly indicates the difficulties involved in attaining simplicity by unconventional means.
Eisler came closer to doing so in his stage music to Johannes R Becher's piece *Die Winterschlacht* (Winter battle), which had been written-as "Deutsche Tragodie" (German tragedy) -as early as 1941 in Soviet exile. The score dates from 1954. Its first performance took place at the Berlin Ensemble on January 12, 1955. The nine-part Winterschlacht-Suite comprises the complete stage music score, compiled for concert performance. The prelude, an almost Handelian funeral music for strings, is identical to the song, *Horatio's Monologue*, written by Eisler to a passage from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (And let me speak to the yet unknowing world/How these things came about; so shall you hear/Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,/Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,/Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,/And, in this upshot, purposes mistook/Fall'n on the investors' heads; all this can I/Truly deliver.). This song was probably not composed until the spring of 1956, and it may be assumed that, while composing the "prelude" for the *Winterschlacht*, Eisler had these verses in mind, without actually setting them literally; a case of the song subsequently having been extracted from the instrumental composition.

The confrontation with Hitler's fascism, with the barbarity of war, with "military honour" and doubt in the sense of senseless dying, with the collapse of the Third Reich and with the question as to the future of Germany-all these form the thematic substance of the piece, "formulated" within a highly contradictory process of which the coming to terms with the historical past is also a part. How Eisler perceived his position as composer was to become quite clear during the production of the piece, with Brecht directing. Referring to the "closing music", Manfred Wekwerth reported the following: "In Becher's *Winterschlacht*, the directors of the Berlin Ensemble had planned to portray the division fleeing in panic... Eisler appeared at the rehearsal and was quite hurtful in his decision, saying it reminded him of his period of soldiering for the old Kaiser Franz Joseph... At one of the following rehearsals he came with a sheaf of manuscript and demanded a large orchestra... Brecht thought the idea of smuggling violins into the theatre quite 'remarkable'... A while later, Eisler played us the tape and greatly amazed. He had deleted all the words from the final scene-the flight. What he now wanted was a 'sketchy pantomime of a retreat, reminiscent of Napoleon's from Russia', and his musical depiction of this retreat contained deep sorrow. That was what made the matter so remarkable. 'Why sorrow?' we asked. 'They are Germans-that is sad'. In the second half, the music burst out in wild triumph, as Beethoven might have used it to signify a Victory. 'But that is a defeat, surely? we blurted out, strangely moved. 'For whom?' demurred Eisler ... Both sorrow and triumph were in the music. Through it-and with only a handful of actors-the scene imparted something of the grotesque social contradiction being represented."

The **Winterschlacht-Suite** is a tonal composition. If the completely rationalized complexity of the serial concert music of the Fifties in West Germany-the concept of "modern" music, in which everything has become absolute and esoteric-were used as the criterion, then the work would be denigrated as conservative. But in its function on the stage, as "applied music", and in the light of Eisler's orientation toward simplification and a broad-based listenership, it made very good sense.

Vorspiel und Gesang, (Prelude & Song) to Schiller's *William Tell*, was composed in 1962 as stage music for Wolfgang Langhoff's production of the work at the German Theatre in Berlin. Eisler's last work, the *Serious Songs*, was written in the same year but he would not live to see it premiered, dying after his second heart attack on September 6 of that year.

For the score of Vorspiel und Gesang, Eisler drew on various works he had written around 1950, including the film music to *Rat der Gaiter* (Counsel of the Gods). These pieces are used for the prelude and for the vocal scene which opens the drama. In addition, a song Eisler had composed while still in exile in the USA in 1946 and set to Goethe's *Glückliche Fahrt* (happy journey) is quoted here almost note for note in both melody and harmony.

Considering the broad scope and variety of writing styles characteristic of his work as a whole, the more complex ones have by this stage decreased in number. At the end of Eisler's life's work, the singable melodic lines and light resilience of the marches so typical of him once more assume prominence-aspects of his music that, from the time of his "Kampfmusik"style at the end of the Twenties onwards, have provided a critical counterbalance to the complexity of modern, concert vocal music on one hand, and to the bombastic ritual marches of Prussian and fascist provenance on the other.

Translation: Janet & Michael Berridge

Deutsche Symphonie (CD3)
The first sketches for this unusual vocal symphonic work in large-scale, multi-layered form were probably made by Hanns Eisler in a hotel room in Detroit in March 1935. Some movements (I; II; V; X) were composed in London in the latter half of 1936, others (IV; VII; VIII; IX) at Skovsbostrand near Svendborg in Denmark in the spring of 1937. X was continued in New York in 1938, and VI was written there in 1939. X was compiled as a full score in Malibu, Los Angeles, in 1947. For Part III, Eisler took the fourth movement of his Orchestral Suite No.1 Op.23 of 1930, and composed the final movement in 1958 just in time for the Berlin premiere, drawing on No.1 of his "Kriegsfibel" (guide to war), which he had composed in 1957.

Except for these borrowings, then, the Deutsche Symphonie, Eisler's most extensive work, took shape under the complicated circumstances of exile. Its choice of subject and its aesthetic design reflects the composer's fundamental political and artistic orientation during those years: total commitment to the international struggle against fascism. This drive determined every activity of his life: the new compositions written in the various genres of "Kampfmusik", particularly film music, and in the newly re-emergent genres of vocal and instrumental chamber music and vocal symphonic music; the concert and lecture tours through many countries; the organizational activities designed to create an anti-fascist "united front" in the international workers' music movement and in international music institutions (such as the ISCM, the International Society for Contemporary Music); and finally the preparation of texts on the history and sociology of music. Hanns Eisler's exile began in February 1933 in Vienna. From there he went to France, Holland and Belgium. In the winter of 1933/34 he stayed in London. Early in 1934 he went to the Saarland for concerts and lectures, then visited Brecht in his Danish exile. In mid-April he was in Paris; the end of August saw him back in London. From February to May 1935 he did a tour through the USA to benefit the children of Saar refugees. He gave concerts in practically all major cities, spoke on fascism and culture and appeared at over 50 mass meetings. This was the context in which he conceived the idea of a great anti-fascist symphony. The stimulus came from a mood, as Hanns Eisler told Hans Joachim Bunge on November 6, 1961: "I remember very well how a tour through America had made me tired of appearing before the Americans every evening and telling them about Germany's cultural barbarity. I was simply tired, because it was so monotonous; I almost always gave the same talk with little variation, and so I decided in a Chicago hotel to compose the

'Deutsche Symphonie'. It began with a mood. Well, the mood lasted five years in the end."

At the beginning of June 1935, Eisler was jury chairman, speaker and piano accompanist for Ernst Busch, taking an active part in the First Workers' Music and Voice Olympics in Strasbourg, where his "United Front Song" was first performed in public on June 8 by Ernst Busch and 3000 worker-singers. Eisler went on to the North Bohemian Workers' Music Festival on the Königshöhe at Reichenberg (now Liberec), then at the end of June travelled to Moscow, where he was appointed honorary chairman of the IMB, the International Music Bureau, in July. He wrote to Brecht from there on July 20: "By the way, I have a very interesting composition outline, namely to write a great symphony subtitled 'Concentration Camp Symphony'. It will have a choir in some places, although it is essentially an orchestral work. In fact I shall use your two poems 'Burial of the Agitator in a Zinc Coffin' (Which will be the central section of a large-scale funeral march) and 'To the Concentration-Camp Prisoners'. The first sketches I have made (in Detroit) are highly encouraging. I hope something really big will emerge. All the same, I need half a year of intensive work on it. Naturally, that by no means rules out a new project with you." (We can assume that Detroit is correctly named and that the 1961 reference to Chicago is a mistake. The memory was fresh in 1935.)

The shifting circumstances of exile made concentrated composition of large forms a very difficult exercise. Work on the symphony went on longer than originally intended. The various movements were not written in the dramaturgical sequence later assigned to them by Eisler. Whereas most "movements" took relatively little time to compose, he needed much longer for the great "Allegro for Orchestra", which was originally to close the work: the short score of 1936 to 1938 needed more than eleven years to emerge as a full score.

Eisler put in his first phase of concentrated work in July/August 1936. On August 24 he wrote to Brecht from London: "I have a great deal to do in the studio, all the same I am deep in the third movement of my symphony, with which I am very satisfied." This "third movement' is not the "Study for Orchestra" which eventually occupied the position of the third movement (and was taken from Orchestral Suite No.1), but the "Allegro for Orchestra", which took its place in the later overall design as the instrumental conclusion, Section X. Eisler's second phase of concentrated work occupied the early part of 1937, during an extended stay with Brecht at Skovsbostrand near Svendborg.

Three movements to lyrics by Bertolt Brecht were completed in London, namely "To the fighters in the concentration camps" (July 20,1936; II); Prelude "O pale mother Germany" (August 5, 1936; I) and "There stands in Sonnenburg" (October 4, 1936, detailed work till the middle of the month; V). Eisler submitted two of these pieces to the jury of the International Society for Contemporary Music in 1936, which judged them to be the best pieces received and scheduled them for performance at the 15th ISCM festival during the World Exposition in Paris in June 1937; but shortly before the festival began, fearing intervention by the Nazi regime, the organizers asked Eisler to substitute a saxophone for the vocal parts with Brecht's contentious anti-fascist lyrics.

Eisler immediately withdrew these two movements and arranged for one of his orchestral suites to be played instead. A similar procedure was followed at the music festival of the German Art Exhibition in London in 1938.

Even after the end of the Second World War, the circumstances were still unfavourable at first for a performance of this great vocal symphonic work. In May and September 1947 Hanns Eisler was called before the "Committee on Un-American Activities", which sought to prove that he was the "Karl Marx" of music. The anti-communist hysteria that ushered in the Cold War in the USA deprived him of a livelihood and led to his expulsion. He returned to Vienna in 1948 and settled in East Berlin in June 1949.

In the German Democratic Republic (DDR), established in East Germany in October 1949, there were now further obstacles in the way of a premiere for the Deutsche Symphonie. The monumental work would have suited the anti-fascist democratic politics of the time, but it did not conform to the aesthetic norms of the music dogma imposed in the USSR, announced in Moscow in February 1948 and applied to the entire area under Soviet dominion. This official view regarded modern music as expressing the decline of bourgeois society, with Arnold Schoenberg as "destroyer of music" and the twelve-note system he evolved as soulless constructivism. However, nearly all the movements of the "Deutsche Symphonie" followed this system, which Eisler had seen in the Thirties above all as a very sensible approach to different genres, adopting it for progressive, anti-fascist subject-matter. A performance would have effectively exposed the stupidity of the prevailing Soviet policy on music. Accordingly, it could not take place until this narrow-minded dogmatism had been officially repudiated in 1958 following the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU in 1956; but by this time the basic anti-fascist message of the "Deutsche Symphonie" was no longer as topical as it might have been in the late Forties.

Eisler wrote an extra, eleventh movement for the premiere in Berlin on April 24, 1959, an epilogue to words by Bertolt Brecht from the "Kriegsfibel", drawing on his introduction to the cantata "Bilder aus der 'Kriegsfibel'" (pictures from the "guide to war") which he had composed in the autumn of 1957. Eisler's addition was a reaction to the new political situation: the rearmament of the Federal Republic (BRD) in West Germany and its acceptance into NATO had been agreed in 1954. January 1956 saw the establishment of the National People's Army in the DDR. In March 1958, the Federal parliament agreed nuclear capability for the West German army. Eisler linked the critical look back at the period of Hitler's fascism, the remembrance of the "fighters in the concentration camps", and the mourning for the victims buried in the "zinc coffin" and Hitler's misled followers with the image of the defeated soldiers: "See our sons, released deaf and blood-spattered from the frozen tank. Ah, even the wolf who bares his teeth needs a place to hide. Warm them, they are cold." With this epilogue, which recalls the horrors of the last war under the threat of an atomic war, the lament of the Prelude "Oh Germany, pale mother, how you are stained with the blood of your best sons", takes on a new dimension; the present warning that the repetition of military conflict in the confrontation of two political systems will inevitably lead to disaster. The **Deutsche Symphonie** ends with a grating dissonance.

The work employs a variety of stylistic resources. The overall concept depends on broad differentiation within the strict framework of twelve-note technique. Each movement is based on a different twelve-note series, used in all four basic forms. This complexity is then interspersed with quotations: at the end of the prelude there is a direct quotation of the opening line from the "Internationale": "Awake, condemned of this earth"; the middle section and the end of Burial of the Agitator in a Zinc Coffin carry the stylistic quotation of a great funeral march. This part, like the little peasant song of the Peasants' Cantata contains a stylistic self-quotation: the springy, light march rhythm of Eisler's "Kampfmusik".

The musical realization of the political and social contradictions articulated in the lyrics compresses the sharpest of contrasts into the smallest of spaces: the rapid transition between weighty, "wild" blocks and gentle, "friendly" passages. This is equally evident both in the compositional interpretation of Bertolt Brecht's texts and of Eisler's adaptation of Ignazio Silone's "Peasants' Cantata" and in the writing of the three "purely" musical instrumental movements.

We must also remember what Hanns Eisler said in 1954 in his lecture on his teacher Arnold Schoenberg. Speaking of the severity of the variation form employed in the third movement of his second string quartet, Eisler observed: "The contradiction between the highly expressive character and the underlying structure is vast. It is as if he wanted excessiveness tamed. And yet, by taming it, he permits himself it."
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Translation: Janet and Michael Berridge

Chamber music (CD 4-6)
It was not through his chamber works that Hanns Eisler won world renown, but rather through compositions which he wrote between 1928 and 1932/33 for a mass audience outside the concert hall: choral pieces for the workers' musical movement, "Kampflieder" (battle songs) and chansons connected with the political and cultural activities of the German Communist Party, music for socially-critical proletarian revolutionary films and modern stage music for Brecht's "Lehrstücke" (didactic pieces). He continued to work in this direction between 1933 and 1938, when he went into exile in the USA, where he chiefly composed songs for the People's Front Movement against fascism, and again after returning to Europe in 1948 and settling in the GDR in 1950, where he composed works such as the "Neue Deutsche Volkslieder" (new German folk-songs) and the "Tucholsky Chansons". For a great many people in Germany Hanns Eisler was notorious as the composer of the national anthem of the GDR. Most knew no more of his music. But that is not the whole story.

A musician of great talent and ability, Eisler also composed for the concert hall prior to his "Kampfmusik" (battle music) period and during his period of exile between 1933 and 1948; he worked in various art-music genres and bequeathed a complex oeuvre to posterity. In addition to many symphonic works with and without voices for small and large orchestral forces, there are also numerous more subtly differentiated compositions, generally subsumed under the collective label of "chamber music". These comprise hundreds of songs, ballads for voice and piano or diverse instrumental ensembles, numerous piano pieces and three piano sonatas, small-scale choral works, "pure" instrumental pieces for various groupings -duo, trio, quartet, quintet, septet, nonet- and suites for chamber orchestra.

In contrast to the major composers of his time, Hanns Eisler did not work in the more subtle genre of chamber music in all creative phases of his life. Following a tentative early period and first successes in the middle-class concert repertoire during the mid-twenties, Eisler withdrew from this kind of composing from 1928 onwards in favour of his "Kampfmusik". Sophisticated chamber music likewise no longer played a part in his work in the GDR between 1950 and 1962. There had been no demand for the many works in this genre which he brought back with him from exile. In view of the musical illiteracy of the masses he desired to reach, other forms seemed more important to him. Just as many of his orchestral works derive from film compositions, so several pieces for smaller instrumental groupings also originated in way. Hanns Eisler began to compose very early-long before receiving instruction in the counterpoint class at the New Vienna Conservatory, where he took up studies upon his return from active service in 1918.

Everything which he composed, virtually self-taught, prior to that point and which has not been lost evinces great talent and considerable ability for one so young.

The **Galgenlieder** (gallows songs) cycle to poems by Christian Morgenstern was probably composed in 1917, while the nineteenyear-old was at field hospital 808. Even in these early "Grotesques" many of the essential elements of Eisler's later work are evident: his tendency toward detached, critical irony and sarcasm. His conception of the "Grotesque" as a medium of artistic expression is explained on the title page of his composition "Die Mausefalle" (the mousetrap –also alter Morgenstern), written in 1918, where he noted that it is "the way to conceal a painful experience with a grin". Eisler's musical imagination responds to each of the texts with precise, plastic figures, which he succinctly varies. This may be seen very clearly in, for instance, "Die zwei Trichter" (the two funnels).

Just how highly developed Eisler's ability already was alter only a brief time at the Conservatory is shown by **"Drei Lieder fur eine mittlere Stimme und Kammerorchester"** (three songs for a mid-range voice and chamber orchestra), which were written in May 1919 and use texts from the Far East. In their content and design, their great expressiveness and differentiated instrumentation, they display an astonishing degree of confidence. And one cannot overhear the fact that Eisler had involved himself intensively with the music of Schoenberg.

Feeling that the instruction at the conservatory was "too easy and superficial", Eisler switched in the autumn of 1919 to an exacting taskmaster, Arnold Schoenberg, with whom he studied counterpoint and composition as a private pupil from 1919 to 1923. His First Piano Sonata, which he composed in 1922/23 and styled as his Op.1, formed the brilliant culmination of this period of instruction. While still studying and immediately afterwards Eisler had already composed a series of instrumental and vocal chamber pieces in quick succession: he made his Six songs for voice and piano (1922) into his Op.2, and his Piano Pieces (1923) were his Op.3.

Written in May 1923, the **Divertimento fur Blaserquintett** (divertimento for wind quintet) became Eisler's Op.4. The inspiration for the work was provided by Arnold Schoenberg, who had just begun working on his own "Blaserquintett" Op.26 at that time. The first movement of Eisler's quintet is tripartite, the lively middle part of which is scherzo-like in character. A set of variations follows, using a theme whose basic elements are contained in the first two bars and whose character is explored with rich inventiveness through six variations. Here Eisler partakes of the highly developed tradition of variation-writing technique which extends from Beethoven to Schoenberg. The coda summarizes all foregone events with great economy. A blaring horn cadenza provides a powerful close to the movement.

Three works which Eisler composed in 1924 were extremely well received: **Palmström Op.5**, again to lyrics by Morgenstern, and the **Second Piano Sonata Op.6** (1st version), both composed using the then new twelve-note method- and the **Duo for violin and cello**n **Op.7**.

In 1926, after writing **Piano Pieces Op.8** in 1925, the composer wrote the **Tagebuch des Hanns Eisler** (diary of Hanns Eisler) **Op.9**. This composition-Eisler's only autobiographical work-has a lengthy prehistory. In spite of his successes on the middle-class concert circuit Eisler was dissatisfied. The usual concert audiences did not suit him. Modern music, isolated by class struggles which were coming to a head, appeared increasingly problematic to him following his move to Berlin in 1925, and at times he even detested it. It put in question everything that music had meant to him up to that point. It was against this background that a conflict arose in March 1926 with Arnold Schoenberg, who had also come to Berlin because of an appointment to the Prussian Academy of the Arts at the beginning of 1926. Schoenberg, who had never approved of his highly talented but refractory pupil's political leanings, now felt left in the lurch by him. What had happened? Returning from a music festival, Eisler had engaged in a "railway conversation" with Schoenberg's brother-in-law Alexander von Zemlinsky and had made derogatory statements about modern music and the twelve-note method. This was reported to Schoenberg, who was outraged. The matter came out into the open after Eisler sent a letter to

Schoenberg, in which he spoke of misunderstandings with reference to Schoenberg's person, but yet substantiated his point of view: “Modern music bores me; it does not interest me, and I even hate and despise some of it. In fact, I want to have nothing to do with modern music”. Eisler stated furthermore: “I also understand nothing (except for externals) about the twelve-note method and serial music”. He said, however, that he was filled with enthusiasm for Schoenberg's twelve-note works. Finally, he rejected Schoenberg's personal remarks to the effect that he was a middleclass boy who was a slave to fashion, that his head was “crammed full with popular jargon” and that he said what people expected. Eisler regretted having given offence and assured Schoenberg of his loyalty, both to his person and his works, and pointed out that the whole issue was “not so simple”. Arnold Schoenberg answered coolly, but not without magnanimity. He justly objected that Eisler's volte-face was mere intention and “not yet evident in his works”, that Eisler had not yet composed any works which documented this ostensible reversal. This was true. Although Eisler did not want to go on composing as he had done up to that point, he did not yet know how to compose otherwise.

It was out of this situation of personal crisis that the “Tagebuch” emerged. Eisler wrote the words and the music in August and September 1928 on the move between Paris, Vienna and Berlin. The piece is full of self-parody, ironic allusions, self-criticism and determination to meet the self-imposed challenge-all set against a provocative backdrop of sham self-assuredness. “The old man” is Schoenberg, he must be right: “Impossible!” It is not difficult to guess just who is “put down” by whom, who it is that “fawns in pitiable canine fashion” and never escapes unscathed, who will soon “explode” and yet does not lose sight of the comforts of life, who the “middle-class boy” is. Nor is the allusion to the “railway” lacking. Genuine dejection is at the same time treated ironically as self-pity, the personal misery set in the larger context of a “damned interesting time”. And it is precisely here that musical references are summoned into service. The main motif of the “Internationale” appears several times in the piano accompaniment. After the reference to the threat of being buried under mountains of manuscripts, Eisler links the “Internationale” quotation with a reference to the rising motif of fourths with which Arnold Schoenberg's “Chamber Symphony” begins (here: a chain of trills in the bass). Two spheres which were barely reconcilable for Eisler at that time are thus juxtaposed here. In his small cantata (premiered in July 1927 at the Baden-Baden Music Festival), which he described as being full of “grotesque intensity”, the composer was, however, still operating in the sphere of middle-class art music-which he had long since found questionable. Nonetheless, during what he called his “looking forwards and backwards” period of “three-and-a-half years” (to the beginning of 1930), the new musical style foreseen by Schoenberg had clearly begun to form-in the choral works Opp. 13-15, 17, and 19, and in the Op.18 Ballads, which Ernst Busch would soon make famous.

The cantata **Tempo der Zeit Op.19**, a work for radio, also attests to Eisler's stylistic reorientation. The swing had been accelerated by his collaboration with the Berlin agitprop group “Das Rote Sprachrohr” (the red megaphone) and by the musical reviews which Eisler had been writing for the German Communist Party newspaper, “Die Rote Fahne” (the red flag), since 1927.

Tempo der Zeit was written in the spring of 1929 and was premiered over loudspeakers in Baden-Baden in July of the same year. This radio cantata contains clear evidence of experimentation. In his Ballads of Op.18, Eisler had already seemed further advanced. The stylistic uncertainty evident here derived just as much from the subject as from the generic form itself. To be sure, the text levels criticism at the New Objectivity movement's blind belief in progress, makes reference from the standpoint of “ordinary folk” to the disparity of status between rich and poor within the technological revolution, yet the solution it offers to make things uncomfortable for the ruling class, to eradicate exploitation and so to enable technological progress to mean progress for all humanity, is still very abstract. Musically speaking, the traditional cantata form is exceeded even in its word-to-music relationship, through an argumentative, appellatory style of address. Even the parodied “Baroque” aria to technological progress shows a certain dissociation from the traditional attitudes surrounding concerts. Yet the striving toward retraction of the complex method of writing in favour of a new simplicity aimed at a broad, musically inexperienced audience (greater emphasis on diatonic melody, tonally-centred harmonic processes, contouring through characteristic, frequently reiterated rhythmic formulas, figures, runs), and also the reference to elements of jazz, which was at that time very popular-all these things actually denote more the process of searching for answers in which Eisler was still immersed, than the expression of an independent method of composing which was qualitatively better than that used by the New Objectivity movement. One year later, however, in his music to Brecht's Lehrstück “Die Massnahme” (the measure) Op.20, he would find it.

Written in 1933, the **Suite for Orchestra No.5 Op.34** (“Dans les rues”) emerged, like the other orchestral suites, from a film commitment. Eisler was in Vienna from January to March. Hitler's coming to power prevented him from returning to Berlin, and his exile began. In March he travelled to Paris, where Victor Trivas, also an emigrant, was shooting “Dans les rues” (“in the streets”), a socially critical film about a young worker at the time of the Great Depression. Eisler wrote the music for the film. Here, as elsewhere, he used the principle of dramaturgical counterpoint. The film images and events are commented on by the music instead of being simply illustrated. He later explained this novel practice, using a sequence from “Dans les rues” as an example: “An organized and bloody fight between young hooligans in an early spring landscape. The music to it delicate, sad, rather glassy, in the form of variations. It shows the contrast between the events and their setting, without going into the action at all. The delicacy of the music provides a dissociative contrast to the brutality of the events: those guilty of the brutality are themselves victims”.

The “Kampfmusik” style is very clearly to be heard in the music of the individual movements: vigorous and yet jauntily light, vibrant and at the same time elegantly simple and sophisticated. For the individual movements Eisler returned to works he had composed earlier: in the “Praludium” he uses the second movement (“Larghetto”) from the Suite for Orchestra No.4 Op.30; in the “Andante eroico” he uses an instrumental version of the song “Komintern”, composed in 1929 for the programme in celebration of the ten years of existence of the KOMINTERN (Communist Internationale), premiered at the Berlin “Plaza” by the group “Das Rote Sprachrohr” and very soon sung in many countries. The “Tema con variazioni” is an orchestral version of the first variations from the “Klavierstücke für Kinder” (piano pieces for children) Op.31, which Eisler had composed in Moscow in October 1932.

As Eisler wrote to Brecht, the film premiere in the summer of 1933 was not a success, but he added: “Good old uncle Eisler has once again come out on top, for the music was rated the best (Between you and me: it unfortunately seems to be one of my best works. What a pity!)”.

The following works on this recording also emerged from film scores. Eisler had been living in the USA since 1938, initially in New York. In February 1940 he began work there at the “New School for Social Research” project, the aim of which was to examine practical and theoretical means of applying the new musical material to the film, as distinct from generally outdated film-music practices. Within the framework of this project Eisler composed the music for the semi-documentary film “The Forgotten Village”. The **Nonet No.2** (suite for nine instruments) and the nonet movements **Satze fur Nonett** Op. posth. derive from this music. John Steinbeck, the scriptwriter, had called him to Mexico City to undertake this work

in December 1940. Herbert Kline was the director. The subject of this socially critical film is the lifestyle of the American Indios. Here too, the composer does not illustrate the respective events, but elevates them to the level of socio-historical significance by providing musical commentary. The music is composed in the style of orchestral suites: unsentimental, aggressive and yet light. A clear sign for this here is the-almost symbolical- use of the trumpet: in the first movement, most characteristically in the third movement, and in the finale of the "Nonet No.2". The combination of violins and double bass, clarinet, bassoon and trumpet results in a characteristically dry sound. For the eighth movement, "Marcia funebre a la Mexicana", Eisler composed a funeral march. This is no simple depiction of a funeral procession accompanied by folk musicians of the kind he had experienced during his stay in Mexico. In spite of many echoes of Mexico (shrill passages in the piccolo, glissando effects in quintuplets and sextuplets, the continuous kettle-drum rhythm), Eisler also raises this "Funeral march on the death of a child"-the designation in the film-to a universal level. Yet there are also moments of extreme delicacy and of beauty in its simplest form in this film music, especially in the solo passages and in the trio. In the fifth movement, "Largo", the well-understood union between beauty and awareness of conflict clearly stands out.

Eisler composed the entire music for the film in a very short space of time, having completed it all by January 20, 1941. At the end of the autograph Eisler noted: "It was abominable work, and nine instruments made it unpleasant (70 minutes music in 30 days). I am not exactly depressed about being finished".

Later, in the GDR, Eisler compiled nine movements for the **Nonet No.2** from this comprehensive score. The remaining material was so rich in content that he intended putting together another suite out of it, but his death in 1962 intervened. The present combination of pieces is the work of Manfred Grabs. They form the **Satze für Nonett Op. posth.** In and between the small movements there are the keenest possible contrasts in respect of instrumentation, structure, tone colour and volume. In these miniatures-in which there are in addition numerous repetitions-the individual instruments take turns at solo performance. The trumpet in particular stands out in the "quasi recitativo" (moderato). It is given a characteristic motif in the last movements: "eroico" and, at the end, "alia marcia". This is the activating tone of the "Kampfmusik", which Eisler contrasts with the primitive superstitions of the Indios, in full sympathy with their hard fate.

The quintet **Vierzehn Arten den Regen zu beschreiben Op.70** also emerged from a film-music project. It is one of the most complicated works Eisler ever composed. As its model it used the documentary film "Regen" (manifold effects before the rain, during the rain and after the rain in Amsterdam), which had been produced by Joris Ivens in 1928 and to which Lou Lichtfeld had written mediocre music. Eisler composed a new score, so as to "try-out in the film medium the most advanced material and the correspondingly very complex compositional technique". This technique was the twelve-note method. The whole work is based on a twelve-note row, from whose original form and modes (inversion, crab, crab in inversion) all melodic and harmonic processes are derived. This reference to a prime set enabled strict formal unity and logic to be attained.

The relationship of this so strictly-ordered music to the film image extended "from the simplest naturalistic form of synchronous depiction of details right up to extreme contrast effects, in which the music rather 'considers' the picture than follows it".

The quintet consists of fourteen pieces-some loosely strung together, some connected-written for the same instrumental grouping as Arnold Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire". Eisler dedicated this work to his admired teacher on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. For this reason, the twelve-note original form-the row from which the whole work develops according to the principle of variations-contains the musically realizable letters of Arnold Schoenberg's name: A, D, eS, C, H, E, B, G (Es being the German E flat). This chamber piece, which Eisler held to be his best, was begun in the summer of 1941 and completed in New York on November 18, 1941. The premiere took place at Schoenberg's Californian home on September 13, 1944, the seventieth birthday of Eisler's strict teacher. In later discussions with Dr. Hans Bunge over this work and its title, Eisler explained it as follows: At the time of one of the most horrible wars in the history of mankind, it had been his intention-over and above the direct reference to the "rain"-to make reference to "the fourteen ways to be sad with decency". In many languages rain is a also symbol for sorrow, so what he depicts in the work is really "the anatomy of sorrow-or the anatomy of melancholy". To Dr. Bunge Eisler said in 1958: "This too is part of art. I would not go so far as to call it the central theme of the twentieth century... but it can have a place in a composer's oeuvre".

The **Scherzo for String Quartet** is a typical early work. It was written partly before and partly just after the lessons with Schoenberg began. A note at the end of the trio after the da capo indication reads: 6.1.1918. The heading, however, bears the date: 26.8.1920. This little piece in varied three-part lorm is clearly and simply constructed. The tonality (D major) is extended. The treatment of themes and motifs is marked by progressions in thirds. The rhythmic structure is limited to a lew basic values, the polyphony weakly developed. There are elements of "parody". A tone piece in the viola the interval A - E flat ("musical shorthand" for Arnold Schoenberg) is marked: with humour. While this is just like Eisler, there is as yet only partial emergence of the elements Ratz noted in his seven mature works in 1924: rich characterization; clarity and unity of portrayal derived from a remarkably sound grasp of compositional technique and instrumentation; and the fresh liveliness of music-making.

These works show, as does Op.11 to an even greater extent, how Eisler had developed from pupil to a "master" with an altogether characteristic style of his own. The independent creative relationship to Schoenberg's shaping influence received quite substantial impetus from Eisler's critical engagement with bourgeois society and from his conviction, reinforced by the Great War and the October Revolution, that it must be changed by revolutionary means. This began to appear more clearly from one chamber-music work to the next: in the modes of expression, the formal development and above all in the choice of texts. While the "Six Songs" Op.2 were entirely in the tradition of bourgeois concert lieder, "Palmström" Op.5 is already a deliberate parody of Schoenberg's style and technique. The **Zeitungsausschnitte Op.11** finally marked Eisler's farewell to bourgeois concert lyrics, albeit within the subtly nuanced, supremely controlled medium of art music. The new quality of "Kampfmusik", for which Eisler later became worldfamous, was still to come.

Palmström Op.5, composed in 1924, gives Eisler the opportunity for numerous critical references to his teacher's aesthetic viewpoint. In 1912 Schoenberg had composed a cycle of 21 melodramas From Albert Giraud's "Pierrot Lunaire"-a work still highly regarded by Eisler decades later, on account of its great innovations in modes of expression, as "wonderful chamber music". What he sharply rejected were the "foolish provincial demonics" of the text and the sympathetic presentation of the speech-song. Eisler had decided on the dry humour of Christian Morgenstern. He composed Morgenstern's texts as "Parodies lor a speech-song voice" and the forces, except piano and bass clarinet prescribed lor "Pierrot Lunaire". Here Eisler crilicizes a questionable bourgeois aesthetic using its own musical medium. This is still further emphasized by the nature of the delivery: the closing line of "L'art pour l'art" is followed by the instruction: "The speaker shakes his head, looking thoughtful". Eisler subtitled his Op. 5 "Studies of twelve-note series in the form of melodramas". He also made use, in the form of parody, the technique then newly

developed, in 1921/22, of “composition with twelve notes related only to one another”. Eisler was attracted by the idea of using this technique to restore logic to musical relationships. He used it in his Op. 5 in an entirely independent and original way-and with a bow to his master: the first two notes of the basic set of the series are A - E flat (Arnold Schoenberg).

The **Duo for Violin and Cello Op.7**, written in Vienna in July 1924, is dedicaled to Ihe violinist Rudolf Kolisch and Ihe cellist Joachim Stutchevski. Its variety of expression compares with that of other works from this period. Like them, it is shot through with contrasting elements, but the part-writing is more straightforward, in keeping with the specifics of the virtuoso instruments. Free atonality points up the rhythmically very concise motivic images despite rapid change: in larger melodic sections and in varied or simple repetition. This is particularly evident in the first movement, Tempo di Minuetto, with its tendency to the dance slow wallz time in the middle-and to symmetrical structure with prominent recapitulation and coda. The second movement, Allegro vivace, is in contrast much denser and more powerful. Eisler tells the soloists to play “wildly” in two places. There are furious runs, extremes of pitch and dynamics-greater contrasts altogether. Even within this highly nuanced chamber music, something new is being expressed.

The first performance of Op.7 took place in September 1925. Eisler was successful, but he was dissatisfied. He took no pleasure from the usual audience. He wanted to say something new, as he said later, and needed new listeners lor it. It was the workers' movement that attracted him. This led to conflicts with his teacher, which came lo a dramatic head in March 1926. Eisler wanted nothing more to do with “modern music”, and Schoenberg accused him of having no compositional warrant for his new outlook on life. Eisler was still composing with the methods of “modern music”, though approaching them critically, but his itself more and more clearly.

Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H for string trio Op.46 was composed in Paris in 1934 between stage and film commitments. It is subtitled: “Study on a twelve-note series”. This little work is one of a group of teaching pieces (Opp. 31, 32 and 44) that Eisler had begun work on in 1933. He set out here to reach young people to think logically, with easily understandable modern music organized on the twelve note system. Reviewing what had been handed down by tradition, and what modern music was capable of, at the start of his exile, Eisler found it necessary to back up his socially motivated critique of modern music by practical research into the material. This included the question of, whether it is possible to make music that is relatively easy to understand using the twelve-note method of composition”. When his String Trio was published in 1936, Eisler delined this compositional method, which Schoenberg had introduced in 1922/23 to defend the craft of music and monitor expertise by reinstating a musical logic that had lost the guarantee provided by tonal relationships, as follows: “A piece of music in the twelve-note system is based on a particular twelve-note series, from which and from whose variations (inversion, retrograde and transposition to other levels) all musical patterns are taken. This relationship to a basic pattern ensures a new formal unity and logic.” The argument that twelve-note technique was “constructivism” foreign to art, was rejected by Eisler at the end of his analytical remarks on the String Trio (1936): “It is necessary to point out that the serial ordering of the musical material imposes no narrower bounds on the composer's imagination and invention than in the old tonality. Here too it is a question not of musical 'mathematics' but of an artistic production.”

The String Trio is undemanding, the basic mood friendly. The musical characters are similar to those of the songs and solo cantatas composed at the time. Subjective reflection and objective regard to tradition (such as the fugue form) are geared to awareness of the socially relevant problems-including the musical ones. The choice of the B-A-C-H motto was not intended as homage to Bach, “who needs no such act of homage”, but as Eisler noted at the time, “to challenge the middlebrow mysticism of the average musician, who often knows no more of Bach than the letters B-A-C-H [the sequence B flat-A-C-B]. The idea is that this motto should put him in the mood to study this little work.”

Eisler wrote the **Sonata for Flute, Oboe and Harp Op.49** in Denmark in 1935-for his pupil Ernst Hermann Meyer. It is not on the twelve note system, unlike the **Sonata for Violin and Piano**. Eisler begun in October 1937 on the way to Prague and consequently subtitled “Reisesonate” (Journey sonata). The individual movements are labelled: 1st movement “Prague”; 2nd movement “on the ship to the USA”; 3rd movement “New York”. These works are an expression of the musician's inner reflection in the midst of intensive political, anti-fascist activities. The lundamental attitude of social responsibility characteristic of Eisler comes out very strongly here in moments of restlessness. But the whole work is pervaded too by the spirit of “Kampfmusik”: insistent motivic figures come to the fore in the **Sonata lor Flute, Oboe and Harp**. Again: the typical swinging march rhythm of Eisler determines the overall structure and content of the first movement of the **Sonata for Violin and Piano** (Poco Martiale, Quasi Marcia). It is opposed, in stark contrast, by the lyrical intensity, tenderness and character elements of the “Gracioso”. This is evident in the melodic orientation of this sonata's second movement. The clarity of the writing is remarkable, particularly in the fugato elements of the second and third movements. There are pronounced tendencies towards individualism, not limited to Eisler's extremely rare recourse to the harp. We are also struck by the frequent silence of the second voice in the violin sonata, the violinist thrown back upon his own resources.

According to a note in the score, the **Nonet No.1** was composed in New York between November 13 and 16, 1939. It may have been adapted from film music to “The Grapes of Wrath”. This work is a variation cycle in one movement. The original title reads: “Improvisations on a theme”. The live-bar theme is a twelve-note series, From which the entire horizontal and vertical event is derived in developing variation. Eisler composed 32 variations, no doubt in imitation of Beethoven's 32 C minor variations, which he thought highly of. This short work of less than six minutes' duration packs the individual variations closely together, highly concentrated, dovetailed into one another. Despite all the richness of the musical expression with its artistic details, the variations are nevertheless clearly grouped. The Andante exposition, which has variations of its own, is followed by six groups: Energico - Allegretto (moderato) - Quasi Marcia - Allegro - Energico - Allegro. This theatrically presented sequence concludes with a varied recapitulation of the theme and a few bars of coda.

Eisler's attitude and with it the relation to reality of this “pure” instrumental music is easy to follow in some places: in the Quasi marcia, Eisler's characteristic springy, light march, which in contrast to the bombastic thud of the fascist jackboot resembles the “Lob des Revolutionärs” (praise of the revolutionary) from the music to “Die Mutter”; or in the second Energico-which follows the sharp, cutting trills of the Allegro with that new heroic emotion which Eisler had given to the “Deutsche Sinfonie” (since 1936/37). This was a “realistic” attitude with historical perspective, corresponding to the scale of the conflicts, the battles and the victims for a better future. And socialist conviction of the final victory over fascist barbarism necessarily involved the preservation of and the continuing quest for beauty, grace and elegance. It is precisely this contradictory field of association that gives this work its inner unity for all its richness of contrast. Eisler had spent nearly three years on a research project at the New School for Social Research (beginning in early 1940) finding out how the new musical material could be applied to the film, in contrast to the generally retarded state of film-music writing. This experimental activity, that is to say the composition of scores to existing films, led to some of Eisler's

most important instrumental works: the **Kammersinfonie** (chamber symphony), the **Fourteen ways to describe the rain Op.70**, the **Septet No.1 Op.92a** (variations on American children's songs) and the **Nonet No.2**.

Septet No.2 "Zirkus" is another chamber-music work linked to a film score. It was written in 1947, long alter the end of the film-music project. Hanns Eisler made use of sketches for a score planned for Charlie Chaplin's silent film "Circus". Like **Septet No.1** and **Nonet No.2**, **Septet No.2** tellingly illustrates Eisler's search for a new simplicity with new resources, in other words his general plan of freeing music from all the excesses of the late-bourgeois modern era (as he said in 1948) and adopting an "at first perhaps more modest approach" to "return it to a higher form of society, from the private to the general". This orientation, which he had pursued ever since the "Kampfmusik", more and more found realization in a friendlier and happier character of music" after the victory over fascism, particularly after Eisler's move to the GDR. He had prepared the way, as already mentioned, in the **Nonet No.2** (as early as 1941) and in the stage music to Brecht's **Galileo Galilei** (1946), which much resembles the **Septet No.2**. Accordingly, as I see it, the dominant lightness and light-hearted elegance in the thematic and melodic structures of the **Septet No.2** are illustrative of more than the bright lights and pageantry of the circus from the lyrical reflectiveness in the second movement to the happy march elements in the final movement. The many figures introduced particularly by the wind instruments and by the highlighted clarinet owe much to the imagery of the film, of course, as do the large intervals, multiple trills and rapid runs throughout the work. The listener is particularly struck by the balancing act of the little flute over a gloomy abyss to the flageolet tones of the violins and the depths of the cello pizzicato bass in the fourth movement (inspired no doubt by Chaplin's big scene on the high wire). Now that this film is generally available as a video cassette, the listener can readily compare image and music and can appreciate and assess Eisler's situation and achievement as a filmmusic composer. The general element already indicated should not be overlooked nor overheard either; more or less regardless of what goes on in the film, this music could not have been composed in this way in 1947 without the optimism of a fresh start after the disaster of the Second World War.

Septet No.2 is unconventional music using simple means. The writing is in open chamber-music style with alternating instruments in solo roles, but without pronounced polyphony. The harmony never extends beyond a very rich, multi-layered tonality. However, all the action is broken up by the advanced compositional approach, which gives it a new meaning. The absence of stereotypes focuses our attention on an originality in differentiation and a new depth and weight in the simplest elements, which was rediscovered in the modern music of post-war Western Europe only after the serial decade of the fifties was over and the trend was to "New Simplicity" a move admittedly inspired by other aesthetics than Eisler's.
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Translation: Janet and Michael Berridge

Brecht songs (CD6)
The singing actress Gisela May was the first woman since Lotte Lenya to display such a perfect command of Brecht' s musical mannerisms. The poet and playwright described his approach as follows: "it is music ... which avoids intoxicating the audience, mainly by linking the solution to the musical problems with a clear and unambiguous deve/opment of the poems' political and philosophical message." The method is common to the.music Kurt Weill, Hanns Eisler and Paul Dessau wrote for Brecht's songs and the only possible basis for an interpretation as the author intended.

Having spent her early acting years in Leipzig, Schwerin and Halle, Gisela May moved on to Berlin's Deutsches Theater before her singing talents were discovered by chance in 1957. She stepped in at a Brecht matinee for a colleague who has been taken ill, delivering a number of songs from *The Threepenny Opera* alongside the illustrious Ernst Busch, Wolfgang Langhoff and Wolfgang Heinz. The impression she made was such that Hanns Eisler - who was in the audience - could not resist rushing backstage to let her have his verdict which, though brief, was to have momentous consequences: "You really should carry on." But he did not leave it at that. In the following three years the composer worked systematically with Gisela May; laying the foundations for a career which was to take her around the world. In retrospect she wrote, "Through my work with Eisler I had the good fortune to learn a lot about music, politics, art and life in general ... Most impressive of all was his ability, whatever the material, to capture the message in its essence and bring it so powerfully to the fore ... You only had to copy the respective mannerisms, adapt them to your own personality and vocal resourees, making sure you adhered to music and rhythm, and already you had the main ingredients for an interpretation." Gisela May was still working with Eisler when she scored her international breakthrough. On a tour of Italy in 1958, presenting the aforementioned Brecht matinee with the Deutsches Theater, she was invited by Paolo Grassi to give a solo evening of her own in Milan. She later recalled, "The proposal was as frightening as it was tempting ... Accustomed to playing in an ensemble for many years, I had never imagined starting a solo career some day. But the offer from Milan was attactive enough, and I was never going to have that chance again. So, after thorough preparation and plenty of hard work, I agreed. The evening came and went, and news of its success was spread by a well versed audience and specialist press. That was how I set out on my international career. The only thing now was to press on."

And press on she did, travelling the world with her musical companion Henry Krtschil. Her name soon became the new hallmark for the definitive reading of Brecht, to the acclaim of audiences and press alike. In 1965, the *Express* of Cologne worte, "When she starts to sing, it is as if Lotte Lenya had taken a cold shower. There is no trace of exuberance, just clarity, precision and the message." And the comment on her first appearance in New York in 1971: "It was demonstrated at the Village Gate in the late hours of 21 November that there is nobody more convincing in this field than Gisela May."

By this time she had joined the Berliner Ensemble and embarked on a twin career which was to continue almost 30 years at Brecht' s theatre and concert venues around the world. Major recordings soon followed, and subsequently teaching assignments at international music seminars and colleges for up-and-coming singers and actors in several countries. Her repertoire as diseuse included musical arrangements of Kurt Tucholsky and Erich Kastner, and she was also associated with the chansons of Jacques Brel. But it was invariably the same recipe that was guaranteed to attract the greatest international attention: Gisela May sings Brecht. These recordings include lieder and songs from Brecht' s plays in which Gisela May appeared at the Berliner Ensemble as well as others which formed part of her established repertoire outside the theatre.

Irmgard Arnold sings Eisler (CD7)
Hanns Eisler always had a very good sense of the contradictions apparent in the social fabric of his times, a sense of social responsibility characterized by Bertolt Brecht as "full of the greatest relish". Since the end of the Twenties he had constantly been concerned "to bring people some political awareness by means of music" -and of course the music itself had to be filled with this awareness, in order to quell the (political) stupidity prevailing in this area, not to mention the stupidity of politics in general: illusions of harmony, blind faith, bathos, bombast, sentimentality and self-pity no less than self-satisfaction, indifference and cynicism.

This approach of Hanns Eisler's expressed itself across the board in his practice as a composer, from deliberate simplicity to nicely differentiated high art, no matter how his message was conveyed. He also struck a new social note, a posture of resistance and solidarity, in his musical structures and patterns. These are inherently contradictory forms of expression arising from a dialectically reflective, politically committed relationship to reality: passionate sobriety, productive dissatisfaction, optimism free of illusion. Bertolt Brecht had just this in mind when he wrote in the preface of the first volume of “Songs and Cantatas” that Eisler's music created”... new tenderness and power, endurance and suppleness, impatience and caution, insistence and self-sacrifice.”

These peculiarities in the music of Hanns Eisler place formidable demands upon the performing artist. And singers who have not had the opportunity of working with him have frequently had difficulties in responding to these demands, for instance on reading what he calls for in the preface to his last work, the “Serious Songs”: “Let the singer endeavour to sing in an altogether friendly, polite and light manner. Personal commitment is immaterial; instead one should seek to give the listeners a commentary on the contents rather than an expression of them. At the same time, artificial coldness, false objectivity and expressionlessness must be avoided, because ultimately it all depends on the singer.”

This demand applies to all areas of Hanns Eisler's extensive oeuvre. It is relatively easy to fulfil-where vocal capacities are concerned when tackling songs of simpler form: the many “Massenlieder” (“songs for the masses”), ballads, chansons, and the “Volkslieder” (“people's songs”), children's songs and lullabies. Eisler wrote many songs for stage and film productions such as Bertolt Brecht's “Die Massnahme” (1930) and “Die Mutter” (1932)-didactic pieces-and “Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe” (1934) or the film “Kuhle Wampe” (1932). The singing actor Ernst Busch had been unsurpassed in the intelligent presentation of this form since 1929. He was justly known as the “Tauber of the barricades”.

Eisler composed no operas and had nothing to do with opera singers. Indeed, he could not stand the great singers of bourgeois opera, unsuited as they were for an intelligent, appropriate interpretation of his subtly varied, highly ambitious vocal compositions: art songs, cantatas, and solo parts in vocal symphonic works. On his return to Europe from the USA in 1948-staying first in Austria, then making his home in 1949 in East Berlin, capital of the newly-founded GDR from October -he had a large stock of vocal compositions “in his baggage”, written in exile but as yet virtually unperformed.

Finding suitable artists to interpret this large group of his works was exceptionally difficult. His first experiences with “normal” opera singers were discouraging; even if they were ready to attempt Eisler at all, he could exercise no influence on their manner of delivery, as he found at the premiere of his “Goethe Rhapsody” in 1950.

Not until 1956 did he find a singer in the person of Irmgard Arnold who had everything he needed for his music-in his own words: “lightness, intelligence, friendliness, strictness, grace and hardness, fun and seriousness”. The soprano Irmgard Arnold was born into a Munich family of musicians in 1919 and after engagements in Augsburg and Halle came in 1949/1950 to the Komische Oper ensemble in Berlin, with which the renowned director Waiter Felsenstein (1901-1975), artistically responsible for the opera house from 1947 till his death, was developing the qualitatively new form of “realistic music theatre”. Hanns Eisler heard Irmgard Arnold for the first time in Felsenstein's 1951 staging of Jacques Offenbach's “La vie parisienne”. This is how he summed up his impression in 1958: “I was thrilled by the singing and the acting. “ In 1954 he saw the singer in Richard Strauss's “Die schweigsame Frau”, in 1956 in Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari's “Le donne curiose” and Leos Janacek's “The cunning little vixen”.

Irmgard Arnold gave her first Eisler concert at the second All-German Music Festival, held in Coburg at the end of August and beginning of September 1956. The composer later wrote of it: “When I was told that... a number of my songs and cantatas were to be performed, I immediately thought of Arnold, with whom I had long wanted to work. The very first rehearsals showed me how lucky I was to have found such a singer.” He praised her application and her determination to improve all the time as a “good, onward-driving ambition”.

Irmgard Arnold herself was very happy to be working with Eisler. At the start of the Seventies she had this to say: “Well, in 'La vie' I didn't thank God -have to play the part of a bombastic opera singer. That was his greatest fear ... out with this frightful operatic pomposity, away with overblown Puccini! The very first rehearsals could be pretty aggressive at times. But he was right, I could hear it myself-and it helped me progress, not just for his songs but for the stage too. And I can only tell everyone: do it this way, forget all this bombast-and leave the sentimental 'Winterreise' be!”

Eisler did not so much talk in rehearsals as play and sing to give an idea of the way it ought to be. And though he was neither a singer nor a good pianist, it was perceptible what he meant by musical and political intelligence. Not that he asked for imitation; he wanted to leave scope for the singer's own personality. “He left me humour, above all, my own humour-and that made me so enthusiastic that it was probably the thing that most helped our work.” Eisler did not expect a faithful note-by-note rendition from a singer. What mattered to him was the attitude, the proximity of “epic” music-making to the melody of speech. That involves precision of a quite different order from that needed in a Mozart aria. Asked who actually sang his songs well, Hanns Eisler told Hans Bunge on July 18, 1961 that it had to be “someone who knows how to avoid sentimentality, bombast, emotion and stupidity of all kinds, presenting the text well and still really singing ... It ought to be someone with a very good voice in the first place, great musicianship, and what I would call 'musical intelligence'. In other words, singing the text in a contradictory way. For instance, when the word 'Frühling' comes, the singer should not indicate the season of spring with a melting voice -to put it quite bluntly. These are very difficult questions... At any rate, it will be a singer who is not a blockhead. He will sing it well, maybe even with no voice... Records are made of all sorts of singers... I find much of their singing terrible-some of it is excellent. I am too tired to worry about a lot of nonsense. If our recording studios employ some singer to perform a song of mine and her performance makes no sense at all, there is nothing I can do about it.”

Irmgard Arnold brought Eisler a good voice, good musicianship and intelligence. She observed the principle: “Don't just sing-think!” She once commented “that when I open my mouth I don't just sing any old notes, I think about them a bit first”.

In her many encounters with Hanns Eisler she created a wide repertoire: art songs from all periods of the composer's life, ballads, solo cantatas, and the solo roles of great vocal symphonic works, which she sang at their premieres: “The carpet weavers of Kujan-Bulak” (February 1958), the “Lenin Requiem” (November 1958) and the “German Symphony” (April 1959).

The vocal works on this recording were presented over the course of many years at her lieder recitals-accompanied by Andre Asriel, who had been top of Eisler's composition class at the Academy of Arts in East Berlin in 1950/51.

Previously released only on LP, these works are now brought together on CD-in chronological order of composition, not as they were originally heard in the concert hall or presented on gramophone records to document the first “authentic”, continuing interpretation of Eisler's art songs, resulting from close cooperation with him and recognized by him accordingly. Irmgard Arnold's

concerts did much to reveal the “unknown” Eisler. Her way of singing Eisler can still be useful for deeper understanding of the difficulties caused to the inquiring artist by this side of Eisler-and for the enthusiasm and enjoyment that intensive work can yield. The listener and singer with specialist interest will find four “bonus” songs on the present CD which Hanns Eisler “ran through” for “his” singer during rehearsals. This gives the chance to see how well he puts into music what he has verbally asked the singer to do, and how the singer has reacted to what the composer has said and demonstrated to her, Many of the items on the present recording are taken from song cycles: from Op.2, Op.11, from the series of solo cantatas or the Hollywood Songbook, or from the stage music to Brecht's “Die Rundköpfe und die Spitzköpfe”. It is the usual practice to make a selection -and in this case, Eisler himself had published only parts of his cycles in the few printed volumes of “Songs and Cantatas”. It is also a common practice to reduce fully scored accompaniments to the piano part for performing purposes. This is the case on the present recording for the stage music suites Op.20 and Op.45 and “The apparitions of Simone Machard”; and only one of the solo cantatas to be heard here, Op.61/2, is included in its original scoring.

The present chronological arrangement of the songs takes the listener through Hanns Eisler's various creative periods. The “Two Songs for Voice and Piano” (1920) are among the many works from his early years (1915-1921/22) written before his intensive studies with Arnold Schoenberg or during that time (1919-1923).

His first creative period (1922-1925/26) includes Op.2 and Op.11. While Op.2 is stylistically indebted to the Schoenberg school and belongs to the bourgeois lieder tradition, the “Newspaper Cuttings” are evidence of Eisler's “departure from concert poetry”, particularly in their choice of textual material.

The second creative period (1926/27-1933), in which Eisler entirely “withdrew” the art song and chamber music in order to found and develop the historically new form of “Kampfmusik” (combat music), yields only one song: “Change the world, it needs it”.

Most of the recordings to be heard on this CD are vocal works written in Eisler's third creative period (1933-1948) in exile in western Europe and the USA. Rigorous opposition to Fascism had altered Eisler's relationship to tradition and his national consciousness, greatly expanding his output of songs and encouraging the emergence of new major forms such as vocal symphonic music (including the “Lenin Requiem” and “German Symphony”) while also promoting the imaginative development of different forms of instrumental music for various forces.

The fourth creative period (1948-1962) is represented here only by “Anmut sparet nicht noch Mühe” (grace will not save the need for effort), the “Vienna Song” and “New Songs”. Even in these few compositions we can already see what Eisler had begun while still in exile in the early Forties: he is now concerned to link the music more firmly to the Classical tradition, while attaining a “new” simplicity and friendliness corresponding to the changed social conditions and new emotions associated with reconstruction and the creation of a “new” society. Eisler again “withdrew” instrumental chamber music in particular.

The present selection of: art songs bring out a notable characteristic of Eisler's work as a whole, namely that deliberate or enforced changes in production or working conditions were marked by phases of compositional reorientation and shifts of creative emphasis. The overall stylistic development moves from differentiation to simplicity, though not to uniformity. Various writing styles coexist: the compositions on this CD contrast the complexity of twelve-note technique in the solo cantatas and the simplicity of the *“Vienna* Song” or the bareness of the kindergarten song “Mutter Beimlein”.

This enormous stylistic range, whether in Eisler's work as a whole or more specifically in his songs, is a great challenge to any trained singer not afraid of such extremes. Irmgard Arnold took on the challenge and did herself -and us- a favour.
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Translation: Janet and Michael Berridge

Works for Piano (CD8)
Hanns Eisler is not one of those composers who, as first-rate pianists, kept writing new, important music for “their” instrument throughout their lives-like Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, or Liszt and Schumann, or Busoni, Prokofiev, Bartok and Shostakovich. Asked once about his modest pianistic abilities, Eisler answered: “I have my music in my head.” Thus substantial works were composed for this instrument and can be heard almost in their entirety (given that new recordings of small minor works were not feasible) on the present CD.

In another respect too, Hanns Eisler is the odd man out compared with his composing contemporaries. There are periods in which he wrote piano accompaniments to songs, ballads, chansons, etc., but no solo piano music. Those were the years of his “Kampfmusik”(between 1928 and 1933). And the years following his return from American exile, namely the periods of composition in Austria (1948-49) and the GDR (1950-62).

Within the complete piano oeuvre we can distinguish two levels. One is a group of self-contained, as it were “autonomous” compositions: early piano pieces, the piano works Opp. 3 and 8, three piano sonatas (Op.1, Op.6, no opus no.) and the variations for piano (no opus no.). The other is a group of works collected under the title “Educational Music”: Opp. 31, 32 and 44 and the two fugues. The twentieth century is familiar with piano works having an educational purpose, written by Bartok and Hindemith among others. Only the overture for two pianos was written as stage music.

In his early creative period Hanns Eisler saw the piano as virtually the focus of his compositional identity, the place where it was shaped and transformed. He was unable to begin his education as a composer until after the First World War-at the age of 20. At first he studied with Karl Weigl at the New Vienna Conservatory, but soon found him too conventional and straightforward. He went to Arnold Schoenberg, the best teacher of his day, and spent four years with him-until 1922/23-learning “to really think musically”. He owed Schoenberg his “honesty” and “responsibility” in music and “the lack of any kind of posturing”. The subject of his strict training was not his teacher's works but those of the classical masters.

Arnold Schoenberg himself recognized Eisler's special talent at an early stage and did much to encourage him-despite the unbridgeable philosophical and social gulf between the socialist convictions of the pupil (who directed 2 Viennese workers' choirs during his studies) and the politically conservative attitude of his teacher, who was and remained out of sympathy with the aims of the workers' movement.

The self-contained, autonomous piano works:
After the **five early piano pieces**, which show the high standard already reached by the student, the first mature work, which Eisler nominated his Op.1, was a **piano sonata**. The first movement was written between March 5 and 9,1922, the finale in March 1923. Arnold Schoenberg recommended this sonata to the Universal-Edition publishing house in Vienna before the third movement was even ready. The sonata was played to Schoenberg on March 29, 1923. Eduard Steuermann premiered the work in the Prague Society for Private Musical Performances on April 10, 1923.

The young composer was exceptionally successful with this “launch”. The sonata had been publicly performed more than 25

times by the summer of 1925-even in Moscow, New York and Paris. In May 1925 Eisler received the Arts Prize of the City of Vienna for his Op.1.

This sonata is still very close to the highly expressive style of his teacher, but its energetic, fresh outlook already marks it out. Eisler here couples traditional forms and techniques with the new, atonal material. This is his way of approaching the inner logic of formal coherence, which had become a problem with the loss of key-relationships: in the first and third movements he employs sonata form, even repeating the exposition, while the second movement has the form of a passacaglia with a ternary A-B-A layout. The continuing formation of structure and pattern is achieved by means of the strictest motivic elaboration in the sense of the developing variation. Here there was audible proof of how soundly Schoenberg's model pupil had mastered his musical craft.

In his chamber-music works, composed in rapid succession after this, Eisler distanced himself more and more from Schoenberg's coded text of suffering, loneliness and fear-without abandoning the "method of composition with twelve notes related only to one another" which his teacher had just evolved (and which later became famous, or notorious, as "twelve-note technique"). He retained even the starkest contrasts in the most limited space. The emergence of the basic attitudes of "friendliness" and "politeness" typical of Eisler, where he tends to report the content in a distanced, but not expressionless, manner rather than expressing himself personally-all this came out to a substantial degree (though also found in Opp. 2, 4, 5 and 7) in works for the piano: the Op.3 piano pieces were written in Vienna in 1923, while his second sonata-begun in the first half of 1924-was finished in Berlin in autumn 1925, along with the piano pieces of opus 8. Both works were composed for Arthur Schnabel's piano master class at the Klindworth-Scharwenka-Konservatorium, where Schnabel taught and Eisler had been given a teaching post.

The **piano pieces Op.3** are composed-in contrast to the very expressive first sonata-in a manner that tends towards the restrained, almost reluctantly contemplative, rather "soft" and tender, with writing of a gossamer transparence, but with repeated occurrence of energetic passages, particularly in the emotional finale.

The formal structure and development of the **second sonata Op.6** proceeds on the basis of twelve-note technique. The use of the sonata form, linked as it was to the hierarchy of the major and minor keys, was bound to cause serious problems in this atonal material. Formal links were developed using a twelve-note series supplied by the composer: this is the source both of the energetic theme and of the fourteen variations derived from it. They lead by way of varying, contrasting expressive characters, by way of abrupt change of tempo in the Andante of the sixth variation and rapid change of dynamics in the eighth to the "Martiale e energico" of the ninth variation. From the tenth onwards there is a new ascent from gentle and persistent to the furious "Martellato". The last variation, in the tempo of the theme, has the function of a sort of recapitulation.

The **piano pieces Op.8** too, in the interests of discipline and strict organization of chromatic harmony, are more or less consistent in their use of "serial technique". Some pieces (I, III, V and VII) show Eisler managing to write "jolly" music in a highly original manner in a technique that was completely new at the time (having been used by Schoenberg and Webern since 1924, by Berg since 1925/26). This achievement was doubted from the start and constantly called in question ever after in conservative circles, even held to be impossible. Eisler's last pupil, David Blake, saw the sixth of the Op.8 pieces as a character study of his teacher and as a compendium of his stylistic features: "nervous haste, spirit, humour, grotesque, vitality, elegance, economy, surprise". Sadness, despair, hysteria and anguish, he feels, are avoided. These pieces show Eisler making use of serial technique alongside non-serial organization, while applying consummate skill and artistry, as he developed towards the parallelism of the transparently simple and the highly complicated, which later so characterized the diatonic idiom of the workers' choruses and songs.

After moving to Berlin in September 1925, Eisler had drawn closer to the Communist-oriented workers' movement. His older sister Ruth was at the head of the KPD (Communist Party of Germany), his older brother Gerhart was also a party worker. Eisler grew more critical of the social isolation and ineffectuality of modern music. This led in 1926 to conflict and a break with Arnold Schoenberg, who since 1925 had been conducting a master class in composition at the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin. Schoenberg's criticism was that Eisler had produced no compositional evidence of his change of heart. These were soon provided. The "Zeitungsausschnitte" (newspaper cuttings) Op.11 substantially composed in 1926 were Eisler's final departure from bourgeois recital material. Their success in the concert hall only fed his discontent. He wrote of this situation in 1955: "I was not satisfied with the usual audience, I wanted to say something new and needed new listeners for it. That meant I had to begin again from the beginning." It was not long before he had composed numerous choruses for the worker-singer movement (which in his opinion was as backward musically as it was politically), film and stage music, and a wealth of political songs, ballads, and so on. He wrote music reviews for the "Rote Fahne" (Red Flag) and began applying Marxist theories to music. He had grown very suspicious of solo piano music and serial technique in the context of "battle music". He simply "withdrew" it at this time, without giving it up altogether.

When he went into exile in 1933 the conditions under which he composed had of necessity changed radically. While writing film and stage music and simple anti-fascist songs (such as the "Einheitsfront-Lied" calling for a united front), he now returned to ambitious chamber music of various kinds: solo cantatas, art songs, instrumental works for varying forces, vocal symphonic works and-once more-piano music.

The educationally oriented piano works:
Hanns Eisler wrote a number of piano pieces for children and learners, a group of works begun only shortly before exile and completed by the middle of the Thirties. The 18 piano pieces Op.31, the seven piano pieces Op.32 and the sonatina Op.44 are the first three of four books bearing the working title "Educational Music". In the draft preface to the fourth book ("Prelude and Fugue on B-A-C-H for string trio" Op.46), Eisler wrote that he had attempted in the first three books "to provide a little practical composition course for children". However, the pieces should be "usable as instrumental studies at the same time".

The commission for these works came from the State Music Publishing House in Moscow. Op.31 and Op.32 were begun in Moscow in October 1932 and concluded in exile in Paris in 1934. Both works were printed in Paris in 1934 and Moscow in 1935. The **piano pieces Op.31**, with simple chordal accompaniment or in two-part imitation (including various contrapuntal devices) are intended for six-year-old children and their teachers. The aim was to inculcate "musical relationships" as well as exercising the fingers.
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Translation: Janet and Michael Berridge

Vocal Symphonic Music (CD9)
The vocal symphonic works by Hanns Eisler compiled on the present CD are very varied-in respect of the circumstances in which they were written, the intended purpose, and the way in which they were composed and received. Except for the "Lenin Requiem" and "Glückliche Fahrt", they were written during Eisler's time in the GDR. The vocal symphonic genre chosen for them displays the

enormous stylistic range between modernism and traditionalism. They also illustrate how difficult it was for Hanns Eisler to reach the goal he set himself after the war, after his return from exile in the USA and after his move to East Germany: that of writing for ease of understanding using new methods, and-as he later said-"recognizing mistakes oneself ... and correcting them as well as one can".

The "Lenin Requiem" has a chequered history of composition and performance, corresponding to the fluctuating fortunes of the world for which it was written. Eisler was commissioned to write the work in 1932-by the State Music Publishing House in Moscow. He was with Joris Ivens in Moscow and in Magnitogorsk that year, in May and in September/October, in connection with their joint work on a documentary film called "Youth has its say" ("Heroes' song") and their involvement in the foundation of the "International Music Bureau" (IMB), intended to unite revolutionary musicians and music associations against fascism. The award of a Soviet commission in 1932 to write a requiem for Lenin undoubtedly signalled exceptional respect and recognition for his musical and political achievements to date. It was to be completed by the 20th anniversary of the October Revolution, that is by 1937.

It was not until December 1935 that Eisler made the preliminary sketches in New York. But this was the very time in which Lenin's legacy was being overturned by dogmatism and the personality cult: August 1936 duly saw the first of the Moscow show trials in which Stalin did away with those revolutionaries who had been close to Lenin. Eisler was with Brecht on the Danish island of Fyn, at Skovbostand near Svendborg, from the end of January to the end of September 1937. Lou Eisler, his life partner and from 1938 his wife, remembers that there was great concern about these events in the USSR. Brecht had clearly expressed his critical distance to Stalin to Waiter Benjamin in 1935. (It is no accident that Brecht and Eisler, though committed Communists, had not emigrated to the Soviet Union.) When, after intensive work on the "German Symphony", the chamber cantatas and many songs, Eisler completed the "Lenin Requiem" on August 5, 1937 under the favourable work conditions prevailing on the island of Fyn, he had met his deadline. However, it was obvious that the work would not be performed in the post-1932 "Stalinist' USSR. In any case, there was a vast divergence between the requiem's basic statement and the political reality of the time.

There was no hope of an "uprising of the masses" either in fascist Germany or Italy or in other capitalist countries. In Spain, it is true, the democratic popular forces supported by the International Brigades (Eisler visited them in January 1937) were defending their young republic against the fascist might of General Franco and his coup. It is the palpable impotence of the time, this stark contradiction between the political reality and the expressive intensity of lament and invocation –in other words the critical appeal to the ideal of the revolution in the person of Lenin-that represents the particular "realism" of this requiem. So far as I know, the work which the Moscow state publishing house had commissioned was never performed in the Soviet Union. It could not be performed in the early years of the GDR either; the personality cult of Stalin lasted until 1956-when the crimes of Stalinism were revealed at the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU. In any case this work is almost uniformly composed in twelve-note technique, a form of composition which had been condemned as "formalist" since 1948 in the Soviet Union and the GDR-an aberration of musical politics which was officially corrected only as a result of the 20th Party Congress. And when the "Lenin Requiem" was first performed in East Berlin on November 22, 1958, it appeared in a context which could not have been foreseen at the time the composition was commissioned: Lenin was modern again, under the slogan of "return to Leninist standards".

This requiem is a new element in Eisler's creative work in respect of its subject matter, its form, its content and its compositional technique. Here the great subject of the revolution, the profile of the revolutionary, the mourning for Lenin and the conviction of the organized working class's indomitable power are handled in a way new for Eisler: in the traditional but secularized form of the requiem, with an expressive power unfamiliar till now, a pathos uncustomary for Eisler. As in the "German Symphony" Eisler here brings the style of "Kampfmusik" (battle music) into the dimension of the large-scale vocal symphonic form, organizing its development in the manner introduced by Schoenberg with twelve notes related only to one another. All melodic and harmonic events are derived from the underlying pattern of a twelve-note series (E; D sharp; F sharp; B; C sharp; D; G; F; A flat; B flat; A; C) and given shape through rhythmic differentiation-quasi-tonal here for the most part. In this way Eisler was able to introduce into this type of structured context the tonally composed "Lob des Revolutionars" (praise of the revolutionary) from his stage music to Gorki/Brecht's "Die Mutter" (the mother, 1931/32), as No.7 "Lob des Kampfers" (praise of the fighter), without a break in style.

Hanns Eisler left Denmark -and Brecht- in October 1937 and travelled by way of Prague to the USA, where he remained till 1948. He lived in New York at first, teaching at the New School for Social Research, staging concerts and giving composition lessons. From 1940 he directed the "Film Music Project", which led to some of his most important instrumental works (see CD 92312BC). In April 1942 Eisler moved to Hollywood, where Brecht had been living since July 1941. The result, apart from numerous film scores, was a large number of songs, and-after the conclusion of the "Film Music Project" in 1943/44-postwar works such as the stage music to Brecht's "Galileo Galilei" (1946) and chamber music such as the "Septet No.2" (1947).

"Glückliche Fahrt" (prosperous voyage) for soprano solo and orchestra was probably begun in the USA as early as 1946. Goethe's lines were particularly relevant to the emigrant's post-war situation: "The mist breaks, the sky is light and Aeolus looses the fearful bond.., the waves divide, the distance grows near, now I see the land." The work was probably not continued until 1949 in connection with the "Rhapsodie", which was conceived as a "Goethe-Kantate" and prepared for the celebrations marking the poet's 200th birthday. Eisler had not used twelve-note technique-one among many compositional methods at his disposal up to the early Forties-since the end of the war. He felt the need for simpler approaches. His aim was to return "music in a manner that may at first be rather modest to a higher form of society". However, the search for a new form of composition linked to tradition led him in this work to an undue emphasis on "ease of understanding" at the expense of "new methods". The "real" Eisler was scarcely recognizable here. The questionable nature of this "classicist" experiment, of which the Zhdanov doctrine proclaimed in February 1948 was not the cause but undoubtedly the setting for occasional opportunism, is particularly evident in the work: "Mitte des Jahrhunderts" (middle of the century). This cantata to texts by Johannes R Becher was composed for the festival programme of the East German SED's Third Party Conference (July 20-24, 1950). The "more joyful" tone of this work is no more convincing than that of its predecessor. Only the lyrical, thoughtful passages, such as those remembering the dead in the second movement or in the "Aria", or in the restrained solo flute, clarinet and bassoon parts in the orchestral study enable us to see today what Eisler understood then as the musical goal of uniting consummate artistic skill and new simplicity. He took the orchestral study from film scores.

The closing chorus "Sei gegrüsst, Partei" (greetings to you, Party) particularly shows how Eisler uncritically assumed the Becher lyrics' attitude of an anthem sung by the faithful. It was in vain to descend to the low musical level of those assembled for political progress. Becher noted in his diary for July 25: "The Party Conference is over. The performance of 'Kantate 1950' a

disappointment. Lyrics too general, the special features of 1950 did not find expression at all." Becher regarded the lyrics as "not successful". He wrote of the music: "Eisler made an effort to fill out musically, and only made things worse. He extended, creating inordinate length right at the start. Behind the vocal pieces constant overlapping ..." Eisler's mistake had been "to settle for the inadequate lyrics". But the composer was not musically satisfied either. The work was not performed again in this form, even though Becher revised the text. Even Eisler distanced himself from it. This kind of pathos in Becher's verse clearly ran up against its limits in the vocal-symphonic form. It did not really suit Eisler. Becher noted in his diary in October 1950: "...And I still have the feeling that Eisler wrote these really popular tunes in a fit of bad musical conscience at least, and each time he takes delight in keeping out any trace of sentimentality by coming up with an unexpected whiplash of sound." And a little later: "Evening discussion with Eisler, pretty unprofitable, talking round the subject, outlook for further mutual cooperation-listless..." Meanwhile, work together with Brecht intensified.

Eisler composed "Das Vorbild" (the role model) in 1951/52-as a teaching piece for his pupils, whom he had been teaching since 1950 at the newly-founded Academy of Arts of the GDR. Here the strong orientation towards tradition, in conformity with dogmatic musical politics, is to be found on a rather different level: the master demonstrates in his great three-part fugue for strings what it means to have total command of the craftsman's art. It displays several expositions and introduces inversion, augmentation and stretto of the fugue theme. Originally Brecht's "Friedenslied" (peace song) took second place. Eisler replaced it in 1952 with some lines from Goethe's poem "Das Göttliche" (the divine)-a friendly, restrained setting. In July 1952 the Second Party Conference of the SED resolved to construct the principles of Socialism for the territory of the GDR. Eisler wrote to Brecht in August 1952: "I am revising my triptych; the 'Friedenslied' is no longer musically appropriate. I am replacing it with another Goethe fragment ('Edel sei der Mensch, hilfreich und gut' (let man be noble, helpful and good)-that sounds right for the construction of Socialism!) and calling the whole work 'Vorbild'. I aim to perform it at my pupils' concert. This is something for young people." "Symbolum" (confession, watchword) is another work which summons up the "voices of the masters", drawing upon Goethe's poem for the Weimar freemasons' lodge. The continued excessive emphasis in this work on observing and learning from the tradition of the old masters is something from which Eisler freed himself in the years that followed.

Eisler wrote the cantata "Die Teppichweber von Kujan-Bulak" (the carpet-weavers of Kujan-Bulak) in June 1957, to a text by Brecht, in honour of the 40th birthday of the USSR. It was premiered in Berlin in February 1958 (that is, before the "Lenin Requiem"). As in the "Requiem", Lenin is the central point of reference, but now, after the revelations of the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU, in a quite particular direction.

The official request to overcome the personality cult surrounding Stalin was translated into the slogan "return to Leninist standards", but fulfilment of this programme largely transferred the cult attitude to the rediscovered Lenin, a trend to which Eisler critically reacted in this cantata.

This is clearly evident from the sentences by Bertolt Brecht which he prefaced to it as a motto: "But it is particularly necessary to take a light-hearted approach to profound objects and greet authorities with friendly indulgence". The practice of plaster busts is countered with the unusual form of a memorial in which those showing the honour would serve their own ends with the money collected and had thus understood the person to be honoured. Eisler has here rediscovered his musical "identity": his commentary on the lyrics is precise, reserved, friendly and light, with small, but highly concentrated means.

This applies too to the "Kriegsfibel" (guide to war) also written in 1957. The laconic four-line verses Brecht wrote under the documentary photos aroused an appropriate response from Eisler. These fourteen, invariably very short pieces were composed with great precision and economy of means. Here Eisler has again attained that brief, precise musical language with which he had forged his inimitable style in the "Kampfmusik"and in exile. It is now enriched by a new, lyrical quality in the melody and the springy, light tone of the "symphonized" march song. And it brings acute contrasts into a very small space. The last image of the "Kriegsfibel" comes from Brecht's "Friedensfibel" (guide to peace) and shows students of the workers' and peasants' faculty. Eisler inserted the text here as "epilogue" and takes this opportunity to close the cantata with the reticent but friendly appeal: "Do not bury yourselves, fight with us, and learn how to learn and never forget". The work is dedicated to the Erich Weinert Ensemble of the National People's Army of the GDR. It is considered to be unfinished. The vocal parts were to have been linked by interludes.

The cycle for baritone solo and string orchestra "**Ernste Gesänge**" (serious songs) is a work which Eisler began in early 1961 and completed in August 1962. In this work, which was his last (Eisler died on September 6), both the choice and arrangement of the lyrics and the selection of musical approaches give a fairly concentrated idea of the exceptional stylistic breadth which is so characteristic of this important 20th century composer while remaining quite distinct from later "postmodern" pluralism. The texts and musical structures, so varied in origin and application, are held together by Eisler's underlying political convictions -here related to the stunning revelations of the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU-to which Eisler was the only GDR composer to make an explicit response!-and the increased hope of a human aspect to Communism.

Talking to Hans Bunge on August 14, 1962, Eisler reported: "Arranging the songs took me the most trouble. It took me a year to put seven little pieces into shape." Asked for the meaning of this shape, he said: "It is: consciousness-reflection-depression-revival-and again consciousness... It just must be done that way, otherwise it is not good. One cannot always write optimistic songs ... one must describe the up and down of the actual situations, sing about it and comment on it." For this purpose Eisler used H61derlin fragments which he had already set ("Asyl" (refuge) 1939; "An die Hoffnung" (to hope) 1943) and a text by Bertolt Viertel, written in 1936 to mark the years of Hitler's dictatorship and already set to music as "Chanson allemande" in 1953. Now included in the cycle, "Traurigkeit" (sadness) received a new meaning. Eisler noted: "... now each may seek out the anniversaries that make him sad".

The third song "Verzweiflung" (despair), to an old text by the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi, set for singing voice and piano by Eisler in 1953 as "Faustus Verzweiflung" (Faust's despair), also received a new status in the cycle: "I need the deep starting-point to jump high"-or to raise hopes. The title of the fifth song, "XX. Parteitag", was chosen by Eisler himself. Taking a few lines from a poem by Helmut Richter, he had headed them: "...I believe it to be the honesty of the artist to name these things that have been so hard to live through." Sadness and the hope of future happiness permeate the whole work. Autumn is a multiple metaphor: we look back at the past and forward to the future both in the entirely personal sphere and in the overall context of life in society. Eisler here addresses the particular problem of age. And this general "human autumn" can also be understood as the "autumn of politics". In his endearing conversation with Hans Bunge (November 6,1961) Eisler said: "If the cult of Stalin dies, for instance, that is autumn for Stalin. He falls like the leaves."

And so the "Serious Songs" cycle is a work Eisler could not have known to be his last and an important testimonial to his general attitude as a political composer. One day after completing the work he told Hans Bunge about his "modest music": "I love these

contradictions. And there is certainly contradiction in my latest work -between the 'Serious Songs' and the present situation. But I believe we must think over the past. Anyone who wants the future must surmount the past. He must purify himself of the past and look clearly and cleanly into the future. I believe we do far too little about that. Perhaps it is the task of an artist-and his task is a very modest one, when we look at the modern world-to see the past truly and sharply and lead it (something for which art is particularly Suited) into a future. An artist who does not do this is hopelessly at the mercy of a shabby optimism." Eisler composed the cycle with a view concentrated on the intensity of the Singing.

The singing voice and the orchestral writing demonstrate the complexity of free atonality (in "Vorspiel und Spruch" (prelude and motto) and in "An die Hoffnung") alongside the simplicity of tonal writing (in "XX. Parteitag", where the Eisler march type comes through). At the end of the work, in the "Epilogue" and its postlude, the persistent melodic and harmonic beauty points to a more deep-seated ideological problem: the threefold repetition of the certainty of future happiness is a religious trinity of invocation which puts this very certainty in question. It betrays as much ideological insecurity as the sweet promise of the closing instrumental consonance-which is not really qualified by the abrupt pizzicato close. The harmonic idyll suggests lack of contradiction. It has something of the other-worldly and unrealistic to it (not Eisler's style at all) and yet is involuntarily "realistic" and from a present-day perspective "tragic" at the same time. It seems that in autumn 1962 Hanns Eisler, despite expressing no verbal doubt in the Communist future, was as an intelligent artist by no means so sure of "future happiness".
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Translation: Janet and Michael Berridge

Choral Music (CD10)
The recordings on this CD testify to Hanns Eisler's change of position since 1925/1926: away from the largely Schoenberg-oriented chamber music of the bourgeois concert hall toward critical qualification of the workers' music movement and the new stuff of "battle music". Of paramount interest to him were compositions for choirs (a new genre for Eisler at the time), and the equally new genres for him of the mass song and of film and stage music: from November 1927 he was active in the agitprop group "Das Rote Sprachrohr" (the red megaphone), in July the music to Waiter Ruttmann's "Opus III" was performed for the first time, at the end of the year Eisler wrote his first stage music. Chamber music was "banished" till 1933, the start of exile.

After his studies with Arnold Schoenberg, Hanns Eisler enjoyed early success with piano works and with vocal and instrumental music for small ensembles. His works were performed from 1924/25 in Vienna and at international music festivals in Donaueschingen and Venice. He had a ten-year contract with the "Universal Edition" in Vienna. Eisler was awarded the Arts Prize of the City of Vienna for his piano sonata Op.1 in 1925. That was the year in which he moved to Berlin. Despite his successes he was, as he later put it, ... dissatisfied. I took no pleasure from the usual audience. I wanted to say something new and needed new listeners for it. So I had to begin again from the beginning."

A crucial reason for this was his increasing awareness of the contradiction between his political sympathies for the Communist-oriented workers' movement and his compositional practice limited to music as a bourgeois institution. Though created in part by the general political circumstances in Berlin, this discontent was also "in the family": in 1925 his elder sister Ruth was at the head of the KPD (Communist Party of Germany), and his elder brother Gerhart was a leading official in this organization.

His increasing distance from Schoenberg and his objections to modern music's isolation from the real world led as early as 1926 to conflict with the teacher he respected; Schoenberg reasonably criticized Eisler for having produced no compositional evidence of his change of heart. Eisler's change of position began in his chamber music-with the "Zeitungsausschnitte" (newspaper cuttings) Op.11 and with the choral works from Op.10 onwards featured on this recording. Even in his student days in Vienna, Eisler had conducted workers' choirs and given thought to the social function of music. His verdict on the glee-club-like programmes of the workers' choral movement, which had a large following throughout Germany, was that they were outdated and showed a lack of taste.

The "Tendency Choruses" in circulation at the time were indeed of low musical value and "reformist" in their ideological orientation, that is to say, full of petit-bourgeois illusions, borne along by a highly generalized yearning for freedom, a fatuous "looking forward to the day after tomorrow".

Eisler countered this practice by composing choral music of a new quality, bringing new approaches to new, meaningful contents and resulting in a new way of singing and listening. The choruses composed between 1925 and 1930 were intended to impinge on the minds and feelings of the worker-singers and their audiences and change their attitudes. They were to offer more than mere entertainment and enjoyment; the beauty of the music was to enhance their usefulness as a "combat tool".

This programme comes through particularly clearly in the **Four Pieces for mixed choir Op.13**. They refer to "something quite different". The "Choral Report" is a biting satire on the typical petit-bourgeois choral society's "usual choral pieces": firstly, religious atmosphere; secondly, "popular nature songs" and finally "popular love songs". Eisler counters these with "3 variazioni": "Our singing too must be a battle!" While the lyrics of the coda refer to the last sentence of the "Communist Party Manifesto", Eisler quotes the start of the "Internationale" in his music. This consciousness-raising piece is followed by the most serious part of the cycle: the "Song of the Defeated". The note "In remembrance of 1927" is explained by the dedication in the autograph score: "To the dead of the Vienna July uprising". (The spontaneous mass protest by the Vienna workers on July 15, 1927 was brutally suppressed, with 86 dead and 1100 injured.) After the confidence of victory turned to political ends in the "Observation of Nature" (following criticism of the euphoria at technical progress expressed by "artists and scholars"), the fourth piece "Kurfürstendamm" presents not a triumphant finale but the reverse: the ppp hush of an emphatic reference to the misery of beggars in the midst of the great city's prosperity and its diversions. The first performance was given in the Bachsaal in Berlin on January 27,1929, with Karl Rankl conducting the Berlin Schubert Choir.

This union of advanced music and political intelligence was new. It was already apparent in "Three Male Voice Choruses Op.10", notably in the disrespectful treatment Eisler gives the selected texts by Heinrich Heine: he does not set everything, he turns lines round and alters words, in short he assembles the lyrics in such a way as to put what he finds important in sharp focus and bring out the relevance to the present day. In No.1 "Tendency" (after Heine's poem "Tendenz") he concentrates on the issue of making the song serve a combative function: motivating to action in "Marseillaise manner". At this point ("march-like") the start of the "Internationale" is quoted in the music for the first time: "Awake, damned of this earth".

Eisler's setting of No.2 (based on Heine's poem "1649 - 1793 - ????") sharpens Heine's mockery of the Germans' servility, who would not behave as the British and French had done in their revolutions. At the same time Eisler points to the necessity and the difficulty of making a revolution in Germany, if only by his choice of a new title "Utopia", with which he ironically brings Heine's question marks up to date.

Eisler's target in No.3 (Heine's "The Changeling")-like Heine's-is the Prussian state: with his mocking title "Democracy". Although Eisler wrote this work while still in Vienna, probably for the workers' choral association led by Anton Webern, the Wiener Arbeiter-Singverein, and though the work is closely linked to the Schoenberg school harmonically and melodically, its interpretative style allows it to be heard as a document of transition: the music is to be mocking in parts, shrill and positively malicious in others, even being shouted at times.

The "Two Male Voice Choruses Op.14" were composed in September 1928 and given their first performance, again by the Berlin Schubert Choir under Karl Rankl, in January 1929. The first chorus "Peasants' Revolt" uses the tune of the old song from the German Peasants' War "Wir sind des Geyers schwarzer Haufen" (we are the vulture's black crew). In No.2 "Brief Enquiry" he takes up the subject of rising unemployment with a text of his own for the first time-sarcastically. The choral score published by Universal Edition in Vienna and Leipzig in 1929 includes Eisler's notes for performance: "No.1. This chorus must be sung very coarsely and wildly. All dynamic markings are only relative. No.2. This song is best sung like this: cigarette in the corner of the mouth, hands in trousers pockets, casual, rather stooped posture, voice a bit raucous, so that it won't sound too nice and no-one will be shocked."

In contrast to the irony and critical distance of the works mentioned so far, the chorus "Singing in the streets Op.15" (another work premiered by Karl Rankl, at the end of 1929) is a "stirring agitation piece in vigorous march tempo", as Eberhardt Klemm wrote. The name of the lyricist (David Weber) is a pseudonym used at the time by Robert Gilbert, Eisler's most important poet in the days before his work with Brecht, and the author of the words to the 2nd chorus of Op.17: "Instead of a funeral address". The subject here is: How should we bury someone who went hungry, fought and died? The answer is: Not with Christianity, but with solidarity: "Good night, comrade!" Several works from the end of the Twenties make the strike into the subject of musical reaction to current events. This is clear in the aggressive first chorus of Op.17: "The Strike-breaker" (written to verses by the North American worker-singer Joe Hill in March 1929) and in No.1 of Op.19: "Also on strike: 50,000 woodworkers" (composed in October 1929). Another good example is No.2 of Op.19: "In the military barracks" takes as its subject the need for resistance, opposition and struggle-in relation here to the miserable situation of the soldiers, who have to die obediently and should really be following the red flag. Op.19 was first performed in Wuppertal-Barmen by the Berlin Uthmann Choir in July 1930. The biting criticism applied to that self-destructive obedience is also aimed at the phrase "peace and quiet" in "Litany of the breath", No.1 of Op.21.

Eisler took a text from Brecht's educational "Hauspostille" (Lesson 1: Songs of entreaty) to react in early 1930 to the terror campaign of Noske's police against the workers' mass campaigns. Here too the message -reversing Goethe's-was ("to be sung as fast as possible"): "Over all peaks there is unrest, in all treetops you feel now a breath of wind."

The text of No.2, "On killing", was written by Eisler himself: everything possible must be done against killing, "so that no more blood will be shed".

The "Two Male Voice Choruses Op.35" were written at different times. "Coal for Mike" was composed in the spring and summer of 1930 (and first performed in May 1931 in the Berlin Philharmonie concert hall); "The Soldiers Who Froze to Death" was composed in October 1928 (premiered by the Berlin Uthmann Choir in November 1929, together with the Moabit People's Choir) and like the two Op.14 choruses is dedicated to "Karl and Adele Rankl". Both parts of this work-like Op.17 and Op.19 before them-relate on the one hand to the phenomenon of solidarity characteristic of the workers' movement (here in a text of Brecht's) and on the other to the senselessness of soldiers dying (to a text from Karl Kraus's piece "Die letzten Tage der Menschheit" (the last days of mankind: Act 5, Scene 55).

The esteem in which Anton Webern, a choir director himself, held these works of Hanns Eisler's is evident from a letter of April 1929, expressing his views on technical points of composition and performance for Op.13 and Op.15, but also saying quite generally: "I like your latest works a lot! That they seem 'odd'-as you say-strikes me as a very healthy sign! I find them altogether original, primal! Uncommonly beautiful in their invention. Just this for the moment. I have thought about them a lot."

The "Bank Song Op.48/1" was written in Berlin in autumn 1931 and first performed there in November by Ernst Busch and the Uthmann Choir directed by Hanns Eisler. The present version dates from Eisler's exile, in London at the beginning of September 1934. It is dedicated to Ernst Busch: "Dear old Ernst: I promise you-better times will come!! Your old friend Hanns Eisler, 22 January 1935."

The song "Noone or Everyone" was written in London in December 1934, originally for voice and piano. It was sung in that form by the International Brigades in Spain, and published by Ernst Busch in 1937. The present version for choir and instrumental accompaniment dates from May 1958, when Hanns Eisler was living and working in the German Democratic Republic.

The "United Front Song" too was first composed in London in December 1934. Currently available data traces the first part of the song back to the mass song "We don't fight for our country" from the stage music "Draw the Fires" to Ernst Toiler's play. The music was ready on December 14. Erwin Piscator had sent Brecht a letter from the International Music Bureau in Moscow on December 21, 1934, asking him for a good united front song. On January 4, 1935, Eisler wrote from London to Brecht in Denmark, saying that the united front song had been in Moscow for quite some time. The song's premiere was at the First International Workers' Music Olympiad in Strasbourg-featuring Ernst Busch, Hanns Eisler and 3000 singers. The present version was made in Prague in September 1948-after Eisler's return from the USA and before his move to the GDR. He had written this "symphonization" for the opening programme of the 14th Party Congress of the Communist Party of Austria.

Brecht noted in his diary on December 29, 1948: "Eisler here for four weeks. One way in which he has sublimated his aversion to the vulgarity and primitiveness of marching songs is by making a symphonic resolution of the 'United Front Song', that is using it as a popular song in strict musical segments." In his conversation with Hans Bunge on May 5, 1958, Eisler reacts to this diary entry. After those awful Hitler songs, he had had "such an aversion to any kind of marching" that he had looked for something else. Brecht for his part had understood that, but had also missed "our plebeian vulgarisms", "which are very necessary, after all". However, after their misuse by the barbarians, a "withdrawal period" had been necessary. This had been much too short, and what was now to be heard on the radio in the way of well-meant compositions by colleagues had "an embarrassing after-taste of those days, which of course may also be due to the often miserable lyrics". In the late Twenties and Thirties a poetical and musical elevation had been reached where simplicity had had a healthy function, without excluding artistic elevation. Unfortunately this had never been imitated in the GDR.

"Freedom Song" comes from Eisler's music for the film "Abdul Hamid". It was composed in London at the end of 1934 or the start of 1935. This film, directed by Karl Grune, was a historically cloaked satire on Adolf Hitler (= Sultan Abdul Hamid): "politically 'decent', but regrettably rubbish all the same"-as Eisler wrote to Brecht at

the time. The present piece is a “Marcia energico” in the style of the “battle music”-with one peculiarity: till 1933 there were no strings in it. The marching song of the oppressed fighters on the present CD includes them for the first time in this style.

The other two choruses come from the stage music “No more peace” to words by Ernst Toiler. They were probably written in London in May 1936. Eisler had not gone on with the composition, because the lyrics did not appeal to him. The present choruses, accompanied by two pianos, will stand alone outside the context of the play. They show how the thinking of exiled German artists in the middle of the Thirties was concentrated on the demand for and the encouragement of anti-fascist activities.

Translation: Janet and Michael Berridge