GLENDYR SACKS

# A Brecht calendar

As a visual aid to the following of Brecht's sometimes complex movements, cities and countries in which he was present at the time indicated are highlighted.

1898 **10 February:** Brecht born in AUGSBURG.

1917 Enrols at University of MUNICH.

1918 Writes 'The Legend of the Dead Soldier'. Writes first version of *Baal*.
**October:** military service as a medical orderly in AUGSBURG.

1919 **9 January:** Brecht demobilised.
**13 February:** 'Spartakus' (later *Drums in the Night*) completed.
Takes small part in Karl Valentin's political cabaret, MUNICH.
**July:** Brecht and Paula Banholzer's son, Frank, born.
**October:** works as theatre critic: for *Volkswillen*.
During 1919, probably wrote several one-act plays, including *The Beggar or the Dead Dog, The Wedding, Driving out the Devil, Lux in Tenebris, A Humble Wedding*.

1920 **21 February:** first visit to BERLIN. Leaves on 13 March, the same day as the Kapp Putsch. Returns to AUGSBURG.

1921 **September:** short story, 'Bargan Lets It Happen (Be)', is published in *Der neue Merkur*, MUNICH.
**7 November:** second trip to BERLIN. Attends Max Reinhardt's rehearsals of Strindberg's *A Dream Play*, along with other major directors' rehearsals.

1922 **Spring:** begins directing Arnolt Bronnen's *Vatermord* in BERLIN. Arguments lead to his withdrawing from the production.
**29 September:** *Drums in the Night* opens at the Kammerspiele, MUNICH. (Directed by Otto Falckenberg; Brecht attends rehearsals.)
*Baal* and *Drums in the Night* are published.
**October:** signs contract to work as dramaturg at Kammerspiele, MUNICH.

**13 November:** awarded the 1922 Kleist Prize for *Drums*. BERLIN.
**20 December:** Deutsches Theater production of *Drums*. (Directed by Falckenberg; Brecht attends many rehearsals; Alexander Granach (Kragler).) BERLIN. Brecht returns to MUNICH soon afterwards.

1923 **March:** Marianne Zoff and Brecht's daughter, Hanne, born.
**9 May:** première of *In The Jungle* at the Residenz-Theater, MUNICH. (Directed by Erich Engel; Brecht involved in all stages of production; designed by Caspar Neher.)
**August:** co-directs, with Arnolt Bronnen, the première of a condensed version of Hans Henny Jahnn's play, *Pastor Ephraim Magnus*. BERLIN.
**8 December:** première of *Baal* in Altes Theater, LEIPZIG. (Directed by Alwin Kronacher; Brecht participating in most rehearsals.)

1924 **19 March:** première of Brecht/Feuchtwanger's adaptation of Marlowe's *Edward II* at the Kammerspiele, MUNICH. (Brecht directs; designed by Neher; Oskar Homolka (Mortimer).)
**September:** moves to BERLIN, to work as assistant dramaturg at the Deutsches Theater.

## Berlin

1924 **29 October:** production of *Drums* in Deutsches Theater, BERLIN. (Directed by Engel; designed by Neher; Fritz Kortner (Shlink); Walter Frank (Garga).)
**November:** Helene Weigel and Brecht's son, Stefan, born.

1925 **February/March:** works on adaptation of Ferdinand Bruckner's version of *The Lady of the Camelias*. (Directed by Bernhard Reich and Elisabeth Bergner at Deutsches Theater.)

1926 **14 February:** *Baal*, revised together with Elisabeth Hauptmann, performed by the Junge Bühne, at the Deutsches Theater in BERLIN. (Directed by Brecht and Oskar Homolka, who also played Baal; designed by Neher.) A single matinée performance.
Series of short stories published, under Brecht's name, although 'written in the closest possible association' (Fuegi)[1] with Hauptmann.
**25 September:** première of *Man is Man* at Landestheater, DARMSTADT. Hauptmann co-worked the text. (Directed by Jacob Geis; designed by Neher.)

1927 **January:** *Hauspostille*, a collection of poems, published by Propyläen publishing house under Brecht's name, although some of the poems were written by Hauptmann.



**18 March:** BERLIN Radio broadcasts *Man is Man*, directed by Alfred Braun, with Weigel as Begbick.
**17 July:** première of *Songspiel Mahagonny* in BADEN-BADEN. First collaboration with Kurt Weill. (Directed by Brecht; music by Weill; design and background projections by Neher; Lotte Lenya (Jessie).)
During this year, Brecht involved in Piscator's directors' collective, based in the Piscator-Bühne, in Nollendorfplatz, BERLIN.
**14 October:** Berlin Radio broadcasts Brecht's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. (Directed by Alfred Braun; introduced by Brecht.)
**10 December:** revised version of *In the Jungle of the Cities* performed in DARMSTADT; directed by Carl Ebert.

1928 **31 August:** première of *The Threepenny Opera* by Hauptmann/Brecht/Weill/Klammer at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, BERLIN. (Directed by Engel with participation by Brecht; designed by Neher; conducted by Theo Mackeben with the Lewis Ruth Band; Harald Paulsen (Macheath); Roma Bahn (Polly); Lenya (Jenny).)
**December:** Brecht's short story, 'The Beast', wins first prize in *Berlin illustierte* competition.[2]

1929 **March/April:** production of Marieluise Fleisser's *Die Pioniere von Ingolstadt* at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, BERLIN. (Directed by Brecht and Jacob Geis; designed by Neher.)
**Summer:** radio production of Brecht/Weill's *Berlin Requiem*, with Weigel.
**28 July:** directs the first *Lehrstück*, *The Flight over the Ocean* (co-written with Hauptmann and Weill) and *The Baden-Baden Cantata of Acquiescence* (co-written with Hauptmann, Dudow and Hindemith) in BADEN-BADEN.
**31 August:** première of Hauptmann's *Happy End*, with music by Weill and some songs by Brecht, at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, BERLIN. (Directed by Engel and Brecht; designed by Neher; with Peter Lorre, Weigel, Homolka and Carola Neher.)

1930 First three issues of Brecht's collected writings (*Versuche*) – including first notes on the plays – are published.
**9 March:** première of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* by Brecht/Hauptmann/Weill/Neher, in the Opera House, LEIPZIG. (Directed by Walter Brugmann; design and projections by Neher.)
**23 June:** *He Who Said Yes* by Hauptmann/Brecht/Weill performed at the Central Institute for Training and Teaching in BERLIN. (Directed by Brecht and Weill.) Ending later revised to create *He Who Said No*.
**18 October:** Weigel's and Brecht's daughter, Barbara, born.

10 **December:** première of *The Measures Taken*, by Brecht and Hauptmann, at the Grosses Schauspielhaus, BERLIN. (Music by Hanns Eisler; designed by Teo Otto; with Weigel, Ernst Busch, Granach and workers' choir.)

1931 31 **January:** Berlin Radio broadcasts Brecht's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. (Directed by Alfred Braun; with Fritz Kortner and Oskar Homolka.)

6 **February:** production of revised version of *Man is Man* at Staatstheater, BERLIN. (Directed by Brecht; designed by Neher; Lorre (Galy Gay); Weigel (Begbick).)

19 **February:** film version of *The Threepenny Opera* opens in BERLIN. (Directed by G. W. Pabst; music by Weill; with Carola Neher, Lotte Lenya, Rudolph Forster, Busch.) Brecht began collaborating on the script, but when his work was rejected, withdrew from the film and sued Nero Film Company.

4 **April:** *The Flight over the Ocean* performed in America, at the Philadelphia Academy of Music, under Leopold Stokowski.

**August:** Brecht completes collaborative filmscript, *Kuhle Wampe*. Brecht finishes *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, written with Hauptmann, Borchardt and Burri, between 1929–31.

21 **December:** production of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* at the Kurfürstendamm Theater, BERLIN. (Initially directed by Brecht and Neher, later by Neher alone when arguments between Weill and Brecht disrupted rehearsals to the point that Brecht was given money to direct *The Mother* instead; designed by Neher; Lenya (Jenny).)

1932 17 **January:** première of *The Mother* (collaborators: Eisler, Weiseborn, Dudow) at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, BERLIN, and toured to working-class districts of Berlin. (Directed by Brecht and Emil Burri; designed by Neher; Weigel (Vlassova); Busch (Pavel).)

**February:** police ban further agitprop performances of *The Mother*.

11 **April:** Berlin Radio broadcasts *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*. Directed by Alfred Braun.

14 **May:** *Kuhle Wampe* premièred in Moscow. Brecht travels there to attend première.

30 **May:** censored version of *Kuhle Wampe*, by Brecht, Slatan Dudow and Ernst Ottwalt, opens in BERLIN. (Directed by Dudow; music by Eisler.) Banned soon after release.

1933 28 **February:** Brecht and Weigel flee Berlin the morning after the Reichstag fire. Travel to PRAGUE, VIENNA, SWITZERLAND and then PARIS.



## Exile in Europe

1933 13 **April:** *The Threepenny Opera* opens at Empire Theatre, New York. (Translated by Krimsky; Neher's designs used.)

7 **June:** première of Brecht/Weill ballet, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, at Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, PARIS. (Choreography by George Balanchine and Boris Kochno; Brecht involved in some rehearsals; designed by Neher; Tilly Losch and Lotte Lenya in leading roles.)

**June:** settles in DENMARK.

**September:** returns to PARIS.

**December:** leaves Paris and joins Weigel in SKOVBOSTRAND, DENMARK.

1934 **Completes** *The Threepenny Novel*. Published in Amsterdam. Publication of second book of poems, *Lieder Gedichte Chöre*, with Eisler.

Together with Margarete Steffin, writes last *Lehrstück, The Horatii and the Curiatii*.

**October to December:** first visit to LONDON.

1935 **Spring:** visits MOSCOW where he meets Joseph Losey and sees the performance of the Chinese actor, Mei Lan-fang.

**April:** begins work with Steffin on the sketches that will form *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich*.

**June:** stripped of German citizenship by the Nazis.

15 **June:** goes to PARIS for international Writers' Conference.

7 **October:** *The Mother* performed in Copenhagen by Ruth Berlau and the Revolutionary Theatre Group.

15 **October:** in NEW YORK at the invitation of the Theatre Union to work on their production of *The Mother*, but quarrels led to Brecht and Eisler being finally removed from rehearsals on 8 November.

19 **November:** the Theatre Union's version in English of *The Mother* opens in New York. (Translated and adapted by Paul Peters; directed by Victor Wolfson; designed by Mordecai Gorelik; Helen Henry in title role.)

29 **December:** leaves New York.[3]

1936 **April to July:** in LONDON.

4 **November:** première of *Round Heads and Pointed Heads*, in Danish, in Knight's Hall Theatre, COPENHAGEN. (Directed by Per Knutzon; Brecht involved in some rehearsals.) Twenty-one performances.

12 **November:** production of *The Seven Deadly Sins* in COPENHAGEN. (Choreography by Harold Landers; involvement by Brecht.) Two performances.

1937 **28 September:** World Fair production of *The Threepenny Opera* in PARIS. (Directed by Francesco von Mendelsohn; participation by Brecht.)

**16 October:** première, in German, *of Señora Carrar's Rifles* (written in collaboration with Steffin) in PARIS. (Directed by Dudow; involvement by Brecht in rehearsals and casting; Weigel in title role.)

**19 December:** production, in Danish, of *Señora Carrar's Rifles* in COPENHAGEN. (Directed by Berlau; Brecht present at some rehearsals; performed by the Revolutionary Theatre Group with Dagmar Andreasen in lead role.)

*The Exception and the Rule* published in *Internationale Literatur*, no. 9 (Moscow, 1937).

1938 **14 February:** production, in German, of *Señora Carrar's Rifles* in COPENHAGEN. (Directed by Brecht and Berlau; set from 1937 Berlau production; Weigel in title role.)

**21 May:** German-language première of eight scenes from *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* under title of 99% in PARIS. (Directed by Dudow; participation by Brecht; music by Paul Dessau; Weigel as the Jewish Wife.)

**August:**[4] première of *The Exception and The Rule*, by Brecht, Hauptmann and Burri, in Hebrew at Kibbutz Givat Chaim in Palestine. (Directed by Alfred Wolf.)

**13 September:** production of *Señora Carrar's Rifles* in English, at Unity Theatre, London. (Directed by John Fernald; Peggy Cochrane in title role.) Toured to other English cities.

**November:** Brecht and Steffin complete first version of *Life of Galileo*.

1939 **3 February:** *Señora Carrar's Rifles* produced at San Francisco Green Street Theatre.

**March:** begins work on *The Good Person of Szechwan*, in collaboration with Berlau and Steffin.

**23 April:** Brecht moves to STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, as Nazis move closer.

**August:** production of *What is the Price of Iron?* in STOCKHOLM. (Directed by Brecht and Berlau; Brecht used the pseudonym John Kent as playwright; performed by students from an Adult Education school in Stockholm.)

Third book of poems, *Svendborger Gedichte*, published.

**November:** completes *Mother Courage and Her Children* and *The Trial of Lucullus*. Steffin collaborated on latter.

1940 **17 April:** moves to HELSINKI, FINLAND, eight days after the Nazis invade Denmark and Norway.



**12 May:** Radio Beromünster (Berne, Switzerland) broadcasts *The Trial of Lucullus*.

**July:** moves to the country home of Hella Wuolijoki in FINLAND.

**September:** in collaboration with Hella Wuolijoki, completes work on *Mr Puntila and his Man Matti*.

1941 **March to April:** collaborates with Steffin on *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*; completes *The Good Person of Szechwan*.

**19 April:** première of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, at the Zurich Schauspielhaus. (Directed by Leopold Lindtberg; sets and costume by Otto; lead played by Therese Giehse.)

**13 May:** Brecht, Weigel, their children, Steffin and Berlau leave HELSINKI for America. They go via LENINGRAD and MOSCOW – where Steffin died of tuberculosis on 4 June. Brecht heard the news when he arrived in VLADIVOSTOK, from where he and his entourage embarked for California on 13 June – nine days before the Germans invaded Russia.

## Exile in America

1941 **21 July:** arrives in CALIFORNIA.

1942 **May to October:** having collaborated with Fritz Lang on the story, Brecht works with John Wexley on the script for *Hangmen Also Die*. The film is shot between November and December. (Story by Brecht and Lang; directed by Lang; the credit for the script goes to Wexley; music by Eisler.)

**28 May and 14 June:** two performances in German of several scenes from *Fear and Misery*, translated and adapted by Eric Bentley as *The Private Life of the Master Race*. (Directed by Berthold Viertel in New York.)

**October:** begins collaboration with Lion Feuchtwanger on a Joan of Arc play which later forms *The Visions of Simone Machard*.

1943 **4 February:** première of *The Good Person of Szechwan* in the Schauspielhaus, Zurich. (Directed by Leonard Steckel; designed by Otto.)

**8 February:** Brecht goes to NEW YORK and stays with Berlau.

**26 March:** *Hangmen Also Die* premièred in Hollywood.

**March to May:** Brecht and H. R. Hays collaborate on an adaptation of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*.

**26 May:** returns to SANTA MONICA.

**June:** completes *Simone Machard* and continues work on *Schweyk in the Second World War* (written 1941–3).

**9 September:** première of *Life of Galileo* in the Zurich Schauspielhaus. (Directed by Steckel; designed by Otto; Steckel in title role.) Begins work with Berlau on *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.
**November:** Brecht goes to NEW YORK to work with W. H. Auden on *The Duchess of Malfi*. In December, when Hays hears of this, he withdraws from further collaboration on the script.

1944 **March:** Brecht returns to CALIFORNIA.
**June:** Brecht completes first draft of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*.
**September:** Berlau's and Brecht's son is born and dies a few days later.
Seventeen scenes from *Fear and Misery* published as *The Private Life of the Master Race*. (Translated by Bentley, under supervision of Brecht and Hauptmann; published in New Directions.)
**December:** begins work with Charles Laughton on a new version and translation of *Galileo*.

1945 **23 May:** returns to NEW YORK to oversee the production of *The Private Life of the Master Race*.
**12 June:** nine scenes from *The Private Life of the Master Race* are performed, in English, in the Pauline Edwards Theatre, NEW YORK. (Translated by Bentley; directed by Viertel and Brecht, after Piscator withdrew.)
**July:** in VERMONT, working with Bergner on *The Duchess of Malfi*.
**December:** completes English version of *Galileo*, in collaboration with Laughton.

1946 **February to March:** works with W. H. Auden on *Malfi* in NEW YORK.
**15 October:** having toured to Boston and Connecticut, adaptation of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* opens on Broadway, in the Ethel Barrymore Theatre, NEW YORK. (Adaptation by Brecht/Bergner/W. H. Auden/H. R. Hays; directed by George Rylands; music by Benjamin Britten; Bergner in title role; Canada Lee (Bosola). Brecht involved in production after Rylands returned to England, but little of his adaptation was actually used.) Thirty-nine performances.

1947 **31 July:** première, in English, of Laughton/Brecht version of *Life of Galileo* at the Coronet Theatre in LOS ANGELES. (Directed by Joseph Losey, with participation from Charles Laughton and Brecht; title role played by Laughton.) Seventeen performances.
**30 October:** Brecht questioned by House UnAmerican Activities Committee in WASHINGTON. The next day, he flies to PARIS.



## Back to Europe

1947 **November:** travels to SWITZERLAND, where he and Neher are reunited. Settles in ZURICH.
**7 December:** *Life of Galileo* transfers to the Maxine Elliott Theatre on Broadway.

1948 **15 February:** première of *Antigone*, adapted by Brecht from Hölderlin's translation of Sophocles, in CHUR, SWITZERLAND. (Directed by Brecht; designed by Neher; Weigel (Antigone); Hans Gaugler (Creon).) One matinée performance.
**5 June:** première of *Mr Puntila and his Man Matti*, by Brecht and Hella Wuolijoki, opens in the ZURICH Schauspielhaus. (Directed by Kurt Hirschfeld with Brecht mostly responsible for rehearsals and production; music by Dessau; designed by Otto; Steckel (Puntila).)
**July to August:** works on *A Short Organum;* begins work on *The Days of the Commune*.
**Late October:** leaves for EAST BERLIN via SALZBURG and PRAGUE, as he is refused a visa for the American zone.

## Back to Berlin

1949 **January:** Berliner Ensemble created.
**11 January:** *Mother Courage and Her Children* opens in Deutsches Theater, BERLIN. (Directed by Brecht and Engel; music by Dessau; sets by Heinrich Kilger, based on Otto's 1941 originals; Weigel (Courage); Angelika Hurwicz (Kattrin).)
**February:** Weigel appointed artistic director of Berliner Ensemble. Brecht goes to ZURICH to recruit actors for the Berliner Ensemble.
**April:** completes draft of *The Days of the Commune*.
**May:** returns to BERLIN via SALZBURG.
**June to July:** in BERLIN hospital with kidney trouble.
**August:** in SALZBURG.
**September:** in MUNICH and then returns to BERLIN.
**12 November:** first Berliner Ensemble production, *Mr Puntila and his Man Matti*, opens at the Deutsches Theater. (Directed by Brecht and Engel; designed by Neher; Steckel (Puntila); Geschonneck (Matti).)

1950 **12 April:** Brecht and Weigel granted Austrian citizenship.
**15 April:** *The Tutor*, adapted by Brecht (with Berlau/Benno Besson/Egon Monk/Neher) from J. M. R. Lenz, opens at the Deutsches

Theater. (Directed by Brecht and Neher; designed by Neher; Gaugler (Läuffer).)

**8 October:** *Mother Courage and Her Children* opens in the Kammerspiele, MUNICH. (Directed by Brecht; Bentley an assistant director; Giehse (Courage).)

1951 **13 January:** *The Mother* is performed by Berliner Ensemble in the Deutsches Theater, BERLIN. (Directed by Brecht; music by Eisler; designed by Neher; Weigel (Vlassova).)

**17 March:** *The Trial of Lucullus* – opera version by Dessau, later revised as *The Condemnation of Lucullus* – given a trial performance in East Berlin State Opera. (Directed by Wolf Völker; designed by Neher.)

**May:** Brecht begins adapting Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*.

**5 August:** *Report from Herrnburg* at the Deutsches Theater. (Directed by Monk; designed by Neher; music by Dessau.) Awarded National Prize.

**11 September:** new production of *Mother Courage* at the Berliner Ensemble.

1952 *Theaterarbeit* is published.

**February:** decides to buy house in Buckow. Brecht and Weigel visit WARSAW, to plan Berliner Ensemble performances there.

1953 **17 June:** workers' uprising in East Germany.

**Summer:** begins work on *Turandot, or the Whitewashers' Congress*, which is completed by 1954, but not revised.

Writes the *Buckow Elegies*.

1954 **19 March:** Berliner Ensemble moves to Theater am Schiffbauerdamm. Opens with Brecht's adaptation, in collaboration with Besson and Hauptmann, of Molière's *Don Juan*.

**Summer:** visits BRUGES, AMSTERDAM and PARIS, where the original *Mother Courage and Her Children* is on tour.

**7 October:**[5] German première of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, BERLIN. (Directed by Brecht; music by Dessau; designed by Karl von Appen; Hurwicz (Grusha); Busch (Azdak).)

**21 December:** awarded Lenin Peace Prize.[6]

1955 **March to April:** works on *Trumpets and Drums*.

**May:** visits Moscow to receive prize.

**June:** in PARIS for Berliner Ensemble's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

1956 **February:** in MILAN for Giorgio Strehler's production of *The Threepenny Opera*, in Piccolo Theatre.

**May:** in hospital.



**10 August:** attends last rehearsal. (Berliner Ensemble preparing for London season.)

**14 August:** Brecht dies.

## NOTES

1 Fuegi, *Bertolt Brecht: Chaos, According to Plan*, p. 192.

2 See Willett, *Brecht Yearbook* 12 (1985) for claims that Hauptmann wrote most of the short story.

3 Lyon, in *Bertolt Brecht in America*, says 'The playwright did not return to Denmark immediately after *Mother* closed, but stayed until early February 1936' (p. 16). Völker, in *Brecht Chronicle*, says that Brecht left New York on 29 December 1935, and was back in Skovbostrand by the end of January 1936.

4 Hayman, in *Brecht: A Biography*, says 1 May 1938.

5 Willett, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht*, gives the date of this première as 15 June (see p. 20 and p. 56). While there were previews of the play, prior to the summer vacation and further rehearsal, the official first night was 7 October, as listed in the Ensemble's *Chronik* of 1961.

6 Previously known as the Stalin Peace Prize.