ABOUT THE PLAY AND THE PLAYWRIGHT

"A certain measure of comfort is necessary for a virtuous life."
-- St. Thomas Aquinas

Bertolt Brecht, who died in East Berlin in 1956, was the creator and leading practitioner of what is usually called "Epic Theatre". The main ideas of this kind of theatre is that a play should stir us not only to feel but to thinkas well. Brecht does not want the audience to "lose themselves" in watching one of his plays. He wants us instead to look at what happens on the stage as a sort of "History", and by viewing it with some of the same detachment with which we look at actual history, to be able to enjoy it and learn from it.

To accomplish this aim, Brecht uses a great variety of theatrical resources, both modern and traditional. In THEGOOD WOMAN OF SETZUAN, for example, we find some of the formalism of Oriental theatre, the sharp songs of the satirical revue, the little "houses" of MEdieval staging, the mILitant lectures of the modern political meeting. Some of the characters are realistic, while others (such as the Gods and the masked cousin, Shui Ta) are deliberately artificial. The language is sometimes the prose of everyday speech, sometimes lyric verse. Brecht is at once story-teller, poet and social critic. He wants to present not only life, but a comment on life.

In this production, we have tried to put some of Brecht's ideas about staging into practice. Some of our scenery is frankly just scenery; some of it is quite real.

Above all, we have tried to catch some of the varied qualities of Brecht: the honesty, the humor, the passionate concern with social evils and moral questions, the lyricism, the vatality, the seriousness.

The play is a fable and a parable. The half-westernized city of Setzuan is not a particular place, but every place. The problems of its people are the problems of the poor everywhere:

for who could

Long refuse to be bad, when
He who eats no meat must die?

COMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 10 - 18 THE BURNT FLOWER BED by Ugo Betti
Directed by Dorothy Davies - Frederic Wood Theatre

MARCH 24 - APRIL 1 MARTINE by Jean-Jacques Bernard
Directed by Dorothy Somerset - Frederic Wood Theatre

JANUARY 30 - FEB 1 - 3 CRIMe AND PUNISHMENT -
Directed by Ian Thorne - Queen Elizabeth Theatre

FEBRUARY 20, 22 - 25 DAMM YANKESE
Presented by UBC Musical Society - UBC AUditorium

MARCH 15 - 17 U.B.C. Players Club Spring Play

THE GOOD WOMAN of SETZUAN

by BERTOLT BRECHT

JANUARY 18 - 21
1961