



# Brecht at the Opera (California Studies in 20th-Century Music)

*Joy H. Calico*

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*Brecht at the Opera* looks at the German playwright's lifelong ambivalent engagement with opera. An ardent opera lover in his youth, Brecht later denounced the genre as decadent and irrelevant to modern society even as he continued to work on opera projects throughout his career. He completed three operas and attempted two dozen more with composers such as Kurt Weill, Paul Hindemith, Hanns Eisler, and Paul Dessau. Joy H. Calico argues that Brecht's simultaneous work on opera and *Lehrstück* in the 1920s generated the new concept of audience experience that would come to define epic theater, and that his revisions to the theory of *Gestus* in the mid-1930s are reminiscent of nineteenth-century opera performance practices of mimesis.



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