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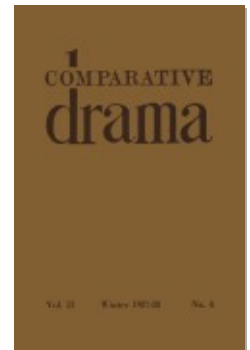
Devon ed. by John M. Wasson (review)

Darryll Grantley

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major—though uncredited—part in the actual writing of *Mahagonny*, *Dreigroschenoper*, and *Happy End*. Essays by Michael Morley and Ronald K. Shull trace the steady growth of artistic differences between Weill and Brecht—not always showing Weill to advantage, but clearly portraying the composer as an assertive collaborator who knew his own mind on aesthetic matters.

The somewhat apologetic quality of the Weill-Brecht essays shows itself too in those on Weill's American career. Guy Stern, for example, largely attributes the commercial failure of *The Eternal Road* to extravagances by its designer, Norman Bel Geddes, and director, Max Reinhardt, as well as the recalcitrance of its librettist, Franz Werfel, all of whom Stern pictures as ignoring Weill's constructive suggestions. Matthew Scott, in "Weill in America: The Problem of Revival," sees Weill's American work as a mixed bag, "unconnected and academically imponderable" (p. 293). He attributes this state of affairs, though, to Weill's never having found a worthy long-term American collaborator, and notes that "to represent the American Weill, scholarship must be enlisted to re-present his work" (p. 295). And Larry Stempel, while writing incisively of *Street Scene* as an artistic failure, diagnoses that failure as stemming from Weill's praiseworthy but doomed attempt to bring opera to Broadway.

While *A New Orpheus* might be accused of approaching its subject more in the manner of a *Festschrift* than of a fully objective study, it nonetheless stands as a welcome addition to Weill scholarship. Particularly impressive are essays by Alan Chapman (on Weill and Schoenberg), Ian Kemp (on *Der Silbersee*), David Drew (on *Der Kuhhandel*), and John Graziano (on *Down in the Valley*), all of whom engage in substantive technical analysis of Weill's music itself. These pieces, together with those that begin revising public perceptions of his collaboration with Brecht, show the clearest promise for the future of Weill studies. All in all, if this collection fails to make a definitive case for Weill as "a new Orpheus," it does succeed in illuminating the contradictions embodied in his life and work and in reemphasizing his unquenchable drive and resourcefulness. In the meantime, if one were to search the Weill canon for a more accurate, if less determinedly laudatory, gloss on the composer, the appropriate title might, ironically, be Brecht's *A Man's a Man*.

ARNOLD JOHNSTON
Western Michigan University

John M. Wasson, ed. *Devon, Records of Early English Drama*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986. Pp. lxxv + 623. \$95.00.

John Wasson's volume on Devon is the seventh contribution to the University of Toronto REED project to publish all the contemporary documentary material relating to dramatic, ceremonial, and minstrel activity in Great Britain before 1642. This is a mammoth undertaking involving, as it does, sifting through a large variety of sources, extracting relevant items, and arranging them according to date and place where possible. Wasson's volume follows the carefully worked out format of

the series, with sections containing descriptions of the sources used, early and modern maps of the area, references to the drama listed chronologically (the earliest is dated 1150), and by town or other auspices such as monasteries and households, translations of the Latin entries, lists of patrons and traveling companies in the period covered, and finally Latin and English glossaries. This format has the advantage of making available to researchers and teachers, who are clearly the intended readership of the series, a wide range of related reference material in an extremely accessible and easily manageable form.

A problem besetting this particular volume is the relative paucity of substantial and highly informative references to the early dramatic activity of Devon even though, as Wasson points out, what the extant records do indicate is that professional drama in the county was "both earlier and more widespread than the old histories of English drama would lead us to expect." Of course a process of deduction on the basis of our knowledge of drama in other parts of the country would probably have brought us to the same conclusion, but deduction alone is hardly a sufficient basis for knowledge, and it is useful to have whatever confirmation the records yield. In view of the relative fullness of these records, Exeter having for instance "outside of London, one of the largest and most nearly complete collections of civic records in England," what they do yield in respect of theatrical activity is frustratingly limited and lacking in detail. The fact that our knowledge of the drama of the county in this period remains very patchy is perhaps more than anything a testimony to the ephemeral nature of this particular cultural artifact in the absence of surviving written play texts. Wasson's response to this problem is to squeeze out every reference of any possible relevance and, where he does offer comments on the material, to milk it of its likely significance for the drama. Such a case is his comment on a fine levelled against players in Totnes in 1631-32 for drinking after hours "in a tipling house" in which he makes the very valid point that if the players had not broken the law, we would not know either from the mayor's account or the receiver's account that they had been in town at all. Thus we can assume that many troupes are likely to have passed through totally unrecorded. Another instance is his reference to a piece of negative evidence in the form of an order by the Devon county justices of the peace in 1604 which accused innkeepers of a variety of abuses including allowing gambling, whoring, swearing, and riotous behavior, but which does not mention plays despite judicial antipathy to plays—a document suggesting fairly convincingly the absence of theatrical activity. Conversely, he very plausibly concludes that the absence of references to professional theatrical activity in the Crediton records is an instance where such an absence does not imply a lack of activity, since this town was an important location on the main road between Exeter and Barnstaple, both of which hosted many professional entertainers.

If he is prepared to make some deductions, Wasson is also very cautious in the exploitation of his material. He comments, for instance, that what is in some ways more disturbing than the great gaps in the extant records is the knowledge that what records do exist can be very misleading because scribes tend to make a note of the unusual rather

than the commonplace. Elsewhere, in discussing one documentary source, he warns that "pageants" referred to in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Andrew's Church in Ashburton are fixed shrines in the church and hence are not to be taken as having a relevance to the study in hand. Yet another useful point made which contributes more generally to the careful handling of the evidence provided by theatrical and other records is the observation that the presence of a Vice in a Robin Hood play from Chudleigh in 1561 may be added to the growing list of indications that the mention of a vice figure is no evidence of morality influence.

Since the principal aim of the volume is to document rather than to process testamentary material, however, it would be misleading to dwell exclusively on Wasson's comments and conclusions, interesting and frequently enlightening though they be. In the process of turning up material, Wasson has been assiduous, and the volume is a substantial one in terms of size. Herein lies an irony, for it is in fact much larger than J. J. Anderson's *Newcastle-upon-Tyne* volume in which the entries are arguably much meatier in the information they yield. One might therefore argue that, given that the REED project has not been without its financial problems, to produce such a large book for Devon is rather excessive. By way of defense it should be stated that the volume is dealing with a large county, and comprehensiveness is clearly an aim of this project, though the compiler does display a love of anecdote which leads him to include some items which if intrinsically interesting might be considered of dubious relevance, such as the story of the apostasy of Robert Hode, the story of Sir Richard Edgecumbe from 1553, or some of the extensive extracts from the Register of Bishop John de Grandisson. However, these scarcely detract from the usefulness of the volume and add considerably to its general reading interest. There are, of course, also many substantial items of enormous significance including several sections of John de Grandisson's writings and, in the civic records of Exeter from 1413-14, an extended reference to the Corpus Christi plays.

Wasson's volume on the Devon records of early English drama takes its place honorably among the REED collections produced so far. Like the previous volumes, it displays meticulous scholarship and a clear dedication to the task of facilitating the work of future researchers, be they social, economic, or theatrical historians.

DARRYLL GRANTLEY

University of Kent at Canterbury

C. L. Barber and Richard P. Wheeler. *The Whole Journey: Shakespeare's Power of Development*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986. Pp. xxix + 354. \$37.50.

Henrik Ibsen's father went bankrupt. Critics have no trouble reconciling this fact with the ruined and feckless paternal figures who populate his drama; we willingly see the symbolism of plays like *The Master Builder* as openly autobiographical. William Shakespeare's father squandered his wife's dowry and, fearing arrest for debt, stopped attending church. Hamlet, on the battlements, responds to the cannonade attending Claudius's royal drinking-bout with a meditation on the way a single