BERTOLT BRECHT'S GREAT PLAYS

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ALFRED D. WHITE

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To my wife

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Preface

This short book is about a closely interconnected group of Brecht's plays in which the elements of his greatness appear in their most concentrated and complex form, and by which his stature can be measured. It is not concerned with his development before these plays were written nor with his verse, narrative, dialogue and theoretical work or with his other plays except in their relevance to the four plays in hand. This involves no denial of the greatness of much of his other work. Despite limitations of scope and length, I hope this book will however suggest what made the dramatist Brecht write as he did, how one may approach his texts and what is to be borne in mind when a production of them is envisaged. The plot of each play is summarised – not just to help those who have not yet read or seen the plays, but because absolute clarity of the story-line is a primary consideration for Brecht. Then an attempt is made to characterise each play and explore some of its salient features.

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A.D.W.

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