

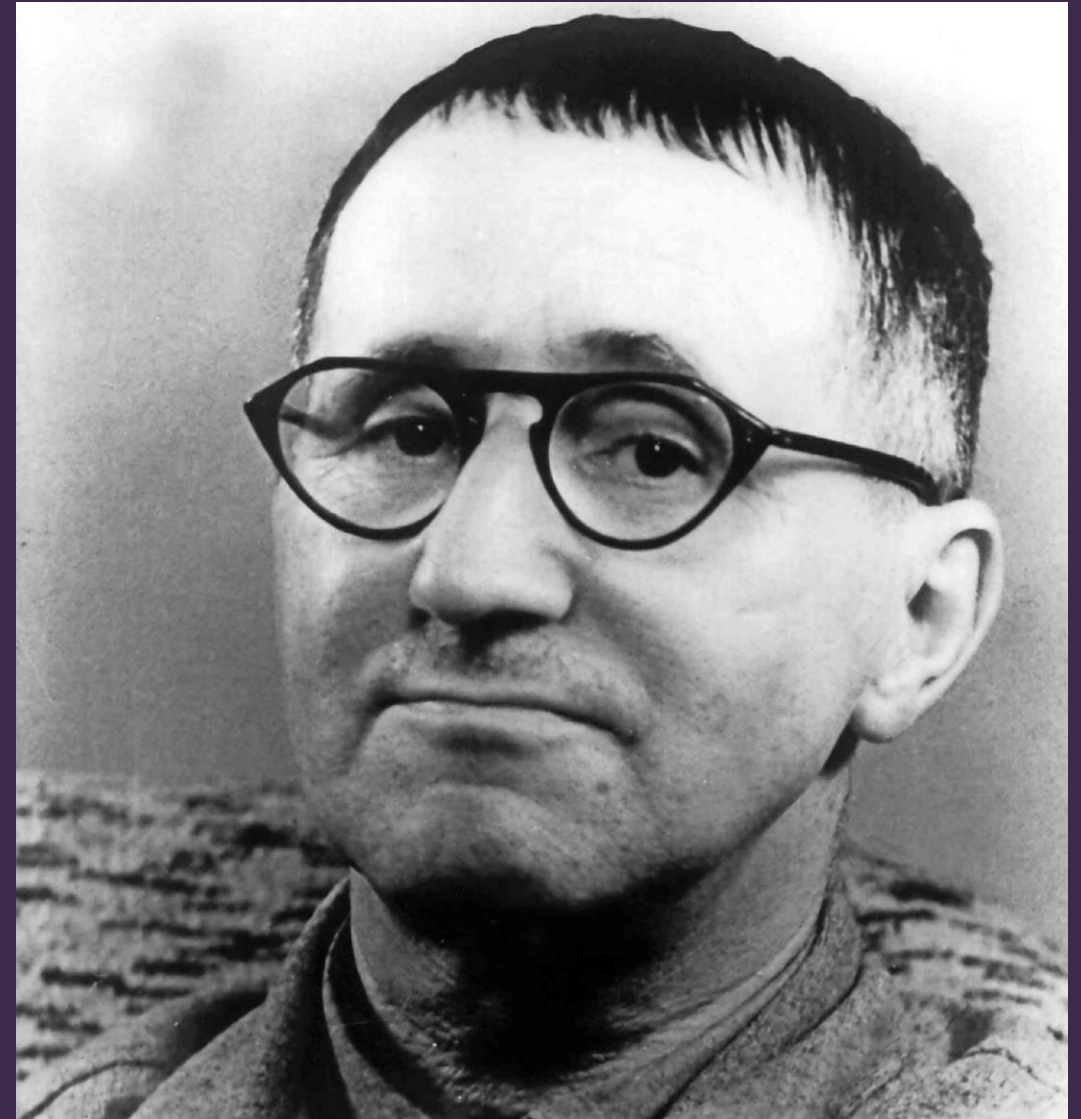
Practical Performance Presentation

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Angel changes Slide

Bertolt Brecht

Who he was and what
he did



Brecht's Basic Background



- Brecht was a playwright
- He 'was born in 1898'
- 'in the German town of Augsburg'.
- Died in 1956.
- He served 'as a medical orderly in the First World War'
- 'He went first to Munich and then to Berlin in pursuit of a career in the theatre'.

Brecht's Theatre

What I'll be covering

- Epic Theatre
- Verfremdungseffekt (V-Effect / alienation effect)
- Song, Music and Dance

What else there is

- Expressionism
- Political Theatre
- Unconventional stages
- Spass
- Gestus

Epic Theatre

- 'Epic theatre (Brechtian theatre) breaks the **fourth wall**, the imaginary wall between the actors and audience which keeps them as observers. They are active members of the theatrical experience as they are kept thinking throughout, not switching off.'



Verfremdungseffekt (V-Effect/ alianation effect)

- 'Many people speak of alienating the audience (making them separate from the action) but verfremdungseffekt actually translates more closely to 'distancing.' However, it's still often called the **alienation** effect or is shortened to the 'v' effect and there are many ways of using it.'
- 'Brecht definitely wanted his audience to remain interested and engaged by the drama otherwise his message would be lost. It was **emotional investment** in the characters he aimed to avoid.'

Devises used in Verfremdungseffekt

- Narration /and third person narration
- Speaking stage directions
- Direct Adress
- Using Placards

Narration/and Third Person Narration

- 'Narration is used to remind the audience that what they're watching is a presentation of a story. Sometimes the narrator will tell us what happens in the story before it has happened. This is a good way of making sure that we don't become emotionally involved in the action to come as we already know the outcome.'
- To have an effect of breaking fourth wall, having a character come out of role to speak directly to the audience is a great way to remind them how they are watching a story and don't become sucked into the plot. For example, a character on stage stepping out of role may tell the audience their emotions, how they're feeling at the time and why.

Speaking the Stage Directions + Direct Address

Speaking the Stage Directions

- On stage, the characters or a narrator would read out their stage directions whilst performing the actions.
- For example, a character telling the audience there is a change of slide whilst changing the slide of the PowerPoint.
- 'This device was used by Brecht more frequently in rehearsal than performance.'
- It was used to remind the audience they need to look at the characters objectively.

Direct Address

- Direct Address is speaking directly to the audience. Like how I'm performing to you today. This could be in character or breaking role to do so.
 - 'Speaking directly to the audience breaks the fourth wall and destroys any illusion of reality.'
 - Characters would break the fourth wall and speak directly to the audience to give them some insight of the scene, details not spoken in the dialogue. It's said directly to the audience so the other characters cannot hear.
 - The device 'Direct Address' 'destroys any illusion of reality', meaning it reminds the audience it's a performance they should be analysing not being drawn into the plot.
- Angel changes Slide*

Placards

- Placards are written information that isn't told in the scene, for example 'Two Years Later'.
- They are usually pieces of card held up by a character or someone coming on from off stage for this specific reason, for example walking across the stage holding the placard.
- Placards could also be in the form of 'Multimedia or a PowerPoint slideshow'. Just how I am performing to you today, using PowerPoint.
- Placards was an effective way to keep the audience knowing information that wasn't portrayed in the scene being performed but is needed to know.
- It is also key to not sucking in the audience to the story line by keeping them aware it's just a performance.
- 'What's important is that the information doesn't just comment upon the action but deepens our understanding of it.'

Use of Song, Music and Dance

- Brecht included song music and dance in his theatre to help 'remind the audience that they are not watching real life'
- 'Often the songs are juxtaposed ironically, with happy upbeat music contrasting with dark, deep lyrics.'
- [Act I Finale from Threepenny Opera - YouTube](#)
- New Line Theatre's 2015 production of The Threepenny Opera, by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, adapted into English by Marc Blitzstein.