Brecht... somehow wanted a narrative theatre rather than one of illusion. He didn't want the actor to awaken the illusion that he suffered or was in agony and—to a certain extent—he didn't want the actor to “sink into a role”. And that's what I find remarkable: that he completely accepted me as an actor, while I have been my whole life long an actor who becomes the role, who immerses himself in the part, in pain, or in agony, or whatever there is to present. It's remarkable that I never played in the manner he wanted, and yet he accepted me entirely in my acting method.

Erwin Faber

Brecht loved the actor above all else. He went so far as to say that in an age where there are no longer great actors, there are no good dramatists. When he wrote a play, he wrote it for the talent that was then in Germany.

Käthie Reichel

Erwin Faber (left) as Edward and Hans Schweikart as Baldock. Premiere of Edward II at the Munich Kammerspiele, March 18, 1924.
Between September 1922 and March 1924, Bertolt Brecht worked in Munich on the original productions of three of his four plays, Drums in the Night, In the Jungle (later called Jungle and finally, In the Jungle of Cities), and Edward II. During this brief span of a year and a half, Brecht also made a short film, Mysteries of a Barber Shop, with many of the same actors from the three play productions. Unlike Brecht's later theatre work, which is thoroughly documented with many photographs and extensive production notes, these earliest productions remain relatively obscure. In an attempt to add to the information we do have, interviews were conducted with the three surviving actors in those first productions of Brecht's work: Hans Schweikart, who played a significant supporting role in Edward II; Blandine Ebinger, who played the comic-romantic lead in Mysteries of a Barber Shop (as well as several leading roles in other Brecht productions outside of Munich), and Erwin Faber, whose portrayals of lead roles in each of the four productions forms a veritable through-line of Brecht's professional work in his Munich years. Since the subject of the interviews was some fifty years past, many of the details of the productions had been forgotten; yet the amount of information recalled by these actors is probably due to the fact that all three still actively participate in theatre production today. (Information in the following conversations has been extracted from as many as three different interviews over a period of up to a year.)

I. DRUMS IN THE NIGHT

By the time that Otto Falckenberg began to cast Drums in the Night in late spring of 1922, the Kammerspiele (literally: the "chamber plays") was internationally reknowned for its many avant-garde productions and was well suited for the naturalistic-expressionistic character of Brecht's "comedy." On their intimate stage of "barely twenty-five feet in width and no depth" the Kammerspiele had premiered plays by the Naturalists Hauptmann and Ibsen as well as by the Expressionists Wedekind, Strindberg and Kaiser. Falckenberg had firmly established his reputation as the "matrix of Munich Expressionism" with his productions of Strindberg's Ghost Sonata (1 May 1915) and Kaiser's From Morning till Midnight (28 April 1917). As artistic director of the Kammerspiele from 1917 on, he had gathered an ensemble of young actors who could perform his productions. The casting of Drums in the Night reflected the "Falckenberg Style" in the variety of extreme character types and the robustness of the lead actor, Erwin Faber. Although Faber had been "discovered" by Falckenberg and had joined the Kammerspiele in 1916 to act in many of Falckenberg's productions, in 1920 he became the leading actor at the National Theatre and had to be "borrowed" to play the role of Andreas Kragler in Drums in the Night. (Faber was still acting with the National Theatre at the age of 86.)

My first questions concern Drums in the Night...
FABER: That premiered in September of 1922.
How did you come to be cast in the role of Andreas Kragler?
Brecht was then dramaturg at the Kammerspiele and requested that I play the lead in Drums in the Night... so Falckenberg in turn asked the director of the National Theatre (Carl Zeiss) who released me for the production.
Had you known Brecht before that?
Yes. We would sometimes go for walks in the woods and he'd play his guitar and sing—in a somewhat raspy voice—his "Ballad of the Drowned Girl" and "The Ballad of the Dead Soldier"...
Do you know why Brecht recommended you to Falckenberg?
Who can say what was on his mind?... I only know that he had seen me in several lead roles and must have been struck by something he saw...
Act II of Drums in the Night (The Picadillybar). Actors, left to right, are Else Kündinger, Wilhelmine They, Otto Stoekel, Felix Gluth, Erwin Faber, Kurt Korwitz, Hans Leibelt, and Annemarie Hase.

Act IV of Drums in the Night (A Small Gin Mill) Kragler (Erwin Faber): "You can kiss my ass with your revolution..."
Falckenberg rehearsed *Drums in the Night* for nearly four and a half weeks. Wasn't that unusually long for productions at the Kammerspiele at that time? *Falckenberg was still the master of the theatre, and although it's true that he had to bring out a production every three or four weeks... when he directed, he wouldn't produce the play until he was satisfied. We had rehearsed The Conspiracy of Fiesco of Genua (11 March 1920) for almost six weeks, and for those times that was quite a lot. Then I played Hamlet under Erich Engel's direction (9 March 1922) and rehearsals lasted nearly six weeks as well.*

How much did Brecht participate in rehearsals for *Drums in the Night?*

*He would just sit in the auditorium and observe. He didn't yet take an active part... Not at all? Hardly at all. Just conversations on the stage after rehearsals, but he didn't yet get very involved.*

Did he change the text of *Drums in the Night* during those rehearsals?

*No. In Drums in the Night, he didn't change a thing... There were a few cuts, to clarify the text, but he did not write any new text.*

Looking at the photographs of the production gives the impression that the acting was extremely stylized, with the actors in grotesque and exaggerated postures—the ensemble always gathered around you at center stage. To what extent does this reflect Falckenberg's style of the production?

*The photographs were not “staged” photographs but were made during the course of one of the final dress rehearsals... Our acting style was perhaps not quite so grotesque as the pictures indicate, but the drama was played realistic-expressionistically, as you can see by our realistic costumes and expressionistic setting by (Otto) Reigbert.*

Reviews of your work before *Drums in the Night* had characterized you as an “intuitive expressionistic actor.” To what extent was your portrayal of Kragler expressionistic?

*Falckenberg had wanted us to play the whole thing expressionistically, and I was against it... And Brecht? He was against it, too. But still, the play was already expressionistic, that is, realistic-expressionistic. It was born of the times, and I played Kragler as such... By the time Brecht arrived, the period of Expressionism in Munich had already passed... This play was perhaps one of the last to be played expressionistically.*

Could you characterize Expressionism as you played it?

*Expressionism means a forced, vexed acting method... with great trumpeted means of expression... to speak with agony towards an audience, formally... to yell out the thing that disturbs you, loud and with large gestures. Of course it could also be played quietly, but then it would have to be done with such an intensity that was still an outcry. For example, (Fritz) Kortner rode down those enormous steps crying out like a child, “A horse, a horse...” in Richard III in such an exaggerated, overdone manner.*

Is this to arouse the feeling of the audience?

*Of course. The audience wanted to get excited... The heyday of Expressionism came in the aftermath of World War I, when we were all exhausted by the war: hunger, suffering, and grief was in every family who had lost a loved one. There was a tension that could only be resolved by an outcry.*

Do you feel that you “became” Kragler as you played him?
Yes, of course! It came from my very nature... What I first read in Brecht's script—that was me. It was easy, very easy, to play that role and "become" the character while playing it.

Could you describe your acting method that you then used? I always found something that let me "slip into" a role, to lose myself in ecstasy or in agony or in pain; truly acting and not just indicating.

How did you portray Kragler? Aggressively!... but that came naturally because Drums in the Night was like a fresh piece of meat: It was the truth. Someone had finally understood and expressed the whole chaotic world that grew out of World War I. For us, it was clear what kind of world we were born into, what kind of chaotic world... But Kragler eventually rejected this chaotic world...

You mean, he rejected the (Spartakus) Revolution. He thinks to himself "What should I do? Let myself get shot for these idiots?" He comes home, and his girlfriend has been stolen by a pimp, so he steals her back and thinks to himself: "You can lick my ass with your revolution. I'm going to bed!"

In the final scene of the play, Kragler appears over the "wooden bridge" beneath the moon that glows red with his every entrance. He finds Anna, his lover, and rejects the Spartakus Revolution. ...and I hauled off and threw (the drum of a nickelodeon) at the moon... which was just a red balloon... (Brecht) had found it all laughable, that everything was so incompetent—the whole Revolution here in Munich, just as in Berlin—and he turned it around and made it cynically laughable. He had had no intention of writing a deadly serious revolutionary play. On the contrary, he wanted to show what kind of idiots they were... And at the same time it's a joke on theatre: Away with every kind of blood earnestness!
II. MYSTERIES OF A BARBER SHOP

In February of 1923, a month delay in beginning rehearsals for In the Jungle gave the director, Erich Engel, and Brecht their first chance to make a film: a half-hour, slapstick, melodramatic romance entitled Mysteries of a Barber Shop. The eleven actors Engel and Brecht brought together were a cross section of the acting talent then in Munich: comic character-actors, music-hall comedians, cabaret singers and lead actors of serious dramas. The film, however, reveals a coherent though complicated plot, while it presents a visual collage of German acting styles of the early twenties. One of the only mentions of the film by Brecht was in a letter to Herbert Ihering (who had given Brecht the Kleist Prize for his production of Drums in the Night). In February of 1923, Brecht wrote, “By the way, I’m making a little film with Engel, Ebinger, Valentin, Leibelt, Faber.”

FABER: I was called for about two days of shooting, and the others too . . . Brecht had said to Engel, “Let’s make a film with Karl Valentin. You’ll direct and I’ll write the script.”—which he never did. You see, Valentin had made films earlier, grotesque films, and had a studio in Schwabing that he had rented to make those films, and that’s where we made it . . . and Blandine Ebinger played a role, as did Hans Leibelt and Otto Wernicke. Just about everyone that had a name played in the film . . .

How long did you rehearse?
We didn’t rehearse at all. They started shooting right away, (Faber laughs) whatever came into our heads.

What exactly did Engel and Brecht do for the film?
Hardly anything . . . Engel said to Brecht, “Where is the manuscript for today?” and Brecht searched through his pockets for maybe something he’d written . . . So Engel said to us, “He enters and then he gets (Faber slams the table) ‘pow!’ And then there’s some noise and then . . .” It was all completely improvised without any manuscript, without any goal, without any clear concept at all. And that’s how we made it.

In the film you play a hair specialist, Dr. Moras, and are accidentally shaved to resemble a Chinese by an absent-minded barber played by Karl Valentin; then you get into a duel with saber-wielding Kurt Horwitz (whose head had already been cut off and taped back on by Valentin) and you slice off his head and win the heroine of the film, Blandine Ebinger. Isn’t your fight as a Chinese with an Occidental similar to the conflict of Schlink and Garga in In the Jungle, especially considering that the film was made during a rehearsal delay for In the Jungle?

No, not at all; but some things are carried over (in the film), like the battle between a white and a Chinese . . . not the way it’s fought, just the notion of the fight . . . but it’s difficult to remember many of the details about the film, because we just improvised our parts and right afterwards forgot what we’d done. (Faber even failed to recognize himself when shown photos from the film.) I do remember Valentin cutting off Horwitz’s head, which begins to move around the room on its own . . .

Was that an idea of Brecht’s?
Of course!

Karl Valentin was reknowned for his comic improvisation. Did his work influence your own in the film?

Mine? No. But Brecht . . . he wanted us to improvise the whole thing, because he loved the improvisations of Valentin and Chaplin. He must have thought, “Those are similar comics, aren’t they?” So he made this film.
Above: Karl Valentin in Mysteries of a Barber Shop. Below: Mysteries of a Barber Shop, actors from right to left are Erwin Faber, Otto Wernicke, Max Schreck, Blandine Ebinger, Joseph Eicheim, and Annamarie Hase.
While you were filming, did you make much use of much dialog?

*It was silent film! But still, everyone improvised whatever came into their heads. It was the beginning of the silent films then. The greatest Chaplin films weren’t yet there, but rather his first films struck us more like a circus...*

Was it a problem that Brecht hadn’t written a manuscript at all and relied so much upon mere improvisation?

*Yes and no. You could say that Brecht had taken the film a bit too lightly—that he imagined it to be a little easier than it turned out... We were supposed to become a great film company, and ended up... an impoverished one.*

Yet it’s surprising that Brecht, who had already written three complete film scripts (*Three In a Tower, The Brillantenfresser, and Mysteries of the Jamaica Bar*) in the hopes of making quite a bit of money from film-making, didn’t even try with *Mysteries of a Barber Shop...*

*Well, it was begun frivolously and so it ended. Erich Engel eventually wanted to make films and obviously had hoped to make something out of this one. But after it was over, he pleaded with me, “Erwin, I implore you: Never tell a soul I’ve already made a film!”*

Other evidence suggests that Karl Valentin, the “frustrated Chaplin of Germany,” had also hoped to make money from the film and that his disappointment with its outcome had been one of the darkest moments in his career. This is substantiated by Valentin’s refusal to let the film be released. But if Valentin was unhappy with the film, he didn’t hold it against Brecht, as his participation at Brecht’s rehearsals of *Edward II* later demonstrated. The comic heroine of the film, Blandine Ebinger, whose remarks support those of Faber, recalls that there was neither talk of “serious film making” nor of becoming a financially successful film industry:

*I never heard anything about getting any money out of the film... we didn’t ask for any. Valentin just cut off Horwitz’s head, handed it to me, and I danced around like a little Salomé... it was all done just for fun and laughs.*

Refreshed from his experiment with actors’ improvisation, in film, Brecht wrote his friend Arnold Bronnen: “Tomorrow the little film will be finished, and we’re going to take a bath.”

*(Arnold Bronnen, *Tage mit Brecht.)*

### III. IN THE JUNGLE

Erich Engel’s production of *In the Jungle* finally had its premiere on 9 May 1923, but only after it had met numerous problems. Brecht’s radical depiction of brutal survival-of-the-fittest existence in Chicago had been chosen to be produced in one of the more conservative theatres in Germany—one that had an audience that included growing numbers of the newly formed Nazi party. Engel’s complicated staging of the play, making use of the Residenz-Theater’s enormous revolving stage, had prolonged rehearsals to an unheard of six-week length—a fact that critics later pointed out when they lambasted the premiere. Brecht’s frequent changes in the text had further complicated the production. They included rewrites of the conflict between the two main characters, Garga and Schlink—originally cast with Otto Wernicke and Erwin Faber.

**FABER:** (Brecht) had seen me in the Kammerspiele’s production of a rather unimportant play by (Melchoir) Lengyel, entitled Taifun, in which I played a Japanese... there was a conflict in court between the Japanese and a writer, and this particular role, so (Brecht) said, had impressed him while he wrote the role of the Malaysian in In the Jungle.

Schlink?
Lucie Hohorst and Erwin Faber in the premiere of 'In the Jungle,' Scene 3, Munich, May 9, 1923.

Yes, Schlink . . . Brecht told me he had written Schlink with me in mind.
Then how did you come to be cast as Garga?
Because I preferred the role of Garga: It's more dramatic. Right in the first scene, Garga is continually harpooned by (Schlink), but I react to it, which appealed to me. And Brecht did not object?
He immediately agreed. But Engel and I eventually had quite a few arguments. Both he and I . . . realized that the audience would sit there and have no idea what was happening on the stage, because (Brecht) had intended that Garga's and Schlink's conflict be completely non-physical and that we attack each other only with words . . . he wanted to produce an effect like that of reading a book. And so it happened . . . and so it happened . . . And that was the way we were asked to play. It happened that this one collided with the other but didn't really collide. We were just like fish in an aquarium.
Did the conflict with Engel concern the overall concept of the play?
No. It was more a question of style, acting style.
How did you want to play it?
Because of my theatre instinct, I was in favor of playing the drama so that the audience would be drawn up into the plot—that they would be moved and suddenly interested in what's happening. But in In the Jungle that is extremely hard, because it's not written that way. It's an atmospheric play, and somehow you've got to understand the atmosphere to be moved by it. Whereas, if you want a clear, tangible action you can follow to figure out its meaning, then you've got yourself the wrong play.

What kind of atmosphere did Brecht and Engel attempt to create?
In In the Jungle Brecht somehow got the idea that without schnapps there wouldn't be much left. So there was quite a lot of drinking . . .

Real alcohol on the stage?
No, not real alcohol—just in the play, just as there was music in just about every scene. Brecht had bought himself a 25-mark tin gramophone and used to play American rhythm songs and such, just to get into the mood to write the play, while he was visualizing his own world, his own Chicago . . . consequently the drama plays like a ballad.

In the pictures of the production, your portrayal of Garga appears quite defensive and distressed, with your hands forever in your pockets, slouched forward, in unkempt clothes, solemn-faced—especially when compared with the aggressive appearance of Schlink. Wasn't your portrayal of Garga contrary to your usually “aggressive” characterizations up till then?
Yes, but Garga becomes ever more aggressive in the course of the play. Still, the conflict lies in the speeches, so that while we fought each other like boxers, we only

*Scene 9 of In the Jungle (Bar across the street from the Prison.) Jane Garga (Charlotte Krüger) in front and slightly to the left, Garga (Erwin Faber) is second from the right.*
Scene 1 of *In the Jungle* (C. Mayne's Lending Library). Otto Wernicke as Schlink and Erwin Faber as Garga. "We swam past each other like fishes in an aquarium . . ."

harpooned each other with words . . . But to make it a great success, you'd have to rewrite the whole play, and that's exactly what (Brecht) didn't want. It was his experiment, as if reading a book or a story.

Did Engel agree with Brecht's idea?

Not entirely. That's why we fought so much. The arguments became so intense that one day the rehearsals had to be stopped. Then, together with the theatre director (Carl Zeiss), and the dramaturg (Jakob Greis), Brecht, Engel and I went to the dramaturg's office and talked over the conflict within the play, and still weren't able to reach an agreement when we broke for lunch. By four we were finally able to resume the rehearsals . . .

But Brecht won.

*In what way?*

That you should play it like "fishes in an aquarium."

*That's right, but he still had to change a lot. I eventually had five different manuscripts . . .*

Yet, despite the general praise of the reviews for your and Wernicke's acting in the production, the production had to be closed after only six performances . . .

*Of course! I've never seen such pandemonium on opening night. It was the time that the Völkischer Beobachter—the Nazi newspaper—first came out—only six months before the Hitler Putsch in Munich . . . The audience threw rotten eggs and stink-bombs onto the stage, and the performance had to be stopped, the theatre aired out, and even at the premiere of the play the police had to come, where they sat in every row of the theatre, while we played on with a half-lit house. It was the same with later performances. The audience fought with each other, and it was a sight . . .*
Scene 10 of In the Jungle (A deserted tent along Lake Michigan). In tent, left to right, are Marie Koppenhofer, Otto Wernicke, and Erwin Faber.

IV. EDWARD II

FABER: Brecht had a contract to direct a Shakespeare at the Kammerspiele; Macbeth, Coriolanus came to mind, as did King Lear. So after my performance we would meet every evening in the Amalkasten (a café across from the Kammerspiele) and make plans... At that time (Albert) Ehrenstein, a noted translator of Chinese literature and friend of mine, sent me a play from Berlin... I was supposed to play it in Berlin with Elisabeth Bergner, but as I read it I felt that its writer was very much akin to Brecht... So I brought the play to Brecht, who took it with him and returned the next day with all the poetry reworked, and I told him, "That is no longer Edward II from Marlowe but Wenzelaus XIV from Brecht!"

Brecht's first work as director began in mid-January of 1924 with rehearsals for his own version of Marlowe's Edward II. The next eight weeks of rehearsals at the Kammerspiele (the longest in that theatre's history up till then) have been well-documented in the memoirs of Berhard Reich and Rudolf Frank and were characterized by extensive rewriting of the text by Brecht—often during the rehearsals—and by a demand for exactitude from the actors on the part of Brecht that verged on the fanatical. For his cast, Brecht had chosen Erwin Faber to play the lead supported by an unusual assortment of actors that included Hans Schweikart, the romantic-lead actor, in the role of Baldock, the betrayer of Edward.

Had you ever played a part like Baldock before?
SCHWEIKART: Actually, no. I had always played the great lovers: Tasso, Lysander, and that type. Baldock was one of my first character roles.

Were the rehearsals for Edward II so long because Brecht was so matter-of-fact?
Yes. He was a fanatic. He paid complete attention (to the details) and we were far too esthetic and too playful and too pretty-colored, and he wanted everything very exact and matter-of-fact.
Was he in this way more dictatorial than Falckenberg?
Yes. That he was. Brecht was very dictatorial, and the discussions with Brecht always led to the point that he was right, and we would do as he wanted.
Would you describe Baldock as you portrayed him?
He was a traitor, and what interested me was that eventually he had a moral breakdown. I knew that a moralist was always tearful or in agony for what he had done. And that pleased Brecht very much.
That you cried on the stage?
Yes, that I feared what I had done, what I had seen.
Was it his idea for you to cry?
No. He saw me do it and approved.
In this way, did Brecht want an emotional production?
He didn't like emotional situations. He seldom had need for them. Rather he usually played direct feelings indirectly. He let the feelings be stated, so that the same feeling is presented from a standpoint critical to the feeling... As Brecht said in his Augsburg dialect, "You've always got to play "thin and mean."
What else did you learn from Brecht as director?
Not to be pathetic and emotional but clear, sober, sharp, exact.
But wasn't Baldock emotional for having cried on the stage?
No. He only cried once; otherwise he remained cool. He talked about his feeling, of his relation to the king, while the same feeling flowed from his soul.

Bernhard Reich recounts one episode during rehearsals for the scene in Edward II in which Baldock surrenders his friend, Edward the King, to the enemy by handing him a handkerchief (see title photograph). After lengthy rehearsals, Brecht yelled out at Schweikart, "Not that way!," referring to Schweikart's hasty and direct way of performing the relatively simple action. Brecht then explained:

"Baldock is a traitor. You must demonstrate the behavior of a traitor. Baldock goes about the betrayal with friendly outstretched arms, tenderly and submissively handing (Edward) the cloth with broad, projecting gestures... The public should note the behavior of a traitor and thereby pay attention! (Bernhard Reich, Im Wettlauf mit der Zeit.)

Scene 2 of Edward II (A London street). Joseph Eicheim as the Moritat seller with Hans Schweikart as Baldock, leaning out the window directly above.
When questioned about this episode, Schweikart replied:

Brecht depended very much upon the moralistic judgments of his characters: It was important for him that we played them as such.

On the small stage of the Kammerspiele, Brecht made extensive use of smaller, more precise gestures as well as quieter, more intensive vocal control. Faber recalls an example of the results of this kind of work and the way in which it contrasted to that of Juergen Fehling's later production of Brecht's Edward II at the large Staatstheater in Berlin (4 December 1924).

In the Brecht production . . . they lead me in chains through England, the two murderers, and then one murderer asks me, "Isn't that right?" and he pulls my head down from behind (Faber flings his head back to one side), but I was already exhausted and said (faint and weak) "Yes." Then the other one pulls my head backwards (Faber twists his head to the other side—his body remaining otherwise motionless). You see: It was so small, not a big to-do. But then I played it under the direction of Fehling in Berlin . . . He had me wrapped in chains and . . . I stood in the middle of the stage with one murderer at the far end of the stage and one at the other, and then they questioned me. The one who asked the question pulled me over to him, and then I collapsed, and then the other asked a question and dragged me over to him, and I collapsed . . . Brecht (who was present at many of the Berlin rehearsals) found that hardly necessary but instead had made it private, like a person really is. The smallest little thing can really hurt you, wound you . . . Brecht drew upon factual reality, so that things became tangible. For example, Edward, if he'd lived today, would be a poor dog—not a great classic figure. Brecht is primarily a naturalist. He works with the smaller, more natural form, to make things clear.

Can you recall another example of Brecht's use of small gestures?

Yes. Earlier in the play, Brecht simply had the three prisoners bound with one piece of cord, and suddenly they were prisoners. It was plastic, like Barlach. Simple, succinct, and clear. (Photo of Scene 7)
Did this smallness of gesture imply that you played Edward II in a naturalistic style, without the tendency towards Expressionism that characterized the Berlin production?

*We played naturalistically from the first scene on, but now and then during Edward’s long tirades there would be moments of Expressionism—it was an exaggerated form of Expressionism but it arose directly from the text.*

How did you portray Edward after his decline, while he was in captivity?

*I used the walls of the set as if I were hunted... and when I felt the net (the metal screen that separated the audience from the stage, which rang out with a clang when Edward touched it) I was filled with horror and, feeling something behind me, I quickly jerked around.*

To what extent did the smallness of the Kammerspiele stage effect the smallness of gestures in the production?

*Quite a bit... Brecht used the small stage effectively with his creation of the street scene in London, where many heads crammed through the small shuttered windows to suggest a crowded city (Photo of Scene 2) as well as the battle scene, in which lighting streaked the actors from the side, so that only a few “extras” who marched around a drop—behind and then in front—on a raked platform created the impressions that there were thousands. They also carried enormous battle knives that sparkled in the light and produced a gruesome clang. It was during this that I called to Gaveston (in a mere whisper) “Gaveston,” and he called back to me from the distance in like fashion. All that took place on the smallest stage. On a larger stage it would hardly have been possible, because you wouldn’t have to have been so creative. We spoke of the atmosphere of In the Jungle. How would you describe the atmosphere Brecht tried to create in Edward II?* **Balladesque...** Brecht in his first works is very balladesque, and that atmosphere was something he could depict superbly... His plastic use of language and of staging—that’s what’s new with Brecht.
Despite the lengthy, detailed work of Brecht with the actors up till the last moment before the premiere, the success of the production was denied through the foibles of a single actor:

FABER: The production would have been a tremendous success, if only (Oskar) Homolka had not been completely drunk as Mortimer... so that at the end of the play, when I was tied up with a cloth over my head, he was supposed to have this tense dialog with me, and nothing came. Suddenly, I noticed his head under mine, and he began talking to me with "Glaggarth." I said, "Horrible, the play is through..." Thank God, it first happened in the last third of the play, because he was unable to play anymore but could only stammer, "Nrmaggargh."

Scene 18 of Edward II. (Westminster.) Oskar Homolka as Mortimer and Erwin Faber as Edward.