

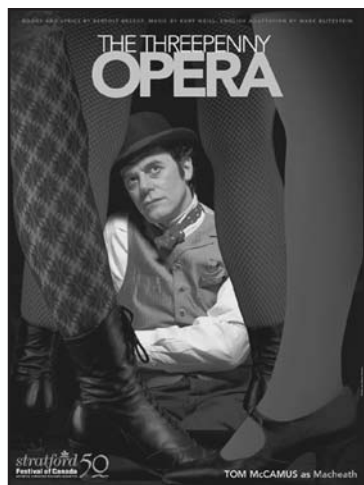
topical Weill

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Spotlight on Weill's Stage Works

A plethora of *Street Scene* stagings offers additional evidence that Weill's American opera has entered the standard repertoire. On the heels of successful presentations by Minnesota Opera (February 2001) and Lyric Opera of Chicago (October 2001) came John Mauerci's rendition of the work mounted at Pittsburgh Opera in February 2002. Two of the foremost U.S. festivals featuring young artists have announced productions in summer 2002: Colorado's Aspen Festival, Julius Rudel conducting (13, 15, 17 August); and the Wolf Trap Opera Company at the 7,000-seat Filene Center outside Washington, D.C. (16–17 August). And *Street Scene* joins the repertoire of Theater Aachen in the coming season (premiere on 28 September 2002).

Canada's famed Stratford Festival raises the curtain on *The Threepenny Opera* on 18 May 2002 for a 70-performance run through 2 November. Stephen Ouimette directs with Don Horsburgh as musical director in the Avon Theatre. Other notable 2002 productions of the Weill/Brecht classic premiere at the Gesher Theatre in Tel Aviv (15 July), at the Pittsburgh Playhouse Repertory Company (1 October), and the Hamburger Kammerspiele (31 December). In Spain, Serveis de L'Espectacle FOCUS begins a national circuit of *Die Dreigroschenoper* in Barcelona on 15 July, one of two Iberian Weill tours; Logistica Cultural y Producciones continues its production of *Die sieben Todsünden* begun in 2001.

After a successful opening at the 2002 Kurt Weill Fest (reviewed on p. 21 of this Newsletter), a new production of *Johnny Johnson* will be transferred by co-producer Neue Oper Wien to the Schloßtheater Laxenburg for a run of ten performances as part of the Laxenburger Kultursommer. Three additional performances will take place at the Kleistforum Frankfurt a. d. Oder on 11–13 September 2002, and plans are underway for a production in Bremen in fall 2002.

As an epilog to the Theater Chemnitz production of *Der Weg der Verheißung*, the Robert-Schumann-Philharmonie and soloists from the Chemnitz Oper, with conductor Fabrice Bollon, presented excerpts from the work in concert on 4 March 2002. The concert, hosted by the Chemnitz Rotary along with the Theater, was a benefit in support of rebuilding the Chemnitz Synagogue. Following the concert, costumes, props, and set pieces from David Sharir's production were sold at auction.



Los 7 Pecados Capitales © Victoria Contreras

New Publications

At long last, a piano/vocal score of *Die Dreigroschenoper* with English lyrics is now available. Based on the Kurt Weill Edition prepared by Stephen Hinton and Edward Harsh, and published in Europe by Universal Edition and in the U. S. by European American Music, the score incorporates Michael Feingold's 1989 translation. In March 2002 Foster Hirsch's *Kurt Weill on Stage: From Berlin to Broadway* (Knopf) appeared, containing the first in-depth survey of Weill's American musicals. The next volume of the Kurt Weill Edition, *The Firebrand of Florence*, will be available in September 2002.

Ronald L. Freed (1937–2002)

Ronald L. Freed, a leading figure in the world of classical music publishing, died on 20 February 2002 in Miami, Florida. He was sixty-four and lived in Miami Beach and New York. Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on 14 August 1937, he later moved with his family to Houston. He studied singing at the New England Conservatory and The Juilliard School, from which he graduated in 1962. His first job in the publishing business was at the Peer-Southern company in New York, where he edited scores of Charles Ives and worked closely with such composers as David Diamond, Ned Rorem, and Virgil Thomson. In 1977 he was chosen to be the chief of the new European American Music Distributors Corporation, a joint company of Universal Edition and Schott Musik International, based in New Jersey, and subsequently relocated to Paoli, Pennsylvania. EAM publishes music by American composers, including Kurt Weill, and is the U.S. representative of numerous European publishing houses. In 1999 the company entered into a joint venture with Warner Brothers Publications and relocated to Miami. Ronald Freed served four terms as the president of the Music Publishers Association and on the board of the Charles Ives Society. At various times he served as a member of ASCAP's Board, on its Symphony and Concert Committee, and on its Board of Review. In recognition of Mr. Freed's tireless efforts on behalf of the music of Kurt Weill, the Board of Trustees of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music has bestowed its Distinguished Achievement Award on him posthumously. A vocal scholarship fund has been established in his memory at The Juilliard School.

Grants and Other Kudos

2001 Kurt Weill Prizes for Distinguished Scholarship in Music Theater

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, American Musicological Society, American Society for Theatre Research, and Modern Language Association awarded the 2001 Kurt Weill Prizes to a book and two articles. *The Ballets Russes and Its World*, edited by Lynn Garafola and Nancy Van Norman Baer (Yale University Press, 1999), won a cash prize of \$2,500. The book's editors were singled out by the prize committee for bringing to life a critical chapter of twentieth-century artistic achievement through essays, facsimiles of sets and costumes, photographs, and other material. The \$500 prize in the article category was shared by Lisa Barg's "Black Voices/White Sounds: Race and Representation in Virgil Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*" (*American Music*, Summer 2000) and Robert Fink's "'Rigorous' (♩=126): The Rite of Spring and the Forging of a Modernist Performing Style" (*Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1999). The panel cited Barg's powerfully original discussion of issues of race and representation in the work of a paradigmatic American modernist; Fink was praised for his command of a wide range of source material and his lucidity in addressing issues of modernity.

Established in 1995 and awarded biennially, the Kurt Weill Prize honors outstanding scholarship about twentieth-century music theater. Submission deadline for the 2003 Kurt Weill Prize is 30 April 2003, for works first published in calendar years 2001 and 2002.

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music encourages individuals and performing groups to apply for grants. Further information is available on the Foundation's website (www.kwf.org) or by phone (212-505-5240).

Weill Article Awarded ASCAP Deems Taylor Award

The American Society of Composers, Authors & Publishers bestowed a 2001 Deems Taylor Award on Kim H. Kowalke, President of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, for his essay "I'm an American! Whitman, Weill, and Cultural Identity," published in *Walt Whitman and Modern Music: War, Desire, and the Trials of Nationhood* (Garland, 2000). This is the fifth Deems Taylor Award for Kowalke, who was one of nine writers honored in the category of journal, magazine, and newspaper articles, and program and liner notes. Twenty-nine Deems Taylor Awards were presented at the 5 December 2001 ceremony at New York City's Lincoln Center, the 34th annual ASCAP awards for outstanding print, broadcast, and new media coverage of music.

Vienna's "Walk of Fame"

Kurt Weill is one of seventy masters of classical music honored in the "Walk of Fame" which has been installed in the pavement between the Theater an der Wien and St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. Along with the likes of Beethoven, Mozart, and Strauss, Weill is commemorated with a marble star bearing his name, portrait, birth and death dates, and signature.

The Show Must Go On

Dicapo Opera, recipient of a 2002 Kurt Weill Foundation Professional Performance Grant for its production of *Street Scene*, suffered a setback on the opera's opening night, 15 February 2002, as reported by one reviewer:

"Dicapo's premiere got some extra drama when Allison Keil, the soprano cast in the leading role of Anna Maurrant, ruptured a vocal cord on Friday afternoon. As a result, Mary Ellen Duncan sang and spoke the role from the side of the stage, while Ms. Keil, at the center of the action, pantomimed Mrs. Maurrant . . . oddly enough, this dual casting didn't prove as distracting as one might expect. Ms. Keil has a compelling stage presence, and the poignancy of her enforced silence gave her character an added vulnerability and authority." — Anne Midgette, *The New York Times* (20 February 2002)

2002 Kurt Weill Foundation Grants Awarded

Research and Travel

Diana Diskin, Northridge, California. Grant to support research on *Die Bürgschaft*.

Publication Assistance

Hermann Danuser, Berlin, Germany. Publication of *Amerikanismus/Americanism/Weill. Die Suche nach kulturelle Identität in der Moderne (1900–1950)*.

Professional Performances

Dicapo Opera Theatre, New York, New York. *Street Scene*.

The Midwest Chorale, St. Louis, Missouri. *Der Lindberghflug*.

Pacific Mozart Ensemble, Berkeley, California. *Der Lindberghflug*.

Long Leaf Opera, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. *Lost in the Stars*.

Kurt Weill Gesellschaft, Dessau, Germany. *Die Bürgschaft*.

Kurt Weill Gesellschaft, Dessau, Germany. *Johnny Johnson*.

Pittsburgh Opera, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. *Street Scene*.

College and University Performances

Kurt Weill Akademie Lüdenschied, Lüdenschied, Germany. *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *Marie Galante*.

City College of San Francisco, San Francisco, California. *One Touch of Venus*.

First Framework, London, England. *The Threepenny Opera*.

Weill in the US



Panelists Kim Kowalke, Maury Yeston, Foster Hirsch, Rob Fisher on 4 April 2002

Kurt Weill: Making Music Theater—Library Events

In conjunction with the exhibition “Kurt Weill: Making Music Theater” (8 February–4 May 2002) at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, a series of five events was produced by the Kurt Weill Foundation. On 25 February, Judy Kaye and David Green read Weill/Lenya correspondence focusing on the years 1941–45, from *Lady in the Dark* to *The Firebrand of Florence*. “Unsung

Weill,” eighteen songs cut from Broadway musicals and Hollywood films, was offered on 7 March by Jennifer Goode and Jacob Langfelder, winners of the 2001 Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers, and pianist Keith Thompson. On 4 April, a panel discussion entitled “Kurt Weill and the Golden Age of the American Musical Theater” brought together Rob Fisher, music director of New York City Center’s “Encores!” series, theater historian and biographer Foster Hirsch, music historian Kim H. Kowalke, and two-time Tony Award winning composer Maury Yeston. *Where Do We Go from Here?*, the 20th Century Fox 1945 film classic starring Fred MacMurray with music by Weill and lyrics by Ira Gershwin, was screened on 18 April. After this newsletter went to press, winners of the 2002 Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers were showcased in a 13 May concert of theater songs by Weill and others.

Two additional events had been hosted by the Library for the Performing Arts as of 15 April: on 8 February, an opening reception featured Judy Kaye and Paula Laurence performing Weill songs; on 8 April Foster Hirsch moderated an evening of songs and reminiscences about Weill’s three Broadway collaborations with producer Cheryl Crawford. Original cast members Phoebe Brand (*Johnny Johnson*), Paula Laurence (*One Touch of Venus*), and Nanette Fabray (*Love Life*) appeared, along with Debbie Gravitte, Russell Nype, Kyle Barisich, and Jennifer Goode.



Nanette Fabray, Phoebe Brand, Paula Laurence, enjoying show-theme cakes with Foster Hirsch



photo: Suellen Fitzsimmons

Street Scene at Pittsburgh Opera (premiere 16 February 2002)

As its first English-language main stage presentation in more than twenty-five years, the Pittsburgh Opera presented *Street Scene* in five performances at the Byham Theatre, with conductor John Mauceri and director Sandra Bernhard, employing sets and costumes from recent productions of the work at Central City Opera and Minnesota Opera. The production was supported by a 2002 Kurt Weill Foundation Professional Performance Grant. An accompanying series of educa-

tional programs included a symposium entitled “Street Scene: Theater Reflecting Immigrant Ancestry” and workshops for teachers who were bringing their classes to a student matinee of the production. Students at local schools created a study guide for the performance in the form of a newspaper containing a synopsis of *Street Scene*, analysis of the characters, and articles about the work’s creators and its socio-historical milieu.

“Pittsburgh Opera music director John Mauceri led a performance full of energy but sensitive to every detail of the score. The orchestra played idiomatically, with the solo trumpet especially memorable. Dramatic soprano Karen Huffstodt was superb as Anna Maurant, showing her voice most fully in a solo that expresses a faith in the possibility of a better life, and scaling back without losing presence when singing with others. Baritone Dean Ely offered an astute portrayal of Frank Maurant, angry but ineffectual until he pulls the trigger. Ely’s dark vocal coloration and tapered dynamics emphasized the husband’s bottled-up anger. The young lovers were appealing visually and

vocally, with Yvonne Gonzales’ light voice and decisive personality perfect for Rose Maurant. Tall Tracey Welborn was the scholarly Sam Kaplan, offering a persuasive blend of the naive and ardent. Lois Englund and Mark Martino commanded the stage with a song-and-dance number worlds removed from operatic ballet, but familiar to those who love musical theater. . . . Unobtrusive amplification was used for spoken dialogue, which in *Street Scene* often is accompanied by mood music from the orchestra.” — Mark Kanny, *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* (19 February 2002)



photo: Suellen Fitzsimmons

“The Broadway Musicals of 1933,” Town Hall, New York City (18 March 2002)

“Few people know that in 1933, two decades before the legendary Off-Broadway production of *The Threepenny Opera* opened in New York, a different English-language version of the Brecht-Weill show arrived on Broadway and lasted for only twelve performances. One of the high points of “The Broadway Musicals of 1933,” Monday’s season-opening concert of the Town Hall series Broadway by the Year, was Mark Coffin’s rendition of “The Legend of Mackie Messer,” the 1933 forerunner of “Mack the Knife.” Mr. Coffin, a little-known cabaret performer of exceptional interpretive savvy, delivered a sly, sinister performance that was a dramatic tour de force.” — Stephen Holden, *The New York Times* (21 March 2002)

Stage Revivals on the West Coast

Lady in the Dark, Marin Theatre Company, Mill Valley (premiere 13 November 2001)

“In a sign of the times, Marin Theatre Company has announced that, due to unprecedented demand, director Lee Sankowich’s revival of the 1941 musical, *Lady in the Dark*, will be extended through December 9. According to a box office source, the phones were ‘ringing off the hook as soon as single tickets went on sale.’ . . . Clearly, the show’s best feature is Weill’s beguiling score. This is not the Weill of *The Threepenny Opera* and other edgy, intensely European compositions. This is the Americanized Weill who, after fleeing from Hitler in the ’30s, came to New York with his wife Lotte Lenya and began composing in a softer, more melodic style to fit Broadway tastes. Given the disparity between how the musical and dramatic sides have aged, it is not surprising that MTC’s production is at its best in the former. Music director Billy Philadelphia and choreographer Richard Gibbs, both associated with the show’s co-producer, Allegra Theatre Company, coax some fine singing and dancing from the strong ensemble. A sweet-voiced Marsha Mercant (Liza) breezes her way through the Noel Coward-influenced ballads, balancing their sentimentality with a gutsy version of “Jenny.” Patrick Leveque (Randy), Martin Lewis (Kendall), and John Flanagan (Johnson) provide strong support as the main men in her life, as do Livia Genise (Alison) and Julie James (Maggie) as her female assistants. Only Danny Scheie’s flaming gay Paxton seems a bit over the top.” — Charles Brousse, *Marin Independent Journal* (16 November 2001)



Lost in the Stars, California Musical Theater, Sacramento (premiere 10 January 2002)

“*Lost in the Stars*, the 1949 musical by Kurt Weill and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and playwright Maxwell Anderson, has been somewhat neglected in recent years. But the new production by the California Musical Theater opened to cheers Thursday night in the University Theatre at California State University, Sacramento, and is a compelling reminder that no Weill musical can stay neglected for long. . . . The center of it is a benign minister of the Anglican Church named Stephen Kumalo, played in a coruscating mixture of humility and forceful courage by the multigifted James Wheatley, who sets out to find his long-gone son, Absalom, and persuade him to return from Johannesburg to his native hills and valleys. . . . Along the course of this drama are many paths to song for the players and the superb chorus, which hangs around to witness and participate, lending great variety to the stage pictures.” — William Glackin, *Sacramento Bee* (12 January 2002)



photo: John Wagner

Lemper’s *Sins*

National Arts Centre Orchestra, Ottawa (14 and 15 November 2001)

“All Lemper needs to hold an audience’s attention is a microphone and some strong material, and that’s what she had with the richly scored 1933 piece by Weill and Bertolt Brecht, the team that also produced the better-known *Threepenny Opera*. Lemper’s gripping performance and the superb playing by the orchestra under guest conductor Lawrence Foster combined to create what will be remembered as one of the highlights of the music season. . . . The soloist’s only chances to take a break in the piece happen when her family members, sung by a male vocal quartet, comment on the action. Joining Lemper and the NACO for the performance was the Hudson Shad Quartet (bass Wilbur Pauley, tenor Mark Bleeke, baritone Eric Edlund, and bass-baritone Peter Becker). Weill wrote some challenging music for the group, and this American quartet matched Lemper’s contributions with some powerful and expressive singing.” — Steven Mazey, *The Ottawa Citizen* (16 November 2001)

St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (5 and 6 January 2002)

“Given her close identification with the music of Kurt Weill, it was natural that the German actress-singer Ute Lemper would eventually tackle Weill’s 1933 opera/ballet *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Lemper has not only recorded the work but in recent years has performed it with orchestras around the country, and she did so with admirable success this past week-end in concerts with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. . . . Rather than shying away from the bitterness of Brecht’s words, Lemper underscored the tone of anger and irony, building the seventh section (“Envy”) to a fierce climax. After Saturday night’s performance at St. Paul’s Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, the audience gave Lemper and conductor Andreas Delfs enthusiastic applause.” — Michael Anthony, *Star Tribune* (7 January 2002)

Around Europe

***Der Kuhhandel*, Städtische Bühnen Münster (premiere 22 December 2001)**

“German theaters haven’t had much experience with Weill’s *Kuhhandel* and people still wrestle for a ‘definitive version’ of the piece, which premiered in 1990 as a concert version in Cologne. This could be felt in Münster. Despite much cutting and pruning, the *Kuhhandel* still was far too long with a running time of three hours and fifteen minutes. The wrestling can continue; the cow still needs to be rescued. All the same, as far as the music is concerned, Weill’s operetta is a precious discovery. Here, the edgy songs from Weill’s early years encounter the luscious style frequently employed in the musicals that soon followed. With the Städtische Bühnen’s Symphony Orchestra, Christian Voß’s presentation of this music was close to perfection.” — Johannes Loy, *Westfälische Nachrichten* (24 December 2001)

“Director Walter Raffener presents the work like a collection of junk: For three hours he rummages around in a cardboard box (set design by Hermann Feuchter), shines a spotlight on some slyness which lets the ensemble glow quite mischievously—but then there is a lot of dust and emptiness. . . . TV show host Götz Alsmann, portraying the smarmy arms dealer Leslie Jones, offers the audience a solo number and lends the production a wickedly charming bite which it otherwise lacks. . . . Birgit Beckherrn (Juanita) and Mineo Nagata (Juan) are staged as foolish text reciters (but their singing is quite elegant). With her cynical pragmatism, Suzanne McLeod as Juan’s mother and brothel entrepreneur appears to be an evolved version of Brecht’s Mother Courage: as Juan is about to be executed, she kindly asks the firing squad to take a few steps to the left—after all, her facilities have just received a fresh coat of paint.” — Elisabeth Elling, *Westfälischer Anzeiger* (28 December 2001)



photo: Michael Hörnschemeyer

***Die sieben Todsünden*, Opera Narodowa, Warsaw (premiere 16 November 2001)**

“Controversy over the National Opera’s production of Kurt Weill’s *The Seven Deadly Sins* has arisen since its premiere last month. There is a language problem here. The National Opera (Teatr Wielki), which has had an almost twenty-year tradition of performing works in their original language, intended for adult audiences, broke with that tradition when premiering *Die sieben Todsünden*. Knowing that the opera house is equipped to provide supertitles during performances, how could the Opera’s administration believe that these songs could possibly sound better in Polish translation than in their original German? . . . Weill intended his work to be a ballet with song. The National Opera has turned this production into a contemporary theatrical piece with dance, in which Weill’s music functions as background that at times is difficult to hear or even understand in the vernacular translation. The most deadly of sins, however, is that *The Seven Deadly Sins* has not been double-billed with anything else. This is a work that only takes around forty minutes to perform. The opera house’s failure to come up with another forty minutes of Weill’s songs or chamber music to complement the ballet and create an entire evening at the theater is not only a sign of unimaginative programming, but an unforgivable sin of cheating the audience.” — Joseph A. Herter, *Warszawa – What, Where, When* (January 2002)

***Happy End*, Theater St. Gallen (premiere 19 January 2002)**



photo: Sandra D. Sutter

“In his first big production at the Theater St. Gallen, Michael Luisier chose to be matter-of-fact without renouncing all elements of revue. Under the crossbeams of a gigantic railroad bridge (the set was designed by Peter Bissegger), he cleverly combines gangster and Salvation Army scenes, playing unobtrusively with contrasts. Marco Volta’s choreography of the groups, varied but never bold, highlights Bill’s and Lilian’s exceptional positions. And the two leads, Juana von Jascheroff and Domenico Pecoraio, harmonize very well: They successfully create a dialogue in the style of the 1930s, with many fresh and teasing notes that make the erotic tension just audible. Their singing voices are weak in comparison, as most musical aspects seem to have been pushed in the background: The small band (conducted by Geoffrey Abbott) is only in a few cases made visible, on swivel-mounted platforms.” — *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (21 January 2002)

***Der Lindberghflug/ Die sieben Todsünden*, Teatro Lauro Rossi, Macerata (premiere 10 July 2001)**

“It is becoming a bit of a tradition for the Sferisterio organization in Macerata to open the summer season with an unusual pairing: a modern piece to close the Teatro Lauro Rossi and a classic repertory opera to open the Arena Sferisterio. . . . This year the choice fell on a Weill double bill, which opened on July 10, and *Norma*. Of the two one-acters, both on texts by Bertolt Brecht, the first, *Der Lindberghflug*, is an appealing direct homage to the legendary American aviator (played by the rather weak tenor Mark Bleeke), which nevertheless betrays its origins as a radio cantata. The other, *Die sieben Todsünden*, finds Weill at his most inspired, in his writing for the character of Anna, brilliantly played here by Svetla Vassileva (and by her ‘double,’ the dancer Nuria Moreno). Bruno Bartoletti, a veteran of many a modernist campaign, and having recently conducted *Mahagonny* in Genoa, was completely at home with the music. Once again, Hugo De Ana was the hero of the evening. For the first half he actually reconstructed a part of the cockpit of Lindbergh’s plane, and in the second produced a colorful staging that conjured up, with caustic irony and more than a touch of the grotesque, the rhythms, contrasts and moods of the explosive world of American in the late 1920s.” — Giorgio Gualerzi, *Opera* (December 2001)

Weill Performers

Swedish Weill Paradigm

Ever since her exemplary 1994 recording with John Eliot Gardiner and the NDR Orchestra, Weill aficionados have associated the mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter with *Die sieben Todsünden*. She has performed the work numerous times in concert, including a critically acclaimed tour with the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen during Weill's 2000 centenary year. Ms. von Otter's most recent foray into the world of the two Annas was in the Paris Opera's November 2001 production (reviewed on page 18), which has been shown on European television and documented on video. She is also an esteemed performer of Weill songs, as evidenced by reviews of her spring 2002 United States recital tour:

New York (10 March 2002)

"Listeners at Alice Tully Hall on March 10 were probably more geared up for Schubert than for Tom Waits; they got both. . . . There was an immediacy to the Waits song and to 'Nanna's Song' by Weill, which, in a smoky, Lenyaesque reading, was one of the highlights." — Anne Midgette, *The New York Times* (7 April 2002)

Chicago (13 March 2002)

"The evening's highlight came with the Weill songs that showed von Otter as that valued vocalist who can also act. She was spellbindingly convincing as a hard-boiled strumpet singing 'Nanna's Lied'; a sarcastic anti-Nazi belting out 'Schickelgruber' with music-hall gusto; a confused paramour insisting 'Je ne t'aime pas'; and a middle-aged man airing a *cri de coeur* that is 'September Song.' The audience demanded and got three encores." — Ted Shen, *Chicago Tribune* (20 March 2002)



photo: Jim Rakete

Marie Galante, Kurt-Weill-Akademie Lüdenscheid (8 April 2002)

"Victor C. Symonette, the academy's music director, has divested the work, originally over three hours long, of cumbersome dialogue and replaced it with short texts spoken by a narrator without affecting the musical authenticity of Weill's composition. In just under forty-five minutes, *Marie Galante* is presented by a specially assembled orchestra whose eighteen musicians give a nuanced interpretation of the music. . . . The student singers Isabell Münsch, Joulia Ermakova, and Alexandra Gauger all had the chance to study the work and play it on stage [alternating as soloist for Marie's songs]. The title role was thus triple cast, partly to meet the academy's educational purpose. After only a week of rehearsals, the trio performed the demanding part with such bravura that they could compete with professional voices. Rudolf Sparing economically directed a revue-style performance in which Marie is portrayed as a blend of Cinderella and Irma la Douce, while the plot's unrealistic elements are underlined by the multiple casting." — Dieter Brüna, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (10 April 2002)

Jazz Recordings

This Is New—Weill Album from Dee Dee Bridgewater on Verve

The jazz diva Dee Dee Bridgewater showcases songs from her new all-Weill album, *This Is New*, in her 2002 touring schedule, including stops at the Leipzig Gewandhaus (13 April), Hamburg's Musikhalle (18 April), the Alte Oper Frankfurt (21 April), and the Munich and Cologne Philharmonies (26 and 27 April). The tour of Europe and the United States also features appearances at the Nice Jazz Festival (26 July) and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. (18 October). *This is New* was released in Europe in April 2002 and will be in U.S. stores this August.

Green Up Time (Hep CD 2079)

"There is a longish history of jazz musicians grappling with the music of Kurt Weill, but it has rarely been done with anything like the panache that Michael Hashim displays here. To begin with, the natural ebullience of his saxophone playing dispels the reverent gloom which often descends on such enterprises. At the same time, he is careful to retain some of Weill's timbre as well as his melodies, so the instrumentation includes an accordion, a banjo and a string quartet. The ten pieces are drawn pretty equally from Weill's German and American periods, and they're not always the obvious ones either—the lively title song, for instance, comes from the little-known Broadway show *Love Life*. A stimulating and vastly enjoyable set." — Dave Gelly, *The Observer* (18 November 2001)

Weill Featured in Vienna Musikverein Series

Ensemble Kontrapunkte, which specializes in chamber music of the twentieth century, has placed a focus on Weill in its 2001/2002 series in the Brahms-Saal of Vienna's Musikverein. Conducted by Peter Keuschnig, the group programmed suites taken from four Weill stage-works: *Quodlibet*, based on *Zaubernacht* (26 November 2001), Suite from *Der Silbersee* (8 April 2002), Concert Suite from *Marie Galante* (6 May), and *The Judgement of Paris*, arranged from *Die Dreigroschenoper* (3 June).

2002 Lenya Competition

The Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers was established in 1998 as a centennial tribute to Lenya, and it has been recognizing outstanding young musical theater talent ever since then. Finals of the fifth annual Lenya Competition took place on 13 April 2002 at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music, open to singers residing in the United States and Canada who had not yet reached their 32nd birthday as of 31 December 2001. Choosing from a field of thirteen finalists, judges Eric Stern (conductor of Broadway shows and musical theater recordings), Stanley Walden (composer and musical theater educator), and the world-renowned singer Teresa Stratas awarded three prizes. The First Prize of \$5000 went to soprano Lisa Conlon of Rochester, NY. In a tie for Second Prize, baritones Kyle Barisich of New York, NY and Ethan Watermeier of Astoria, NY each won \$2500. In addition, the judges singled out three contestants for special recognition: sopranos Amy Van Looy (Rochester, NY) and Nicole Cabell (Chicago, IL), and baritone Lucas Meachem (Rochester, NY). They received \$500 each, designated as Awards for Outstanding Vocal Talent.

Each contestant was asked to prepare a fifteen-minute program including an aria from the operatic or operetta repertoire, a selection from one of Kurt Weill's European stage works, a selection from one of Weill's American stage works, and a selection from the American musical theater repertoire by a composer other than Weill. The prizewinners presented an array of musical theater selections from Donizetti to Sondheim, as well as pieces from *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, *Love Life*, *Lady in the Dark*, and *The Firebrand of Florence*.

Thirteen competition finalists were selected from regional auditions held in New York City, Rochester, and Chicago. In addition to the winners listed above, finalists included Alta Boover, mezzo-soprano (Rochester, NY); Dianna Dollman, mezzo-soprano (Montreal, Quebec); T. Adam Goos, tenor (Chicago, IL); Michael McKinsey, baritone (Rochester, NY); Kenneth L. Overton, baritone (Bronx, NY); Misty Ann Sturm, soprano (Rochester, NY); and Stephanie Tennill, soprano (New York, NY).



Lisa Conlon, First Prize; Kyle Barisich and Ethan Watermeier, Second Prize (tie)



Competition judges Stanley Walden, Teresa Stratas, and Eric Stern



Outstanding Vocal Talent Awardees (from left) Amy Van Looy, Lucas Meachem, and Nicole Cabell

Brecht's Last Days on Film—*The Farewell* Reviewed

"*The Farewell*, [director] Jan Schütte's portrait of the ailing playwright Bertolt Brecht three days before his death, in the late summer of 1956, is the psychological equivalent of the kind of close-up photo that scours the face to uncover every dermatological blemish and portray the countenance as a map of personal ruin. . . . The story takes place during the last day of Brecht's summer vacation at a lakeside cottage outside the East German town of Buckow, as he and his entourage are preparing to return to East Berlin to begin rehearsals on a new production. Unbeknown to the playwright, the East German authorities inform his wife, Helene Weigel (Monica Bleibtreu), that they are planning to arrest two of his houseguests, Wolfgang Harich, a young political firebrand, and his mistress, Isot Kilian, for high treason. Brecht, by virtue of his status as East Germany's ranking cultural hero, is to be spared prosecution. . . . Josef Bierbichler's Brecht suggests a burly younger King Lear whose ailments only partly diminish his still-hearty sexual appetite. By turns forgetful, peevis, grandiose, and abject, he wields the power of a king accustomed to taking for granted his absolute authority." — Stephen Holden, *The New York Times* (16 January 2002)

2003 is the 75th Jubilee Year of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, which premiered on 3 August 1928 at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm in Berlin.

New Publications

BOOKS

- Anbruch*, 1919–1937. Complete run of the journal in facsimile, available on CD-ROM. Universal Edition.
- Benaïm, Laurence. *Marie Laure de Noailles: la Vicomtesse du Bizarre*. Paris: Grasset, 2001.
- Hirsch, Foster. *Kurt Weill on Stage*. New York: Knopf, 2002.
- Kebir, Sabine. *Helene Weigel: Abstieg in den Ruhm: eine Biographie*. Berlin: Aufbau, 2002 (paperback issue).
- Kuhnt, Christian. *Kurt Weill und das Judentum*. Saarbrücken: Pfau, 2002.
- Marlene Dietrich: *Photographs and Memories*. Compiled by Jean-Jacques Naudet, captions by Maria Riva with Werner Sudendorf. New York: Knopf, 2001.

DISSERTATIONS

- Shin, Hyesu. *Kurt Weill: Sinnlichkeit und Vergnügen in der Musik der zwanziger Jahre*. Ph.D. dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin, 2000.

ARTICLES

- Breivik, Magnar. “Die Oper—Wohin?: On Kurt Weill’s Contributions to a New Opera.” In: *Musikklidenskapelig Årbok 2001* (Musikkvitenskapelig Institutt NTNU Trondheim): 127–142.
- Kramer, Lawrence. “Long Ride in a Slow Machine: The Alienation Effect from Weill to Shostakovich.” In: *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 2001): 216–241.
- Krüger, Antje. “Schnittstellen der Moderne und Postmoderne im Werk von Bertolt Brecht am Beispiel der *Dreigroschenoper*.” In: *Communications* 30, no. 1–2 (June 2001): 38–43.
- Naumann, Thomas. “Brecht und die Bibel.” In: *Dreigroschenheft* (4/2001): 31–40.
- Ritzel, Fred. “Über das Singen von Weill-Songs.” Available on the author’s web site, <http://www.uni-oldenburg.de/musik/weill/material/WeillSingen.htm>.
- Stern, Guy. “Zu einem Reinhardt-Konzept für *The Eternal Road*: Ein unveröffentlichtes Dokument aus dem Kurt Weill Archiv.” In: *Überschreitungen: Dialoge zwischen Literatur- und Theaterwissenschaft, Architektur und Bildender Kunst: Festschrift für Leonard Fiedler zum 60. Geburtstag*, eds. Jörg Sader and Anette Wörner (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002): 179–184.

RECORDINGS

- String Quartet in B minor; String Quartet, op. 8, Leipzig Quartet, Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 307 1071-2.
- Die Dreigroschenoper*, historical recordings, 1929–1934, Symposium 1285.
- Das Berliner Requiem*; Violin Concerto; *Vom Tod im Wald*, various performers, re-issued as part of “Edition Herreweghe,” Harmonia Mundi HMX 2981422.
- Kurt Weill from Berlin to Broadway*, songs arranged for brass quintet, Center City Brass Quintet, Chandos CHAN 9924.
- Kurt Weill: The Centennial*, songs, live recording of concert, Los Angeles, November 2000, LML Music LML CD-301 (2 CD’s).
- Blue Moon Cat: Live At Joe’s Pub*, Catherine Malfitano, VAI 1203.
- Just Between Friends*, Bea Arthur (one-woman show), DRG 12993 (includes “Pirate Jenny” and “It Never Was You”).
- This Is New*, Dee Dee Bridgewater, songs (jazz), Verve 016-884-2 [U.S. release in August].
- Green-Up Time*, Michael Hashim with Kenny Washington and Dennis Irwin, songs (jazz), Hep CD 2079.
- Mack the Knife and Other Berlin Theatre Songs of Kurt Weill*, Sextet of Orchestra USA, Koch Jazz KOC-CD-8588 (re-issue).

