

KURT WEILL NEWSLETTER

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Kurt Weill 1990

KURT-WEILL-FESTIVAL

Schirmherr: Ministerpräsident Johannes Rau



DÜSSELDORF 1990

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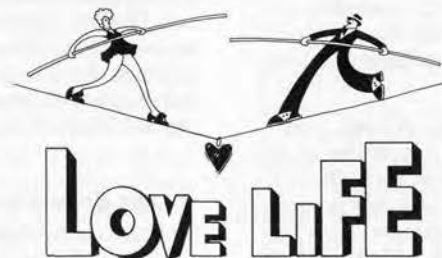
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The American Musical Theater Festival opens the first professional revival of *Love Life* on 10 June at the Walnut Theatre in Philadelphia. The show runs through 24 June, with performances at 8:00 PM Tuesday-Saturday and matinees on 13, 16, 20, and 24 June at 2:00 PM. Members of the creative team are Barry Harman (director), Robert Kapilow (musical director), Chris Chadman (choreographer), Loren Sherman (sets), Randy Barcelo (costumes), and Beverly Emmons (lighting).

Debbie Shapiro, winner of a Tony Award for her performance in *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, and Richard Muenz, most recently seen in the off-Broadway Maltby-Shire musical *Closer Than Ever*, portray the protagonist-couple Susan and Sam Cooper. A full report will appear in the next issue.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Almeida Festival in London

Almeida Presents UK Premieres

This summer the Almeida International Festival of Contemporary Music and Performance will celebrate its tenth anniversary season with three British premieres during its "Weill Event," 14 and 16 June at Union Chapel in London's Islington district. Three theater works will be presented in arrangements devised by David Drew: *Marie Galante* and two suites from Weill's American period, "Cry, The Beloved Country" from *Lost in the Stars*, and "War Play" from *Johnny Johnson*. American singers Angelina Réaux and Damon Evans will sing the leading roles, Ian McDiarmid will narrate, and Robert Ziegler will conduct the Matrix Ensemble.

The Almeida will also present Weill's songs in two contrasting programs. Angelina Réaux, a "legit" soprano who has won enthusiastic acclaim in the US with various Kurt Weill evenings, will make her British debut in a solo, all-Weill program at the Almeida Theatre on 15 June, and The Willem Breuker Kollektief, a Dutch jazz ensemble also performing in Britain for the first time, will create its unique brand of improvisations using Weill's melodies.

Another highlight of the Festival, which runs from 13 June to 14 July, is the world premiere of John Cage's *Europeras III & IV*, a work scored for eight singers, two pianists, and six gramophone operators. Also featured are compositions by Gidon Kremer, Susana Rinaldi, Arvo Pärt, and Henryk Gorecki. For information, telephone the Almeida in London at (71) 226 1577.

Mahagonny Rises in New European Productions

The Hamburg Staatsoper premieres a new production of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* on 9 June. Bruno Weil serves as conductor, Günter Krämer is the stage di-

rector, and the production is by Andreas Reinhardt. The cast includes Eva Gilhofer (Begbick), Trudeliene Schmidt/Ning Liang/Renate Spingler (Jenny), William Pell (Jimmy Mahoney), Toni Blankenheim/Carl Schultz (Trinity Moses), Peter Galliard/Donald George (Jakob Schmidt), and Frieder Stricker (Tobby Higgins). Other dates are 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20 June.

Mahagonny bows at this year's Maggio Musicale Fiorentino at the Teatro Verdi in Florence. Staged by Graham Vick and led by Jan-Latham König, the new production is designed by Maria Bjornson. Catherine Malfitano takes the role of Jenny and Yvonne Minton that of Begbick. Performances are slated for 12, 15, 17, 21 June. Other productions in the Florence May Festival, which runs from 28 April-4 July, are Rimsky-Korsakov's *Invisible City of Kitezh*, *Il Trovatore*, Donizetti's *Parisina*, and *Don Giovanni*.

Street Scene Returns to New York

After a lengthy contractual dispute resulted in the cancellation of the entire Summer-Fall 1989 season, New York City Opera is back on its feet and will undertake an ambitious and interesting schedule, including new productions of a Ravel double-bill *L'heure espagnole/L'enfant et les sortilèges*, Janacek's *From the House of the Dead*, Flotow's *Martha*, and Schoenberg's *Moses and Aron*.

Street Scene re-enters the repertory on 7 September with performances on 12, 15, 20, 23, and 29 September.

Chris Nance will conduct the performances, and Patricia Birch sets the choreography. Jack O'Brien and Jay Lesenger, stage directors, Paul Sylbert, set designer, Marjorie McGown, costume designer, and Gilbert V. Hemsley, Jr., lighting designer, complete the production team. Margaret Cusack and Claudia Cummings will alternate as Anna Maurant, and William Parcher and Charles Karel share the part of the husband Frank Maurant. Maureen O'Flynn assumes the role of their daughter, Rose. Sam Kaplan will be played by Kevin Anderson and Michael Rees Davis.

Les Ballets Jetés to Saratoga Springs

The National Museum of Dance in Saratoga Springs, New York presents the exhibition "Les Ballets 1933" from 23 May to 29 July 1990. The Royal Pavilion Art Gallery and Museums, Brighton, England first mounted the show in 1986, and it subsequently toured to two other locations in England. [See Jane Pritchard's article in vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 10-11.]

Curator Jane Pritchard has reorganized the exhibition for an American audience and emphasized the role played by George Bal-

anchine's "Les Ballets" in the development of ballet history. The organizers were compelled to make minor changes in the exhibition for the Saratoga installation: some set pieces were too fragile to make the trans-Atlantic trip, and all the scenic backdrops from the original production were too tall for the gallery. However, the new version will include photographic reproductions of items recently discovered in France, as well as materials borrowed from several American repositories. The Kurt Weill Foundation has loaned a recently acquired sketch study which Caspar Neher made for the "Anger" scene in *Die sieben Todsünden*.

According to Allison Moore, Museum Director, a new catalog will include memoirs by Boris Kochno, a reprint of an article by Lincoln Kirstein from *Vogue*, 1933, an essay by Pritchard, as well as a checklist of the exhibition. The museum is opening two other exhibitions on 23 May: "100 Years of the Russian Ballet: 1830-1930" (from the Lenin-grad State Museum of Theater and Music) and "Shaping the American Dance Dream," both of which run through 7 October. For further information, call (518) 584-2225.

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The Newsletter is published to provide an open forum wherein interested readers may express a variety of ideas and opinions. The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the publisher's official viewpoint. The editor encourages the submission of articles, reviews, and news items for inclusion in future issues. The submission deadline for the next issue is 1 September 1990.

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Maurice Abravanel, Carolyn Abravanel, Kim Kowalke

Conductor Maurice Abravanel was honored with the first Distinguished Achievement Award given by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music in a ceremony on 23 March 1990 at the International Kurt Weill Symposium, Duisburg, Federal Republic of Germany. Kim H. Kowalke, President, made the presentation during the dinner hosted by Mr. Josef Krips, Mayor of the City of Duisburg, on behalf of the Foundation's Board of Trustees "in recognition of lifetime devotion to the music of Kurt Weill on both sides of the Atlantic." The award of Steuben glass accompanied a citation listing the numerous concert and stage works which Abravanel has conducted throughout his career. Abravanel, conductor and music director emeritus of the Utah Symphony, serves as Artist-in-Residence to the Berkshire Music Center at the Tanglewood Music Festival.

International Advisory Council Meets

The International Advisory Council of the Kurt Weill Foundation met for the first time 25-27 March in Marienthal, West Germany in joint sessions with the Foundation's Board of Trustees and staff. Established in 1989 in an effort to broaden the range of socio-political, economic, cultural, and geographic input and outreach and expand the Foundation's sphere of influence, the Council will be flexible in size and be comprised predominantly of non-Americans, with as wide a geographic distribution as possible. Chaired by the President of the Foundation, the Council will meet at least biennially to advise the officers, staff, and Board on matters of policy and priorities.

Members of the Council attending were David Drew (UK), Jürgen Schebera (GDR), Michael Morley (Australia), Stephen Hinton (FRG), and Marion von Hartlieb (Austria). The agenda of the two-day retreat encompassed a broad variety of topics, including discussion of the Foundation's goals, image, and impact; publications; future projects, including the feasibility of a critical edition; regional concerns; recording projects; artistic policies.

Weill Festival at Boston Conservatory

In recognition of the 90th anniversary of Weill's birth, the Boston Conservatory served up a concentrated but ambitious month-long Weill Festival, from 2 February through 11 March, with works ranging from chamber music to full productions of *The Seven Deadly Sins* and *Lady in the Dark*. In addition to concert performances and productions fea-

turing Weill's music, the Boston Conservatory also presented Angelina Réaux in a recital of Weill songs and Dr. Leonard Lehrman and Helene Williams, in a lecture-concert devoted to the music of Marc Blitzstein and Weill. Neil Donohoe, Chairman, Theater Division, organized the Festival.

Faculty members and selected students opened the festival on 2 February with a varied program, including the Boston premieres of Ofrabs Lieder and the Two Movements for String Quartet. Ms. Réaux's performance on 9 February, was followed by a concert performance of *The Seven Deadly Sins* by the Boston Conservatory Orchestra, Ronald Feldman, conducting, Sara Goldstein, student soloist. On 22-25 February, Anna Sokolow staged a new production of *The Seven Deadly Sins*, sung in English, which utilized a corps of six dancers. Writing in the *Boston Globe*, Debra Cash observed "As the singing Anna, Lisa Lockhart conveys a lucid understanding of Brecht's text and captures Weill's special brand of declamation without corrupting her direct, expressive soprano into Lenya-esque harshness. Dancing Anna, Marianne Kowalski, who will alternate with Kris Mengel, transforms initial modesty into shameless gluttony." Selections from *Down in the Valley*, *One Touch of Venus*, and *Street Scene*, as well as a new dance piece entitled *Weill Dances*, choreography by Susan Rose, with Ms. Rose and Peter di Muro, as faculty soloists, completed the program.

On 2 March, Leonard Lehrman and Helene Williams offered their program "A Blitzstein Cabaret/Weill Symposium" in honor of the birthday anniversary of both composers. *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* figured on the 13 March concert of the Boston Conservatory Wind Ensemble. The festival featured a very successful production of *Lady*

in the Dark, presented by the Conservatory's Theater Division on 8-11 March (for a brief review, see page 25).

French Resistance Drama Televised

Last January's import from London Weekend Television International featured Weill's "J'attends un navire" from *Marie Galante* as the theme music to the British series "Wish Me Luck." Used during opening and closing credits and throughout the seven hour-long episodes, "J'attends un navire," long-identified as a liberation tune of the French Resistance, played perfectly in the docu-drama tracing the involvement of two British women, portrayed by Kate Buffery and Suzanna Hamilton, in the Resistance forces of World War II. It aired in the New York area on WLIW, channel 21, a PBS affiliate.

Weill in Cleveland

The Great Lakes Theater Festival initiated in September 1989 its year-long Kurt Weill Festival at Cleveland with a new production of *The Threepenny Opera*, directed by Victoria Bussert and conducted by Stuart Raleigh. The Festival runs through August 1990 and includes a new production of *Street Scene*, in the summer repertory season of Ohio Light Opera. On 11 July, the Ohio Chamber Orchestra presents the *Marie Galante* Concert Suite and Lyric Opera Cleveland concludes the festival with its August production of *Berlin to Broadway*.

Earlier in the Festival the String Quartet of the Cleveland Octet presented the Cleveland premiere of Weill's complete works for string quartet, the Quartet in B Minor, the Quartet Op. 8, and the rarely performed Two Movements for String Quartet (1922-23), at a 31 March concert at Severance Hall.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Members of the Cleveland Octet include Erich Eichhorn, violin, Mark Dumm, violin, Mark Braunstein, viola, and Bryan Dumm, cello.

Leading music educational institutions in the greater Cleveland area also took part. The Cleveland Institute of Music presented the Violin Concerto, *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*; the Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory of Music, Berea, OH, offered concert performances of *Vom Tod im Wald*, *Bastille Music*, and the Cello Sonata; *Frauentanz* figured on a Cleveland Music School Settlement program; and the Opera Theater of the Oberlin College Conservatory presented a production of *Der Jasager*.

A range of related and ancillary programs and events testified to wide community interest. In May, the Tom Evert Dance Company, a contemporary ensemble, presented a new piece on Weill songs. Throughout the season radio station WCLV-FM broadcast an ongoing series devoted to Weill's European and American stage and concert works. The Cleveland Cinémathèque at the Cleveland Institute of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Art both offered surveys of films for which Weill composed the score or which were adapted from his stage works. In addition, the Cleveland Museum of Art organized an exhibition "Cross Section: Graphic Art in Germany after the First World War," which considered the art of Grosz, Beckmann, Dix, Klee, and Neher, among others.



Macheath (Neal Ben-Ari) awaits his hanging in the Great Lakes Theater Festival *Threepenny Opera*. Victoria Bussert, director. Photo: Roger Mastroianni.

1990 Grants Awarded

In December 1989 the Board of Trustees of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc. approved the recommendations of the Independent Grants Advisory Panel to award the grants listed below in the areas of research and performance.

Research

James Zychowicz, Madison, WI. Travel grant to the Weill-Lenya Research Center and Yale University to conduct research for a study of Weill's compositional process as demonstrated in the sketches for *Lost in the Stars*.

Dissertation Fellowships

Richard Bower, New York, NY. To support expenses associated with travel to the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas; Federal Theatre Archives, George Mason University; Weill/Lenya Archive, Yale University; and the Library of Congress. "Kurt Weill in America 1935-1941, the Americanization of Weill." Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York.

Tamara Levitz, Rochester, NY. To support expenses associated with travel to the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Berlin (East); Archiv der Akademie der Künste, Berlin (West and East); Preußischer Staatsarchiv, Merseburg, GDR; and the Edward Dent Estate, Cambridge University. "Teaching Composers: Busoni's Master Class in Composition," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Rochester, Eastman School of Music.

Performance

Armadillo String Quartet, Los Angeles. String Quartet in B Minor, String Quartet Op. 8, Two Movements for String Quartet.

Boston Conservatory, Boston. Kurt Weill Festival, including stage productions of *The Seven Deadly Sins* and *Lady in the Dark*.

Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn. Stage production of *The Seven Deadly Sins*.

Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, Brooklyn. "Pantomime" from *Der Protagonist*.

Buffalo State College and the State University of New York at Fredonia. *Der Jasager* and *Down in the Valley*, co-production with the University of Dortmund, Federal Republic of Germany.

City Summer Opera, City College of San Francisco, San Francisco. *Der Silbersee* (in English).

College of DuPage, DuPage, IL. Concert performances of *Down in the Valley* and *Lost in the Stars* ("Cry, The Beloved Country").

Downtown Music Productions, New York. Cello Sonata, *Vom Tod im Wald*, *Frauentanz*.

The Juilliard School, New York. Stage production of *The Seven Deadly Sins*.

MasterSingers of Greater Stamford, Stamford, CT. *Der Lindberghflug*.

The Matrix Ensemble, London. *Mahagonny Songspiel*.

Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA. *Street Scene*.

The New Stagecraft Company, New York. *Happy End*.

New York Chamber Ensemble, New York. *Mahagonny Songspiel*.

Occidental College/Caltech Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles. Second Symphony.

Ohio Light Opera, Wooster, OH. *Street Scene*.

Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Saint Louis. *Der Lindberghflug*.

Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston, Boston. Violin Concerto.

Angelina Réaux, New York. Concert performance of *Marie Galante*.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London. Concert performance of *Johnny Johnson*.

To the Editor:

All that I remember and all that I am able to check agrees with your excellent "A Threepenny Chronology." It is a relief to read something about Weill that contains no misinformation.

One misprint though, on page 15: It should be Trude Hesterberg, not Hesterburg. Hesterberg played "Witwe Begbick" in our Berlin *Mahagonny*. It was bankrolled by her friend, Fritz Schönherr, a Potsdam banker. Aufricht sent me to Potsdam to pick up the cash. Cash. For reasons best known to the banker it was not a check, but banknotes (a considerable amount) in a sealed envelope. Our connection with Trude Hesterberg started earlier. She was a very popular cabaret chanteuse, who had operatic ambitions. She played the "Marquise" in my adaptation of Donizetti's *Regimentstochter*.

Another thing: "Barbara-Song" and *Othello*. It is safe to assume that Brecht at the time he wrote the "Barbara-Song" knew Shakespeare. But it is also safe to assume that he read the celebrated German translation and not the original. Has anyone looked up the *Othello* quotation in the Schlegel-Tieck Shakespeare? I don't have one here.

Robert Vambery
17 February 1990
Los Angeles

To the Editor:

A footnote to David Farneth's excellent account of *3Penny* in films might amuse your readers. David is right that I was hired as lyricist for the 1963 film. Like this: There was a ring at my downstairs bell, and a gentleman with a German accent came up to the apartment. He presented a business card (for Gloria films, I think) and I let him in. He said there was this German film, but they wanted to make a soundtrack in English, too, could they use my lyrics? While I was hesitating at the suddenness of the procedure, he took out a check book and said, "If you agree, I'll pay you right now — \$2000." I agreed, and he departed. I thought the check would probably bounce but it didn't. Next I heard was that the film had opened in New York but that Sammy Davis was singing "Mack the Knife" in Marc Blitzstein's words. I got to see the film myself a dozen years later when I found Yale School of Drama had a print. David is right; bits of Blitzstein were inserted at other points. I hope he or his Estate got their \$2000. In any event, such is or was Life in the Wonderful World of *3Penny Opera*.

Eric Bentley
3 December 1989
New York

To the Editor:

A bit of news for the *Newsletter*. On January 20 I gave at Le Petit Theatre in New Orleans a talk on "Kurt Weill in America." The talk, which was given in conjunction with Le Petit's production of *Dreigroschenoper*, was primarily a show-and-tell, intended for a general audience rather than for specialists. (Members of the audience whom I spoke to after the talk confessed to knowing only the first and last of the songs listed in my next sentence.) Three excellent singers sang the following songs: "Speak Low," "If Love Remains," "One Life to Live," "Here I'll Stay," "That's Him," "Buddy on the Night Shift," "Foolish Heart" (the token piece in 3/4), "A Marble and a Star," "Wouldn't You Like to Be on Broadway?" "What Good Would the Moon Be?" "Stay Well," and "September Song." Response was overwhelmingly that this was wonderful music which ought to be well-known. "If Love Remains," the only song which readers of the *Kurt Weill Newsletter* won't have heard many times, worked very well. For me the talk was part payment of a debt I incurred in 1949, when my life was changed by the experience of seeing *Lost in the Stars*.

Wayne D. Shirley
24 January 1990
Washington, D.C.

To the Editor:

Marc Blitzstein's 85th birthday and Kurt Weill's 90th (on the same day) were celebrated at Boston Conservatory last March 2nd with a Blitzstein Cabaret program, including original works of Blitzstein (edited and, in some cases, completed by me), a number of his Brecht-Weill translations, and a new translation of "J'attends un navire" from *Marie Galante*, written in his spirit. The question of Marc Blitzstein's role and importance in the tradition of Brecht and Weill, separately and together, is one that has been touched on several times in your last two newsletters. Eric Bentley, as he has for the past 35 years — ever since Blitzstein turned down Bentley's offer for him (Bentley) to direct *Threepenny* in 1951 — has been at pains to disparage it.

In his 5 November 1988 letter which appears in vol. 7, no. 1 of the *Newsletter*, Bentley insists that in "many productions" which used the Blitzstein translation, "my [i.e. Bentley's] lyrics were sung." I would challenge Mr. Bentley to quote exact instances where this has occurred, for it is the general consensus of opinion everywhere that the Blitzstein translation is, even today, far superior to any of the various other English translations of *Threepenny* that have been written over a period of nearly 60 years. It is not just a question of "how the English words fit the music." It is a question of words written by a composer who knew the meaning of creating a unity between words and notes so that,

as the late Virgil Thomson wrote in his *Herald Tribune* review (21 March 1954) of the Blitzstein *Threepenny* adaptation, "one can scarcely believe them to be translations at all." This simply cannot be said of any of Bentley's translations; nor of Michael Feingold's popular *Happy End* adaptation which, as Alexander Ringer wrote, "interferes time and again with the characteristic bite of the melodic-rhythmic patterning"; nor even one of the most popular translations of the Broadway of our day — *Les Misérables* — whose words sound like a translation, no matter how they're performed!

Albrecht Dümling's observation (in the same issue) that "Blitzstein was the most important American composer-dramatist to carry on Brecht's [and, one might add, Weill's and Eisler's as well] musical-theatrical impulse" is absolutely correct. (This is borne out in part by Brian Byrnes' review in your last issue of Eric Gordon's Blitzstein biography, on which more in a moment.) Bentley, unable to abide any praise of Blitzstein at all, submits to you a list of other American composers who collaborated with Bentley on setting Bentley's Brecht translations to music and who, in his judgment, were therefore just as important as Blitzstein in America's post-war discovery of Brecht. But this is not the point, for the contributions and achievements in this area of none of these composers — nor of Bentley either — can even begin to compare with Blitzstein's.

Blitzstein's importance has until now been recognized only by a relatively small number of people. One hopes that Eric Gordon's mammoth *Mark the Music: The Life and Work of Marc Blitzstein* will help change that. Brian Byrnes is unfortunately right in criticizing the book as "cluttered" with "gossipy irrelevancies"; and, as a result, no critic to date has yet been able to read the book thoroughly enough to criticize it on its own terms. (My efforts to do precisely that have appeared in the March-April 1990 issue of *Jewish Affairs* and have been submitted to *American Music*.) Nonetheless, the book has had the effect of causing at least some companies to take another look at the forgotten treasure of Blitzstein's creations. These include the Chicago Lyric Opera and New York's Center for Contemporary Opera, which will give the orchestral premiere of *Tales of Malamud* (in my completion).

Byrnes' review merely scratches the surface of the wide range of material in Gordon's book that would be of interest to fans of Kurt Weill. Blitzstein's metamorphosis from a disdainer to an admirer of Weill's music is here, to be sorted out by the diligent reader from among all the other details. (It can also be read about, a bit more cogently and coherently perhaps, in my 1969 paper "The Threepenny Cradle," a comparison between *The Threepenny Opera* and Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock* [unpublished; available from the author].)

In his most colorful, early diatribe on Weill's music, Blitzstein, in a letter dated 28 January 1930 [Gordon, p. 55], writes that Weill's "idea of a 'sonk' is an outlandish mixture of German beer-drinking ditty and American ballad, accompanied *a la marcia* by jazz-band instruments betrayed into a Sousa formula." This in response to a piece of Weill's that appeared on a November-gruppe concert together with an Eisler song cycle that year. (Which Weill piece? Gordon's book maddingly does not say. Perhaps one of you can?)

Two years later, in *Modern Music*, Blitzstein wrote, again disparagingly, of Weill's "super-bourgeois ditties (stilted *Otchi Tchornayas* and *Road-to-Mandalays*)" — which is actually not such an inapt observation, as Jack Gottlieb pointed out at Merkin Hall in September 1987: the resemblance between the famous "Barbara Song" theme and "Otchi Tchornaya" may well be more than coincidental, even if possibly subconscious.

Even as late as January-February 1936, Blitzstein wrote in *Modern Music* of the aforementioned *Marie Galante* song as "about rock-bottom in melodic cheapness." But that year he was to change his mind, radically. Blitzstein's most exciting and illuminating article on the subject, "Weill Scores for Johnny Johnson," came in the November-December 1936 *Modern Music*, where he admits, concerning Weill, "He hasn't changed, I have." ("So had the world," adds Gordon.)

What is important to remember is that Blitzstein's *Cradle Will Rock* vaulted him to the front pages of American newspapers in 1937, and that right up until Weill's death in 1950, Weill's name as a composer in America was never greater than Blitzstein's. In the January-February 1941 *Modern Music*, for example, Samuel Barlow reviewed Blitzstein's *No For An Answer* as being "in just the right American vein which is so conspicuously out of Mr. Kurt Weill's range, for example." Weill must have rankled when he read that.

It is thus not at all impossible that right after the success of Blitzstein's *Cradle*, Weill, as Gordon puts it [p. 166], "began parading about town asking everyone he met, 'Have you seen my new opera?'" It is worth noting, however, that this account is based on Minna Lederman's "Memories of Marc Blitzstein, Music's Angry Man," printed in *Show* in June 1964, in an article which contained a few inaccuracies. In December, 1970, in an interview I had with Lotte Lenya, she denied that this had ever happened: "Kurt would never have done a thing like that." Then again, her memory wasn't perfect either.

In a book this size, there are a few errors, of course, although the 250 pages with notes I sent Dr. Gordon upon receipt of an early draft of the book did manage to dispel some of them. The only one that remains that

directly concerns Weill fans is on p. 352, which asserts that Lucy was the role for which Lenya "had been known," when of course it was not Lucy but Jenny.

Certain errors in Brian Byrnes' review of the book must be set straight. Lukas Foss spells his first name with a "k," not a "c." It is hardly accurate to describe the academic career of a straight-A student, as Blitzstein was at Penn, as "troubled" — he left the college over a dispute concerning whether gym should be a required subject. *Cradle* has "enjoyed many performances" not just "through the 1950's" but well into our own decade. Blitzstein wrote incidental music for Orson Welles' production of *Lear* (as well as a separate orchestral piece entitled "*Lear: A Study*") — not a "musical adaptation of *King Lear*" as stated by Byrnes. And finally, Blitzstein did not try "to incorporate communist philosophy (in a time of burgeoning McCarthyism) into his musical aesthetic." By late 1949 he'd left the Party. But that's for another article.

One last note on Bentley: In April 1971, I attended the Second International Brecht Congress, at Rutgers University, and heard Bentley speak and perform. Due to an embarrassing (for him) question-and-answer period that had been held after his speaking at the First International Brecht Congress a year or so earlier in Wisconsin, this time he spoke on condition of not having to answer questions in public afterwards. Nevertheless, I did get to speak with him privately.

In his talk, he denounced Marc Blitzstein for having "denounced" Hanns Eisler at "a Communist meeting" in Europe during

World War II. I asked him later what meeting he could have been referring to, since I had seen no conclusive evidence up to that time that a) Blitzstein had ever, in fact, been a member of the Party, and b) he had ever spoken at "a Communist meeting." Bentley's reply was, "When two or more Communists meet, isn't that 'a Communist meeting?'" I quoted his answer to me at the final session of the Congress. The reaction of the delegates seemed in general to be, "Oh there goes Bentley again, Red-baiting and slandering Blitzstein whenever he can." It would take until November 1985 for Bentley to admit his "sibling rivalry" with Blitzstein over Brecht. (See *American Theatre* of that month; also Gordon, p. 566, note 5.) Meantime, however, Gordon's book — which Bentley praised, although backhandedly — has contributed considerably to clearing this whole matter up. The "meeting" in question turns out to have been with the Marxist English composer Alan Bush, whom I myself met in 1971, and who spoke of Blitzstein with only the very highest regard. According to Gordon [p. 229], whose (unnamed) sources are Bentley and Eisler's son Georg, "Blitzstein told Bush that to his mind Eisler had 'sold out' in California, separated himself from the progressive movement." And, Gordon adds, this was "a fairly widespread opinion of Eisler among Communist [he might have said 'leftist'] circles." In other words, it hardly merits the term "political denunciation," although Gordon uses the term — obviously Bentley's — on p. 460.

Leonard J. Lehrman
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Conductor Carlos Kalmar and the Dusseldorf Symphoniker take a bow after playing Weill's *Symphony No. 2* in the Tonhalle on 5 April 1990. Photo: Christine Langensiepen.