

KURT-WEILL-FESTIVAL

19 January

Die sieben Todsünden; Gastspiel des Theaters Oberhausen; Kulturhaus Lüdenschheid

2 February

Teacher workshop "Kurt Weill: Composer, Teacher, German Jew, American, Contemporary of Half a Century; Regierungspräsident Arnsberg und Universität Dortmund; Landesmusikakademie NRW e.V.; Burg Nienborg, Heek

21 March

Film screening "Salute to France" (Jean Renoir, director, USA 1944) and "Welcome to Britain"; Filminstitut der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf

22 March

Official Opening of the Festival; Dr. Johannes Rau, Prime Minister of the State of North Rhine Westphalia

Der Kuhhandel, concert performance; WDR-Kölner Rundfunkchor & Rundfunkorchester, Jan Latham-König, conductor; Tonhalle, Düsseldorf (also 23 March in Mülheim and 24 March in Köln)

23 March

International Weill Symposium; Steigenberger Duisburgerhof, Duisburg (also 24-25 March)

24 March

Royal Palace, Der Zar läßt sich photographieren; Theater Oberhausen, Oberhausen (also 8, 25 April, 15 May)

Choral Music Concert *Recordare*, "Legende vom toten Soldaten," *Berliner Requiem*, "Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen," "Four Walt Whitman Songs," "In Times of War and Tumult," *Kiddush*; Niederrheinische Chorgemeinschaft, Chor der Studenten der evangelischen Kirchenmusik an der Robert-Schumann-Hochschule und der Kirchenmusikschule Düsseldorf, Mädchenchor Hannover, Jürgen Wagner, tenor, Wolfgang Holzmair, baritone, Robert-Schumann-Kammerorchester, Bläser der Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, Hartmut Schmidt, Mark-Andreas Schlingensiepen, conductors; Schumannsaal, Düsseldorf

25 March

Exhibition "Von Kurfürstendamm zum Broadway: Kurt Weill (1900-1950)"; Heinrich Heine-Institut, Düsseldorf

Happy End; Theater-AG, Chor und Big Band des Theodor-Fliedner-Gymnasiums Düsseldorf-Kaiserwerth, Eberhard Huppertz, director, Martin Weitkamp, cond.; JAB Junge Aktionsbühne, Düsseldorf (also 26, 27 March)

28 March

Street Scene (Eine Straße in New York); Bühnen der Stadt Bielefeld, Bielefeld (also 1, 7, 10, 14, 26, 27 April; 2, 9 May; 8, 12, 14, 17 June)

30 March

Big Band Concert; Westdeutscher Rundfunk Big Band, Caterina Valente, soprano, Jerry van Rooyen, cond.; Opernhaus, Düsseldorf (also: 1 April, Opernhaus, Aachen; 4 April, Philharmonie, Köln)

1 April

Film screening "Die Dreigroschenoper" (G.W. Pabst, director, Germany, 1931); Filminstitut der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf

3 April

Lecture-demonstration "Erst kommt das Fressen...: The history of *Die Dreigroschenoper*"; Peter Thomas Heydrich; Georg Corman, piano; Palais Wittgenstein, Düsseldorf

5 April

Symphony No. 2; Düsseldorf Symphoniker, Carlos Kalmar; Tonhalle, Düsseldorf (also: 6, 8 April)

7 April

Song concert; Ute Lemper, vocalist, Jürgen Knieper, pianist; Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf

8 April

Film screening "You and Me" (Fritz Lang, director, USA, 1938); Filminstitut der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf

Knickerbocker Holiday, concert performance; Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf

Exhibition "Kurt Weill: Bekenntnis zur Zeit"; Dumont-Lindemann-Archiv, Düsseldorf; Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf

12 April

Die sieben Todsünden; Sinfonietta Düsseldorf, Ute Lemper, vocalist, Mark-Andreas Schlingensiepen, conductor; Schauspielhaus, Düsseldorf (also 15, 16, April)

Chamber Music Concert; Cello Sonata, *Frauentanz*, String Quartet in B minor, String Quartet Op. 8; Robert Schumann Hochschule, Jürgen Kussmaul, conductor; Tonhalle, Kleiner Saal, Düsseldorf

22 April

Film screening "Where Do We From Here" (Gregory Ratoff, director, USA, 1945); Filminstitut der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf

25 April

Woodwind Ensemble Concert; *Violin Concerto, Bastille Music, Vom Tod im Wald, Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*; Ensemble Neue Musik, Christiane Edinger, violinist, Guido Jentjens, bass, Mark-Andreas Schlingensiepen, conductor; Tonhalle, Düsseldorf

29 April

Film screening "Die Dreigroschenoper" (Wolfgang Staudte, director, co-production, Federal Republic of Germany & France, 1962); Filminstitut der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf

DÜSSELDORF 1990

Song recital, "Kurt Weill on Broadway"; Frank Blees, baritone; Linda Bouman, piano; Karl Albert, moderator; Palais Wittgenstein, Düsseldorf

29 March

Der neue Orpheus, Quodlibet, Symphony No. 1; Robert-Schumann-Kammerorchester, Lesley Bollinger, soprano, Marie-Luise Hartmann, violinist, Jürgen Kussmaul, cond.; Tonhalle, Düsseldorf

Dance program, *Die Schiefe/Sieben Miniaturen* (based on *Frauentanz*); Wanda Golonka Tanztheater; Junges Theater in der Altstadt, Düsseldorf

30 May 1990

Seminar, "Kurt Weill and the American Musical"; Mrs. Lys Symonette, Guest lecturer; Robert-Schumann-Hochschule, Düsseldorf

8 June

Lecture-discussion; *Der Jasager and Down in the Valley*; Hans-Werner Henze, principal speaker; Mallinckrodt-Gymnasium, Dortmund

8, 11, 12 June

Der Jasager, Down in the Valley; University of Dortmund, Buffalo State College, State University of New York-Fredonia, Dr. Willi Gundlach; Haam, Recklinghausen, Dortmund

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Scenes from the International Kurt Weill Symposium Duisburg 23–25 March 1990



*Top: Gernot Born, Rector of the University of Duisburg welcomes the audience to the session "Kurt Weill und die Idee einer 'mittleren musik.'" Photo: Frank Augstein.
Middle: Informal discussions. Photo: Volker Herold.
Bottom: Partial view of a symposium session. Photo: Volker Herold.*



KURT-WEILL-FESTIVAL

(Re-) Unification?

by Christopher Hailey

Public anniversaries are an artifice. In America such celebrations are most often devoted to producing patriotic extravaganzas, commemorating assassinations, and marketing sports events. In Germany, on the other hand, almost any anniversary divisible by five or ten can generate a flurry of activity, sage commentary, and perhaps a postage stamp. This German passion for the theater of anniversaries was not lost upon the Kurt Weill Foundation, which, with an enterprising bustle usually reserved for centennials, declared 1990 a Kurt Weill year (fortunate timing since Mozart and Columbus had prior claims on 1991 and 1992 and history had other designs for 1989). The months-long festival being held in the German state of North Rhine Westphalia is surely among the most comprehensive ever attempted for any twentieth-century composer. From March of this year into the beginning of the next, dozens of performances and productions, broadcasts, and exhibitions betoken, if nothing else, an impressive feat of logistic coordination. Past Weill festivals and exhibitions held in Berlin (1975) and New York (1976 and 1987), as well as the 1983 New Haven conference (celebrating the opening of the Weill-Lenya Research Center and the Weill-Lenya Archive at Yale University), may have had greater focus, but even in sum they did not approach the breadth of the current activities in Germany. And the German festival is just one component of many, for the celebration of the Weill year extends far beyond the banks of the Rhine; a poster-sized calendar has documented in advance a world-wide array of stage productions, concerts, publications, and conferences, and an eye-catching logo has been designed to identify the participants. Having thus established the international scope of the "event," there remains the question of its relevance.

Alas, the winds of historical change that swept last year to such a dramatic close continue to preoccupy our attention. The efforts to reshape the now rickety political structures of Eastern Europe, the talk of liberation and democratization, of independence and self-determination have become nodal points at which dreams and reality converge. In Germany, officially divided since 1949, the overriding obsession has been with the question of unification (the prefix "re-" is deemed semantically indelicate, implying as it does *reconstructing* the German Reich as it existed in 1945, or even 1918). Such momentous concerns can overshadow even a 90th birthday. And yet there are times when the forced and the fortuitous complement one another in surprising ways.

The Kurt Weill Conference in Duisburg, held between 23 and 25 March, took place less than one week after the elections in the German Democratic Republic and was attended by an unprecedented number of East Germans, who discussed with candor the issues and controversies facing them today. The GDR is a country in the midst of redefining itself, and for those involved in the arts, there is an understandable anxiety that the country's heavily subsidized cultural and intellectual life may be among the first sacrifices to monetary union and a market economy. But for the West Germans likewise this is a time of reassessment. The prospect of a single fatherland evokes specters of the past and forces confrontation with sometimes painful questions of identity.

Identity is central to the question of Kurt Weill, the German composer of Jewish heritage forced into emigration in mid-career, ultimately to become an American by choice and conviction. History may have cast him as a victim and outsider, but Kurt Weill managed to remain the ever-successful insider, an artist whose restless mind and creative versatility resulted in a series of protean transformations suggesting to some a kind of musical Jekyll and Hyde. Where is the real, essential Kurt Weill? And can such a fragmented image — surely the reflection of his fragmented century — be *re-unified*?

In a brace of keynote papers Stephen Hinton and Kim Kowalke addressed broad contextual issues dealing with Weill's German and American identities. According to Kowalke, Weill's American success can be attributed to the composer's rapid assimilation not only of the styles but the premises of the American musical theater. If, in consequence, Weill's American works resist being judged by the traditional yardstick of European art music, his career as a whole calls into question what Hinton identified as three traditional unities of the "great composer": an organic oeuvre, a biography leading teleologically to a body of late works, and individual works that are complete and autonomous.

Echoing these themes, the conference papers ranged widely, though not evenly, over Weill's life, offering a good mixture of documentary studies by Jürgen Schebera and Jürgen Thym (on Weill's American years, with particular emphasis on the 1940s) and Guy Stern and Tamara Levitz (on Weill's student years, with special attention given Weill's self-identification as a German and a Jew); work-specific examinations (Andreas Hauff and David Drew on *Die Bürgschaft* and Werner Grünzweig on the Whitman songs); and analytical papers, including a sensitive

look at *Der Jasager* by Ian Kemp, formal analyses of Weill's symphonies by Robert Bailey, an examination of Weill's song structures by Michael Morley, and an exemplary sketch study of "My Ship" from *Lady in the Dark* by Bruce D. McClung.

The central session of the conference, entitled "Weill's Place in 20th-Century Music," took as its point of departure Hermann Danuser's examination of the awkward place accorded Weill in several histories of twentieth-century music (he cited textbooks by Eric Salzman, William Austin, and Joseph Machlis). Danuser advocated terminology to describe those composers whose music occupies a dialectical middle ground between traditional harmony and atonality, between the commercial and the avant-garde, the functional and the autonomous, in short, a *mittlere Musik*, ineptly translated in the conference program as "middle-brow" music. While Rudolf Stephan first applied this concept to certain music of the 1920's, Danuser contended that broader application might enable one to embrace Weill's career and oeuvre as an integral whole, as well as offer a point of comparison with like-minded composers. What is more, it would describe a source for the stylistic pluralism of the post-modern age.

Most respondents acknowledged the utility of such an over-arching concept, but, like Thomas Heyn, objected to the value judgment implicit in the term "middle." Heinrich Schwab, for whom Kurt Weill is the anticipation of a new type of artistic personality, suggested that "fusion" (though unfortunately already in use) might more accurately characterize the phenomenon, while Danuser himself proposed "artificial functional music" as a revalorization of mere functional music. Albrecht Dümmling argued that function was of central significance in assessing Weill's work, for he was first and foremost a theater composer for whom the "new" was not a question of style but a matter of purpose and public, a thesis endorsed by Gerd Rienäcker and Jürgen Schebera.

The speculative drift of this session provoked palpable impatience on the part of a number of participants, particularly among the pragmatically minded English-speaking circles. Some of the tension can be attributed to the misunderstandings inherent in a bilingual conference (despite the heroic efforts of two simultaneous translators). In principle, however, Kim Kowalke questioned the value of finding an aesthetic box for Weill, rather than examining the forces that shaped his music or exploring the composer's influence on subsequent musical language and forms. While puzzling over

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questions of historical narrative is certainly an appropriate concern for a conference of specialists, the clash of differing agendas and priorities reflected varying degrees of urgency. Descriptive terminology generally confirms rather than creates perceptions, and for many the Duisburg conference was first and foremost a means of shaping perception, of presenting and exploring an unknown Kurt Weill.

It is inevitable that we chart the contours of the unknown through the known and familiar, and it is not surprising that this conference was haunted by a number of familiar ghosts, invited and uninvited. Both Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler put in frequent, occasionally polemical appearances (via Jost Hermand, Alexander Ringer, and Eberhardt Klemm); in the wings stood Arnold Schoenberg and Theodor W. Adorno as erstwhile arbiters of high art, while the spirit of the late Carl Dahlhaus hovered above as a kind of *deus musicologicus*. Treading lightly between these spectral coordinates, many participants appeared relieved to be able to accord Weill his middle ground between musical worlds, but most seemed uncertain in their footing. Except for Michael Morley, none demonstrated an interest in discussing Weill's music within the context of comparable works by contemporaries, whether it be songs of Gershwin, Porter, or Arlen, or the operas of Hindemith, Schreker, or this year's other ninetieth-birthday celebrant, Ernst Krenek (in his way a no less representative product of twentieth-century culture and worthy of more than a passing mention at this conference). But it is a common problem that adding a third dimension to one artist can flatten the perspective on others.

Part of the problem with staking out a middle ground for Weill is the scholar's infatuation with the tools and terminology of "high art" and artistic autonomy. It is indicative that one of the best papers of the conference was Bruce D. McClung's sketch study that applied the refined scientific methods of "high" musicology to what is in essence a hit tune. On the other hand, it has become an article of faith (not to say fetish) among Weill scholars that in his American years the composer placed great importance upon preparing his own orchestrations, a last refuge, as it were, of sovereign artistic control. Curiously, no one saw fit to illustrate the effects of this much-vaunted instrumental autonomy.

This discrepancy exemplifies one of the central dilemmas of Kurt Weill's oeuvre, for he produced music not for posterity but for the present, and in consequence wrote genres that had contemporary relevance and were subject to contemporary exigencies. It was therefore not always possible to estab-

lish a single "authentic" performing version, nor can one suppose that Weill himself would have wanted one. In such situations the line between license and pedantry can become thin indeed. Because these are controversial topics, in which the Kurt Weill Foundation frequently finds itself enmeshed, it is regrettable that the conference schedule included no formal discussion of performance practice or production history (the informal comments by Maurice Abravanel were accordingly all the more welcome and refreshing). The energy generated by a brief flareup over the performance of *Kuhhandel* or the general indignation over the horrendous productions of *Royal Palace* and *Der Zar läßt sich fotografieren* in Oberhausen suggest that it would have been a timely topic. One of the elements that made the 1983 New Haven conference so vital was the presence of theater practitioners with first-hand experience of Weill and the staging of his works. With so many conductors, stage directors, and *Dramaturgen* in Duisburg, a session of jaw-boning about everything from production styles, performing versions and editions, to performance rights would have been salutary. Such an exchange might also have led to a discussion about the successors to Weill's legacy and thereby established his links to the living theater of today.

At the heart of that living theater and a central component of all aspects of Weill's art is the audience — the true claimant to that middle ground between high and low, theory and history, sources and speculation. In Duisburg, one voiced concern that aesthetic relativism might blur the criteria for judging quality. But this is to overlook the fact that many of Kurt Weill's works — for all their artistry — may quite appropriately be judged according to their degree of popular success, that several of his earlier and later stage works are qualitatively inferior simply because they failed (and in some cases continue to fail) to win and hold an audience. To be sure, circumstances and changing tastes may alter judgments, but Weill was not one to ignore the lessons learned at the box office — even if box office success was not his ultimate goal. Audiences were his sounding boards; to accept their diversity is to understand his pluralism and resist the temptation of tidy unification, whether historical or aesthetic. In the last analysis everyone chooses his or her own Kurt Weill, which colors all the others. Too much historicizing, too much context, too much agonizing over which American or which German work can best introduce Weill to this continent or that obscures the fact that the great works create their own context. *Die Dreigroschenoper* has proven itself capable of creating that context in the theaters around the world; the same might not be true of, say, *Royal Palace* or *Knickerbocker Holiday*,

though each work must be given its fair opportunities. The cultural contexts that created Kurt Weill's oeuvre will never exist again, and, while understanding background can enhance appreciation, it cannot create or insure lasting value. That value must be conferred or denied by the living audience.

The fact that Kurt Weill, like Alban Berg, died at age fifty makes every anniversary a neat commemoration of both his birth and death. While enriching the contemplative perspectives, this mathematical nicety unfortunately reduces by half the opportunities for official celebration. Unfortunately, the magically rounded centennial will likewise mark the millennium, with which few composers could hope to compete. One can well understand the urgency in calling attention to Weill's 90th, for there is much work to be done in the decade to come. It is obvious from the conference papers, as well as from David Farneth's report on current books and dissertations, that research and publication progresses apace. But scholarship and anniversary celebrations can at best bestow what in German one calls an *Ehrenrettung*, a moral vindication or rehabilitation. The respect thus generated can be the first step toward genuine understanding and affection. More important are the points of contact — in whatever year — between the artist with his audience, an audience in most cases blissfully oblivious to history, context, and artistic autonomy.

In the decade ahead we will be taking the measure of our tragically eventful century by examining and assembling the fragments of our experience to make comprehensible the whole. By the year 2000 Germany, indeed Europe, will be unified, and the political, economic, and cultural wounds from the convulsions that rent the fabric of European civilization in 1914 and 1939 may have begun to mend. Kurt Weill's music, which holds a mirror to those calamitous times, may well acquire unity through hindsight. His works may either be among the pieces that refuse to fit or an atoll defining a new middle ground. And we will begin to recognize whether Kurt Weill's works represent disparate documents or ongoing processes, the scars of history or the tissue of its healing.

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Der Kuhhandel. Kölner Rundfunkorchester und Chor; Jan Latham-König, conductor. Tonhalle Düsseldorf. 22 March 1990. Repeated 23 March 1990 at the Staddthalle Mülheim/Ruhr and 24 March 1990 at the Kölner Philharmonie.

The choice of *Der Kuhhandel* as the work to open the musical events associated with the Kurt Weill Festival in North Rhine Westphalia was both imaginative and enterprising. But with the best will in the world, the same could not be said of the result.

Without a closer familiarity with the score than this reviewer possesses, it is difficult to comment constructively on the arrangement of the numbers and the relationship of the narrative to music in this "Konzertante Fassung." What is obvious on a first hearing is the quality of the invention and range of musical styles that distinguish the score. In the same way that the work's storyline incorporates plot elements from operetta and musical comedy, the music moves freely and wittily between these idioms while also nodding in the direction of French and German cabaret and opera. Set in the fictitious Caribbean island republic of Santa Maria, the piece belongs to that genre of inverted utopian operas and operettas which combine traditional elements of the fairytale with a fairly unambiguous critique of aspects of contemporary society.

The traveling American arms dealer Leslie Jones (should he perhaps be renamed Ollie North?) is intent on starting an armaments race between the two neighbors, Ucqua and Santa Maria. Unfortunately, the President of Santa Maria turns out to be not only a university professor, but also a pacifist. Fortunately, money speaks even to the pacifists, and the President is bribed into ordering an arms shipment which he has no intention of using. Jones meantime spreads rumors that both sides are arming themselves for a possible confrontation, to the point that Ucqua seems ready to invade Santa Maria. At a gala dinner, the President is deposed in a *coup d'état* by General Conchas, and war seems just around the corner. Set against these events from higher realms is the tale of romance between the two villagers, Juan and Juanita, and of the symbol and means of their existence, the cow — a motif familiar from fairytales. Twice Juan loses the cow to the government; but despite his conscription, subsequent elevation to the representative of opposition to the regime, and threatened execution by firing squad, all turns out happily-ever-after when it is discovered that none of the weapons sold to both states by Jones's corporation actually works. The hawkish General becomes a dove (this is, after all, fiction, not fact), and the only cloud on the horizon hovers over the cow; she might just

Kurt Weill-Festival in NRW



Der Kuhhandel

Satirische Operette in 2 Akten

von Robert Vambéry

Musik: Kurt Weill

Konzertante Uraufführung

der Originalfassung

WDR

BESETZUNG:

Juanita Sanchez	Lucy Pracock
Juan Santos	Eberhard Büchner
Leslie Jones	Christian Schotenröhr
Präsident Mendez	Walter Raffner
Ximenez	Udo Holdorf
General Garcia Conchas	Oskar Hillebrandt
Emilio Sanchez	Dariusz Niemirawicz
Juan's Mutter	Ingeborg Moss
Gerichtsvollzieher	Frederic Mayer
Odette	Renate Zimmermann
Mädchen	Regina Röttger
Minister u. Redakteur	Franz Gerthsen
Bürgermeister	Heinz Heidbüchel
Rektor	Josef Wagner
Burschen, Soldaten	Gerd Grochowski
Gäste, Diener	Josef Otten
	Dieter Müller
	Heinz Heidbüchel
	Josef Wagner

ERZÄHLERIN

Lore Lorentz

SPRECHER:

Lutz Göhrmeier

KÖLNER RUNDFUNKCHOR

Einstudierung: Gregory Rose

KÖLNER RUNDFUNKORCHESTER

Leitung: Jan Latham-König

MUSIKALISCHE BERATUNG

und KORREKTION:

Lys Symonette

REGIEASSISTENZ:

Ulrich Jökel

REGIE:

Kay Lorentz

TON:

Hermann Kaldehoff und

Siegfried Spittler

PRODUKTIONSASSISTENZ:

Siegfried Köpf

PRODUKTION:

Harald Banter

Pause nach dem 1. Akt

Sendung: 7.4.1990

20.05-22.00 Uhr WDR 4

be repossessed by the government if the breaking of peace proves a little costly.

The work is constructed along more traditional lines than those works that precede it; but Weill cleverly adapts the form to accommodate the conventions of the operetta — lovers' duet, signature tunes for the hero and villain, quartets, trios, and chorus numbers. A presidential recitative is followed by a melting *terzettino*, on whose heels (metaphorically and literally) marches the *scène à faire* of the General with his own version of "I am the very model of a hard-boiled army general." Weill himself noted in a letter to Lenya that, using a knitting metaphor, he had "a very good working skein, things are going wonderfully easy and I have plenty ideas." Certainly the fluency of the melodies and the clarity and the color of the orchestral textures confirm his own assessment. But in this particular performance, "*etwas* (or rather *etwas und noch etwas mehr*) fehlte." First and foremost was the gap between what the music itself was trying to say and its not entirely successful realization in the performance itself. All too often it was the case of Eliot's shadow falling between the idea and the reality, between the motion and the act. Jan Latham-König's conducting technique is certainly strong on motion, with not much of it being translated into effective or meaningful orchestral results. Too often his platform demeanor irresistibly called to mind images of Hoffnung conductors, melting into the podium at the moments of swooning sentiment, or adopting the manner of a rather peremptory drum major when the music assumes a quasi-martial manner.

Personally, I could not care if a conductor offends any potential Hamlets in the audience by sawing too much air, if this were to promote precision, idiomatic playing and, above all, whole-hearted commitment to the music from the players under his baton. Alas, the strings in particular sounded both under-nourished and under-involved, while often the ensemble left a good deal to be desired. The major temptation with this music is for both conductor and orchestra to take it too lightly. It is one thing for Weill to note that the composing "*geht leicht*" (the dual connotation is suggestive); it is quite another for performers to assume that, simply because it may look or seem easy, it requires less attention than, say, Stravinsky or Poulenc.

To achieve its full effects, this score calls for rhythmic exactness, attention to the orchestral textures (I noted, though never managed to hear, both a banjo and accordion), and a flexibility in idiom which was not always in evidence. The deliciously ironic duet "Auf Wiedersehen" for Juan and Juanita sounded four (three?) square, where the music clearly calls for the sort of elegant hesitation *rubato* traditionally associated with Strauss waltzes. And although Eberhard Büchner's lyrical and warm-toned tenor was

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entirely appropriate to all Juan's music, his account of the Ariette "Seit ich in diese Stadt" (later reworked for "September Song") would have sounded even better if the orchestral accompaniment and the shaping of the melody had displayed greater flexibility.

The other soloists offered a range of vocal and interpretive abilities; Oskar Hillebrandt's General certainly communicated vigor and assertiveness, with his "Auftrittslied" in particular coming across as a robustly emphatic signature tune. "Der stark Mann" he most certainly was, and if at times the voice became a touch strident, there were no reservations whatever about his diction and vocal attack. On the other hand, Lucy Peacock's Juanita seemed under-powered, both vocally and in terms of offering any clear presentation of her character; it almost seemed as if she were relying rather too much on her (admittedly eye-catching) dress and appearance. In this sort of concert performance, a splash of color is not out of place as a piece of character designation; but a little bit of semiography is no substitute for singing and characterizing the notes.

But the sourest note of the evening was, unfortunately, struck by Lore Lorentz's linking commentaries. Arch where she should have been direct, self-indulgent where measured delivery was required, she seemed constantly to be mistaking the "nudge-nudge-wink-wink-know-what-I-mean?" school of stand-up comic complicity for the surely more appropriate combination of irony and relaxed narration. And at times her narrative digressions seemed so long-winded that the work also ran the risk of becoming an extended, uncomic monologue with orchestral obbligato. Far better to have cut the linking narrative to the minimum and to have had it delivered by Lutz Göhnermeier's *Sprecher*, who struck precisely the right balance between medium and message.

If this sounds like an unduly harsh judgment on what was a wholly worthwhile enterprise, that is not my intention. It is simply that this inventive score, with its echoes of Offenbach, Gilbert and Sullivan, English musical comedy, Viennese operetta, Wagner and Weber and its constant indications of Weill's remarkable sense of pacing and theatrical effectiveness, cries out for a rather more disciplined and penetrative reading than it received in Düsseldorf. After all, both Juan and the audience know how important a cow is in the land of Santa Maria: it represents the "cream to eat with apple tart" that Stevenson speaks of, as well as much more besides. Unfortunately this was closer to Gilbert's skim milk masquerading as cream.

MICHAEL MORLEY
Flinders University of South
Australia

CHORAL CONCERT. Niederrheinische Chorgemeinschaft, Chor der Studenten der evangelischen Kirchenmusik an der Robert-Schumann-Hochschule und der Kirchenmusikschule Düsseldorf, Mädchenchor Hannover, Robert-Schumann-Kammerorchester, Bläser der Düsseldorfer Symphoniker, Hartmut Schmidt, Mark-Andreas Schlingensiepen, conductors; Jürgen Wagner, tenor, Wolfgang Holzmair, baritone; Robert Schumann-Saal, Düsseldorf, 24 March 1990.

"Between War and Peace" (*"Zwischen Krieg und Frieden"*) was the motto of a choral concert in the Robert Schumann Hall in Düsseldorf, featuring music by Kurt Weill for various vocal and instrumental ensembles. The program presented — in chronological order — a panorama of the most divergent stylistic manifestations, ranging from the densely textured motet *Recordare* (a highly expressionist cappella setting of the fifth chapter of the Lamentations of Jeremiah composed in 1923) via the austere and sparsely orchestrated *Berliner Requiem* of 1928 (a cantata on texts by Brecht) to the *Four Walt Whitman Songs* (1942-47) for baritone and orchestra, representative of the so-called "American" Weill. Other compositions complemented these principal works and rounded off the program: *Die Legende vom toten Soldaten* for mixed chorus and *Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen* for male chorus preceded by the *Requiem*, in whose vicinity they originated; "In Times of War and Tumult" (i.e., the prayer scene from *Johnny Johnson* written for Broadway in 1936) functioned as a transition from the Civil War poetry of the Whitman settings to the *Kiddush* for tenor, choir, and organ (1946), a Hebrew prayer for sanctification of wine, with which the concert concluded. Overall, the program represented a veritable tour de force in bringing together compositions that hardly seemed compatible.

And yet, the concert was successful (perhaps surprising in view of the considerable odds), partly because of the care with which the program had been planned and partly because of the high degree of musicianship and performance skills with which each composition was then rendered. Credits are due especially to Hartmut Schmidt and his Niederrheinische Chorgemeinschaft as well as the Chor der Studenten der Evangelischen Kirchenmusik Düsseldorf and the Mädchenchor Hannover. The orchestral and instrumental parts were handled competently by the wind section of the Düsseldorfer Symphoniker and by the Robert-Schumann-Kammerorchester as well as by Arno Ruus on the organ. Mark-Andreas Schlingensiepen was the conductor in an inspired performance of the *Whitman Songs*; Wolfgang Holzmair stood out as the soloist in these songs, as did Jürgen Wagner in the *Kiddush*. (The *Kiddush* was even repeated as an encore.)

A recording of some of the works performed at the concert is reportedly planned by Koch Schwann Records; I hope it will not repeat three shortcomings. First, a greater mastery of the admittedly difficult contrapuntal web of *Recordare* is highly desirable, so that the expressive quality of a lament is rendered without reticence and tentativeness. Second, Weill specifically asks in *Recordare* for a *Kinderchor* (which is not the same as a *Mädchenchor*); I believe that the very moving effect at the end of the motet can be achieved only by following the letter of Weill's instructions. Third, the competently-written program notes by Heinz Geuen should be corrected in one small but significant detail: Fight for Freedom, Inc., a political organization that reportedly commissioned Weill's *Whitman Songs*, was a movement lobbying *for*, not against, America's entry into the European war. How we hear and understand Weill's music of "war and peace" may depend to some extent on our ability to place it into an appropriate context.

JÜRGEN THYM
Eastman School of Music
University of Rochester



Hartmut Schmidt leads the chorus in *Recordare* at the Robert-Schumann-Saal, Düsseldorf on 24 March 1990. Photo: Christine Langensiepen

KURT-WEILL-FESTIVAL

KAMMERKONZERT. String Quartet in B Minor. Frauentanz. Sonata for Violoncello and Piano. String Quartet, op. 8. The Minguet Quartet and students from the Robert-Schumann-Hochschule Düsseldorf. Tonhalle, Düsseldorf. 20 April 1990.

Important events do not have to be spectacular. Often the smaller, less-publicized concerts in a festival provide greater insights (in this case, to the music of Kurt Weill) than the more lavish, higher-profiled productions. As such, this concert of early chamber offered an ideal embellishment to the larger events of the festival.

The cleverly ordered program demonstrated the structure of Weill's early work — that composed between 1918 and 1923 — and its permeation by disparate stylistic characteristics, governed by diverse aesthetic ambitions. It is not merely coincidental that the student performers from the Musikhochschule Düsseldorf were barely older than Weill was when he composed this music. Perhaps this factor led to the *Gleichklang* which infused the evening's intense performances.

The young Minguet-Quartet (Ulrich Isfort and Anke Bettine Lorentz, violins; Irene Schwalb, viola; Konstantin Schoenberg, cello) opened the program with the String Quartet in B Minor of 1918. The unmistakably romantic themes reminiscent of Mendelssohn and Reger set within the traditional quartet form deceive the listener into thinking the work dates from an earlier time. Weill employs a continuous chromatic harmonization to achieve structural transitions between major and minor tonalities. However, the collage-like thematic overlappings and accompanimental rhythmic patterns in the final movement show Weill searching for new pathways. The group played with an appropriate, inner tension, although their interpretative focus diminished somewhat towards the end.

Next on the program, soprano Inga Fischer joined an instrumental ensemble for *Frauentanz*, op. 10. Although the playing lacked precision in the more demanding songs (nos. 1, 3, and 4, notably) and Ms. Fischer did not always project the requisite transparent vocal quality, the performers successfully conveyed the proper style. They avoided a psychological characterization of the seven medieval love poems in favor of a "matter-of-fact" reading, which placed a proper emphasis on an instrumental *gestic* and rhythmically defined shapes.

Konstantin Schoenberg gave a highly sensitive performance of the Sonata for Cello and Piano of 1919-20. Schoenberg cast wide melodic lines of grandiose breadth in the *Andante espressivo* and lead the listener

through the technically demanding five-part Rondo section with assured ease. Thomas Schäfer offered deft support.

To conclude the program, the Minguet Quartet returned to provide in the String Quartet, op. 8 — a work composed five years later — an exciting comparison with the first work on the program. By 1923, Weill's musical language had changed dramatically; the structural methods, and even aesthetic claims, are worlds apart. Even musicologists who are skeptical about the role this work plays in Weill's development must be struck by the fascinating impression left from a live performance. The musicians's interpretation of the score clearly delineated Weill's use of segmentation as a compositional process. They recreated the music with fervent passion and their playing sharply contrasted individual episodes, thereby clarifying Weill's intention of mediating between older and newer musical languages.

GUNTHER DIEHL
Altenholz

Teacher Workshops Held in Heek

Under the heading "Kurt Weill, German Jew, American Citizen, Contemporary of Half a Century," a continuing-education workshop for teachers convened from 28 February to 2 March 1990 in Heek, a tiny rural community situated close to the Dutch border and northwest of the cities of Dortmund and Münster in West Germany in an area seemingly untouched by the Autobahn or Ruhr district-related ecological problems. The program addressed interrelationships among music, literature, and politics and was sponsored by the Governing President of the County of Arnsberg, the University of Dortmund, and various municipalities of Westphalia. The four-day program featured



Violinist Christiane Edinger and conductor Mark-Andreas Schlingensiepen confer at a rehearsal for their 25 April performance of Weill's Violin Concerto. Photo: Christine Langensiepen

scholarly lectures, concert performances, and lighter entertainments. One evening a recitalist presented a selection of Weill's songs: "Nannas Lied," "Der Abschiedsbrief," "Complainte de la Seine," and — the hit of the evening — "The Saga of Jenny."

Professor Willi Gundlach, Prorektor and Choral Director of the University of Dortmund, delivered a stimulating lecture about Weill's school operas *Der Jasager* and *Down in the Valley*, and Dr. Inge Schleier presented a comparative analysis of *Der Jasager* and *Der Neinsager*. Lys Symonette delivered a lecture-demonstration of *The Ballad of Magna Carta* supplemented with a literal German translation of Maxwell Anderson's text.

Performances of *Der Jasager* and *Down in the Valley*

Each summer the University of Dortmund sponsors "Campus Cantat," an event which brings together students from European countries for collaboration on a musical project. This year, from 1-12 June, the program will involve two American institutions: the State University of New York at Fredonia and Buffalo State College. Choral singers from Fredonia and instrumentalists from Buffalo will join forces with the students from the University of Dortmund to present a double-bill of *Der Jasager* (in German) and *Down in the Valley* (in English), both in semi-staged concert performances. Three young, professional American singers will take the leading roles in *Down in the Valley*: Ilana Davidson (Jenny), Marc Acito (Brack) and Donald Collup (the Leader). The first public performance is on 8 June in Hamm, followed by presentations in Recklinghausen on 11 June and Dortmund on 12 June. A recording will be produced for broadcast by the Westdeutscher Rundfunk.

KURT-WEILL-FESTIVAL

Exhibitions

Performances of unknown works do much to introduce an audience to a composer's oeuvre, but when heard in isolation, those works are sometimes difficult to place within the context of a composer's career. While various performing organizations in North Rhine Westphalia introduced audiences to some of Weill's seldom-heard compositions, two cultural institutions in Düsseldorf provided valuable contextual forums by mounting the first comprehensive exhibitions in Germany of documentary materials related to Weill's life and work.

Vom Kurfürstendamm zum Broadway: Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Dr. Bernd Kortländer of the Heinrich-Heine-Institut gathered music manuscripts, first editions, correspondence, photos, librettos, posters, recordings, and other items from the Weill-Lenya Research Center, the Music Library of Yale University, Universal Edition, Vienna, the University of Cologne, the Academy of Arts in West Berlin, and other institutions, to introduce the Düsseldorf public to the entire range of Weill's musical legacy. The institute, located next to the Robert-Schumann-Institut on historic Bilker Strasse, mounted a handsome chronological exhibition in two rooms on the main floor.

The "German" room provided visitors with an understanding of Weill's development, beginning with early German-Jewish cultural influences and continuing through his first works, training in Berlin under Busoni, collaborations with Kaiser and Brecht, and emigration to France. The "American" room featured the all-important "pivotal works" from France and chronicled Weill's various collaborations for the commercial theater in New York. In addition to documents and manuscripts, Kortländer assembled an appealing variety of art works and scenic designs by Otto Dix, Bruno Voigt, Caspar Neher, and others. To lighten the mood, a set of shark's jaws (with full complement of teeth) set the tone for the German room, while a virgin-white, seven-foot Statue of Liberty bearing the program of "It's Fun To Be Free" greeted visitors to the American section.

The exhibition ran in Düsseldorf from 25 March to 6 May and selected portions will be on display in Hagen until mid-June.

Kurt Weill — Bekenntnis zur Zeit

Winrich Meiszius mounted a dramatic exhibition of photographic reproductions pertaining to the premiere performances of Weill's stage works in the lobby of Germany's preeminent theater, the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus. Each work was represented by a large panel which included stage photos, set designs, programs, and reviews. After appearing in Düsseldorf for five weeks (8 April - 13 May), the exhibition tours to the Stadttheater Bielefeld (15 May - 15 June), the Kulturhaus Lüdenscheid (7 September - 9 October), and the Theater Gütersloh (8 January - 28 February 1991).

The Heinrich-Heine-Institut, the Theatermuseum Düsseldorf, and the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music joined forces to produce a catalogue for both exhibitions: *Vom Kurfürstendamm zum Broadway: Kurt Weill (1900-1950)* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1990. 164 p.). The book contains specially commissioned essays from German and American scholars and features 117 black and white, and 8 color photos.

Contents

"Der Weg der Verheissung — The Eternal Road: Statt eines Vorwortes" *Bernd Kortländer*

Grusswort *Lys Symonette*

"Hin und zurück: Kurt Weill heute" *Kim H. Kowalke*

"Das ist 'ne ziemliche Stadt': Kurt Weill in der Kunst- und Geisteslandschaft von Berlin 1918-1933 *Jürgen Schebera*

"Zur Urform der Oper" *Stephen Hinton*

"Kurt Weill — Musiktheater: Theaterarbeit in Deutschland, Frankreich und Grossbritannien 1919-1935 *Winrich Meiszius*

"Das amerikanische Musical in der dreißiger und vierziger Jahren und die Rolle Kurt Weills" *Henry Marx*

"Weills Kontakte zur amerikanischen Literaturszene" *Michael Nott*

"Erfolg in einem neuen Land: Weills amerikanische Bühnenwerke" *Mario R. Mercado*

"Kurt Weill — Theater in Bildern: Eine Bilddokumentation" *Winrich Meiszius*

"Weill-Chronik" *David Farneth*

The paperback catalogue is available in German bookstores and from the Heinrich-Heine-Institut for 25 DM (Postfach 1120, D-4000 Düsseldorf 1 Federal Republic of Germany) or the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music [see the order form on the back page of this issue].



Top: Bernd Kortländer and Lys Symonette review the Heine Institute exhibition before the opening. **Bottom:** The Dumont-Lindemann Archiv displayed rare photos from stage productions at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus.



Der Jar läßt sich photographieren.
Die hintere Reihe: Agnes Meinhardt als falscher Baron, Regisseur Dr. Friedrich Schramm, Margarete Brüggenmann als Angèle, Kapellmeister Hugo Walzer, Fritz Hinz-Fabrizius als Begleiter des Jaren.
Vordere Reihe: Berthold Vöh als Jar, der Komponist Kurt Weill, Jara Böhms als falsche Angèle. Sitzend im Vordergrund: Ludwig Hoffmann als falscher Gehilfe.

KURT-WEILL-FESTIVAL

Excerpts from German Newspapers

"Der Haifisch, der hat Zähne": Kurt Weills Dreigroschenoper und 50 weitere Werke.

"The shark has teeth": Kurt Weill's Threepenny Opera and 50 other works.

Everybody knows his *Threepenny Opera*. But who is aware of the fact that Kurt Weill has written chamber and choral music, symphonies, and radio cantatas as well? The West German Radio (WDR) intends to present the known and the unknown Kurt Weill in an abundance of wide-ranging programs such as has never before been offered anywhere in the world.

Westfälischer Anzeiger
22 February 1990

Bettelhaft und Königlich Zugleich

Both Beggar and King

Because the European modernists and the post-modernists are facing a crisis, it is now especially rewarding to re-examine the work of Kurt Weill. Weill lays himself open at close range to totally new rules of bourgeois, quasi-industrial productivity, yet without losing his own critical consciousness. Whatever is musically accessible to him may come from anywhere, be it the street, the circus, or the establishments of pleasure.

Gerd Rienäcker
Volkszeitung/Die Tat
Düsseldorf, 23 March 1990

Das geteilte Paradies — Kurt Weill's "Kuhhandel" konzertant in Düsseldorf

The divided Paradise — Concert performance of Kurt Weill's "Kuhhandel" in Düsseldorf

The musician Weill has been liberated in those twenty-four numbers to such a degree such that the music seems to flow like a stream of lava. The melodic lightness of its hit numbers (of the very best Léhar quality); the mostly Caribbean-South-American rhythms, their sloping, unwieldy harmonies always reminding us of the best of Mahagonny-models; the finesse and the pointed wit of the orchestrations — they all add up here to a Weill hit parade, which provides one delight after another, so much so that one can hardly sit still.

Horst Koegler
Stuttgarter Zeitung
24 March 1990

Waffenhandel im Land des Lächelns

Arms dealing in the Land of Smiles

The audience at the Düsseldorf premiere became more and more involved with the work as the evening went along and, in the end, gave it enthusiastic approval. Dr. Johannes Rau, under whose aegis the Festival was taking place, opened the proceedings with a speech in which he noted that Kurt Weill was an artist with extraordinary sensitivity toward political thought.

Olaf Ciers
Junge Welt
Berlin (GDR), 11 April 1990

Haifisch und Gentleman — Überlegungen anlässlich des Internationalen — Kurt-Weill-Symposiums in Duisburg

Shark and Gentleman — Reflections on the occasion of the International Kurt Weill Symposium in Duisburg

Kurt Weill's fame is as one of the Brecht-composers, with Brecht's shadow still lurking over the greatest part of the rest of his work. Only when — after years of preparatory work — David Drew's *Kurt Weill: A Handbook* finally appeared in 1987, did the entire bulk of Weill's complete oeuvre become known. Yet, at the same time, the entire "question of Weill" had to be drawn into sharper focus. To speak with some exaggeration: in the history of German theatre of the Twenties, it is impossible not to assign a significant place to Kurt Weill. It is quite conceivable not to mention Weill's work at all in the musical history of that period. The question of the music-historical significance of Weill's music, notwithstanding its gigantic success, is indeed only part of the problem.

Jürg Stenzel
Frankfurter Allgemeine
Frankfurt, 24 April 1990

Weill am Rhein

Weill on the Rhine

The Festival in honor of the German-American composer is in essence a documentation of the inadequacy of the German Weill-reception...An International Weill Symposium took place in Duisburg. Jürgen Schebera and Joachim Lucchesi (Akademie der Künste, GDR) referred to the composer's contributions to the United States war-effort. Weill dedicated himself wholly to his new homeland. As Offenbach had once become a genuine French composer, Weill wanted to become an American one, leaving persecution, lean times, chaos, and artistic quarrels of the Old World forever behind on the other side of the ocean. This momentous decision of practical and artistic consequence still stands — alongside continuing old prejudices — in the way of today's reception of Weill in Germany.

Frieder Reininghaus
Die Tageszeitung
Berlin (FRG), 3 April 1990

Der Flugbeobachter vergaß den bösen Brecht

The Air-Raid Warden Forgot all about the Wicked Brecht

From the perspective of sheer ignorance of the American works themselves, the American period is still being judged disparagingly. In the USA, as in other countries, they are rarely performed. Moreover, the impossibility of even hearing pieces like the violin concerto or the symphonies prompted Kim Kowalke to point out in his final summation: "At this point in time, it is not important whether works like *Die Bürgschaft* are well or poorly interpreted. The main thing is that they are being performed, and not only at anniversary festivals."

Guido Fischer
Rheinische Post
27 March 1990