

KURT WEILL NEWSLETTER

Volume 10, Number 2

Fall 1992



David Raksin talks about *Where Do We Go From Here?* and Hollywood music in the 1940s.

Alec Wilder's opinion of Weill



as recalled by **Arnold Sundgaard**.

Steve Reich discusses political music and Weill's relevance to music theater composition today.



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BBC Documentary on Weill's American Years

The British Broadcasting Corporation in cooperation with the Hessischer Rundfunk, Frankfurt, has produced *Formerly German: Kurt Weill in America*, a 60-minute documentary on Weill's emigration to France and his career in America. Directed by Barrie Gavin and based on a script by Gavin and Kim H. Kowalke, the film makes use of previously unpublished archival documents from the Weill-Lenya Research Center, includes new interviews with colleagues of Weill and Lenya, and contains footage of Rockland County, NY, where Weill and Lenya made their home.

Judy Kaye, soprano, Kevin Anderson, tenor, Franc D'Ambrosio, tenor, Daniel Narducci, baritone, and Michael Scarborough, baritone, recorded selections from Weill's American stage works with the Hessischer Rundfunk orchestra under the direction of James Holmes.

The documentary will be broadcast first by the BBC in November 1992.

New Weill Productions at Santa Fe Opera and Houston Grand Opera

The Santa Fe Opera will present the American professional stage premieres of *Der Protagonist* and *Der Zar läßt sich photographieren* during its 1993 season. Performance dates are 31 July, 4 and 13 August 1993. Both works, on librettos by Georg Kaiser, will be presented in English translation. Jonathan Eaton stages the double-bill, George Manahan serves as conductor, scenery and costumes will be designed by Robert Perdziola, and Craig Miller is the lighting designer.

Principal cast members for *Der Protagonist* are Jacque Trussel (the Protagonist), Ashley Putnam (Catherine, his sister), Patryk Wroblewski (the Young Lord), and David Rampy (the Major-Domo). Chief roles in *Der Zar* will be sung by David Malis (the Tsar), Kathryn Gamberoni (Angèle), and Angelina Réaux (the false Angèle).

The Santa Fe Opera opens its season with a revival of *La bohème* and includes new productions of *The Magic Flute*, *Xerxes* (Handel), and *Capriccio*, in addition to the Weill double-bill.

* * *

The Houston Grand Opera will mount *Street Scene* during its 1993-94 season. The new production premieres on 28 January 1994 in the Brown Theater, Wortham Theater Center, with subsequent performances on 30 January, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11 February 1994.

William Henry Curry (conductor), Francesca Zambello (director), Adrienne Lobel (set designer), Martin Pakladinaz (costume designer), and Jim Ingalls (lighting designer) comprise the creative team.

The cast includes Sheri Greenawald (Anna Maurant), Robert McFarland (Frank Maurant), Lee Merrill (Rose Maurant), Kip Wilborn (Sam Kaplan), Timothy Nolen (Harry Easter), Joyce Castle (Emma Jones), Eugene Perry (Henry Davis), and Jerold Siena (Lippo Fiorentino).

Other works in the HGO 1993-94 season are *Elektra*, *Don Carlos*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La traviata*, *Turandot*, *Porgy and Bess*, and two new works by American composers: *Hey, Al!*, by Peter Schickele, and an opera based on the life of Harvey Milk, commissioned from composer Stewart Wallace.

Aldeburgh Mounts Britten-Weill Festival

As this Newsletter goes to press, a unique juxtaposition of the music of Benjamin Britten and Kurt Weill begins in Aldeburgh, 22-25 October. Andrew Davis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra open the Britten-Weill Festival in Snape Concert Hall with Britten's Overture to *Paul Bunyan* and *Sinfonia da Requiem*, op. 20, followed by Weill's Violin Concerto, op. 12, and Symphony no. 2 (1933). Ernst Kovacic is the violin soloist.

On Friday, 23 October, the Borodin String Quartet, soprano Lucy Shelton, and pianist Ian Brown alternate compositions by Weill and Britten: String Quartet in B minor (1918), "On This Island" (1936), "Frauentanz" (1923), and String Quartet no. 1 (1941).

Saturday morning's open forum and discussion at Baptist Chapel will feature David Drew, HK Gruber, Kim H. Kowalke, Rodney Milnes, Donald Mitchell, and Marion Thorpe, followed by a screening of G.W. Pabst's *Die Dreigroschenoper* film.

On Saturday night in Snape Hall, American soprano Angelina Réaux joins Austrian composer-performer HK Gruber (baritone) and the BBC Singers in a program of songs and arias conceived by David Drew drawn from *Paul Bunyan*, *Der Kuhhandel*, *Johnny Johnson*, and *Knickerbocker Holiday*.

The Festival closes Sunday, 25 October, with concert presentations of *The Threepenny Opera* (featuring the British premiere of Michael Feingold's translation) and the "Happy End Songspiel" by singers from the Britten-Pears School and the Britten-Pears Orchestra conducted by Stuart Bedford.

The Snape Hall concerts will be broadcast on BBC Radio. Last year's fall festival

featured the music of Britten and Shostakovich. These special "focus" festivals are independent of the larger Aldeburgh Festival of Music and the Arts, a three-week event that takes place in early Summer.

Feingold Translation of Threepenny Now Available for Performance

Michael Feingold's translation of *The Threepenny Opera* is now available for performance worldwide. Feingold made the translation for the 1989 Broadway production. For licensing information, contact European American Music Corporation, PO Box 850, Valley Forge, PA 19482. Telephone: (215) 648-0506.

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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 15 January 1993.

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Foundation Welcomes New Staff Members

The Kurt Weill Foundation's staff has undergone a number of changes during the past year as three employees left to embark upon new ventures. Peggy Sherry (Associate Archivist) took a position at the Princeton University Libraries in January. Anita Weisburger (Office Administrator) and her husband Doug joined the Peace Corps and departed this summer for a two-year tour in Papua New Guinea. John Watson (Secretary) began a full-time acting career in September.

We welcome the following three new employees, who will play a crucial role in carrying out existing programs and advancing new initiatives:

John Andrus (Associate Archivist) assumes responsibility for the technical processing activities of the Weill-Lenya Research Center, including cataloging the collection on the RLIN database, compiling finding aids, processing, preservation, and conservation. He is developing procedures and policies to facilitate efficient research access to the various collections in the Research Center.

Mr. Andrus worked for over two years as Bibliographer-Cataloger of the US-RISM Libretto Project at the University of Virginia after completing his MLS degree at Simmons College. He has a Ph.D. in musicology from the University of California, Santa Barbara and also attended the University of California, Berkeley and Oberlin College & Conservatory of Music. His diverse travels and experiences include studying Arabic music in Cairo, working as an editorial assistant at Phonogram International in The Netherlands, and teaching English in Japan.

Edward A. Buckley (Secretary/Office Manager) carries out the day-to-day operations of the Foundation, including reception, word processing, mailing list management, and scheduling. He assists in all program-related activities.

Mr. Buckley earned a Bachelor of Liberal Arts at Simpson College, where his majors were German, music, and education. Previously he worked for the Easter Seal Society, Schock Metal Fabrik in Urbach, Germany, and Career Blazers in New York.

Edward D. Harsh (Production Manager for the Kurt Weill Edition and Associate Director of Publications) is responsible for coordinating and producing the Foundation's various publications, including the new *Kurt Weill Edition*, editions of correspondence, the *Kurt Weill*

Newsletter, oral histories, and other ancillary publications. His work for the next year will concentrate on multi-faceted tasks relating to the establishment of the *Kurt Weill Edition*: administration of the Editorial Board, analysis of software and hardware requirements, budget, fundraising, and communications with volume editors, publishers, and vendors.

Mr. Harsh joined the Foundation in August after completing an MMA and MM in Composition at Yale University, an MA in Historical Musicology at Columbia University, and a BM in Composition at Peabody Conservatory. He also studied at the Royal Conservatory in Holland and Ithaca College. Mr. Harsh worked on the staff of the Yale Center for Studies in Music Technology and served on the editorial committee for *Current Musicology*. His composition teachers have included Louis Andriessen, Martin Bresnick, Earle Brown, Jacob Druckman, Lukas Foss, Karel Husa, Robert Hall Lewis, and Frederic Rzewski.

Weill at Rodgers and Hammerstein

Editing of the performing scores and parts for Weill's *One Touch of Venus* has recently been completed, and the S.J. Perelman-Ogden Nash-Kurt Weill collaboration is now available for stock and amateur licensing from the Rodgers and Hammerstein Theater Library, 1633 Broadway, Suite 3801, New York, NY 10019; telephone (212) 541-6900; telefax (212) 586-6155.

The Rodgers and Hammerstein Concert Library also has a number of arrangements available for concert performance: "Cry, the Beloved Country," a concert suite from *Lost in the Stars*, adapted by David Drew, for mezzo-soprano, tenor, double choruses, SATB, and instrumental ensemble consisting of Reed 1 (cl, alto sax, fl), Reed 2 (cl, ten sax, Eng Hn), Reed 3 (cl, alto sax), tpt, piano (accordion), harp, timp & perc; 2 viola, 2 cello, and bass; *War Play*, a suite of music from *Johnny Johnson* arranged by David Drew for soprano, mezzo-soprano, two tenors, bass, and instrumental ensemble of Reed 1 (cl, eb cl, bass cl), Reed 2 (alto sax, cl, bar sax, bass cl), 2 tpt, tbn, guitar (banjo), Hammond organ, piano, timp, perc, 2 vn, cello; and the Symphonic Nocturne from *Lady in the Dark*, a concert suite arrangement by Robert Russell Bennett for full orchestra.

Berliner Ensemble's Final Performance of *Dreigroschenoper*

Sunday, 12 July 1992, saw the 333rd and final performance of the Berliner Ensemble's famous 1981 staging of *Die Dreigroschenoper*.

In the days leading up to the closing, lines at the box office grew as many waited for the opportunity to have one last look at the production, which had been a prominent part of Berlin theater life for more than a decade. Even long after the curtain had fallen for the last time, the audience remained standing, clapping rhythmically and singing the now famous opening melody: "...und der Haifisch, der hat Zähne."

The histories of both venue and work have been intertwined since long before 1981. The fabulously successful 1928 premiere of *Die Dreigroschenoper* took place in the hall when it was still the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm. In 1960, the work was revived there, again to much acclaim. However, a return engagement after the present closing is unlikely.

Major changes are in store for both company and building, though the end result of these is as yet uncertain. The Berliner Ensemble is coming under the leadership of a new five-man committee of directors, while the theater is to be extensively renovated and will not open again until early 1993.

Darius Milhaud Centennial Observations

Correspondence documenting the professional and personal relationship between Darius and Madeleine Milhaud and Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya highlights an exhibition mounted in the Art Gallery of the Abraham Goodman House in New York City. The exhibition complemented a day-long celebration on 4 October 1992, the 100th anniversary of Milhaud's birth, that included two concerts of the composer's vocal, choral, and chamber music, a screening of the documentary film *A Visit with Darius Milhaud* (introduced by the composer's widow Madame Madeleine Milhaud) followed by a round table discussion moderated by Nancy Shear with panelists William Bolcom, Grant Johannesen, and Charles Jones.

Brooklyn College Opera Theater, in association with the Empire Center at the Egg in Albany, New York, presented the first fully staged American production of Milhaud's *Christophe Colomb* in Whitman Hall on the Brooklyn College Campus, 10-11 October 1992.

The opera, with a libretto by the French poet Paul Claudel, is an allegorical and mystical interpretation of Columbus's voyage, presented by a large cast of vocal soloists in a series of 27 tableaux connected by choral and spoken interludes. Of Milhaud's 15 operas, *Christophe Colomb* is conceived on the grandest scale and has

rarely been staged since its premiere at the Berlin Staatsoper in 1930. The Brooklyn College Opera Theater performances marked both the Columbus quincentenary and the Milhaud centennial. The performances, sung in English, were conducted by Richard Barrett and staged by Edward Berkeley.

Also in observance of the Milhaud and Columbus anniversaries, the San Francisco Opera offers the first professional American performances of *Christophe Colomb* on 11 and 13 December 1992. Lotfi Mansouri, General Director of the SFO, will direct the semi-staged concert performances that will be conducted by Kent Nagano. The opera will be performed in French, with English supertitles, and the actor Derek Jacobi will deliver the narration in English. Principal singers in the extensive cast are Maria Fortuna (Isabella), Jean-Philippe Lafont (Christophe Colomb I), Victor Ledbetter (Christophe Colomb II), Mary Mills (Wife of Colomb), Philip Skinner (King of Spain), and Michel Sénéchal (Major-Domo).

The performances of *Christophe Colomb* in San Francisco bear added significance because of Milhaud's association with Mills College in Oakland, CA, where he taught from 1940 until 1971.

New Publications

Recordings:

Kleine Dreigroschenmusik. Philharmonia Orchestra; Otto Klemperer, conductor. EMI Classics CDM 7 64142 2. [Recorded October and December 1961.] [Includes Stravinsky, Symphony in Three Movements; Stravinsky, Pulcinella Suite; Strauss, Wiener Blut.]

Der Kuhhandel (excerpts). Soloists, Kölner Rundfunkchor, Kölner Rundfunkorchester; Jan Latham-König, conductor. Capriccio 60 013-1.

Sonata for cello and piano. Roger Drinkall, cello; Dian Baker, piano. Pyramid 13505. [Includes Martinu, Sonata no. 3; Kodály, Fantasia, op. 4; Hindemith, Sonata no. 3.]

Scores:

Der Lindberghflug: Revidierter Text (Der Ozeanflug) von Bertolt Brecht. UE 9938. [Reprint of the 1930 edition.]

Initiation of the Kurt Weill Edition

After several years of preparation, the Kurt Weill Foundation announces the inception of a collected critical edition of the composer's work.

For any organization devoted to the promotion and perpetuation of an artist's life-work, the most enduring and significant task may be the publication of that individual's legacy in "permanent" form. The Trustees of the Kurt Weill Foundation recognized this when, upon Lotte Lenya's death more than a decade ago, they adopted an ambitious agenda for the future. Although the conception of a *Gesamtausgabe* requires only a noble thought, its realization demands an investment of resources and skills of a considerably more imposing order. Thus, for many years the notion of a complete edition of Weill's work remained a desirable, but still distant goal.

History of the Project

In 1990, Kim Kowalke recommended to the Foundation's Trustees that the time was right to begin the task of preparing a Weill edition. A meeting was organized for October of that year to determine the feasibility of an edition of Weill's music: in particular the nature, organization, funding, and production of such an edition. In addition to Foundation staff members (Kowalke, David Farneth, Mario Mercado, and Lys Symonette) those attending included Theodore Chapin, Gabriel Dotto, Ronald Freed, Lawrence Gushee, John Shepard and James Zychowicz. (David Drew and Stephen Hinton were unable to attend but later reviewed and commented upon the post-meeting report.) Those assembled met in round table discussions in four sessions moderated by staff members. The outcome of these meetings led the Board of Trustees, at its annual meeting in December 1990, to approve the next stage: developing a detailed prospectus for a Weill edition and commissioning a preliminary draft of editorial guidelines.

A year later, after the staff had drafted the Prospectus (in consultation with David Drew and Stephen Hinton), the Board approved in principle the founding, organization, and announcement of — and initial fundraising for — the *Kurt Weill Edition*. Kim Kowalke then met with the principal publishers of Weill's music to discuss practical aspects of production and distribution of the Edition. The meeting, in Stuttgart, resulted in a concurrence on basic principles, and all participants agreed that planning and development should continue.

The Edition

The *Kurt Weill Edition* will be a collected, critical edition of reliable performance texts for the music of Kurt Weill, equally useful for informed performance and scholarly inquiry. As a rule, the Edition will contain only those works which the composer completed. Variant pieces and "cut" numbers from the stage works may, when appropriate, be included in an appendix to each volume, although performing versions of unfinished or fragmentary works assembled by someone other than the composer himself are beyond the scope of the edition. Similarly, neither reconstructions of lost works nor arrangements of Weill's music will be included.

The text of each work presented in the Edition will, of course, be the result of a rigorous examination of all relevant primary and secondary sources and documents. Thus, the composer's oeuvre will be presented for the first time in a form realizing the highest standards of musical scholarship, with each editorial decision carefully documented. Equally important in the eyes of the editors, however, is that this careful scholarship provide to performers usable and authoritative practical editions for works that until now have been represented only in corrupt editions or even (in several cases) not represented at all.

Current plans for the Edition anticipate a total of 45 volumes, with accompanying critical reports, that will be organized into the following 9 series (with the number of volumes projected within each series in parentheses):

- Series I. Music Theater (30)
- Series II. Incidental Music (1)
- Series III. Film Music (2)
- Series IV. Orchestral Music (2)
- Series V. Vocal and Choral with Orchestra (2)
- Series VI. Chamber Music (1)
- Series VII. Choral Music (1)
- Series VIII. Lieder, Chansons, Songs (1)
- Series IX. Unfinished works, Juvenilia, etc. (5)

The bulk of each volume will comprise the musical score itself. Preceding the score will be a general foreword to the edition and a dual-language preface (German and En-

glish) to the volume. The preface will present the historical background of the work(s) and offer a general overview of the relevant sources, as well as address questions and issues related to performance practice. It will necessarily also draw attention to the general editorial problems associated with the work. Facsimile pages and, in the case of the stage works, documentation concerning design or staging may also be included as part of the prefatory material.

A critical report, published separately, will furnish detailed source information, an explanation of editorial decisions, and a list of musical and textual variants or alternative readings. The report will be made available in a range of electronic media, as well as paper.

An important feature of the Edition will be separate but parallel ancillary publications, such as newly prepared piano-vocal scores to the stage works (particularly to the American stage works), new instrumental parts, practical editions of chamber music and song collections.

Organizational Structure

The *Kurt Weill Edition* will be produced by an independent not-for-profit corporate entity, established and administered by the Kurt Weill Foundation. This arrangement

will allow a clear separation of financial and operational responsibility while permitting coordination of the Edition's activities within the broad goals and mission of the Foundation.

Overseeing all the Edition's work will be an Editorial Board, initially a four-member committee consisting of David Drew, Stephen Hinton, Giseler Schubert, and Kim Kowalke. The board will establish an editorial policy which addresses the multifarious nature of Weill's output and make the assignments of musical works to individual volume editors, who will be commissioned from the scholarly community on a volume-by-volume basis.

Coordinating the interaction of editorial personnel with one another as well as with other agents in the process such as librarians, archivists, and publishers will be the newly-appointed Production Manager of the Edition, Edward Harsh (see New Staff news article). Mr. Harsh will oversee all aspects of the Edition's production and finances.

In addition to the primary organizational structure of the Edition, several dozen distinguished members of the international musical community have been invited to serve on an advisory board. Members of this group will counsel on matters pertaining to their respective areas of expertise.

Significance of the Edition

Editorial procedures developed by the *Kurt Weill Edition* may set important precedents for future projects. Never before have works from the American musical theater had the benefit of the careful scholarly scrutiny that is a natural by-product of the critical edition process. None of the works of Weill's last 15 years has been available for study except in piano reduction made by others. This alone testifies to the importance of the endeavor, leaving aside the obvious practical benefits to be gained from preserving and solidifying an important artist's legacy.

Yet another benefit may obtain from the project. In a very direct and physical way, a collected edition concretizes a composer's output, perhaps making it less susceptible to partitioning. The appearance of the *Kurt Weill Edition* may shed new light on the long-standing critical construct of the "two Weills," and not only because all the volumes will be bound with the same material. Each work will be presented in comparable terms to a new generation of scholars, who will have the opportunity to introduce the "American" and "European" Weills to each other on common ground and determine whether they are or are not one and the same.

* * * * *

LETTERS

To The Editor:

I offer these clarifications to two items in the Spring 1992 Newsletter that concern Brook House, Weill's and Lenya's home from 1941 until their deaths.

In the script of a 1950 radio broadcast, ["A New Addition to Weill's *Gesammelte Schriften*" in Newsletter 10:1] Weill says he has "about a half a mile of property" near a trout stream in New City. Actually, it was about one-sixth of a mile in road frontage, and nowhere near half a square mile or even a half-mile square in area. I suppose, even then, hyperbole in radio interviews was a celebrity's duty. But the stream was — and is — real.

The item that announced that Brook House is once again for sale had some erroneous background. West Branch Conservation Association did not "assume control" of some of the land surrounding Brook House and its cottage (not a "carriage house," that I know of — garage, perhaps.) West Branch bought the *entirety* of Lenya's property on South Mountain Road from her estate.

Our goal was to preserve, as much as possible, the natural attributes of this important place within our watershed. Lenya's land could have become a nine-lot subdivision. Instead, we were able to insure that

Brook House and the cottage would be left on their 5.5 acre setting near the stream with no further residential building allowed; that no more than one house would ever be built on the four-acre remnant of a larger parcel Lenya donated to a county park in 1975; and that we would keep 8.5 acres along the brook, downstream of the houses, as a nature preserve.

When we sold Brook House and the four-acre building site (undeveloped even now), we knew that the full extent of new development on the eighteen acres Lenya had owned would be one more house, well out of sight. Because of other land-saving we had accomplished nearby, that section of South Mountain Road should remain just about as it was in 1950.

Trout are scarcer than in Weill's day, but the brook continues to flow through the same natural setting enjoyed by Weill and Lenya.

MARTUS GRANIRER
President, West Branch Conservation Association, New City, NY

To The Editor:

Please inform Christopher Hailey that Max Bruch was not a Jew. Beethoven also

utilized the distinctive theme of Kol Nidre. I found his review quite interesting, and I too missed a more adequate discussion of Kurt Weill in Alexander Ringer's worthy book on Arnold Schoenberg. There is, after all, much to link those two creative figures, fascinating for their similarities and contrasts. Both recognized and suffered early on the peril of Jewish life in post-World War I Europe and especially felt the advance of Nazism in Germany itself. In the 1930s Schoenberg actively sought the establishment of a Jewish national homeland, and Weill settled his parents and other family members in Palestine. Though each went his distinctively different professional way in America, both responded to Judaic reflections personally and in various works. Weill's creative environment was outwardly directed, whereas Schoenberg's source of inspiration was internalized and inner-focused. Beyond their personal histories and musical careers, both are fascinating for their intellectual strengths. Perhaps it is time now for a serious consideration of the intriguing parallels in these two Weimar-Americans, and how such matters affected their distinctive impacts on 20th-century musical history.

IRENE HESKES
Forest Hills, NY