

# KURT WEILL NEWSLETTER

Volume 13, Number 2

Fall 1995

Building the City of . . .

# MAHAGONNY



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## Texaco-Metropolitan Opera Broadcast of *Mahagonny* on 9 December 1995

The Metropolitan Opera revival of the 1979 John Dexter production of *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, which opens on 25 November 1995, will be broadcast worldwide through the Texaco-Metropolitan Opera Network on 9 December. The stellar cast includes Teresa Stratas, Helga Dernesch, Kenneth Riegel, Gary Lakes, Richard Versalle, Timothy Noble, and Alan Held. James Levine will conduct all five performances.

### Distinguished Professor Walter Hinderer Joins Board of Trustees

Professor Walter Hinderer, who was recently awarded the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany for "outstanding interdisciplinary scholarly contributions to literary and cultural studies," was welcomed as a new member of the board of trustees at the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music in September.

A prolific scholar in German literature and culture of the past three centuries, Professor Hinderer has taught at Princeton University since 1978. He is also a member of the Germanistic Society of America (New York City) and trustee of the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (Washington, DC).

## Mahagonnys Throughout the World

One of Weill's most performed operas, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, set quite a record in May 1995. During the course of that month, four new productions of the opera — at Cottbus, Koblenz, Radebeul, and Bremerhaven — opened, along with a revival of the 1992 Stuttgart State Opera production directed by Ruth Berghaus. In June, the English National Opera premiered a new production of *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* with an English translation by Michael Feingold (see a review by Andrew Porter on p. 23), and the Bastille Opera presented its new production of the opera on 14 October. A number of Weill-related events organized by Pascal Huynh accompanied the Bastille production. These included screenings of videos, an exhibition at the Opera House, and a studio production of *Celui qui dit oui* (*Der Jasager*).

## German stages and Kurt Weill — A Preview of 1996

A number of significant new productions of Weill's stage works will be presented in Germany during the first few months of 1996. Berlin's Theater des Westens will follow the success of *Street Scene* earlier this year with a new production of *Johnny Johnson* (in a new German translation by Fred Berndt and Jörg Gronius) in January 1996. Weill's and Paul Green's anti-war musical will also be presented in Dessau in March 1996, as part of a guest appearance of the Theater des Westens at the annual Kurt-Weill-Fest in Weill's native city.

*Der Silbersee*, Weill's last collaboration with expressionist playwright Georg Kaiser, will receive two new productions in March 1996: at Leipzig's opera house (Drehscheibe) and at the Landestheater Dessau. *Der Silbersee* received its premiere in Leipzig, Magdeburg, and Erfurt on 18 February 1933, two weeks after Hitler had become chancellor of Germany. One of the most famous songs from *Der Silbersee*, "Ballade von Cäsars Tod," was interpreted by many as a veiled criticism of Hitler. On 4 March, the Nazis banned all further performances of the work, and on 21 March the composer fled to France and never returned to Germany again. This "play with music" has attracted sporadic stage revivals and concert performances in the postwar period. According to David Drew, *Der Silbersee* is a work that not only reflects Germany in the period immediately preceding Hitler's ascent, but warns of the consequences of "any society that is fatally divided against itself."

## Rhombus "September Songs" Receives International Award

The Kurt Weill video "September Songs" won the top award under the "audio-visual creation/adaptation" category at the third Internationale Musikzentrum Wien (IMZ) Opera Screen Festival hosted this year by Opéra de Lyon. The film, directed by Larry Weinstein, also won the overall prize, "Grand Prix Opera Screen," bringing with it a cash prize of 100,000 French Francs. According to the prize selection committee, the film "narrates the story of Kurt Weill's emigration and his final years with advanced means and with great care for details." Teresa Stratas, who was featured in the film singing "Surabaya Johnny" and "Youkali," was present at the award ceremony in Lyon.

## New e-mail addresses for the Kurt Weill Foundation

Information: [kwfinfo@kwf.org](mailto:kwfinfo@kwf.org)  
Kurt Weill Edition: [kwe@kwf.org](mailto:kwe@kwf.org)  
Weill-Lenya Research Center:  
[wlrcc@kwf.org](mailto:wlrcc@kwf.org)

Cover photos (left to right): *Gold Diggers' Saloon*, 1915-16 by George Grosz; Drawing of Max Schmeling by George Grosz; sheet music cover of "Komm nach Mahagonne."

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The Newsletter is published to provide an open forum wherein interested readers may express a variety of 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 1996.

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## KURT WEILL EDITION REPORT

### *Dreigroschenoper* Facsimile Goes to Press

The first published product of the Kurt Weill Edition, the eagerly-awaited full-color facsimile of the *Dreigroschenoper* manuscript, goes to press in November of this year. The detailed production process required to reproduce faithfully the image of each of the more than one hundred pages of score will extend over several months, with the finished publication appearing sometime early in 1996. The volume, edited by KWE Managing Editor Edward Harsh, includes scholarly essays by Stephen Hinton, Kim Kowalke, and David Farneth along with a *Dreigroschenoper* chronology and other documentary materials.

Information about the purchase of this volume, as well as concerning the subscription and distribution of the complete Edition, will be available soon from European American Music Corporation. (EAMC publishes the Weill Edition in association with the Weill Foundation.)

Later this fall, the Editorial Board is scheduled to meet with the six editors who began work on the first round of volumes commissioned in 1993. This meeting will give the editors, by now well into their assignments, an opportunity to report on the editorial issues raised by each work and to discuss with the Editorial Board and among themselves ways to address these issues in an effective manner. Such small symposia are a special feature of the Weill Edition's editorial practice and serve an important function in ensuring consistency and coherence from one volume to another.

### *Love Life* is Discovered in Europe

In January 1995, Britain's Opera North will present the 1948 Weill-Lerner collaboration *Love Life: A Vaudeville* on the stages of Leeds, Nottingham, Sunderland, Hull, and Manchester. This pioneering revival has attracted much attention in Europe and America. The director is Caroline Gawn and the conductor is Wyn Davies.



### *Street Scene* HDTV Wins "Nombre d'Or" at IBC Widescreen Festival; Broadcast on European Public Television

In September, *Street Scene*, a video coproduction of Camera Film GmbH and Westdeutscher Rundfunk, won the first "Nombre d'Or" award at the Widescreen Festival at Amsterdam, organized by the International Broadcasting Conference (IBC). It is also entered for a 1995 International Emmy Award.

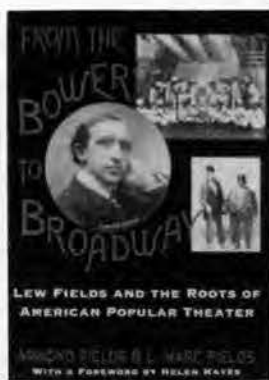
Directed by José Montes-Baquer and produced by Michael Boehme, the film is assembled from videotapes of Francesca Zambello's critically acclaimed 1994-95 staging conducted by James Holmes, a coproduction of the Houston Grand Opera, the Theater im Pfalzhaus Ludwigshafen, and Berlin's Theater des Westens.

The HDTV (High Definition Television) video premiered on the ARTE channel on 31 May; a second broadcast is scheduled for 16 December on the Westdeutscher Rundfunk. The videotape is distributed by MICO (Media International Corporation) of Japan and will be available for purchase.



### Jeunesse Musicale Festival, Vienna

Two years of planning went into the month-long Kurt Weill festival beginning on 29 September 1995 in Vienna and organized by the Jeunesse Musicale Festival. Many international artists and orchestras provided the musical public with ideal opportunities to become better acquainted with the composer's oeuvre. Works by Weill's teacher (Busoni) and contemporaries (Hindemith, Milhaud, Stravinsky, Gershwin, Copland, Eisler and Ives) were included in the festival. Lys Symonette, the Musical Executive of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, was present at the opening concerts and conducted numerous press interviews.



### Inaugural Kurt Weill Prize: Announcement of Winners

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, the Modern Language Association, the American Musicological Society, and American Society for Theatre Research announce the winners of the first Kurt Weill Prize awarded to outstanding scholarly works in the field of twentieth-century musical theater. The winners for works published in 1993 and 1994 are Stephen Banfield's *Sondheim's Broadway Musicals* (University of Michigan Press) and Armond Fields & L. Marc Fields' *From the Bowery to Broadway: Lew Fields and the Roots of American Popular Theater* (Oxford University Press). Each award carries a \$1,500 cash prize.

The panel also commended two other finalists: J. Bradford Robinson's chapter in *Music in the Weimar Republic* (Cambridge University Press) entitled "Jazz Reception in Weimar Germany: In Search of a Shimmy Figure," and Gunther Diehl's *Der junge Kurt Weill und seine Oper "Der Protagonist"* (Bärenreiter Verlag).

The winners and finalists will be honored at a reception in the offices of the Kurt Weill Foundation on 3 November, on the occasion of the annual conference of the American Musicological Society in New York City. The winners will also be announced at the business meeting of that conference and publicized among scholarly societies and journals. The prize selection committee was impressed by the range in subject matter, high level of scholarly research, and interdisciplinary approaches among 23 highly competitive and distinguished nominations from the US and abroad.

The deadline for nominations for the second annual Kurt Weill Prize is 30 April 1996. For more information or submission guidelines, please contact the Kurt Weill Foundation.

### Yale Publishes Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Life by Jürgen Schebera

Yale University Press has published a revised and expanded version of Jürgen Schebera's *Weill: eine Biographie in Texten, Bildern und Dokumenten* in an English translation by Caroline Murphy entitled *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Life*. In preparing this new version of the 1990 German edition, Schebera drew upon newly discovered documents and research on Weill conducted in the intervening years. The new edition includes 47 additional photographs, approximately twenty-five percent more text, and an updated bibliography and discography. In addition to examining documents at the Weill-Lenya Research Center and Yale University, Schebera searched throughout Germany and placed advertisements in local newspapers to locate new sources.

A large portion of the expanded text draws upon Weill's letters to his brother Hans and other family members. Included in this part are Weill's impressions of Berlin's revolutionary days of November 1918 and his election to the "revolutionary student council" at the Hochschule für Musik; his work as a choir director at a Berlin synagogue; and his consideration of Humperdinck and Schoenberg as composition teachers. The book also features new documents in the section "The Nazis and Weill" and revised sections dealing with Weill's Paris years, Weill's work for the American war effort, and expanded coverage of Weill's American period.

Schebera's book has been selected as part of the gift package to be awarded weekly on the "Opera Quiz" program hosted by Edward Downes, which is aired as an intermission feature on the Texaco-Metropolitan Opera worldwide broadcasts.

### Letters of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya to be Published in April 1996

The complete correspondence, consisting of more than 400 letters and postcards, exchanged by Weill and Lenya between 1924 and 1950 will be published by the University of California Press in February 1996. *Speak Low (When You Speak Love): The Letters of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya* will also include photographs, facsimiles, and drawings by the two subjects, supplemented by the first publication of Lenya's



autobiographical fragment, as well as footnotes, glossaries, and indexes. These highly personal letters chronicle the lives of two of this century's exceptional artists and illuminate the people with whom they

came in contact. The register of names reads like a "Who's Who" in the arts and entertainment in Europe and America in the period between the wars. This publication marks the culmination of more

than a decade of work by Lys Symonette and Kim H. Kowalke, who edited, translated, and annotated the intimate "private language" used by Weill and Lenya. *Speak Low* offers a backstage view of German music and theater,

the American musical theater in the late thirties and forties, and Hollywood. The letters are candid, vivid commentaries on world events, the creative process, and the experience of exile.

## ARTICLES

Drew, David. "I Sing of War ..." *Musical Times* 86, no. 1828 (June 1995): 279-83. "Testimonies." *Gramophone* 73, no. 866 (July 1995): 23-25. [Reprinted versions of the program notes that accompany the recording *Testimonies of War = Kriegszeugnisse: 1914-1945*, Largo 5130.]

Milnes, Rodney. "The Stage Works of Weill." Part I: *Opera* 46, no. 5 (May 1995): 519-26. Part II: *Opera* 46, no. 6 (June 1995): 662-670. Part III: *Opera* 46, no. 7 (July 1995): 778-784. [Discographic essay, updating the author's article in Alan Blyth's 1984 *Opera on Record* 3]

O'Connor, Patrick. "Kurt Weill's Stage Works." *Gramophone* 73 (June 1995): 38-41. [discographic essay]

Wolter, Günter. "Der Weg der Verheißung: Über jüdische Assimilation und Antisemitismus im deutschen Musikleben." *Das Orchester* 7-8 (July-August 1995): 15-22.

## BOOKS

Brecht, Bertolt. *Broadway—the Hard Way: Sein Exil in den USA 1941-1947*. Frankfurt and Leipzig: Suhrkamp, 1994.

Funke, Christoph and Wolfgang Jansen. *Theater am Schiffbauerdamm: Die Geschichte einer Berliner Bühne*. Berlin: Ch. Links, 1992.

Hanssen, Paula. *Elisabeth Hauptmann: Brecht's Silent Collaborator*. Berlin: Peter Lang, 1995.

John, Eckhard. *Musikbolschewismus: die Politisierung der Musik in Deutschland 1918-1938*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1994.

Lareau, Alan. *The Wild Stage: Literary Cabarets of the Weimar Republic*. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1995.

Lazar, Irving. *Swiftly: My Life and Good Times*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

Levi, Erik. *Music in the Third Reich*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Meredith, Burgess. *So Far, So Good: A Memoir*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1994.

Weill, Kurt. *Grandeur et Décadence de la Ville de Mahagonny*. Texte française par J.-C. Hémery et G. Serreau; commentaire littéraire et musical de Pascal Huyhn. *L'Avant Scène Opéra*, no. 166 (1995).

## RECORDINGS

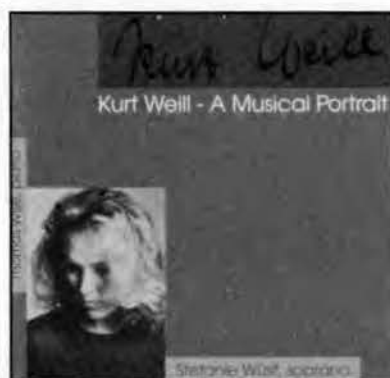
*Kurt Weill: A Musical Portrait*. Stefanie Wüst, soprano; Albert Rundel, violin; Thomas Wise, piano. Edition Al Segno AS 2010 2.

*Play Kurt Weill*. Piero Odorici Quintet with Eddie Henderson. Newjazz NLM 0941.

*Royal Palace: Filmszene*. Transcription for chamber orchestra by Friedrich Schenker. Ensemble Recherche; Lothar Zagrosek, conductor. Montaigne/Auvidis MO 782068.

*Testimonies of War = Kriegszeugnisse: 1914-1945*. Various soloists; London Philharmonic Orchestra; Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin; Poznan Philharmonic Orchestra; BBC Symphony Chorus; The Wallace Collection; Noam Sheriff, Berthold Goldschmidt, Andrzej Borejko and Stephen Jackson, conductors. Largo 5130 [2 CDs]. [Includes Weill's "Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen" and the premiere recording of Choral-Fantasie "Herr Gott dein Zorn tu von uns wenden" (1922) for string orchestra, 3 winds, and male chorus. Also includes works by Blacher, Goldschmidt, Milhaud, Shortall, and Vaughan Williams.]

*Violin Concerto*. Christian Tetzlaff, violin; Soloists of the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie. Virgin Classics VC 5 45056 2. [Includes works by Hindemith and Toch.]





# LETTERS

## To the editor:

In the last issue (vol. 13, no. 1) on page 5 you refer to the performances of *Die sieben Todsünden* I conducted with Ute Lemper in Boston as using the "Brückner-Rüggeberg arrangements." In fact, the orchestrations and all editorial decisions for the notes played were based on Kurt Weill's manuscript, and only the keys reflect those used by Lotte Lenya when she performed it and recorded it under Brückner-Rüggeberg. None of his orchestration and tempo changes were used in these performances. Indeed, the recording that Ms. Lemper and I made in Berlin observed the same procedures.

JOHN MAUCERI  
New York

## To the editor:

I just wanted to bring to light a small inaccuracy with respect to the Gisela May recording of *Die sieben Todsünden* referred to by Daniel Albright in his review of the two new recordings

of the work in the last issue of the Newsletter (vol. 13, no. 1, p. 30). The CD cover reproduced at the end of the review is the one I created for the American release on Polydor in 1989; it is not the cover of the Berlin Classics reissue mentioned in the review.

Perhaps your readers would like to know a bit about the complex history of this recording and its various reissues. The original recording was a co-production between Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft (Hamburg) and East German Radio (Leipzig). To the best of my knowledge and according to the original contract, DGG held the phonorecord rights for Western nations, and the Eastern bloc territories were covered by Leipzig Radio. I don't think the DGG LP was ever officially "released" in the US, but it might have been imported in a relatively small quantity and sold to retailers on a one-time-only basis. Thus, the original LP was a rare item here and was never made available again in the US.

I worked for PolyGram Records for a number of years, during which I lobbied DGG to re-

lease this recording on CD. Eventually I was told that DGG had no interest in pursuing this project and was given permission to remaster and re-release the recording for CD on the Polydor label in the US, coupled with the *Berliner Requiem* from the legendary DGG Atherton 3-LP box. I had always found the stark simplicity of the original DGG LP cover to be interesting, so I simply recreated the cover and modified it to include the Requiem.

When Germany reunited, a clause in the original contract caused full worldwide ownership of the phonorecord rights to vest in Leipzig Radio. DGG issued immediate instructions to pull the recording from its catalog, as its rights had lapsed. Thus, the CD was withdrawn from the American market. It is now available, however, on the Berlin Classics label, but not coupled with the Requiem and without the complete documentation that I had compiled for the program booklet of the Polydor release.

LARRY L. LASH  
New York

## Are "Weill" and "Brecht" Household Words?

By Kerstin Schweiger

In 1994, students of the Technische Universität Berlin conducted a telephone survey researching, among other things, the public's familiarity with Weill and Brecht. The poll was conducted in preparation for a project investigating the transfer of radio plays to the medium of television, using *Der Lindberghflug* as an example. The pollsters chose, at random, 931 households from the West Berlin telephone book to participate in the survey. Of the chosen households, 64.8 percent were reached by telephone, and 32.9 percent of the total (306) responded.

The surveyors asked each participant to answer a wide range of questions, four of which pertained to their familiarity with Brecht or Weill. The results follow:

Questions 28 and 30: Which of the following do you associate with the name Brecht? Which with the name Weill?

1. Musician
2. Composer
3. Sports
4. Politician
5. Writer
6. Dramatist
7. The name does not tell me anything

Answers 5 and 6 were counted as correct for Brecht.

Answers 1 and 2 were counted as correct for Weill.

## Results (of those who responded) to Questions 28 and 30.

	Correct	Not known (#7)	Wrong
Brecht	89.8%	7.9%	2.3%
Weill	49.2%	40.9%	9.8%

Question 29. Do you know the works of Bertolt Brecht and if so, which ones?

Question 31. Do you know the works of Kurt Weill and if so, which ones?

## Summary results to Questions 29 and 31:

Percentage of respondents who said they were not familiar with any works:

Brecht	67%
Weill	80.1%

Percentage who professed familiarity with any works:

	Knew titles of works	Did not know titles
Brecht	50.8%	49.2%
Weill	36.4%	63.6%

The work named most often:

Brecht:	<i>Die Dreigroschenoper</i> (35 times)
Weill:	<i>Die Dreigroschenoper</i> (55 times)

The work named second most often:

Brecht:	<i>Mutter Courage</i>
Weill:	<i>Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny</i>

Summary of titles identified as works by Weill:

*Die Dreigroschenoper* and "September Song"  
*Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Mahagonny*  
*Jasager/Neinsager*, *Die sieben Todsünden*, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*  
*Lieder*  
*Music for Brecht*  
"Show me the way to the next whisky bar"  
*Mutter Courage*  
Songs  
*Dreigroschenoper* mit Ute Lemper  
Helen Schneider interpretiert ihn  
Mackie Messer  
Walzernacht

Kerstin Schweiger is a student at the Institut für Medienberatung at the Technische Universität Berlin. She is preparing a dissertation entitled "Das Bild von Kurt Weill in der Öffentlichkeitsarbeit von Institutionen 1985-1995." (Note: The survey was conducted before the highly successful run of *Street Scene at Theater des Westens* in January 1995 and the opening of *Die Dreigroschenoper* at the *Deutsches Theater und Kammerspiele* in May 1995.)