



Venus logo: King's Head Theatre

In 1942 Weill arranged three standard American patriotic songs: "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "The Star-Spangled Banner," "America," and his own setting of Walt Whitman's "Beat! Beat! Drums!" for speaker (Helen Hayes), male chorus, and orchestra. The National Symphony Orchestra will perform Weill's "Four Patriotic Recitations," conducted by Leonard Slatkin on 7 February 2002 in Washington, D.C.

Venus Rising

As this issue of the *Kurt Weill Newsletter* goes to press, two European "first-class" productions of *One Touch of Venus* are in the works. The producers of the acclaimed King's Head Theatre, London, *Venus* (see page 3a) are raising funds for a West End transfer. On 31 October, a German production of *One Touch of Venus* starring Marianne Rosenberg premieres in a specially constructed tent theater in Berlin.

Other 2001/2002 season stage productions include the revival of last year's *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at Hamburgische Staatsoper, Ingo Metzmacher, conductor, Peter Konwitschny, director (from 19 October); *Die Dreigroschenoper* at the Düsseldorf Schauspielhaus (from 22 November); and the Polish National Opera's *Die sieben Todsünden* in Warsaw (beginning 16 November). On 9 January 2002, the Städtische Bühnen Münster raises the curtain on a new production of *Der Kuhhandel* with Christian Voss, conductor, and Walter Raffener, director. *Kuhhandel* will also be revived by Theater Hagen beginning 9 September. John Mauceri leads the Pittsburgh Opera production of *Street Scene* (16, 19, 22, and 24 February 2002). *Die sieben Todsünden* can be seen in two ballet productions: Pina Bausch Tanztheater presents the work beginning on 12 October in Wuppertal, with tour performances in Japan in May 2002; and the Opéra National de Paris has scheduled eleven performances opening on 26 November, featuring Anne-Sofie von Otter as Anna 1. The 2002 Kurt-Weill-Fest in Dessau (1–10 March 2002) unveils two new productions, *Die Bürgschaft* and *Johnny Johnson* (further information on page 7a).

Concert presentations of *Die sieben Todsünden* include a tour through Leipzig (11 November), Erfurt (18 November), and Magdeburg (23 November) by the MDR Sinfonieorchester (Fabio Luisi, conductor; Anja Silja, Anna); and performances by the National Arts Centre Orchestra (Lawrence Foster, conductor; Ute Lemper, Anna) on 14–15 November in Ottawa. Excerpts from *Der Weg der Verheißung* will be played on 18 November by the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, with Gerard Schwarz, conductor; Ernst Senff Chor; and soloists including Karl Dent, Constance Hauman, and James Maddalena. The performance follows recording sessions for the Milken Archive CD.

Please visit the Kurt Weill Foundation's website (www.kwf.org) to view a calendar of upcoming performances and other events about which the foundation has received information. Readers are invited to inform us of additional events not posted in the calendar (kwfinfo@kwf.org).

"Making Musical Theater"

The exhibition, "Making Musical Theater: Kurt Weill and His Collaborators," will be on view 8 February–4 May 2002 at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. Curated by staff members of the Kurt Weill Foundation and the New York Public Library, the show will contain many NYPL items not seen at the Akademie der Künste Berlin exhibition last year. Highlights will include original manuscripts, correspondence, set designs by Jo Mielziner and Boris Aronson, and rehearsal footage from the Broadway production of *One Touch of Venus*. Plans for ancillary events include a reading of Weill/Lenya correspondence, concerts, a screening of *Where Do We Go from Here?*, and a panel discussion.

Across the United States

Lady in the Dark, Plymouth Music Series, Minneapolis (13 October 2001)

"We have nearly a century of popular musical theater to look back on now, a huge body of repertoire spotlighted by several dozen classics that still engage and entertain, and one of those is surely *Lady in the Dark*, the show that way back in 1941 made psychoanalysis a fit subject for the musical stage.

"Plymouth Music Series presented the show as its season-opener Saturday night at Orchestra Hall in a lively concert staging by Vern Sutton, who also played several key roles. While one might argue that Plymouth's chorus of 100 or so voices is too big to provide an authentic Broadway sound, conductor Philip Brunelle did use Weill's original orchestration with its wonderfully blaring saxophones, and the proud hoofers of JazzDance, the local dance troupe headed by Danny Buraczewski, injected a whimsical '40s aura to the dream sequences, the little one-act operas that form the heart of Weill's innovative score.

"In the role created by Gertrude Lawrence, Connie Evingson looked terrific as our heroine Liza Elliott: chic, sophisticated and possessed of what tap dancers used to call '6 o'clock legs,' meaning flawless. And a little repressed, as Liza needs to be. The brilliant editor of a fashion magazine, Liza's unhappy and can't make up her mind, so she goes to a psychiatrist (played in a nicely clinical tone by Tim Russell). Evingson gave us a real character, though it needed more push in a couple of scenes, and her singing voice has just the right cool but insinuating tone for songs such as 'My Ship' and 'The Saga of Jenny,' the tale of a woman 'who couldn't say no in 27 languages.'

"The cast was strong. Sutton delivered the most famous of patter songs, 'Tschai-kowsky,' with exuberant clarity—39 seconds in the reprise, thereby matching Danny Kaye's timing, according to Gershwin's memoirs. Keith Rice, a properly handsome Randy Curtis, sang a rich-toned 'This Is New.' James Bohn was a suave Kendall Nesbitt, James McKeel a strong Charlie Johnson, and a bunch of small female roles were filled out amusingly by Janet Hanson and Linda Zelig." — Michael Anthony, *The Star Tribune* (15 October 2001)

Songplay, Odyssey Theater, Los Angeles (4 August–14 October 2001)

"Drawing from *The Threepenny Opera*, *Happy End*, *Marie Galante*, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and other works, creator-adaptor Jonathan Eaton has fashioned an evening that offers more continuity than the simple thematic grouping of songs frequently encountered in a revue, though it falls short of a full-fledged theatrical piece.

Hovering somewhere in between, *Songplay* forges quasi-narrative through lines with a sextet of characters who gather in a seaport bar to await the arrival of a ship that will carry them to 'Youkali,' (Weill's ironic ode to an island paradise where dreams come true). As they wait, their voyage takes on a 'Waiting for Godot' quality. Using Weill's songs as their back stories, the performers sustain single characters throughout the piece. When the conceit dovetails with the compositions, the result is riveting—especially in Melody Butiu's venomous delivery of a chambermaid's revenge fantasy in 'Pirate Jenny.' Notably well-executed character sketches include 'Surabaya Johnny,' Sandy Mulvihill's aching confession of her dependence on her scoundrel lover (Marc Cardiff), complemented by Cardiff's later abandonment of her in 'Wie lange noch?'" — Philip Brandes, *The Los Angeles Times* (23 August 2001)



photo: Denise Blasor

The Seven Deadly Sins, New York Philharmonic (16 July 2001)

"The New York Philharmonic [with conductor Michael Stern] performed to a teeming crowd on Central Park's Great Lawn on Monday night. Orchestra officials estimated the attendance at 60,000. . . . The centerpiece of the concert was the seldom-performed score from Kurt Weill's ballet *The Seven Deadly Sins*, a treat to hear on any program, but especially welcome in this venue, where no doubt many listeners were coming with little previous exposure to his music. The work presents the witty, sardonic story of two sisters, both named Anna, heading out across America. . . . Alternately chiding and imploring them from a distance is their family, sung on Monday by an excellent all-male vocal quartet [Roy Cornelius Smith, Michael Steinberger, Richard Knapp, and Frank Barr] in a style that sounded by turns like religious liturgy and cabaret. Audra McDonald was

delightful as both Annas, with a clear tone, wonderful diction and an ideal range of vocal colorings that brought ample nuance to her characters' journey. There is also, it must be said, a heart-wrenching innocence to this music and its muted social criticism, composed by Weill and Bertolt Brecht in 1933 on the edge of a cataclysm, after Hitler had risen to power but before his intentions were clear." — Jeremy Eichler, *Newsday* (18 July 2001)

"Bridges are being formed in each measure: people who would probably never dream of entering the glass foyer of Avery Fisher Hall are listening, possibly for the first time, to live orchestral music. . . . Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins* worked well—largely thanks to the strong performance by Audra McDonald in the central role of Anna. Weill's music builds a bridge of its own, between cabaret and opera. Ms. McDonald caught its hybrid style bang on, and emphasized the life and resilience in the piece much more than the cynicism." — Paul Griffiths, *The New York Times* (18 July 2001)

Critics' Praise from London

One Touch of Venus, King's Head Theatre, London (30 July–2 September 2001)

"A cast of 20 cram themselves onto the King's Head's pocket-handkerchief stage and perform this delightful show with palpable and entirely justified pleasure. Timothy Childs' production has all the required snap, crackle and pop, and there is a neat, ingenious set design by Nigel Hook, as well as a cheeky glimpse of topless lovelies impersonating Picasso paintings. There are some highly cherishable performances, too. Peter Land is vanity personified as the art collector, while Giselle Wolf has exactly the right hard-boiled, wise-cracking manner as the secretary who secretly holds a torch for him. Michael Gyngell is deliciously confused and nervy as the barber who discovers that the goddess of love has fallen head over heels for him, and there is terrific



"Way Out West in Jersey," photo: Simon Annand

support from Gina Murray as his hideous, indignantly squawking fiancée and from Mark White who plays a variety of roles, ranging from mad prison shrink to hilariously-accented, knife-wielding Egyptian, with superb aplomb. Best of all is Kim Medcalf as Venus, straight out of drama school and making a sensational stage debut. . . . *One Touch of Venus* is a rare treat." — Charles Spencer, *The Daily Telegraph* (2 August 2001)

"This musical is a real find. . . . The score is not Weill's finest, but it does very well thank you: no need to overpatronise his Broadway work. The book and lyrics are a feast of elegant New York wit." — John Peter, *The Sunday Times* (5 August 2001)

"*One Touch of Venus* is the only show in musical history to have a rousing second-half chorus in defence of Dr. Crippen, a much misunderstood murderer, and to describe the entire concept as waywardly and wilfully eccentric doesn't begin to do it justice. The plot has all the manic intensity of a Marx Brothers farce. . . . In the expert American hands of Timothy Childs as director and adaptor, *One Touch of Venus* wonderfully suits the 'hey kids, let's do the show right here' atmosphere of the newly reseeded and air-conditioned King's Head, and an immensely strong cast is confidently and wittily led by Peter Land and Michael Gyngell. Playing Venus is Kim Medcalf, an actress making her professional debut straight from drama school: it is the most impressive I have seen in a musical for many a long year. If there is any justice *One Touch of Venus* should be sure of a long West End life." — Sheridan Morley, *The Spectator* (11 August 2001)



Venus (Kim Medcalf) and Rodney (Michael Gyngell), photo: Simon Annand

Royal Palace, BBC Promenade Concerts, London (2 August 2001)

"The phrase 'lost masterpiece' is often flung about indiscriminately, though every so often a work turns up that justifies its use. Kurt Weill's *Royal Palace* is a case in point. . . . At the British premiere at the Barbican last year, everyone was knocked sideways. Now, by popular demand, the work is back. Weill's score, comparably swivelling between past, present and future, constitutes an extraordinary farewell to Romanticism and a conscious examination of the multiple potentials of modernism. The protestations of the three lovers cue passages of Straussian opulence, Stravinskian ferocity and reined-in neo-classicism, before the work culminates in a hypnotic tango that points to the fusion of classical and popular elements that Weill uniquely made his own. It's music to die for, and Andrew Davis, who also conducted the Barbican premiere, sweeps you through it with tremendous relish and allure. Janice Watson, looking like some Hollywood screen siren, is, yet again, his shimmeringly sensual Dejanira." — Tim Ashley, *The Guardian* (4 August 2001)

"It was a truly weird experience: on Thursday an outstanding Prom performance of Kurt Weill's surrealist one-act opera, given a slap-up premiere in Berlin in 1927 and subsequently lost, and the previous evening *One Touch of Venus* at the King's Head, his entrancing Cole Porter-style Broadway musical of 1943. Could this really be the same composer? Was he just a chameleon? An accomplished pasticheur making a living when forced into exile? Both and neither: he remains one of the great enigmas of 20th-century music. *Royal Palace* was the most notable rediscovery in the BBC Symphony Orchestra's centennial Weill weekend last year, and it was re-booked for this Prom repeat with largely the same forces. It has to be Weill-as-Weill, shaking off atonal and neo-classical severities and rich in popular dance rhythms that presage his later 'song style.' It is a work of dazzling virtuosity, rescued from oblivion by Gunther Schuller's reconstruction of the orchestration in 1971, and one of the very few surrealist operas that really works. It cries out to be staged, but would need a budget way beyond the resources of any of our opera companies. Shame." — Rodney Milnes, *The Times* (4 August 2001)

Kurt Weill Foundation News

“Unsung Weill”

Foundation staff members are assembling a volume of twenty-three Weill songs that were cut from Broadway musicals and Hollywood films, to be published in spring 2002 by European American Music. The songbook will feature lyrics by Ira Gershwin, Ogden Nash, Maxwell Anderson, Alan Jay Lerner, Ann Ronell, Oscar Hammerstein, and other noted Weill collaborators.

Lenya Competition Winners in Concert

Winners of the 2001 Lotte Lenya Competition for singers—sopranos Jennifer Dyan Goode, Raquela Sheeran, and Misty Ann Castleberry Sturm; tenor Noah Stewart; and baritone Jacob Langfelder—are preparing for their 27 November 2001 concert at Lincoln Center’s Library for the Performing Arts, New York City. Accompanied by the pianist Thomas Rosenkranz, the young artists will present theater music by Weill, Blitzstein, Kern, and others. The 6:30 p.m. concert in Bruno Walter Auditorium is open to the public free of charge.

Kurt Weill Prize

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, American Musicological Society, American Society for Theatre Research, and Modern Language Association are sponsoring the 2001 Kurt Weill Prize for distinguished scholarship in twentieth-century music theater (including opera), the fourth awards since the Prize was established in 1995. A panel composed of representatives from each of the four sponsoring organizations is currently discussing twelve books and twenty-eight articles which have been nominated for the 2001 prize. There will be two 2001 Kurt Weill Prize awards: the author of the winning book entry will receive a cash award of \$2,500, and the author of the winning article entry will receive \$500. Winners will be announced in the next issue of the newsletter.

Grant Program

Upon recommendation from the grant review panel, the Board of Trustees of the Kurt Weill Foundation has awarded 2001 Mid-Year Professional Performance Grants to Opéra Décentralisé Neuchâtel in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, for a production of *Die sieben Todsünden* that took place this August; and to Cadence Music Centre in Yerevan, Armenia, for an upcoming all-Weill concert of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra in December 2001.



Broadway production of *The Firebrand of Florence*,
photo: Lucas Pritchard

Kurt Weill Edition

Finishing touches are being made on the upcoming critical edition of *The Firebrand of Florence*, in preparation for its publication at the end of 2001. Next to appear in the Kurt Weill Edition will be a volume of Weill’s chamber music.

More information regarding the Foundation’s programs is available at: www.kwf.org

2002 Lenya Competition

Finals of the fifth annual Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers, open to singers residing in the United States and Canada who have not reached their 32nd birthday by 31 December 2001, will take place on 13 April 2002 at the University of Rochester’s Eastman School of Music, after regional auditions at the Houston Grand Opera (9 February); San Francisco Conservatory (10 February); the Eastman School of Music (16 February); Symphony Space, New York City (2 March); and the Lyric Opera of Chicago (15 March). Finalists selected from the five regional competitions will each receive an award of \$500, plus a stipend of \$500 to defray the travel costs of competing in the April finals in Rochester. Awards at the finals will include prizes of \$5000, \$3500, and \$2500. Winners will be presented in a recital in New York City later in the year.

The Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers recognizes excellence in the performance of music for the theater, including opera, operetta, and American musical theater. To show versatility in the performance of varied musical theater styles, each contestant will be asked to prepare an aria from the operatic repertoire, a selection from one of Weill’s German stage works, a selection from one of Weill’s American stage works, and a selection from the American musical theater repertoire by a composer other than Weill. For further information on the competition and application forms, visit the website of the Kurt Weill Foundation: www.kwf.org.

Around the World

Weill in Japan

Tokyo theatergoers had the opportunity to experience Weill's music in two contexts in recent months. Perhaps predictably, one context was *The Threepenny Opera* (*Sanmon Opera*) in a July 2001 production at the Bunkamura Theater Cocoon. In the newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Yukiko Kishinami credited director Yukio Ninagawa with creating a visually stunning version of the work. Beginning with a bare stage and back wall open to reveal the Tokyo street outside, performers entered the auditorium and danced onto the stage during the "Moritat," joining diverse variety acts such as Sumo wrestlers and strippers.



Takuzo Kadono in *Yume no Sakeme*
photo: Masahiko Yakau



Cast of *Yume no Sakeme*
photo: Masahiko Yakau

The leading Japanese novelist and playwright Hisashi Inoue chose Weill's music to punctuate his new play called *Yume no Sakeme* (*The Shattering of a Dream*). Premiering at the New National Theater Tokyo on 8 May 2001, Inoue's play tells the story of an ordinary working man who is caught up in a war crimes trial after World War II. A dozen tunes by Weill were incorporated into the script.

Weill-Revue in Amsterdam, Het Nationale Ballet (15 June 2001)

"Originally it was intended as a choreography for *Die sieben Todsünden*. But then Wayne Eagling, director of the Dutch National Ballet, and choreographer Krzysztof Pastor agreed to tackle something more daring: a large-scale, full-evening ballet about Kurt Weill. For the Polish Pastor, who had been a dancer at the Dutch National Ballet before starting his career as a choreographer, the knowledge of Weill's oeuvre at this point comprised only *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*. Starting work on his project, he noticed 'that Weill was a completely different composer than I had imagined.' This may have been a quite unsettling discovery. In any event, it caused him to neglect *Die Dreigroschenoper* and *Mahagonny*, designing the ballet as a journey through the life of the Jewish composer and thus a considerable portion of twentieth-century history.

"From the beginning, it is clear that this will not be successful. Even though Pastor's Kurt Weill starts out with the 'Moritat,' a soprano sings it so operatically and colorlessly that the song's wicked verve and sauciness are lost. After this 'overture,' the piece mostly follows the composer's oeuvre chronologically, with a decided emphasis on the awkward, more 'serious' compositions. . . . Drawings by George Grosz, Renzo Vespignani, Audrey Flack, and Andy Warhol dominate the cyclorama on stage. Chaplin's great dictator plays with the globe like a child with a balloon. Excerpts from Riefenstahl's Olympics film show groups of girls swinging Indian clubs. A camera glides over the bombed Berlin in low-level flight. We are watching a dance piece slowly turning into an opera, its content into a requiem; a short scene towards the finale (in which the entire ensemble swings its legs to a musical medley), where rock stars such as David Bowie and Tom Waits attempt to interpret Weill, serves rather as a weak excuse. But most of all we are watching a one-million-guilder misunderstanding (that's what the production costs probably amount to): Due to his admiration for the unknown (to him) composer Kurt Weill, Pastor lost sight of the compelling theater man and critic of his time. What could and should have become a grand, sparking, and satirical revue, the choreographer reduced to an anemic psychospasm." — Jochen Schmidt, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (10 July 2001)

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny, Bruckner Fest 2001, Linz (16 September 2001)

"The great affinity for the work expressed by Heinz Karl Gruber in his introduction was apparent during the performance. Without forfeiting the appeal of the song-like music of Act II, he followed the composer's intentions and emphasized the music's epic depth, upholding the work's large-scale musical structure and avoiding the danger of getting lost in irony and grotesqueness. In his hands were the Bruckner Orchester, which got into distress during some of the Weillian hurricanes, and an unnamed chorus with splendidly rehearsed diction. Among an extremely good cast, Gabriel Sade as a brilliant-voiced and expressive Jimmy and Marie McLaughlin as a nuanced Jenny stood out. A delightful character study was delivered by Kenneth Riegel as the overeating Jakob, matched by Reinhild Runkel's portrayal of a bizarre, demonic Begbick. Robert Wörle, Kay Stieffermann, Frederick Burchinal and Karl-Friedrich Dürr also presented their parts more than convincingly. A grand evening which—perhaps as an upbeat to a series of so-called 'degenerate music'—created the appetite for more." — Michael Wruss, *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten* (18 September 2001)

Listen to their Songs



photo: Andrew Eccles

Street Scene Diva

Catherine Malfitano, who sang Jenny in the recent stagings of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at the Salzburg Festival and Lyric Opera of Chicago, returned to Lyric Opera on 2 October for Weill's *Street Scene*. This time around she is Anna Maurrant, but her connection with *Street Scene* stretches back to the highly acclaimed 1978 New York City Opera revival, in which she sang Rose, Anna's daughter. In the intervening years, Malfitano has played Polly Peachum in *The Threepenny Opera* and presented Weill songs on numerous recital programs. In a March 2001 Los Angeles Opera gala, she sang songs from *Lady in the Dark* and *One Touch of Venus*, and her 7 and 14 May cabaret appearances at the New York Public Theater's Joe's Pub included German and American Weill; the concert was recorded on CD by Video Artists International and is scheduled for release early in 2002. Malfitano joins William Bolcom and Joan Morris in May 2002 for "Two Faces of Kurt Weill" in Toronto. And she is passing on her Weill experience to other singers as well: her student Lori Ann Fuller plays Rose in the Lyric Opera *Street Scene*.



"I Hear America Singing"

During the 2001 Salzburg Festival, Thomas Hampson initiated a series of four concerts focusing on song settings of American poetry, with an emphasis on Walt

Whitman. The first of these concerts, on 30 July, featured Hampson's first performance of Weill's *Four Walt Whitman Songs*, accompanied by the Radio Symphonieorchester Wien, Dennis Russell Davies, conductor. The performance was broadcast on ORF radio, and RM Arts will include it in a video program of Hampson singing American songs.

Weill Veteran Epstein Stages New Cabaret

"Kurt Weill: Songs Degenerate and Otherwise," Market Theatre, Cambridge (19 June-1 July 2001)

"This evening, performed by American Repertory Theater regular Alvin Epstein and singer-actress Beth Anne Cole, takes songs from both Weills and blends them into a free-flowing celebration of his musical skills and keen choice of collaborators, who included Maxwell Anderson, Ogden Nash, and Ira Gershwin. Linking the songs is a running commentary about the Nazis' hugely popular 1937 exhibit of 'degenerate art'. . . Epstein's rough-toned baritone is perfect, especially for the brittle Brecht numbers (some sung in German) that allow him to exhibit his considerable acting skills. Cole is also a superb singer-actress, with a firm soprano that can accent a melody with evocative vocal color. They receive terrific musical support on the piano from Cathy Rand." — Robert Nesti, *The Boston Herald* (26 June 2001)

"Mackie" Redux

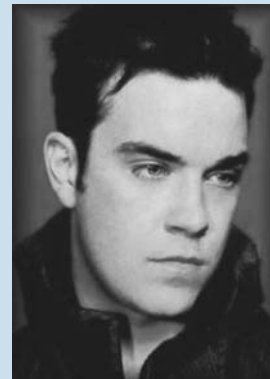
Seventy-three years after the premiere of *Die Dreigroschenoper* and forty-two years after Bobby Darin's landmark 1959 hit, popular entertainers still flock to "Mack the Knife"; the latest is Robbie Williams, British teen idol, who includes "Mack" on his upcoming CD of big-band arrangements. Jazz vocalist Diane Reeves sings "Speak Low" on her 2001 Grammy Award-winning *The Calling* on Blue Note/EMI. Canadian cabaret singer Patricia O'Callaghan includes three Weill songs on *Real Emotional Girl* (Teldec). The veteran stage and recording artist Dee Dee Bridgewater plans an all-Weill release, to be recorded in Paris for Universal Jazz in November 2001, followed by Weill tours around Europe through 2002.

Udo Lindenberg, perennial favorite of audiences in Germany and elsewhere, is readying a concert tour, television, and video project entitled "Atlantic Affairs," focusing on Weill, Brecht, Lenya, Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, and other artists exiled during the Nazi era. Lindenberg, his Panik-Orchester, and numerous guest artists will participate.

On her current twenty-three city American tour, Broadway and television actress Bea Arthur includes songs from *The Threepenny Opera* in an evening of reminiscences about her six-decade career. Arthur played Lucy in the famed 1954 New York revival of the work.



Udo Lindenberg, photo: Jim Rakete



Robbie Williams

Stage Productions Headline the 2002 Kurt-Weill-Fest

The Kurt-Weill-Gesellschaft in Dessau promises three stage productions as centerpieces of the tenth annual Kurt-Weill-Fest, 1–10 March 2002. The Anhaltisches Theater's production of *Die Bürgschaft*, conducted by Golo Berg and directed by Jonathan Eaton, will premiere on 1 March. *Johnny Johnson* (Walter Kobera, conductor; Michael Sturminger, director) follows on 3–4 March, in a co-production with Neue Oper Wien and the Kleist Forum Frankfurt/Oder, where additional performances will take place on 5–6 March. The world premiere of *Lenya*, a one-woman play starring Maresa Hörbiger, by the renowned author of musicals Michael Kunze, is the third theatrical presentation of the Fest (7–9 March). Completing the picture around the three main stage works will be concerts and cabarets, including Stanley Walden's "Liebster Kurt . . . Dein Stanley" (3 March) and a performance by Max Raabe and the Palast Orchester (10 March) of the Weill salon orchestra arrangements featured on their recent CD (review on page 23).

New Kurt-Weill-Akademie Inaugurated

Kurt Weill's early experiences as a conductor in the Stadttheater Lüdenscheid will be commemorated when the new Kurt-Weill-Akademie opens in April 2002. Sponsored by the cities of Lüdenscheid, Iserlohn, and Hagen, and housed in the Kulturhaus Lüdenscheid, the first Akademie will focus on introducing young singers to the work of Weill, under the leadership of Victor C. Symonette, conductor, and Rudolf Sparing, director. Weill's *Mahagonny Songspiel* and songs from *Marie Galante* will be presented on 7–8 April after a week-long preparation. Participants are to be chosen by audition in January 2002. For further information, contact: Kurt-Weill-Akademie Lüdenscheid, c/o Musikschule, Altenaer Straße 9, 58507 Lüdenscheid, Germany (Fax: +49-2351-17.17.22).



Recent Book and CD Releases

New from Warner Bros. Publications is the *Lost in the Stars* Songbook, the latest in the "Rediscovered Broadway" series. Eleven songs with piano accompaniment are included, along with photos from the original 1949 Broadway production. Recent book publications include two biographies of Weill collaborators, Steven Bach's *Dazzler: The Life and Times of Moss Hart* (Knopf) and *Mielziner: Master of Modern Stage Design* by Mary C. Henderson (Back Stage Books). *Street Scene* lyricist Langston Hughes' correspondence with Carl Van Vechten is collected in *Remember Me to Harlem* (edited by Emily Bernard; Knopf).

Pamela Katz: *Die Seeräuberin* (Aufbau-Verlag 2001)

"*Die Seeräuberin* marks the literary debut of New York screenwriter Pamela Katz. Her 'Lotte-Lenya-novel' approaches the historical figure with a nonchalant, autonomous touch. Katz blends true stories and researched materials with literary fiction of her own. In her afterword, readers in search of biographical data about Lotte Lenya are referred to pertinent literature. But those who are eager to plunge into the 'roaring twenties,' those who want to learn about women, emancipation, and art at the beginning of the last century will enjoy themselves immensely with her 'freely invented' biographical novel. This certainly proved to be true during a book presentation at the Berliner Ensemble. . . . On the rehearsal stage, the actress Maria Schrader read passages from the perspectives of each of the three women whose narrations form the novel: Lenya herself, her mother, and an American journalist. The latter two accidentally meet during a crossing from Le Havre to New York City in 1950 and engage in an intense dialogue about the famous actress and singer. Pamela Katz, though, focuses not so much on the art of Lenya, or that of her husband Weill or Brecht, but rather on the psychological relationship between Lenya and her family and its consequences. From a difficult childhood with a strict mother, a violent father, sexual abuse, and crushing poverty Lenya develops—in Katz's version—a phenomenal forcefulness: 'My life was a constant tight-rope walk. Already at the age of four I was balancing on the rope and made every effort not to fall off.' However, in spite of all misfortunes *Die Seeräuberin* is not sensational, but rather the portrayal of an epoch interspersed with more than a touch of comic, its imaginations based on the characters' precise, vivid narrative. Just how much



performance potential is hidden in this subject and its clever presentation was made apparent by the amusing and enjoyable reading of Maria Schrader, who is scheduled to play the lead in a planned film version of the book." — Irene Bazinger, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (19 June 2001)

Der Protagonist on CD

Following their 15 April 2000 concert presentation of *Der Protagonist* at the Berlin Philharmonie, the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and conductor John Mauceri have recorded the opera with a cast headed by Robert Wörle as the Protagonist, and including Amanda Halgrimson (His Sister), Alexander Marco-Buhrmester (The Young Gentleman), and Matteo de Monti (Innkeeper). A production of Deutschland Radio and the Rundfunk-Orchester und Chöre, the recording was released in August 2001 on the Capriccio label.

New Publications

BOOKS

- Bach, Steven. *Dazzler: The Life and Times of Moss Hart*. New York: Knopf, 2001.
- Fritz Lang: *His Life and Work, Photographs and Documents*. Edited by Rolf Aurich, Wolfgang Jacobsen, and Cornelius Schnauber in collaboration with Nicole Brunnhuber and Gabriele Jatho. Berlin: Jovis, 2001 [also German and French text].
- Henderson, Mary C. *Mielziner: Master of Modern Stage Design*. New York: Back Stage Books, 2001.
- Katz, Pamela. *Die Seeräuberin: Ein Lotte-Lenya-Roman*. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2001.
- Remember Me to Harlem: the Letters of Langston Hughes and Carl Van Vechten, 1925–1964*. Edited by Emily Bernard. New York: Knopf, 2001.

DISSERTATIONS

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