

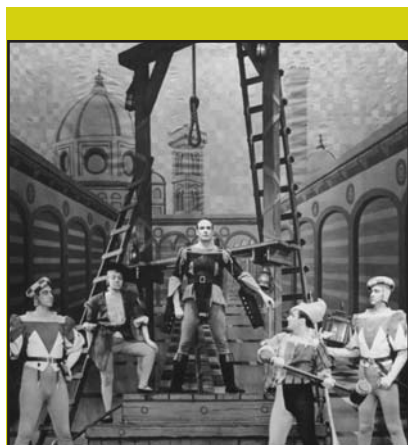
topical Weill

Volume 20

Number 2

Fall 2002

A supplement to the Kurt Weill Newsletter



Firebrand on Broadway, 1945

The Firebrand of Florence is Published

European American Music Corporation and the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music have published the first critical edition of the full score and libretto of a Broadway musical, *The Firebrand of Florence*. Edited by Joel Galand, Weill's collaboration with Ira Gershwin and Edwin Justus Mayer is now available in two volumes with an accompanying critical report. *Firebrand* constitutes the third publication in the Kurt Weill Edition, a collected critical edition of Weill's completed works. Subscriptions to the Edition and individual volumes are available from European American Music.

In January 2003, Capriccio will release *Firebrand* on CD, a live recording of the BBC Symphony Orchestra performance with Sir Andrew Davis, conductor, and Rodney Gilfry as Cellini.

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).

The Threepenny Opera Thrives

Seventy-four years after its Berlin premiere, *Die Dreigroschenoper* remains contemporary to audiences all around the world, as attested by recent performances in Bucharest, Ankara, Ljubljana, Izmir, and Rio de Janeiro. In Germany, new productions open this fall in Wiesbaden (28 September) and Augsburg (23 November), among others; and on 21 December Landestheater Linz revives its lauded 2001–2002 season production (see review, p. 3a). HK Gruber continues his concert performances of the work with Ensemble Modern, begun in Weill's centenary year, at the Cologne Philharmonie (6 November), the Frankfurt Alte Oper (7 November), the Dortmund Konzerthaus (8 November), and the Baden-Baden Festspielhaus (9 November). Pittsburgh Opera Center will showcase its young artists in *The Threepenny Opera* 27 February–2 March 2003. The Royal National Theatre's education department will tour a new production throughout the UK from October 2002–February 2003, after which it will have a limited run in the Cottesloe Theatre at the National Theatre in London. In Scotland, the Dundee Repertory Theatre will present the work 7 April–31 May 2003, in Dundee and on tour.

Weill in Concert

Notable upcoming Weill concert offerings include the New Year's Eve concert of the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle and including Walt Whitman songs and excerpts from *Street Scene*. Thomas Hampson, Kim Criswell, Audra McDonald, and Brent Barrett will be among the concert soloists. The first-ever opera ball at Berlin's Staatsoper Unter den Linden (1 March 2003) will feature HK Gruber leading a starry cast in original orchestrations of Weill songs, followed by the same songs in salon orchestra arrangements. Gruber also conducts Weill in a 3 January 2003 New Year's concert with the Rotterdam Philharmonic. On 10 and 11 January, the Gewandhausorchester plays *Die sieben Todsünden* under the baton of John Mauceri, with Meret Becker as Anna I; the Radio Kamerorkest of Amsterdam plays the same work on 15 March (Peter Eötvös, conductor, Anja Silja, soprano). Ute Lemper joins conductor Andreas Delfs and his St. Paul Chamber Orchestra for Weill songs on 14 February, and Ingo Metzmacher leads the Gewandhausorchester in *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* on 27 and 28 March.

2003 Kurt Weill Fest Dessau

Weill's home town will host its next Kurt Weill Fest 28 February–9 March 2003, featuring four Weill stage works: *Die Dreigroschenoper*, performed by the Milan Sládek Pantomimentheater of Cologne; the pantomime *Zaubernacht*; a revival of last year's production of *Die Bürgschaft* at the Anhaltisches Theater; and a student performance of *Der Protagonist* by the Weimar Hochschule für Musik "Franz Liszt." Appearances by Max Raabe and the Palast Orchester, singer Helen Schneider, jazz pianist Joachim Kühn, and the Dresdner Sinfoniker round out the schedule.

Off to Mahagonny

To the question, "If you could sing anything on the opera stage, which role would you play?" posed in the August 2002 issue of *Opera News*, the Broadway diva Patti Lupone replied: "The one I think of is Jenny in *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. Primarily because it must have been one of the most exciting times in history—to be in Berlin with those creators and put on that piece. I'm surprised I haven't done any Brecht-Weill before. I just think I'm built for that kind of theater and that kind of music. If I did it, I'd love Peter Sellars to direct."

Kurt Weill Foundation Grants, Prizes, and Competition

In pursuit of its mission to promote greater understanding of the lives and accomplishments of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya through research and performance, the Kurt Weill Foundation offers several funding opportunities to individuals and non-profit organizations:

2003 Kurt Weill Prize

The Kurt Weill Prize for distinguished scholarship on twentieth-century musical theater has been awarded biennially since 1995. In 2003, two prize awards of \$2500 and \$500, respectively, will be presented to the author of an outstanding book and the author of an outstanding article. Eligibility is limited to work first published in 2001 or 2002; entries may include books, major scholarly articles or essays (or chapters of larger volumes), critical editions, or publications in other media, including audio or video recordings. Cosponsors of the prize are the Modern Language Association, the American Musicological Society, the American Society for Theatre Research, and the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music. Nominations, including five copies of the nominated work and contact information for the author, must be received by 30 April 2003 at the offices of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, 7 East 20th Street, New York, NY 10003.

2003 Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers



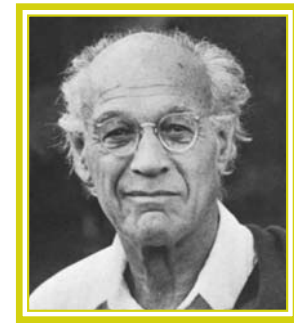
The sixth annual Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers is open to artists born after 31 December 1970. Competition finals will take place on 22 March 2003 at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music, after regional auditions at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (1 February), the Eastman School of Music (8 February), the Lyric Opera of Chicago (13 February), and Dicapo Opera Theater, New York City (22 February). To show versatility in the performance of varied musical theater styles, each contestant will be asked to prepare an aria from the operatic or operetta

repertoire, a selection from one of Weill's European stage works, a selection from one of Weill's American stage works, and a selection from the Broadway musical theater repertoire by a composer other than Weill. Finalists selected from the four regional competitions will each receive an award of \$500, plus a \$500 stipend to pay for travel to the 22 March finals in Rochester. Awards at the finals will include prizes of \$7500, \$5000, and \$3000, and winners will also be presented in a concert in New York City later in the year.

Annual Grant Program

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music funds scholarly research pertaining to Weill and Lenya and performances of complete musical works by Weill. Applications are accepted in the following categories: research and travel, symposia, publication assistance, dissertation fellowships, college/university performance and production, recording projects, broadcasts, and professional performance and production. The annual application deadline is 1 November for projects taking place in the following calendar year or cultural/academic season, except for the professional performance category, for which there is no set application deadline.

Further information regarding the above programs is available at the Foundation's website: www.kwf.org; by phone: 212-505-5240; or by fax: 212-353-9663.



Abravanel Centennial Tribute

The Utah Symphony, where Maurice Abravanel served as music director for thirty-two years (1947–1979), is offering an homage to the conductor next year for the centenary of his birth. On 13 March 2003 Keith Lockhart will lead the Utah Symphony in Weill's *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* and *Die sieben Todsünden*, with Lisa Vroman as Anna I. "Bravo Broadway," with Weill songs performed by Teri Hansen, Doug Labrecque, and Ron Raines, will be presented by the Symphony Pops and conductor Scott O'Neil on 21 and 22 March.

Maurice Abravanel studied music theory with Kurt Weill in Berlin in 1922–1923, beginning a friendship that would last through the 1933 exiles of both to Paris and their eventual settlements in New York. He conducted the Paris premiere of *Die sieben Todsünden* in 1933 and shortly thereafter emigrated to Australia, where he worked until 1936. Engaged as a conductor at the Metropolitan Opera from 1936 to 1938, he resigned his position there to join Weill's *Knickerbocker Holiday*. Weill turned again to Abravanel to conduct the Broadway runs of *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus*, *The Firebrand of Florence*, and *Street Scene*. Abravanel accepted the music directorship of the Utah Symphony in June 1947, returning to Broadway only once, for the 1949 production of Marc Blitzstein's *Regina*. In 1990, he was awarded the first Kurt Weill Foundation Distinguished Achievement Award.

John Willett (1917–2002)

John Willett, author, translator, and scholar, died at the age of eighty-five on 20 August 2002 in London, where he lived. Born in Hampstead on 24 June 1917, he was educated at Oxford and, after service in World War II, joined the staff of the *Manchester Guardian* (1948–51). A 1956 article on Bertolt Brecht for the *Times Literary Supplement* led to Willett meeting and working with Brecht on the Berliner Ensemble's London tour. Three years later, Willett published his first book on the playwright, *The Theatre of Bertolt Brecht*. He translated and edited *Brecht on Theatre* (1964), and he was a founding member of the International Brecht Society. Collaborating with Ralph Manheim, he edited and translated a series of volumes of Brecht's plays, prose, and poetry; *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1976), which they translated and edited, and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* and *Die sieben Todsünden* (1979), in which they edited the W.H. Auden/Chester Kallman translations, are included in those volumes. In addition to his work on Brecht, Willett was also an authority on culture, politics, and society in Weimar Germany and wrote *Expressionism* (1970), *Art and Politics in the Weimar Period: The New Sobriety* (1978), *The Weimar Years: A Culture Cut Short* (1984), and *The Theatre of the Weimar Republic* (1988). He was associated with the *Times Literary Supplement* for many years and served as its Assistant Editor from 1960 to 1967.

Notable Stage Productions

Street Scene at Wolf Trap Opera (16–17 August 2002)

With the support of a Kurt Weill Foundation professional performance grant, the Wolf Trap Opera Company presented the Washington, D.C.-area premiere of *Street Scene* at the 7,000-seat Filene Center in Vienna, Virginia. Conducted by Richard Bado and directed by Garnett Bruce, the production employed the Adrienne Lobel sets designed for the 1994 Houston Grand Opera/Theater des Westens production and refurbished for the Minnesota Opera.

“Broadway musical theater and American opera have been fighting a turf war for the better part of a century. But in Kurt Weill the twain met, producing a true Broadway opera—his late-career masterpiece *Street Scene*. Wolf Trap Opera’s two-performance revival over the weekend felt as fresh and powerful as the work must have seemed at its 1947 New York premiere. *Street Scene* is as unmistakably Weillian as *The Threepenny Opera*—from its strutting jazz rhythms to the doom-laden yearning in its love songs, from its serious operatic form to its eruptions of pop-infused high spirits. It’s also a synthesis of the quarter-century of Broadway writing preceding it: genre-

defining music dramas like *Show Boat*, *Oklahoma!*, and *Porgy and Bess* are never far from Weill’s imagination here. . . . For the third time in a three-work season, Wolf Trap Opera hit pay dirt casting from its company of young singers. Carolyn Betty sang the role of Anna Maurrant with a shimmering, creamy soprano, finding the requisite ache in the gut for her “Somehow I Never Could Believe.” Soprano Angela Fout’s Rose Maurrant was no less rich-voiced and gave a touching urgency to the girl’s romantic confusion and wanderlust. As Sam, tenor Patrick Marques lent a callow sincerity to the evening’s big tune, “Lonely House” (which is used ingeniously as a leitmotif throughout the score). In stark contrast, Oren Gradus’ pitch-dark bass and committed acting as Frank Maurrant created such tension, such a mounting sense of dread, that his double homicide in Act II seemed as inevitable as the relentless heat.”—**Joe Banno**, *The Washington Post* (19 August 2002)

“[Wolf Trap Opera’s *Street Scene*] could very well prove to have been the most significant classical music event in the metro area this year. An authentic masterpiece, Weill’s 1946–47 Broadway opera finally received its belated Washington premiere at these perfor-

mances, and it was a stunner. . . . The opera is loaded with wonderful little set pieces and routines, and in the Wolf Trap production, there were many standouts. Chief among these were mezzo-soprano Adriana Zabala’s obnoxious neighbor Emma Jones; tenor Ross Hauck’s ingratiating ice cream impresario Lippo Fiorentino; the song-and-dance team of Anne Hawthorne and Stephen Gregory Smith, whose happy voices—and feet—brought down the house; Linda Kirk and Jennifer Blades, whose smarty-pants nursemaids/Greek chorus provided acidic commentary not only on the action but also on the shallow nature of New York’s upper classes. Garnett Bruce’s direction was tight and crisp, conductor Richard Bado led the orchestra and the singers with a sure and steady hand. . . . Complaints? The miking of this production was not notably successful, particularly in Act I. While the soloists, with their impeccable diction, could generally render Hughes’ exceptional lyrics intelligible, most of the choral numbers, while always musical, could rarely be parsed correctly. Even an English-language opera can benefit from the use of surtitles at the Filene Center, particularly in the aural soup of a steamy summer night.”—**T.L. Ponick**, *The Washington Times* (24 August 2002)

Die Dreigroschenoper, Landestheater Linz (premiere 20 January 2002)

“In front of a cheap red velvet curtain, titles and names appear. That’s how cinema once started. That’s how *Die Dreigroschenoper* starts under the direction of Kurt Palm. The curtain has hardly risen when you see the inside of a church where beggar king Peachum (Sven-Christian Habich) fervently delivers a sermon from the pulpit. The book of books is secured by a chain, a bottle of liquor is stashed away in the tabernacle, the *mater dolorosa* dangles from the wall. The overall cool atmosphere of the room allows this stretch between morality play and parody because Brecht specialist Palm, with a clear conscience, has staged *Die Dreigroschenoper* in an especially “culinary” way. In his up-to-date interpretation of “epic theater,” the songs are moved into the foreground. The actors quickly hit their stride when singing these queer songs. Performed by Max Renne and the Bruckner Orchester Linz, using the original score, the songs go straight to the heart of the audience. . . . Stefan Matousch is a seedy, arrogant, almost subdued Mack the Knife, Sabine Martin plays a rather sober Polly. Verena Koch shows some eroticism as Pirate Jenny, singing the ‘Moritat’ as an interlude. Olga Strub portrays a dissipated Mrs. Peachum casting her net of intrigues. Maxi Blaha is a conservative but shrewd daughter of the corrupt police commissioner, Tiger Brown, played by Günter Rainer. Thunderous applause at the premiere!” —**Vera Rathenböck**, *Neue Kronen Zeitung* (22 January 2002)

“Kurt Palm has staged the Weill/Brecht classic—spectacularly witty, and with an infallible balance between jokes, satire, and a deeper meaning. The evening gained additional verve through the swing of the Bruckner Orchester led by Max Renne. Their performance is simply fantastic, giving the play an additional layer, that of a showcase for Weill’s best-loved classics.” —**Gunther Baumann**, *Kurier* (22 January 2002)



Photo: Christian Brachwitz

International Performance Log

Suite from *Marie Galante*, Ensemble Kontrapunkte, Vienna Musikverein (6 May 2002)

“The programs of Zyklus Kontrapunkte never fail to stimulate: The Brahms Hall saw a wide range of works, from Janacek and Weill to Gubaidulina and Gerhard Schedl. There was, however, a common element: the peculiar tone color of the saxophone, prominently used as solo instrument or forming a quartet, not to forget the central role it plays in Weill’s orchestration. . . . The sparkling finale was a concert suite of Weill’s *Marie Galante*, his 1934 incidental music for a socially critical play about prostitution. Instrumental dance pieces (tango, foxtrot, march, waltz) alternate with vocal numbers, during which Heinz Zednik murmured and squeaked like a worn-out shellac disk, but the Ensemble Kontrapunkte under the baton of Peter Keuschnig is without the slightest competition when it comes to Weill and Eisler.”—Manfred A. Schmid, *Wiener Zeitung* (8 May 2002)



Der Silbersee at Stadttheater Osnabrück
(premiere 5 June 2002)

Der Lindberghflug, Orchester Damals und Heute, Carinthischer Sommer, Ossiach (6 August 2002)

“Bertolt Brecht put the Atlantic’s first aerial crossing into prose, Kurt Weill set it to music, and the Orchester Damals und Heute launched it in the Stiftskirche Ossiach. Flight attendants for the young American musicians under the baton of Michael Alexander Willens were the members of the terrific Vokalensemble Köln, Dietmar Kerschbaum (tenor), Stephen Bronk (bass and narrator), and Karsten Mewes (baritone). They served up a delicious slice of music history: brilliant as well as educational, equipped with a message, wonderfully emotional (including Lindbergh’s conversation with his motor), with tonal painting (stretching from fog to snow storm), vivid (with choral crowd scenes)—i.e., with all the characteristics of a Weill composition (hitherto unknown to a large part of the audience).”—Frieda Stank, *Kärntner Krone* (8 August 2002)

The Threepenny Opera, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre, London (premiere 23 August 2002)

“In 1920 the old Lyric Hammersmith staged a famous production of Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*. This came to the attention of a German writer, Elisabeth Hauptmann, who inspired Brecht and Weill to work on their own sardonic update. Now, by a pleasing circularity, this most famous of twentieth-century musicals returns to Hammersmith in an aggressive, sexy, well-sung National Youth Theatre production that quite simply took my breath away. Director Edward Wilson and his team wisely make no attempt to treat the 1928 show as a museum piece. They update the action to the present so that Peachum, the beggar king, seeks to embarrass the authorities with a public display of poverty during our own Queen’s Golden Jubilee. . . . There is a standout performance from Jo Nesbitt, whose Polly Peachum is a tough cookie ready and eager to take over Macheath’s gang. It helps that she also sings with raw, gutsy power. Fine vocal work, too, from Lucy Voller as Jenny Diver. But what really staggered me was the ability of these young actors to play with total conviction rapacious thugs and randy whores. I’m not sure what they’re teaching them at school these days, but it has bred a generation of natural Brechtians.”—Michael Billington, *The Guardian* (30 August 2002)

Berlin to Broadway with Kurt Weill, Gloucester Stage Company (premiere 26 June 2002)

“*Berlin to Broadway with Kurt Weill* chronicles the German composer’s journey from the politically charged cabarets of pre-Nazi Berlin to the Broadway stage of the 1940s. And in doing so it illustrates how Weill was something of a musical chameleon able to adapt his music to the fashions of the times. . . . The result is a respectable if stodgy show that’s being given a pleasant, bare-bones production by the Gloucester Stage Company. As devised by Gene Lerner, the songs are linked with the thinnest commentary, which reduces Weill’s life to a civics lesson. If you came knowing little about him, you’ll leave not much more enlightened. Still, it’s hard to quibble with the music, which consists of many hauntingly beautiful songs. . . . But many of them, especially the German ones (here sung in translation), are daunting, which makes performances of them something of a minefield for actors usually accustomed to less strenuous fare. This may be why the hard-working Equity cast, under the direction of Nancy Curran Willis and Celia Couture, never fully grasps the dramatic power of some of the material, most notably in the first half. Here the four-member cast works best in the ensemble numbers, which include the catchy ‘Alabama Song’ (made famous by the Doors) and the inevitable ‘Mack the Knife.’”—Robert Nesti, *The Boston Herald* (4 July 2002)

Happy End, Central Station, London (14 May 2002)

"I'm sure that Bertolt Brecht would have appreciated the bright idea of presenting *Happy End* in a King's Cross strip club. The play, after all, is largely set in the sleazy beer hall run by Chicago gang boss Bill Cracker and the interplay with the audience adds an entertaining extra dimension to the evening. . . . Even in this fairly free adaptation by Michael Feingold, the closing message that 'Robbing a bank is less criminal than owning one'—which the Salvation Army troop wholeheartedly endorses—hangs rather loosely on a plot that, while attacking moral hypocrisy, is otherwise hardly a great anti-capitalist tract. Brecht's main contribution was to the songs, written with his *Threepenny Opera* collaborator Kurt Weill. And they are great songs, too. . . . Unfortunately, even in Central Station's relatively confined surroundings, a number of the performers, while hitting all the right notes, clearly don't have experience of singing without amplification, so some of these songs rather go missing. Notable exceptions are Tracy Wiles as Lilian, who produces one of the best interpretations of 'Surabaya-Johnny' I've ever heard, and Alasdair Harvey as Bill, whose West End musical experience is rather underused in vocal terms, but who shows what can be done with 'Song of the Big Shot.'"—Mike Parker, *Morning Star*, London (6 June 2002)

Weill at Maxim's, Chicago (19 July 2002)

Members of the Lyric Opera of Chicago's Center for American Artists presented an amalgam of Weill songs and arias from Bizet's *Carmen* at the red plush-filled Belle Époque Maxim's on Chicago's Gold Coast. The cabaret evening was part of the city's "Music Everywhere" summertime series, with repertoire ranging from the ubiquitous "Mack the Knife" to "Lost in the Stars," "Dirge for Two Veterans" along with Bizet's "Toréador Song," and "Denn wie man sich bettet" performed by Nicole Cabell, an award winner in the 2002 Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers.

The eleventh Symposium of the International Brecht Society (26–29 June 2003) will be held at Humboldt Universität in Berlin, focusing on "75 Years of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*."

Udo Lindenberg's *Atlantic Affairs* on ARD

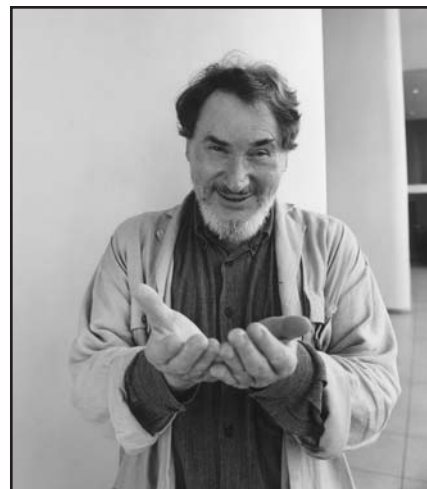
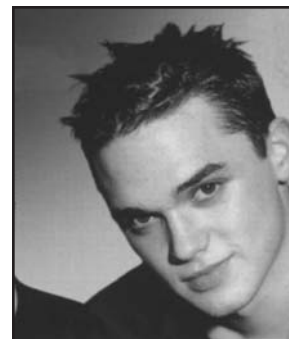
The television film, *An Atlantic Affair—A Musical Adventure Film*, documents Udo Lindenberg's new stage revue focusing on Nazi-era émigré composers, including Kurt Weill. Lys Symonette, Weill's musical assistant, is interviewed, along with other friends and descendants of the composers. After the documentary is shown on ARD in Germany on 3 November 2002, Lindenberg will tour the revue through Europe in early 2003.

"Mackie's Back in Town"

In a salute to Las Vegas and the big band sound, *Robbie Williams Live at the Albert* (Chrysalis DVD and VHS), features the British rock and pop heartthrob's take on "Mack the Knife," closely modeled after the 1959 Bobby Darin version. Chrysalis has also issued *Swing When You're Winning*, a CD release of the same Williams big band renditions.

The hugely popular British TV contest series "Pop Idol" has generated the latest mega-hit recording of "Mack the Knife." *Pop Idol: The Big Band Album* showcases Gareth Gates' rendition of the perennial favorite. The eighteen-year-old Gates, who was edged out for first prize in the 2002 contest in a photo finish, said that Robbie Williams—who else?—was his own "pop idol."

From left:
Bobby Darin
Robbie Williams
Gareth Gates



Spotlight on HK Gruber

Composer, conductor, chansonnier, and double bass player HK Gruber is one of the foremost advocates for the music of Kurt Weill, with countless Weill performances to his credit. In 1999–2000 Gruber was Artistic Advisor for the South Bank Centre's Weill Festival, in which he conducted programs with Ensemble Modern and the London Sinfonietta. He conducted the BBC Symphony Orchestra in a September 2000 concert performance of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at the BBC Proms, after which they toured the work to the Lucerne Festival and Bremen Musikfest; at the Internationales Beethovenfest Bonn in September 2000, he led performances of *Die sieben Todsünden* in Wuppertal, Bonn, and Düsseldorf. After recording *Die Dreigroschenoper* with Ensemble Modern for RCA Victor in 1999, Gruber performed the work live with Ensemble Modern in acclaimed concert performances in London, Berlin, Kiel (as part of the Schleswig Holstein Festival), Rome, and Milan. The celebrated *Dreigroschenoper* collaboration continues with November 2002 performances in Cologne, Frankfurt, Dortmund, and Baden-Baden. Gruber's most recent Weill recording is *Charming Weill* with the Palast Orchester and Max Raabe.

New Releases

***The Eternal Road: An Encounter with the Past*, Frank Productions documentary (Ergo Media #675)**

"Documentaries about musical productions don't come along every week. . . . Ron Frank's *The Eternal Road: An Encounter with the Past*, from Ergo Media, tells of an epic musical drama about the history and plight of the Jews, which was written in 1934, performed in 1937 in New York and revived in 1999 in Chemnitz, Germany. . . . *The Eternal Road*, which begins with a 1930s Jewish congregation trapped inside its synagogue, recounts biblical stories of persecution and follows the group into exile. In 1935 Kurt Weill arrived in New York with the production and soon was living at the St. Moritz and mingling with the Gershwins. With its elaborate staging and hundreds of extras, *The Eternal Road* took a long time to be produced. . . . It would last 153 performances before succumbing to its huge expense. In the habit of inviting its own exiles to return, the city of Chemnitz was preparing to stage *The Eternal Road* at the same time that Mr. Frank arrived with his father, Erwin, a Chemnitz refugee, to make a film about a new synagogue and the Chemnitz wartime experience. Stirring in scenes of the revival, the documentary deftly alternates from the present to the past."—Peter M. Nichols, *The New York Times* (31 May 2002)

***Will Friedwald's Stardust Melodies: A Biography of Twelve of America's Most Popular Songs* (Pantheon, ISBN 0-375-42089-4)**

"A song can emigrate, change its name, learn a second language and acquire new citizenship. That's the case with the most exotic of Friedwald's choices, 'Moritat,' which Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht wrote for *The Threepenny Opera* in Berlin in 1928. 'Moritat' enjoyed a promising youth in Germany till 1933, when Hitler began banishing all music written by Jews. . . . Marc Blitzstein gave 'Moritat' its naturalization papers by renaming it 'Mack the Knife' in his English version. . . . A record producer, George Avakian, saw its larger possibilities and arranged for Louis Armstrong to record it in 1955. It began working its way into the standard repertoire, via Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and others. . . . In 1959 the exuberant, insolent Bobby Darin record became one of the most popular singles of all time. By then 'Mack the Knife' seemed entirely American. When Ella Fitzgerald sang it in Berlin, she treated it as a Louis Armstrong number and didn't even mention that Berlin was where it was born. She didn't know or didn't care. Weill would have liked that. It may be the saddest part of his sad story that he missed all this. . . . He must have imagined his bitter ode to a murderer was too depressing for Americans. He could hardly have known that a more sophisticated America would love it, put it on the hit parade for months, and make it one of the great standards."—Robert Fulford, *National Post* (6 August 2002)

Coming in Spring 2003

After presenting his *Dreigroschenoper* arrangements in concert, pianist Marino Formenti has prepared them for publication by Universal Edition. "Six Songs from *Die Dreigroschenoper*" for solo piano, including Formenti's versions of "Barbara-Song," "Seeräuberjenny," "Ballade vom angenehmen Leben," "Liebeslied," "Zuhälterballade," and "Kanonen-Song," will be available in March 2003.

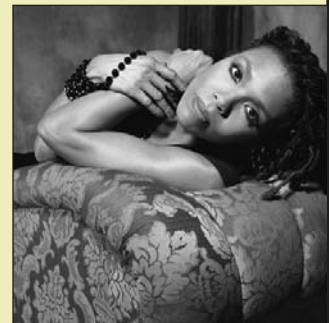
Getting Weill'd with Dee Dee Bridgewater

Following upon the success of her CD *This is New* (review on p. 21), Dee Dee Bridgewater continues her international tour featuring songs by Kurt Weill. In October 2002 she crosses North America with stops in Madison, Columbus, Atlanta, St. Louis, Montreal, Boston, and New York City; her appearance at the Kennedy Center in Washington (18 October) will be recorded for "JazzSet," the weekly jazz show she hosts for National Public Radio. In November she returns to France and Germany. The new year brings concerts at the Hong Kong International Jazz Festival (7-8 March 2003), an appearance at the LG Arts Center in Seoul, and additional dates in France and the United States. Bridgewater's Weill has been the topic of considerable commentary from the international press:

"With her irrepressible swing, muscular rhythm and vibrato caressing the beat, it's easy to see why Bridgewater draws comparisons with Ella Fitzgerald. In a sense, this is a break with her lineage but with its focus on Kurt Weill, it's still a songbook à la Ella."—Leon Gettler, *The Age, Melbourne* (30 May 2002)

"One would be hard pressed to name another female singer working today who can finesse the theatrical elements of Weill's songs while also infusing them with comparably brilliant scat singing, propulsive swing rhythm and gorgeously lush tone colors."—Howard Reich, *Los Angeles Times* (4 August 2002)

"With a mostly French ensemble at the Barbican (3 May 2002), her success was mixed. All Bridgewater's considerable virtues—broad range, driving swing and roaring attack—seemed in storming working order on the opener, 'I'm a Stranger Here Myself.' But 'September Song' turned into a Latin shuffle that brought out Bridgewater's occasionally nagging showtime mannerisms. Her clowning version of 'Mack the Knife' wasn't funny enough to justify either subverting the original, or departing from the Ella version, of which Bridgewater can make a superb account. All Bridgewater's old jazz-swingers' relish returned, however, on a raucous, blues-blasting version of 'Alabama Song.'"—John Fordham, *The Guardian* (13 May 2002)



***Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires (premiere 12 April 2002)**

“Since its opening nearly a century ago, the Teatro Colón has been Argentina’s symbol of culture. But to keep the theater’s programs running since Emilio Basaldúa took over as artistic director last October, he has had to confront situations that would be unimaginable to directors of similar institutions in other countries. In April . . . *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* was being presented, precisely because ‘Buenos Aires was the city in the real world that most resembled Mahagonny at that time,’ Mr. Basaldúa said. But the government had just ordered all banks closed indefinitely, no money was available anywhere, and the Colón ended up simply throwing its doors open to the public and offering the last performance free.”—Larry Rohter, *The New York Times* (30 July 2002)



photo: Miguel Micciche

“Jérôme Savary’s staging was rich in imagination and convincing in development of the action, though it didn’t reflect the ‘Florida desert’ setting specified by the authors. Savary set this *Mahagonny* in a garbage dump. Some other staging details referred to the present situation in Argentina—rather gratuitously, because the corrupt life of Mahagonny has nothing to do with the grievances and anguish of contemporary Argentina, where economic disaster has been caused by those in power, not by the people. Gerardo Gandini brought out the alternately operatic and cabaret-ish character of Weill’s score, in an exciting reading. The performance featured generally high-quality voices, perfect articulation of the text, and vivid portrayals of many characters. However, Graciela Oddone was a little bland and vocally undernourished as Jenny, and though Carlos Bengolea’s Jimmy was impassioned, his tone production was effortful. . . . In the second cast, Adriana Mastrángelo and Gustavo López Manzitti were ideal as the couple: she exquisitely feminine and vocally radiant, he equally brilliant in voice and looking the role. In both casts, Alejandra Malvino, Gabriel Renaud and Luis Gaeta excelled as Begbick, Fatty and

Moses, Mahagonny’s knavish founders. The audiences loved the show, which was essentially a triumph of well-oiled ensemble work from the orchestra, chorus, and large cast.”—Eduardo Arnosi, *Opera News* (August 2002)

“[Jérôme Savary’s] vision of *Mahagonny* relies on broad strokes, gags (some of them slightly dated), a more or less light touch, and visual impact rather than subtleties. . . . It is Savary’s concept, and in this case it complies with his assignment. Be that as it may, the best happens in those moments where the director uses absurdity, superimposes symbols, and juxtaposes genres: When a tango is contrasted with naked female boxers and with an absurd voyeur show, when a man bursts—literally—after having eaten several cows, when people fly in the air, and the threat of a hurricane is averted by a crazy unreal denouement of rich beauty.”—Diego Fischerman, *Página 12* (14 April 2002)

Tanztheater Wuppertal’s *Die sieben Todsünden*, Saitama Arts Theater, Tokyo (premiere 11 May 2002)

“The company’s first tour in three years opened with *Die sieben Todsünden*, which comprises two works, both with insightful, often sarcastic texts. The first half of the performance is the title work, followed by *Fürchtet euch nicht*, a cynical and decadent revue that uses a collection of songs from Brecht-Weill operas and musicals, including *Die Dreigroschenoper*, *Happy End* and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*. . . . [The piece] opens flamboyantly with an instrumental version of ‘Kanonen-Song.’ Men and women, all costumed in flowing dresses of various colors, dance a kind of Charleston. . . . In [Pina] Bausch’s works, dancers need not only physical strength and artistry, but also acting skills. They sing, too, and, like the four tawdry, fur-clad women who perform ‘Eifersuchts-Duett,’ sometimes scream; the quartet performs the song in gales of frantic laughter, which caused some of the audience members to laugh along with them.”—Yukiko Kishinami, *The Daily Yomiuri* (16 May 2002)

***Der neue Orpheus*, Bamberg Symphony, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, conductor (3 August 2002)**

“Kurt Weill’s cantata, *Der neue Orpheus*, composed in 1925 on an expressionist text by Yvan Goll, shows the composer already on his way to a more popular, simpler style, apparent in the subtle sonorities which do away with violins in the orchestra. Maneuvering between cabaret sound and grand operatic gestures, soprano Lena Nordin and solo-violinist Alexander Rozhdestvensky, son of conductor Gennady Rozhdestvensky, offer a gripping interpretation of this effective work.”—Jochen Berger, *Coburger Tageblatt* (12 March 2002)

New Publications

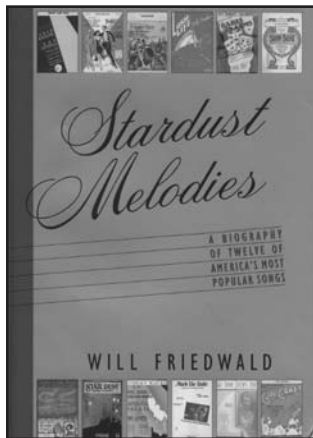
SCORES

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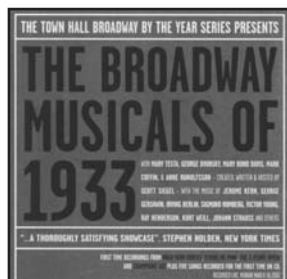
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VIDEOS

The Eternal Road. Documentary film by Ron Frank on the staging of *Der Weg der Verheissung* and the return of Jews to Chemnitz. Ergo Media #675.

In Performance: Jennifer Larmore. Live recital filmed 5 January 2001. Includes "Je ne t'aime pas" and "Youkali." VAI VHS 69229/DVD 4205.

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RECORDINGS

Second Symphony, Kammer-symphonie Berlin, cond. Jürgen Bruns, EDA 018-2 (also Berthold Goldschmidt: Suite for Orchestra, op. 5; Roberto Gerhard: Concertino for Strings, op. 12).

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Broadway Musicals of 1943, Sally Mayes, Heather MacRae, Jason Graae, from the "Broadway by the Year" series, six songs from *One touch of Venus*, Bayview RNBW015.

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