

A supplement to the Kurt Weill Newsletter



Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, ca. 1928

Weill/Brecht Works Take the Stage...

A bevy of productions of Weill's collaborations with Bertolt Brecht are in the works, partially inspired by the upcoming 50th anniversary of the death of Brecht in 2006. *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* is currently playing in Nuremberg, Darmstadt, and Pforzheim, and Harry Kupfer's new staging of the work opens at the Dresden Semperoper on 6 May 2005 (Sebastian Weigle, conductor). In the autumn, additional *Mahagonny*s premiere at Theater Basel (Marko Letonja, conductor) on 14 September; on 12 November at Saarländisches Staatstheater, Saarbrücken (Leonid Grin, conductor), in a co-production with Stadttheater Ulm; and in Madrid at Teatro Español on 1 December. Two Berlin productions are planned: a revival of the 1999 Günter Krämer production at Deutsche Oper Berlin beginning 30 October 2005, and a new one at the Komische Oper opening in September 2006. *Mahagonny* will also highlight the 2006 Kurt Weill Fest in Dessau.

Spring 2005 and the 2005/2006 season are filled with productions of *Die Dreigroschenoper* worldwide. The work is ubiquitous in Germany, and U.S. outings are led by a Broadway revival of *The Threepenny Opera* scheduled by the Roundabout Theatre Company for early 2006. Directed by Scott Elliott, the Roundabout production will feature a new translation by Wallace Shawn. An increasing number of North American opera companies are choosing the work: after recent productions at Opera Omaha and Vancouver Opera, future venues include Long Beach Opera (11–15 June 2005), Arizona Opera (premiere 11 November 2005), and Opera Columbus (13–15 January 2006). A bumper crop of stagings in Eastern Europe provides the opportunity to see Peachum's band of beggars in Wrocław, Warsaw, Krakow, and Białystok, Poland; Ostrava and Uherske Hradiste, Czech Republic; Belgrade, Serbia; Varazdin, Croatia; and Budapest, Hungary.

Canada's Shaw Festival revives its 2003 production of *Happy End* 15 May–28 October 2005; the work has also been seen recently in Dessau (review on page 20), Los Angeles, Vienna, and at the Teatr Narodowy in Warsaw. Peter Ludwig conducts and Hans Peter Cloos directs *Die sieben Todsünden* with Meret Becker, soprano, in a French stage production playing 10–21 May 2005 at MC2, Grenoble, and moving to MC93, Bobigny, 24 May–12 June. In upcoming concert performances of the *Sins*, Yakov Kreizberg conducts the Vienna Symphony (29–30 May 2005), Lawrence Foster the Munich Radio Orchestra (16 October 2005), and Stefan Sanderling the Florida Orchestra (Clearwater, 22–23 October 2005; Tampa Bay, 24 October 2005).



Weill and Lenya with Woolly

... And Weill Without Brecht

Opera North's hit production of *One Touch of Venus* (reviewed on page 18) tours to Italy for performances at the Ravenna Festival on 15, 17, and 21 July 2005. Plans are underway for a residency at Sadler's Wells Theatre, London, in November 2005. Not one but two recordings of both of Weill's symphonies are due out this year. Marin Alsop leads the Bournemouth Symphony on a Naxos disc, also including Robert Russell Bennett's Symphonic Nocturne based on *Lady in the Dark*; and Antony Beaumont conducts the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen on Chandos (with Weill's *Quodlibet*). After a successful five-month New York run in 2004, Bebe Neuwirth's Weill revue, *Here Lies Jenny*, moves to the Post Street Theatre in San Francisco for a three-week run in May 2005.

New Weill/Lenya Musical

In an interview with Broadway legend Harold Prince, on 28 November 2004 Martin F. Kohn of the *Detroit Free Press* reported that Prince's next project, in collaboration with *Parade* playwright Alfred Uhry, is "a musical based on the lives of composer Kurt Weill and singer Lotte Lenya, who were husband and wife."

Jerry Orbach (20 October 1935–28 December 2004)

Theater, movie, and television fans alike mourned the death of Jerry Orbach, who died on December 28 at the age of 69. Orbach's career took off when he was cast in 1955 as the Street Singer in the Theater de Lys production of *The Threepenny Opera*. He was also an understudy for Mack and eventually went on to play the role opposite Lotte Lenya during his three and a half years with the show. Other notable musicals in which he starred included *Chicago*, *Guys and Dolls* (both of which earned him Tony nominations), *The Fantasticks*, *42nd Street*, *Carnival!*, and *Promises, Promises*, for which he won a Tony award. A presence in theater for years, Orbach gave more performances on Broadway than any other male actor in history. While his career focused on television and movies in his later years, he did not entirely eliminate singing from his repertoire. In February 2000, he returned to celebrate Weill once again, performing "Mack the Knife" at a Brooklyn Academy of Music gala honoring Weill's centenary.

2005 Grants Awarded

Research and Travel

Hanna Höfer, for research on *Love Life*

Publication Assistance

Esbjörn Nyström, to publish doctoral dissertation entitled “Libretto in Progress: Brechts und Weills *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*”

College/University Performances

SUNY Potsdam, *The Threepenny Opera*

Lakeland College, *Der Jasager*

Grand Valley State University, *Street Scene*

University of Redlands, Weill series including *The Threepenny Opera*, *Der Lindberghflug*, and *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*

Morehead State University, *The Threepenny Opera*

Professional Performances

Chameleon Arts Ensemble of Boston, *Frauentanz*

Opera de Camara del Teatro Colón, *Die sieben Todsünden*

Opera North, *One Touch of Venus*

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music funds research and performance projects related to Kurt Weill and his wife, actress-singer Lotte Lenya. For each funding period, the Foundation accepts proposals 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. Grant guidelines, application forms, and further information on the grant program are available on the Kurt Weill Foundation website (www.kwf.org) or by telephone (212.505.5240).

2004 Grant Recipient Report

Johnny Johnson Reprised by Boston Camerata in Sanders Theatre, Cambridge (7 November 2004)

“It’s not surprising the Boston Camerata revived *Johnny Johnson*. This little-seen 1936 Kurt Weill anti-war musical has far more relevance today than when the group first mounted this concert version in 1996. . . . Conducted by Joel Cohen, this fine, abridged version left one wanting to see the work in its entirety. Here the musical’s scenes were suggested through the use of continuity spoken by Christopher Lydon, and the use of an occasional prop or costume. . . . It was in the numerous orchestral interludes that Weill’s unique musical gifts were best realized. Cohen’s crisp leadership served the composer’s idiosyncratic, bittersweet sound well. Now if only we could see the entire show.”—Robert Nesti, *Boston Herald* (9 November 2004)

“Although the play was given an elaborate Broadway production by the Group Theatre, the strengths of *Johnny Johnson* are firmly in its score, which is plaintive and stirring and shows Weill incorporating the joyous strains of swing into the elements he brought with him from his Berlin kabarett days, the embittered yet still heartfelt resetting of Viennese musical traditions. In *Johnny Johnson*, you can hear Richard Strauss embrace Benny Goodman, and some of the songs—‘Song of the guns’ and the tender, ironic ballad ‘Mon Ami, My Friend’ and the finale, ‘Johnny’s Song,’ with its hobbled fairground beat—are among Weill’s very best. The Boston Camerata cast—11 singers and 11 musicians—performed the score with full attention to its emotional richness and its playfulness.”—Steve Vineberg, *Boston Phoenix* (12 November 2004)

Two Footnotes to a Paris Concert in 1933

On 26 November 1933, a concert by the Paris Symphony Orchestra premiered three songs from Der Silbersee in the Salle Pleyel. During one of the songs, the French composer Florent Schmitt (1870–1958) got up and shouted repeatedly “Vive Hitler!”, adding that there were already plenty of bad French composers and there was no room for all the Jews from Germany. The audience tried to drown out the protest. Newspapers reported the incident in the following days. Schmitt, a Prix de Rome recipient, had close ties with the Nazis during the German occupation and held offices under the Vichy government.

In a newly surfaced letter from Weill to Arno Huth, a German musicologist and critic who resided in Paris at the time, Weill urged Huth not to mention “the silly Florent Schmitt scandal.” Rather, Huth should write along these lines: “it goes without saying that a composer whose works are performed all over the world can live and work peacefully in Paris.” Apparently, Weill wanted to deflect attention from the scandal and avoid becoming a larger target for the Nazis and also for the Fascists, because, as Weill mentioned, a performance of *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *Der Jasager* was scheduled at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia for 29 December 1933 in Rome. The letter, dated “Louveciennes, 21 December 1933,” is a recent gift from Huth’s son Gerald Huth to the Kurt-Weill-Gesellschaft e.V., Dessau.

As of 1 January 2005, a prestigious French high school in the small town of St. Cloud, ten miles west of Paris, is no longer called Lycée Florent Schmitt. After years of debate about the Nazi past of its former namesake, the school decided to adopt the name “Alexandre Dumas.” The school’s principal, Bernard Gary, issued a statement expressing relief that the school can leave the debate behind and focus on education. According to various newspaper reports, the school (both students and faculty) had favored the change for some time but met resistance from the municipality.

2005 Kurt Weill Fest

Unsung Weill, Schloss Köthen (6 March 2005)

2004 Lenya Winners in Revue Staged by David Runzo

“Amy Justman and Richard Todd Adams, winners of last year’s Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers, showed just how much lively charm can be infused into even songs that were cut from Weill’s musicals.”—Isabel Herzfeld, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (12 March 2005)

“What Amy Justman and Richard Todd Adams . . . offered was an object lesson in the criteria for quality of the works’ guardians [the Kurt Weill Foundation]. And it was a point of special interest that the winners literally dug into the composer’s wastepaper basket where numerous discarded numbers can be found. Even this *Unsung Weill* contains ideas that might serve a less talented composer for an entire musical: the tragicomic comparison of the sexes, ‘Vive la différence!’ for instance, which was cut from *One Touch of Venus*, as was ‘Who Am I?’ Or the quaint proposal, ‘It’s Never Too Late to Mendelssohn,’ that was intended for *Lady in the Dark* along with ‘Unforgettable.’ The two young singers unveiled these treasures with a casual elegance in which high notes were hit effortlessly, combined with perfect diction and dramatic nuance. They required little more than two bar stools, a rose, and themselves to mould the disparate parts into a small mosaic about the eternal topic of love. A kiss in the beginning and a ‘Farewell, Goodbye’ in the end are it all takes to create an arc of suspense upon which one can shape a mini-melodrama.

After the intermission, when composers such as Bernstein, Sondheim, Hollmann, and Stephen Schwartz had their turn, it was like a closing of ranks among brothers. The fact that their songs—with one exception—had all seen the light of the stage, made Weill’s cut numbers all the more impressive. In both sections, the great pianist Thomas Rosenkranz was in a league of his own, accompanying the singers entrusted to him with finely nuanced and sensitive playing that elevated them rather than following them.”—“ahi,” *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* (7 March 2005)



Amy Justman and Richard Todd Adams
Photos: Jens Schlüter



Thomas Rosenkranz

Hudson Shad, Marienkirche Dessau (5 March 2005)

“The ensemble appears as rounded as a bowler hat, with arches and curves that fit like a custom-tailored tailcoat. In addition, the gentlemen parody their series of evergreens with delightful dance steps, ending time and again in a grinning tableau. Despite [the group’s] various endearing accents, their German lyrics remain completely accent-free. And to the ‘Dorfmusik’ they add ‘Ur-German’ thigh clapping. The second half belongs to Kurt Weill’s eternal American songs. But after ‘Berlin im Licht,’ the five take a moment to deliver the ingenious ‘Klopslied.’ Subsequently, we hear songs from *Love Life*, *Lady in the Dark*, and *Knickerbocker Holiday*. . . . Peter Becker’s powerful voice delivers the ‘September Song’ with a Broadway touch, Mark Bleeke adds a lot of character to ‘Susan’s Dream.’ Even more compelling is the precisely nuanced and colorful ensemble sound of their voices. Roger Wright is always a virtuoso accompanist at the piano. ‘Tchaikowsky’ is sung as a speedy tongue-twister and makes for a perfect ending. Even though the arrangements appear a bit cautious at times, at least they don’t slick back Weill’s hair.”—Thomas Altmann, *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* (8 March 2005)

Dietrich Henschel, Baritone, and Tatjana Blome, Piano; Schloss Köthen (27 February 2005)

“For Dietrich Henschel, the program was a personal premiere. He had studied Weill’s rarely performed *Walt Whitman Songs* specifically for this festival, and his interpretation turned out to be a convincing combination of dramatic and lyric elements. Particularly in ‘Oh Captain! My Captain!’ he brought out the pain of the war poem splendidly. This was contrasted with the martial rhythms of ‘Beat! Beat! Drums!’ He reduced some passages to a kind of ‘Brechtian’ *Sprechgesang* which heightened the intensity of the message.”—kki, *Mitteldeutsche Zeitung* (2 March 2005)

Dessau Symposium

In conjunction with the theme of the 2005 Kurt Weill Fest, “Fluchtpunkt Amerika,” on 4–6 March the festival hosted a symposium entitled “*Street Scene* und der urbane Raum im Musiktheater des 20. Jahrhunderts,” including a perspective on the Berlin musical theater of the 1920s and the Broadway musical of the 1950s and ’60s. Presenters focused on such works as Weill’s *Street Scene* and *One Touch of Venus*, Sondheim’s *Company*, Bernstein’s *Trouble in Tahiti*, and Blitzstein’s *The Cradle Will Rock*. The symposium was sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) in cooperation with the Stiftung Bauhaus and the Kurt Weill Fest, and papers were presented by noted musical theater and Weill scholars from Germany, Switzerland, and the United States.

Media Mix

On the Road Again



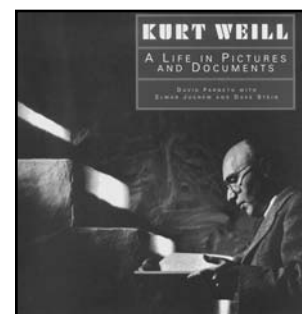
A year and a half after its release to inaugurate the Milken Archive's American Jewish Music series, the highlights CD of *The Eternal Road* (Naxos 8.559402) is still receiving attention from the press:

“Throughout, we are conscious of its pivotal nature. Neo-classicism is apparent in the echoes of Bach’s Passions, though traditional Jewish music has replaced the chorales. The jazz-inflected, Weimar-Republic Weill is still audible in the nightclub shimmy of the dance round the golden calf and the hypnotic tango that forms the basis of the love duet for Ruth and Boaz. Elsewhere, however, the looser-limbed music we identify as the American Weill is already in place: ‘Miriam’s Song,’ for instance anticipates such classic standards as ‘Speak Low’ and ‘September Song.’ The performances

are strong, though the role of Moses is written over such a wide range that James Maddalena struggles with it. Barbara Rearick is gorgeous as Miriam and Ruth, Constance Hauman and Ian DeNolfo are wonderful in the big duet for Jacob and Rachel, and Karl Dent is the dignified Rabbi. Gerard Schwarz’ conducting is refined and passionate, and there is some electrifying choral singing from the Ernst Senff Choir, above all, in the vast fugue that follows the scene between Abraham and Isaac. Great stuff, much of it profoundly moving—all we need now is the rest.”—Tim Ashley, *The Guardian* (3 December 2004)

Kurt Weill Book Profiled at Manhattan Theatre Club

As part of its Writers in Performance series featuring books about theatrical figures along with their authors, on 28 March 2005 New York City’s Manhattan Theatre Club hosted an evening focused on *Kurt Weill: A Life in Pictures and Documents*. The book was compiled by Kurt Weill Foundation personnel David Farneth, Elmar Juchem, and Dave Stein in honor of Weill’s centenary and published in 2000 by Overlook Press in the United States, Thames & Hudson in the United Kingdom, and in Germany as *Kurt Weill: Ein Leben in Bildern und Dokumenten* by Ullstein Verlag. A paperback edition of the book is newly available from Overlook. Farneth, Juchem, and Stein were interviewed by the series director, Steve Lawson, and answered audience questions about Weill’s life and work.



Dylan on “Pirate Jenny”

In his 2004 memoir, *Chronicles: Volume I* (Simon and Schuster), singer/songwriter Bob Dylan tells about his first exposure to *The Threepenny Opera* at the Theater de Lys:

“Within a few minutes I felt like I hadn’t slept or tasted food for about thirty hours, I was so into it. The song that made the strongest impression was a show-stopping ballad, [‘Pirate Jenny’]. . . . This is a wild song. Big medicine in the lyrics. Heavy action spread out. Each phrase comes at you from a ten-foot drop, scuttles across the road and then another one comes like a punch on the chin. . . . Later, I found myself taking the song apart, trying to find out what made it tick, why it was so effective. . . . I wanted to figure out how to manipulate and control this particular structure and form which I knew was the key that gave ‘Pirate Jenny’ its resilience and outrageous power.”

Dylan goes on to say that the influence of “Pirate Jenny” transformed his songwriting style, causing his “little shack in the universe to expand into some glorious cathedral.”

Kevin Spacey Sings “Mack”

In connection with the release of his Bobby Darin biopic, *Beyond the Sea*, actor-director Kevin Spacey embarked on a cross-country concert tour of the United States in December 2004. Accompanied by a nineteen-piece band, Spacey impersonated Darin’s performances of his signature songs:

“Spacey adopted some of Darin’s vocal mannerisms and twitchy body language. He even replayed some of Darin’s stage humor. When the band began playing the familiar opening notes of ‘Mack the Knife,’ Spacey, as Darin sometime did, looked at the audience and said, ‘Three guesses.’ Spacey also employed the spontaneous asides and local color that Darin brought to his swinging version of the Kurt Weill/Bertolt Brecht number. Thus, he sang, ‘Yes, that line forms on the right, babe/Now that Macky’s back in Ventura town.’”—Robert Hilburn, *Los Angeles Times* (6 December 2004)

Emerging Talents

2005 Lenya Competition



In the finals of the eighth annual Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers, held on 9 April 2005 at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music, four prizewinners were selected. The first prize of \$7,500 was awarded to baritone Jonathan Michie, 20, a student at the Eastman School of Music and the youngest prizewinner in the competition's history. Two second prizes of \$4,000 each were garnered by tenor Erik Liberman, 28, and baritone Liam Bonner, 24, both of New York City. Another New Yorker, soprano Morgan James, 24, won the third prize of \$3,000. In addition to the prizes above, a \$1,000 special award for "Outstanding Performance of an Individual Song" was given to Jendi Tarde, a 26-year-old soprano from Chicago, for her rendition of Jeanine Tesori and Dick Scanlon's "The Girl in 14G."



Judges for the competition were the composer and pianist William Bolcom, Broadway producer and director Harold Prince, and opera and musical theater singer/actress Angelina Réaux, who heard each contestant perform four varied musical numbers: two contrasting selections by Kurt Weill and one each from the opera/opera and the American musical theater repertoires. All twelve contestants returned to sing in an evening concert, after which the prizewinners were announced.



Competing in the finals were young artists selected from regional auditions in Chicago, Rochester, and New York City by judges Richard Pearlman, Director of the Chicago Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, and Tony Award-winning actress/singer Judy Kaye. In addition to the above-mentioned winners, the finalists included sopranos Emily Albrink, 22, Catherine Walker, 26, and Kiley Watson, 27; mezzo-soprano Lauren Pastorek, 27; baritones Scott Dispensa, 25, and Giuseppe Spoletini, 30; and bass-baritone Aaron Theno, 25; all New York City residents. Each of the regional winners received a prize of \$500.

On 19 May 2005, Lenya Competition prizewinners Liam Bonner, Morgan James, Erik Liberman, and Jonathan Michie are showcased in a musical theater concert at Lincoln Center's New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Left, from top:
Jonathan Michie,
Liam Bonner, Erik
Liberman.
Right, from top:
Morgan James,
Jendi Tarde.

Bottom row: judges
William Bolcom,
Harold Prince,
Angelina Réaux.



Harold Prince on Broadway's Last 50 Years

Preceding the Lenya Competition finals on 9 April, Harold Prince was interviewed by Kurt Weill Foundation President Kim H. Kowalke in Eastman's Kilbourn Hall. In response to Kowalke's queries and questions from the audience, Prince told about his early production work with George Abbott, his career as Broadway producer of *West Side Story* and *Fiddler on the Roof*, among many others, and his evolution into the director of a string of landmark shows including *She Loves Me*, *Follies*, *Sweeney Todd*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. Prince reminisced about his friendship with Lotte Lenya, begun when he directed Lenya as Frau Schneider in *Cabaret*, and revealed that his newest project is a musical about Weill and Lenya called *LoveMusik*.

Performance Reviews

Street Scene, Portland Opera (premiere 26 March 2005)

“Portland Opera’s first production of *Street Scene*, which opened Saturday in Keller Auditorium, does several things well, but until the climax, the pace feels slow and saggy. That’s a shame because Weill’s music is just the opposite: it can do anything. Need an ode to ice cream? Here’s a lively sextet. Looking for a children’s chorus? Try ‘Catch Me if You Can.’ A Broadway number? How about ‘Moon-faced, Starry-eyed?’ Not to mention jazz and blues along with full-blown opera. So what was the problem? Slow tempos under conductor Cal Stewart Kellogg, for one thing. . . . But stolid pacing by director Nicolette Molnar affected the big numbers, too. . . . Luckily, the singing was stronger. Dean Peterson’s Frank exuded the danger of a one-way mind with a voice that commanded the stage. As Anna, his long-suffering wife, Pamela South had the task of appearing vulnerable while singing with strength and dignity. . . . Sari Gruber’s bright soprano enlivened Rose while letting the young woman’s pain show. Her voice blended nicely with the shining tenor of Jonathan Boyd’s Sam Kaplan, the law student ready to throw it all away so they can elope. The cast’s other standouts included Kevin Skiles, Jane Shaulis, Katherine Swigert, Jonathan Green, and Anne McKee Reed. The children’s chorus sang spot-on, as did the two nursemaids who hilariously rocked their prams while cooing about the lurid killing that just took place. Only the composer of *The Threepenny Opera* could have pulled that off.”—David Stabler, *The Oregonian* (28 March 2005)

“Set in a New York tenement overflowing with America’s melting pot of dreams, languages, and disappointments, the piece requires a full chorus, twenty-six children, local actors, tap dancers, a sixty-piece orchestra, great singers, a well-behaved dog, and a super-talented stage director like Nicolette Molnar. She nailed it, and conductor Cal Stewart Kellogg’s musical zest matched Molnar’s staging. Despite broken hearts and a murder of passion, Broadway dreams and heavy drinking, the opera avoids schmaltz and sentimentality. . . . A set that spins seamlessly from a shambling Lower-East Side apartment house to a make-my-dreams New York City vista was treat enough. But there was so much more. Down to the last prop (there were tons!) and thick 1940s-era hosiery, magic was in the details as well as in the big picture.”—Angela Allen, *The Columbian* (30 March 2005)

The Threepenny Opera, Opera Omaha (1 October 2004)



Macheath (William Michals) in the brothel scene.

“Less has rarely been more clever than in Opera Omaha’s new production of Kurt Weill’s political satire, *The Threepenny Opera*. The stage is tiny for an Opera Omaha production, and the house only seats 350. Props are minimal and the set is, well, resourceful. . . . One of this production’s most captivating assets is the effective use of a neutral space. No unit sets or large backdrops are used. Instead, scenic artist Peter Harrison uses four movable scaffolds to dictate the shape of each scene. . . . As Macheath, William Michals is devastatingly charming, quick with the tongue and his tricks. Alicia Berneche plays a naïve, idealistic Polly Peachum whose love for Macheath muddles her good sense. And Jill Anderson is seductive and deceitful as the conniving prostitute Jenny Diver. A small pit orchestra, led by Opera Omaha artistic director Hal France, accentuated the spirit of the cabaret-like play with a tempered performance of Weill’s catchy score. The performances were enhanced by the fact that audience members were able to see the actors’ subtle gestures, and in some cases hear their breath, because of the intimate size of the theater.”—Ashley Hassebroek, *Omaha World-Herald* (2 October 2004)

Second Symphony, Auschwitz Memorial Concert at the Christuskirche in Bochum (26 January 2005)

“The readings entered into a dialogue with the music—an alternation uninterrupted by applause. Schönberg’s *Friede auf Erden* and Mahler’s *Kindertotenlieder*, featuring the Israeli alto, Edna Prochnik, offered space for recollection. Especially impressive was Weill’s Second Symphony, composed during the rise of Nazi barbarism in 1933. Conductor Arno Hartmann led the Bochum Symphony Orchestra with great sensitivity, not employing false restraint and yet avoiding all pathos, so that the ominous forebodings of future horrors could be sensed through the music.”—Michael Hayungs, *Stadtspiegel Bochum* (29 January 2005)

“[In Weill’s Second Symphony] the audience encounters a warning tone in the first and a *marcia funebre* in the second movement. Weill as a prophet? Hardly. Weill appears as a witness who observes but doesn’t comment. Typical of the composer’s musical language, brilliant brass are paired with the rounded sound of the strings. The dynamic accents of the last movement lingered for a long time, and the turbulent finale would have made the audience cheer under different circumstances. But there was no applause. The concert ended in silence. Not a stunned silence but rather a stillness that resulted from the commemoration of Nazi atrocities. When words fail, silence is perhaps the only proper expression.”—Oliver Daschkey, *Ruhr Nachrichten* (28 January 2005)

***Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Theater Pforzheim (premiere 4 February 2005)**



Photo: Sabine Haymann

Pforzheim's music director, proves again his competence in twentieth-century music. . . . In Nadia Stefanoff, the theater has a brilliant Begbick. Her dark, powerful, and clear mezzo combined with her stage presence make her an almost ideal cast. Lemuel Cuento sings Jim Mahoney with a metallic, penetrating—occasionally hard-edged—tenor, whose expressive powers are most effective in the finale.”—Thomas Weiss, *Pforzheimer Zeitung* (7 February 2005)

“For the ending, Biganzoli tried to show today’s misery onstage—immediately creating weariness with his flood of images. The waste of theatrical means . . . unnecessarily spoiled the good impression that his staging had created in the hours before. . . . Jenny, a strapping mixture of *Lolita* and *Carmen* with a penetrating soprano (Monica Chavez), immediately drops her favorite beau, Jim Mahoney (Lemuel Cuento with Heldenentenor gusto), when he goes broke. . . . Led by Jari Hämäläinen, the orchestra sounded clean and stylish—the Pforzheim opera boss could have cranked up the heat by a notch or two.”—Jürgen Hartmann, *Stuttgarter Zeitung* (9 February 2005)

***Happy End*, Pacific Resident Theatre, Venice, California (premiere 27 January 2005)**

“Over the decades, Weill’s sublime music resisted obscurity, producing standards in ‘The Bilbao Song,’ ‘The Sailors’ Tango’ and ‘Surabaya Johnny.’ Michael Feingold’s lauded 1972 adaptation for Yale Rep led to the 1977 Broadway staging with Christopher Lloyd and Meryl Streep. In 1985, *Happy End* inaugurated Pacific Resident Theatre. As its 20th anniversary approaches, the company revisits the show with triumphant results. Director Dan Bonnell sustains a sure touch, from the picket-line prologue, ‘Hosanna Rockefeller,’ to the humanitarian finale. His sterling forces embrace the social satire and music-hall moxie. As antihero Bill Cracker, virile Timothy V. Murphy enjoys dangerous chemistry with Lesley Fera’s marvelous Lillian Holiday. Christopher Shaw inhales the period stereotypes of Dr. Nakamura, a role originated by Peter Lorre. Martha Hackett lends tongue-in-cheek menace to the Fly. . . . musical director Carolyn Mignini produces authentic, abrupt *Sprechstimme*. At times, such definitive assurance makes this revival seem, to quote ‘Bilbao Song,’ fantastic, beyond belief.”—David C. Nichols, *Los Angeles Times* (28 January 2005)



Open Fist Theatre, Los Angeles
Performances 22 April–12 June 2005

***Der Lindberghflug*, Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra (13 March 2005)**

“People of today who are able to fly anywhere they want may have difficulties comprehending the heroic achievement of Charles Lindbergh, who flew alone over the Atlantic Ocean in 1927 and inspired authors and composers to depict his adventure. Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill had already had an international success with *Die Dreigroschenoper* when Brecht wrote the text for *Der Lindberghflug* the following year, and Weill wrote the music, at first in collaboration with Hindemith, and then in a version on his own. The piece, which requires chorus, soloists, and a large orchestra, is not performed very often, but now the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra has included it in its concert program. With Russian conductor Alexander Vedernikov, chief conductor at the Bolshoi, at the podium and with Swedish tenor Mathias Zachariassen in the title role, a success could be predicted. Mathias Zachariassen’s compact, well-handled tenor depicted the solo flight in a dialogue with the chorus and the soloists Jonas Bjerkén, baritone, and Per Fernesten, bass, who performed the other roles. The chorus fulfilled the duties of male choir, soprano choir, and mixed a cappella choir, in a nuanced and well-trained performance matching the skill of the other two soloists. But the lasting impression was made by Zachariassen’s tenor. He was superb!”—Gunilla Boström, *Helsingborgs Dagblatt* (15 March 2005)

New Publications

BOOKS

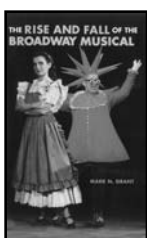
Angerer, Manfred, Carmen Ottner and Eike Rathgeber, eds. *Kurt Weill Symposion. Das musikdramatische Werk: Zum 100. Geburtstag und 50. Todestag*. Vienna: Doblinger, 2004 (Beiträge der Österreichischen Gesellschaft für Musik; 11).



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