

# topical Weill

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A supplement to the Kurt Weill Newsletter

## Berlin Phil Plays Weill



Simon Rattle

The Berlin Philharmonic focuses on Weill this season in four different concert programs at the Philharmonie. On 8 November 2006, Sir Simon Rattle leads *Mahagonny Singspiel* with noted soloists and the Philharmonic's Orchestra Academy, established in 1972 to prepare the most talented young musicians to join the Philharmonic and other leading international orchestras. Weill's Symphony No. 2, in a program with Shostakovich and Prokofiev, will be conducted by Ion Marin on 5 and 6 May 2007. Former Artistic Director Claudio Abbado returns to the Philharmonic on 18–20 May for performances of Weill's Violin Concerto, with Kolja Blacher as soloist. And on 1–3 June, the Berlin Philharmonic plays *Die sieben Todsünden*, with Rattle conducting; Angelika Kirchschrager as Anna I; and a male quartet consisting of William Burden, Timothy Robinson, Simon Keenlyside, and Reinhard Hagen. This last series of concerts will be accompanied by an educational program entitled MusicOPERA, in which students at two Berlin secondary schools create their own "sung ballet" on the *Sins* theme.



Claudio Abbado

## Other Season Highlights

A record number of Violin Concertos are programmed in the 2006–2007 season. Before his appearances with the Berlin Philharmonic, Kolja Blacher plays the work with Philharmonisches Orchestra Augsburg (Rudolf Piehlmayr, conductor) on 11–12 December; with Orchestra Verdi, Milan, and Ion Marin, conductor (1, 3, and 4 March 2007); and with Orchester des Stadttheaters Gießen and Carlos Spierer (13 March). The NDR Symphony Orchestra programs it (Alan Gilbert, conductor; Stefan Wagner, violin) on 2 February (Hamburg) and 3 February (Lübeck). Minneapolis audiences will hear the Violin Concerto, along with *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, in Minnesota Orchestra concerts on 3–5 May (Edo de Waart, conductor; Jorja Fleezanis, violin).



Kolja Blacher



Roberto Minczuk

HK Gruber leads the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* at the Swansea Festival (21 October 2006) and Ensemble Modern in Weill songs in Essen (2 January 2007). Fresh from his Opéra de Lyon Weill triumphs (reviewed on p. 22), conductor Roberto Minczuk leads the London Philharmonic Orchestra in the Suite from *Die Dreigroschenoper* (13 and 15 December). Leopold Hager conducts Orquestra Sinfonica Portuguesa, Lisbon, in *Die sieben Todsünden* on 23 March, with Mísia as

Anna I. Other notable orchestra concerts include Niederrheinische Sinfoniker (Graham Jackson, conductor) in Symphony No. 2 (17–19 October 2006 in Krefeld and Mönchengladbach); *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* with the Bochumer Symphoniker (Mark Laycock, conductor) on 11–12 January 2007; Symphony No. 2 with Saarbrücken's Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester (Michael Sanderling, conductor) on 20 April; and Basel Sinfonietta in *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* and *Suite panaméenne* (Desirée Meiser, conductor), 3–6 May.

## Critical Edition of *Der Protagonist* Published

Series I, Volume 1 of the Kurt Weill Edition, the critical edition of Weill's opera *Der Protagonist*, has been published by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music and European American Music. Edited by Gunther Diehl and Jürgen Selk, the volume contains the full orchestral score of 324 pages, accompanied by an introductory essay and a separately published critical report. For the first time, the score of Weill's 1925 one-act opera is available for purchase.



*Der Protagonist* at 2004 Bregenz Festival

## Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny Opens at Los Angeles Opera

on 10 February: James Conlon conducts; John Doyle directs a cast led by Audra McDonald (Jenny), Patti LuPone (Begbick), and Anthony Dean Griffey (Jim). Adding to the string of *Mahagonny* productions this season on both sides of the Atlantic, the Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg and L'Opéra de Nancy are co-producing *Aufstieg*. Paolo Olmi conducts and Philipp Himmelfmann directs; performances are scheduled for 22–29 April in Nancy and 11–12 May in Luxembourg. Theater Hagen premieres its *Mahagonny* production on 13 January (Steffen Müller-Gabriel, conductor; Rainer Friedemann, director), and Opera Boston's production (Gil Rose, conductor; Sam Hilfrich, director) begins on 23 February. Stagings at Komische Oper Berlin and Stadttheater Bern opened in September 2006.

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## Kurt Weill Foundation Programs

### 2007 Lotte Lenya Competition for Singers

Lenya Competition prizewinners continue to attract notice from competition judges, opera companies, and musical theater producers around the world. Brian Mulligan, a winner from the very first competition in 1998, won first prize in the 2006 Belvedere Vocal Competition in Vienna; he has sung roles at the Metropolitan Opera and New York City Opera. Nicole Cabell, special prizewinner in 2002, has sung with numerous American opera companies and orchestras since her Cardiff Singer of the World win in 2005. Meredith Arwady, a 2006 special prizewinner, will solo with the New York Philharmonic this fall. This season two 2004 competition prizewinners appear in Broadway musicals: Amy Justman is in the cast of *Company*, and Richard Todd Adams will appear in *The Pirate Queen*.



Lotte Lenya, 1977  
Photo © 1988 Martus Granirer

Applications for the tenth annual Lotte Lenya Competition must be received by 1 February 2007. Artists born after 31 December 1974 and before 1 January 1988 are eligible to apply, and regional auditions will be held at the Lyric Opera of Chicago (21 February 2007), the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music (24 February), the New England Conservatory, Boston (27 February), the University of Kansas, Lawrence (5 March), and Dicapo Opera Theater, New York City (22 and 23 March). Finalists selected from the regional auditions will participate in the finals, to be held on 21 April 2007 at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester. Each contestant will be asked to prepare two contrasting theatrical selections by Kurt Weill, plus two non-Weill selections—an opera/operetta aria and a selection chosen from the American musical theater repertoire. All selections must be performed in their original language and musical version. Regional winners will each receive an award of \$500, plus a \$500 stipend to pay for travel to the finals in Rochester. The finals judges will award prizes of \$7500, \$5000, and \$3000, plus additional special prizes.

If contestants are unable to participate in any of the scheduled regional auditions, they may instead submit a videotape or DVD, which must contain all four of the required repertoire selections, by 15 February.

### 2007 Kurt Weill Prize

The Kurt Weill Prize for distinguished scholarship on twentieth-century musical theater has been awarded biennially since 1995. In fall 2007, 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 2005 or 2006; 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 2007 at the offices of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, 7 East 20th Street, New York, NY 10003.

### Astrid Varnay (1918–2006)

Astrid Varnay passed away on 4 September 2006 in Munich, where she had made her home in later years. The daughter of two Hungarian opera singers, Varnay was born on 25 April 1918 in Stockholm and grew up mainly in Jersey City, New Jersey. She made a spectacular Metropolitan Opera debut at the age of twenty-three, replacing Lotte Lehmann as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, followed most improbably at the Met six days later by her role debut as Brünnhilde in the same opera, standing in for Helen Traubel. After this auspicious beginning, Varnay went on to sing an astounding range of repertoire, from Wagner to Strauss and Verdi to Weill's *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, in the foremost opera houses of the world. She first sang *Mahagonny*'s Leokadja Begbick at the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf in 1970; she was asked to join the cast because the Intendant thought her American background would lend a note of authenticity to the production. After performing in the Düsseldorf production for three seasons, she repeated her acclaimed portrayal of Begbick when the Zurich Opera mounted *Mahagonny* in 1975. In the 1979 *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* at the Metropolitan Opera, Varnay was joined on stage by distinguished colleagues Teresa Stratas (Jenny), Richard Cassilly (Jimmy), Ragnar Ulfung (Fatty), and Cornell McNeill (Trinity Moses). *Mahagonny* was the final production of her thirty-eight year career at the Met.



Astrid Varnay (right) with Lenya. Photo: Lys Symonette

## Extended Life for Recent Weill Stagings

Weill fans who missed the initial runs of *Signé Vénus* (*One Touch of Venus*) at Opéra de Lyon (June 2006) and *Arms and the Cow* (*Der Kuhhandel*) at the 2004 Bregenz Festival and last spring at Opera North, Leeds, will have another chance to experience the productions. *Der Kuhhandel* travels to the Vienna Volksoper for a 5 May 2007 premiere, with additional performances 7, 10, and 24 May, and 11 and 20 June. *Signé Vénus* may be seen in a regional tour of France beginning in Dijon (14, 17, 20 February 2007) and Thonon (27–28 February), with subsequent March stops in Villefontaine (2), Bretigny sur Orge (3), Villefranche sur Saône (6), Echirolle (8), Annécly (13), Bourg en Bresse (15), Suresne (23–24), and Massy (30–31).

Opéra de Lyon was invited to bring its successful and highly original production of *Der Lindberghflug/Die sieben Todsünden* (reviewed on p. 22) to the 2006 Edinburgh Festival for three performances, 14–16 August. International critics reported the following:



Map of Santa Maria and Ucqva from 2004 Bregenz Festival's *Der Kuhhandel*

"Staged superbly by François Girard. . . . Lindbergh is excellently performed by Charles Workman. . . . Add to that Roberto Minczuk's vigorous conducting of the fine Opéra National de Lyon Orchestra, and you have as entertaining a show as anything in Edinburgh this week."—Richard Morrison, *The Times* (16 August 2006)

"Visually breathtaking and outstanding musically, the presentation of both seldom produced works by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill was a true triumph, especially for the director François Girard."—Theresa Valtin, *Frankfurter Rundschau* (1 September 2006)

"Both epitomizing different aspects of the American dream, and both to dryly effective texts by Bertolt Brecht, [they] make a stunning double bill."—Kenneth Walton, *The Scotsman* (15 August 2006)

"This *Seven Deadly Sins* was thrilling music theater."—George Hall, *The Independent* (20 August 2006)



Poster from Opéra de Lyon's production of *Signé Vénus*

## 2007 Stage Forecast

Welsh National Opera has announced a double bill of *The Seven Deadly Sins* and Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, to premiere on 25 May 2007 in Cardiff's Wales Millennium Centre. WNO Music Director Carlo Rizzi will conduct, and mezzo-soprano Sara Fulgoni will sing Anna I and Judith in *Bluebeard*. Two additional performances (30 May and 2 June) are scheduled in Cardiff, followed by a 19 June performance at the Birmingham Hippodrome.



Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier

The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, provides London exposure for *The Seven Deadly Sins* in spring 2007. Martin Yates will conduct a triple bill for the Royal Ballet consisting of *Sins*, *La fin du jour* (Ravel), and Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (26 April–9 May 2007).

The Rome Opera will present *Marie Galante*, in a new adaptation of the script prepared by Joseph Rochlitz, on 23–25 February 2007 at the Teatro Nazionale. Rochlitz will direct and Christopher Franklin will conduct, with Chiara Muti in the title role.



Sara Fulgoni

Tim Albery, who directed *One Touch of Venus* in 2004 for Opera North, will stage *The Threepenny Opera* for Toronto's Soulpepper Theatre Company, featuring cabaret artist Patricia O'Callaghan as Polly Peachum. The production premieres on 24 January 2007.

The 2007 Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston will feature *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, staged by Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier, the Belgian/French directing team responsible for over sixty international opera productions in the past twenty-five years. Emmanuel Villaume, Music Director for Opera and Orchestra of the festival, will conduct.

## Weill at the Lucerne Festival

### *Die sieben Todsünden*, Vienna Philharmonic at Lucerne Festival (8 September 2006)

“HK Gruber, this year’s composer in residence, stood at the podium of the Vienna Philharmonic and presented, along with his own work, music of recent times which has been completely missing from the repertoire of the orchestra up to now. . . . Before the youthful Philharmonic brass and percussion sections brought the evening to a swinging final chord in Bernstein’s *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*, the orchestra, conducted by Gruber with stylistic sense and rhythmic precision, accompanied the wonderful Angelika Kirchschrager and a male quartet led by Oliver Ringelhahn and Adrian Eröd on the voyage of Brecht’s *Anna* through the States and over the shoals of the deadly sins. Kurt Weill set it to music; and one understands what Gruber means when he says we must adjust our view of recent music history: that which was thoughtlessly dismissed for decades as ‘light music’ can attain the highest symphonic level when correctly performed. . . . For the first time in Lucerne, this high level of performance has been achieved by the Philharmonic. Vienna urgently needs to hear it, too.”—Wilhelm Sinkovicz, *diepresse.com* (11 September 2006)



Angelika Kirchschrager and HK Gruber

### *Das Berliner Requiem*, Lucerne Symphony Orchestra (29 August 2006)

“One of the more imaginative orchestral programs of this year’s Lucerne Festival came not from a high-powered visiting orchestra but from the city’s own Lucerne Symphony Orchestra. . . . *Das Berliner Requiem* deals with the war dead of World War I in a very Brechtian manner: ‘A Home for Every Soldier,’ German politicians are said to have urged, but here that home is a coffin, the soldier’s reward for serving the Fatherland. The music-hall songfulness of Weill’s irresistible music for the ‘small cantata’ in six movements confirms the banality of the suffering. The Berlin Radio Chorus, in top form all evening, lent its rich-toned male voices to the performance, with strong solo contributions from tenor Jan Remmers and baritone Christian Immler. Axelrod drew sounds variously sarcastic and euphonious from his orchestra’s winds. *Das Berliner Requiem* was performed in still another version by the Weill scholar David Drew, who first prepared an edition of the problematic score in the 1960s.”—George Loomis, *MusicalAmerica.com* (11 September 2006)

*This performance was recorded for release on Nimbus Records.*

### *Die Dreigroschenoper*, Luzerner Theater (10 September 2006)

“The Luzerner Theater opens its musical season with *Dreigroschenoper*, a co-production with the Lucerne Festival: a successful, spicy contribution to the current Brecht year. . . . The director Vera Nemirova, schooled by Berghaus and Konwitschny, makes it clear at every turn: in contrast to (real) opera, the alienating distance is always apparent, as exemplified by Lucy’s *Revenge Aria*, an ‘aria agitata’ which sports pseudo-operatic material. The idea of alienation is reinforced by the orchestra, placed within view at the back of the stage; playing with a pointed, alert sound under its Chief Conductor John Axelrod, it comments upon more than accompanies the happenings on stage. . . . As an example of this alienation, for lack of real furniture in Mackie’s hideout, his underlings unceremoniously drag in substitutes. Or the wedding banquet, in which the robber’s bride Polly cuts off a crook’s finger like a sausage and eats it. And finally, the brilliant wedding night itself: an acrobatic freestyle wrestling match for the bridal pair!”—Bruno Rauch, *Schweizerische Depeschagentur* (11 September 2006)

### *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, Opera aan den IJ, Amsterdam (30 March–2 April 2006)

“Inna van den Hogen doesn’t shy away from placing her bet on a box-office success that, strangely enough, is seldom performed in Holland. . . . Van den Hogen also doesn’t shy away from playing opera just as it is written. Instead of tiresome directorial concepts, alienation effects, or shocking events, the director shows the production as it is: an angry parable of society’s wickedness and corruption, situated in a largely neutral room consisting of a square catwalk, in the middle of which the orchestra is seated, with costumes out of the ‘20s à la George Grosz, choreography in the style of the musical *Cabaret*, eight decorative palms (the story plays somewhere on the American West Coast), and a huge white full moon in the background, the ‘Moon of Alabama’ of the song. . . . Naturally, the soloists play a decisive part in the success of the piece. The attractive Meike van de Linde as Jenny Hill, especially, is virtually perfect at finding the vulgar, erotically charged and at the same time innocent *Chanson* tone of Weill’s music. Her entrance, ‘Oh, show us the way to the next whiskey bar,’ is a show-stopper and early high point of the evening. As her lover, Jimmy Mahoney from Alaska, the physically present, athletic Charles Hens convinces with his lumberjack outfit and his heroically-colored tenor—one could almost say the ideal casting for the role. . . . Otherwise, the director draws sharply defined character types, even with the excellent male and female choruses, who practically take on the roles of additional soloists in this production. If the conductor Tom Löwenthal had a little trouble in the dress rehearsal eliciting the precise, pointed Weill sound from his orchestra, the newly-assembled musicians rose to great form during the run of performances. The public rejoiced.”—Kevin Clarke, *Magazin Klassik* (1 April 2006)



Jenny (Meike van de Linde) and the girls arrive in Mahagonny

## On the Grapevine

The German film production company teamWorx has posted casting notices for a twenty to thirty year-old, spitfire, triple-threat (acting/singing/dancing) leading lady with a southern German or Austrian accent for its upcoming two-part television film *Lenya*. *Lenya*, to be directed by Dominik Graf and scripted by Pamela Katz, author of the *Lenya* book *Die Seeräuberin*, has been in the pipeline for several years, but was sidelined while teamWorx produced other TV films on historical events and characters, including, most recently, *Die Mauer - Berlin 1961*, about the Berlin wall. *Lenya* is scheduled for fall 2007 production.



Anne Kerry Ford

Songstress Anne Kerry Ford's latest CD on Illyria Records is called *Weill*, a collection of fifteen songs from the German and American songbooks. Most of the songs were recorded live with the WDR Big Band, Roger Kellaway conducting, in Cologne's Philharmonic Hall. Ford brings her Weill repertoire to Café Sabarsky, New York City, on 30 November.

### Happy End Out on CD



Peter Macon as Bill Cracker and Charlotte Cohn as Lillian Holiday

The American Conservatory Theater's *Happy End* will be preserved for posterity on a cast album CD, now in post-production and due out in December 2006 on Sh-k-boom Ghostlight Records. Utilizing Michael Feingold's translation, ACT's cast album will be the first English-language recording of the work.

### Weill Divas

Two celebrated sopranos have toured recently with themed concerts of eclectic song repertoire including Weill: Yvonne Kenny's evening entitled "A Touch of Venus" has been heard this summer in England and Australia.



Yvonne Kenny

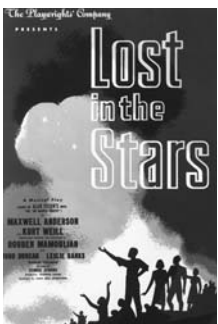
Felicity Lott's program, which has been presented in England, Germany, and the United States and also released on CD, is called "Fallen Women and Virtuous Wives," and begins, naturally enough, with "Nannas Lied": "One doesn't always remain seventeen."



Felicity Lott

### Lost in the Stars Wins NEA Grant

In the second year of a project entitled "American Masterpieces: Three Centuries of Artistic Genius", the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts has announced a \$35,000 grant to Virginia Stage Company (Norfolk, VA) for a semi-staged performance of Kurt Weill's and Maxwell Anderson's *Lost in the Stars*. Julius Rudel will conduct and Christopher Hanna will direct. The production, along with accompanying community outreach and educational activities, is planned as the centerpiece of the spring 2008 Virginia Arts Festival. Other 2006 NEA grants were awarded to fund productions of musical theater works by Leonard Bernstein, George Gershwin, Jerry Herman, Richard Rodgers, Stephen Sondheim, Jeanine Tesori, and Meredith Willson.



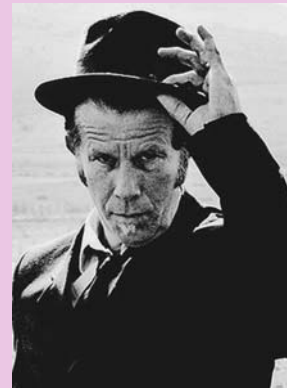
### Lady in the Dark: Biography of a Musical

This November Oxford University Press publishes Bruce McClung's *Lady in the Dark: Biography of a Musical*, a chronicle of the work's landmark Broadway production. Incorporating sketches and drafts, production scripts, correspondence, photographs, costume and set designs, and clippings from Gertrude Lawrence's personal scrapbooks, McClung recounts the history of Kurt Weill's 1941 hit written with Ira Gershwin and Moss Hart. Interviews with eleven members of the original company provide a first-hand glimpse into the backstage story.



### Tom Waits on the Future of "Mankind"

*Orphans: Brawlers, Bawlers, and Bastards*, the new 3-CD set from gravelly-voiced crooner Tom Waits, is to be released 20 November 2006 on Anti-Records, and will feature the veteran singer's rendition of "What Keeps Mankind Alive", from *The Threepenny Opera*.



Tom Waits

## KWF Grant Recipients in Performance

### *The Threepenny Opera*, Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester (16–30 March 2006)

“It says much for the standards at the School of Vocal Studies at the RNCM that it could field two casts for the ten performances of this lively production of Weill’s and Brecht’s take on *The Beggar’s Opera*. . . . Stefan Janski brought his imaginative flair to the production and had successfully induced the cast to throw off any inhibitions. . . . He also designed the set (plenty of opportunity for pole-dancing with its suggestive allusions). . . . There were several more-than-promising individual performances—Weill’s songs were all the more effective for being sung rather than snarled, although it is a piece that will have honed the students’ acting skills rather than their vocal prowess. Philip Smith had charm as well as oily villainy as Macheath, and Adam Leftwich and Cressida van Gordon made the Peachums a likeably disreputable couple. Nadine Livingston sang Polly’s songs with outstanding lyrical bravura, and I was impressed by Zoe Taylor’s Lucy. But the star was Ella Kirkpatrick, whose Jenny was a spitfire dominating the stage whenever she appeared. Clark Rundell conducted the excellent chamber ensemble with his usual skill, zest, and vitality.”—Michael Kennedy, *Opera* (June 2006)



Photo: Tony Redmond

### *Mahagonny Songspiel*, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (27–30 April 2006)

“In ‘At the Crossroads – Bargaining with the Devil and Arguing with God,’ artistic director Eduardo Diazmunoz explores age-old themes of good and evil with hi-tech takes on two short masterpieces from the early 20th century, Igor Stravinsky’s *A Soldier’s Tale* and the first collaborative work by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht, *Mahagonny Songspiel*. . . . The cast sang Weill’s memorable melodies very well. The duet by Juliane Gorretta and Carolyn Sundlof, playing two girls in search of a drink and a man in the well-known ‘Alabama Song,’ was particularly effective.”—Tim Barnes, *The News-Gazette* (30 April 2006)



Photo: David Warfel

### *The Seven Deadly Sins*, Auckland Opera Studio (26, 27, and 29 April 2006)

“Director Patrice Wilson’s sleek take on Brecht and Weill’s *The Seven Deadly Sins* is stylized monochrome, with the singers and props in white and the stage an ominous black box. . . . As Anna I, Andrea Creighton understands Brechtian restraint and cabaret deadpan, and yet her operatic soprano thrills in Weill’s gorgeous lines. The male quartet (Jack Bourke, Philip Rhodes, Brendan Casey, and James Ioelu) are brutally funny. . . . There may be perilous a cappella in the hilariously vicious ‘Gluttony’ but, like other problems, it seems as much opening night nerves as anything else. Peter Scholes and his Auckland Chamber Orchestra experience a few navigational challenges, too, but how can one express anything but wonderment at the sight and sound of a mighty orchestra ranked around a banjo?”—William Dart, *The New Zealand Herald* (28 April 2006)

## Dancing to Weill—2007 Kurt Weill Fest in Dessau

“Weill getanzt” is the theme of the 2007 Kurt Weill Fest, which opens on 2 March with *Tango Palast. Weill & Tango - Eine Passion*. A co-production of the Kurt Weill Fest with Gregor Seyffert Compagnie Dessau and the Anhaltisches Theater, *Tango Palast* is a full-evening ballet incorporating music by Weill, Astor Piazzolla, and others (also 9 March). On 4 March, Rambert Dance Company of Britain presents *Judgment of Paris*, Antony Tudor’s ballet using music from *Die Dreigroschenoper*. Two acclaimed orchestras perform dance music: Ensemble Modern, led by HK Gruber, plays Weill compositions included on the CD *Berlin im Licht* (3 March); on 6 March Max Raabe and the Palastorchester repeat the salon orchestra arrangements from their CD, *Charming Weill*. On 10 March, Bel Canto Northwest, Portland State University, travels from Oregon to join the orchestra of Universität der Künste Berlin in a performance of *Down in the Valley*, paired with Hindemith’s *Hin und zurück*, as it was at its 1948 premiere at Indiana University. The festival is rounded out with performances by pianist Michael Rische, 2007 Artist in Residence, on 3, 4, and 11 March; and a closing tango concert from bandoneonist Carel Kraayenhof and his Sexteto Canyengue (11 March).



Max Raabe

## ... and More Weill in the Press

### *Mahagonny Songspiel*, Fondazione Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte, Montepulciano (15 July 2006)

“It must be clear that Montepulciano is not a commercial festival, but rather a socio-political and cultural event to be enjoyed.’ So wrote Hans Werner Henze [about] the Cantiere or workshop, a yearly meeting focused on young musicians. . . . Music director Jan Latham-König thinks that in the future Montepulciano must move with the times and become more tourist-oriented, paying artists to come and relying less on the sort of vigorous networking that helped him secure Alfred Kirchner as producer of this year’s operatic double bill, Henze’s first opera *Das Wundertheater* (1949) and Kurt Weill’s *Mahagonny Songspiel* (1927), a musical preface to his full-scale opera on the same theme. . . . The difficulty with *Mahagonny Songspiel* is how to recreate the moral turpitude of a piece that was designed to shock. Kirchner’s answer was blue transparent food wrapping, apparently a rare commodity that resourceful Latham-König managed to track down. Young Rachel Nicholls (Jenny), topless and sporting the de rigueur garter belt, was the willing victim for partial mummification, though she would do well to put the wraps on a prematurely generous vibrato. The same goes for Anne Albrecht’s Bessie. But the men were in splendid vocal health: Philip O’Brien and Giles Davies stood out in both works.”—Francis Carlin, *Financial Times* (20 July 2006)



Photo: Fondazione Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte di Montepulciano-Italy

The festival also included a performance of “Kleine Dreigroschenmusik” on 23 July, played by the Young Janacek Philharmonic Orchestra, Jan Latham-König, conductor.

### Violin Concerto, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (28 April 2006)

“David Robertson has a keen ear for programming, and Thursday’s concert offered an intriguing glimpse of three composers in transition. . . . Weill’s Violin Concerto, written at age 24, finds the composer balancing his intensive classical training with an equally serious attraction to the off-kilter rhythms and unexpected harmonies that Weill heard, and often played, in the popular music of post-World War I Germany. Echoing the evening’s Mozart and Brahms, Weill’s concerto includes nocturno and serenade movements. But the modern age of anxiety was definitely present in its moody opening episode for winds and the lean tone and alert wariness of James Ehnes’ violin. In the nocturno movement, there was a hint of Shostakovich-like grim humor in Vadim Karpinos’ clattering xylophone, while Mark Ridenour’s trumpet was a luminous beacon against Ehnes’ self-absorbed violin song.”—Wynne Delacoma, *Chicago Sun-Times* (29 April 2006)

### *The Threepenny Opera*, Seaside Music Theater, Daytona Beach (20–31 July 2006)

“Seaside’s *Threepenny Opera* may not create a furor, but an evening with Macheath can send shivers down your spine. Macheath, of course, is the famous Mack the Knife, whose anthem, straight from *Threepenny*, became a symbol of the swinging ‘50s in 1959. Bobby Darin’s upbeat version is as far from the creepy original as it can be: Just listen to the ‘Ballad of Mack the Knife’ as sung by *Threepenny*’s Street Singer, the ambiguous, androgynous figure who watches and occasionally narrates the proceedings with savage glee. Actor Chris Gleim brings to the Street Singer both panache and a pointed, menacing air, and right from the beginning, you know you’re not in Darin-Land. . . . Director



Photo: The Daytona Beach News-Journal

Lester Malizia makes much of Brecht’s famous ‘alienation techniques,’ which are meant to shake an audience out of its torpor. . . . Trevor Southworth makes a vivid Mack the Knife, and his beautiful voice and strong presence are matched by many others in the cast, especially Michelle Knight as an intrepid but commonsensical Polly Peachum, Rebecca Johnson as the solemn prostitute Jenny Diver and Matthew Tewardy as a comically besotted Tiger Brown.”—Elizabeth Maupin, *Orlando Sentinel* (18 July 2006)

## New Publications

### BOOKS

Koch, Gerd / Florian Vaßen / Doris Zeilinger (eds.). *„Können uns und euch und niemand helfen“: Die Mahagonnysierung der Welt*. Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel, 2006. (Wissen und Praxis 138)

Lucchesi, Joachim (ed.). *Brandauer inszeniert „Die Dreigroschenoper“ von Brecht & Weill*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2006. (Suhrkamp Taschenbuch 3807)

mcclung, bruce. *„Lady in the Dark“: Biography of a Musical*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

### SCORES

Weill, Kurt. *Der Protagonist*, ed. Gunther Diehl and Jürgen Selk. New York: Kurt Weill Foundation; New York: European American Music Corporation, 2006. (Kurt Weill Edition, Series I, vol. 1).

### ARTICLES

Grosch, Nils. “... an einer einzelnen humoristischen Figur den phantastischen Irrtum des Krieges aufzuzeigen”: Weill, Eisler und die musikalische Dramaturgie in *Schweyk*.” In *De Hasek à Brecht: Fortune de la figure de Chveik en Europe* (Grenoble: Institut des Langues et Cultures d’Europe et d’Amérique, 2006), pp. 153–167. (Les Cahiers de l’ILCEA, 8)

Lewy, Tom. “Composers as Interpreters: The Case of *And What Received the Soldier’s Wife?*” In Gad Kaynar and Linda Ben-Zvi (eds.), *Bertolt Brecht: Performance and Philosophy* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 2005), pp. 177–186.

Rehding, Alexander. “On the Record.” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 18, no. 1 (March 2006), pp. 59–82 [on *Der Zar lässt sich fotografieren*].

### VIDEOS

*The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*, Warner Brothers DVD 38931 (new DVD reissue, region 1).

### RECORDINGS



*Hoppla! Die Weill-Lenya Biographie*, ein Original-Hörbuch von Jürgen Schebera, gelesen von Sophie Rois, Tom Pauls, Goetz Kronburger, Bear Family BCD 16082 F6 (6-CD set, audiobook with 36-page printed booklet).

*Die sieben Todsünden, Happy End*, Lotte Lenya, et al., Wilhelm Brückner-Rüggeberg (conductor), Sony Classical 82876 78754 2 (reissue).

*Weill*, Anne Kerry Ford (vocals), Roger Kellaway (conductor), Illyria Records CD003 (fifteen Weill songs).



*Die sieben Todsünden, Songs*, Brigitte Fassbaender (mezzo-soprano), Radio-Philharmonie Hannover des NDR, Cord Garben (conductor and piano), Harmonia Mundi (“Musique d’abord” series), HMA 1951420 (reissue).

*Le grand Lustucru: Lars Duppler Trio spielt Kurt Weill*, Editions Collage EC 536-2 (jazz treatments of ten Weill songs).

*The Juliet Letters*, Elvis Costello (vocals), The Brodsky Quartet, Rhino R2 73363 (includes “Lost in the Stars”).

