

Summer Stage Highlights

Argentinian-born Jérôme Savary, renowned for his work in musical theater and opera—above all for his groundbreaking 1987 Paris production of Kander and Ebb's *Cabaret*—turns his hand to Kurt Weill, the composer whose work inspired the 1966 musical. Savary directs a new production of Weill's *Happy End*, co-produced by the Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen and Hamburg's St. Pauli Theater, opening on 22 May 2008 in Recklinghausen. After five further performances during the Ruhrfestspiele (23–27 May), the production will travel to Hamburg in November. Anneke Schwabe, who played Lucy in St. Pauli Theater's long-running production of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, will star as Lilian Holiday; Peter Lohmeyer will portray Bill Cracker. Veteran film and TV actress Angela Winkler, currently also to be seen as Jenny in Robert Wilson's *Dreigroschenoper* at the Berliner Ensemble, will play the Lady in Gray.

A concert performance of *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* will kick off the 2008 Edinburgh International Festival on 8 August. Weill champion **HK Gruber** leads the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Edinburgh Festival Chorus, with soloists Anthony Dean Griffey (Jimmy Mahoney), Giselle Allen (Jenny Hill), Willard White (Trinity Moses), and Susan Bickley (Leokadja Begbick), among others.

The First Prize winner of the 2008 Lotte Lenya Competition, Rebecca Jo Loeb, will portray Jenny in the Tanglewood Music Center's production of *Mahagonny* (10–12 August). **James Levine**, Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, will conduct; Douglas Fitch will direct. The cast and orchestra will consist of members of Tanglewood's Fellowship Program, joined by the Tanglewood Festival Chorus. The Tanglewood

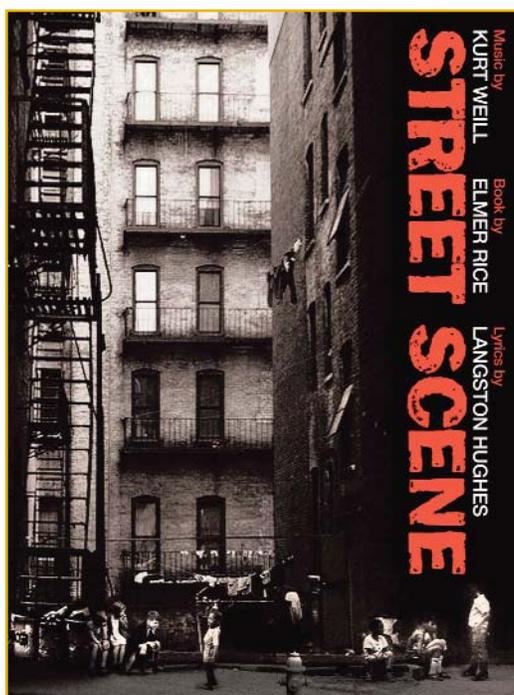


Peter Lohmeyer as Bill Cracker with the gang. Photo: Katharina John

production will utilize David Drew and Michael Geliot's English translation, while the Edinburgh Festival will use that of Michael Feingold.

London's Opera Group tours *Street Scene* across Britain during the month of July, making stops at the Watford Palace Theatre (4–5 July), the Buxton Festival (13, 24 July), and the Young Vic in London (17–19, 21, and 22 July). **John Fulljames** directs a cast which includes Adrian Dwyer as Sam Kaplan and Ruby Hughes as Rose Marrant; Patrick Bailey conducts.

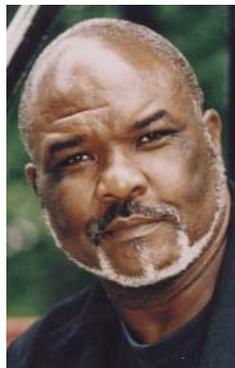
Rounding out the summer, **Chautauqua Opera** stages *Street Scene* on 15 and 18 August, in a co-production with the Manhattan School of Music. Eric Fennell and Deborah Selig will appear as Sam and Rose, under the direction of Jay Lesenger, with Jerome Shannon conducting.



Poster for The Opera Group's production of *Street Scene*



Anthony Dean Griffey



Willard White



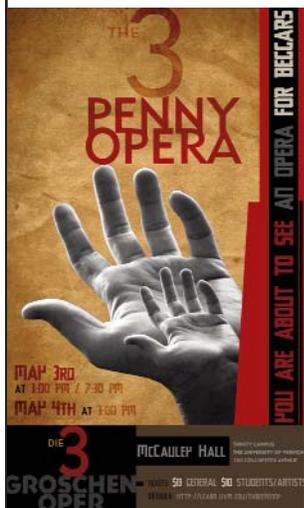
Giselle Allen

Kurt Weill Foundation Grants

The Kurt Weill Foundation announces an additional 15 September grant application deadline especially for Fall Semester 2008 College/University Performance Grants.

Threepenny101

The University of Vermont in Burlington offered a spring 2008 multidisciplinary course centered on *The Threepenny Opera*. Academic modules were offered covering the musical innovation and legacy of Kurt Weill; the revolutionary impact of Bertolt Brecht as a writer, director, and theorist; and the historical and socio-cultural context of Germany between the wars. Culminating the semester's work was a staged production of *The Threepenny Opera* on 3–4 May, directed by Rachel Perlmeter and conducted by T.L. Read, and cast with students, faculty, and members of the community.



2008 Kurt Weill Foundation Grants Awarded

Upon the recommendation of an independent review panel, the Kurt Weill Foundation has awarded funding to the following eight grant applicants:

Professional Performance

Opéra Français, New York, NY. *Marie Galante*.

Kurt Weill Gesellschaft, Dessau, Germany. *Der Lindberghflug*, *Ballad of Magna Carta*, Violin Concerto.

College/University Performance

Tanglewood Music Center, Lenox, MA. *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*.

Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY. *Street Scene*.

Coe College, Cedar Rapids, IA. *The Threepenny Opera*.

North Carolina School of the Arts, Winston-Salem, NC. *Street Scene*.

University of Vermont, Burlington, VT. *The Threepenny Opera*.

Research and Travel

Sarah Whitfield, London, England. For research on Weill the American Dramatist.

Further information on the grant program, including grant guidelines and application forms, is available on the Kurt Weill Foundation website (www.kwf.org) or by telephone (212.505.5240).

Street Scene at New York City's Manhattan School of Music (30 April, 2 and 4 May 2008)

"With more than 50 roles (and a small ensemble of children), *Street Scene* is a challenging work to stage. The Manhattan School of Music's smartly produced, professional-quality production . . . vibrantly conveys the conflicted lives of the tenement's gossipy inhabitants. Steven Capone's impressive, realistic set, consisting of the front and stoop of an apartment building, is rich in details like a fire escape. . . . The cast has strong direction from Jay Lesenger, and the conductor, Hal France, keeps the pace flowing briskly in the pit. As Anna Maurant, Andrea Arias-Martin sings with a bright soprano and effectively conveys the character's disillusionment and unhappiness with her abusive husband, Frank, portrayed here with burly menace by Arthur Miller. Their daughter, Rose, is vividly sung by Devon Guthrie, while James Rodgers is ardently hopeful as Sam Kaplan, her rejected admirer. There are plenty of lively characters among the gossipy apartment residents, including the music teacher Filippo Fiorentino, portrayed with jovial gusto by Frederick Voegele. Weill offers plenty of lighthearted relief before the tragedy, including a snappy boogie-woogie-style dance (expertly choreographed by Francis Patrelle) between the ditzie Mae Jones, charmingly played by Carolyn Amaradio, and her admirer, Dick McGann, sung with charisma by Jacob Lewis Smith."—Vivien Schweitzer, *The New York Times* (3 May 2008)



Cast members of Manhattan School of Music's 1976 *Street Scene* production were photographed with their 2008 counterparts: (l to r) Devon Guthrie and Judy Blazer (Rose Maurant); Michael Philip Davis and James Rodgers (Sam Kaplan). Photo: Brian Hatton



"Ain't It Awful, the Heat?" Photo: Carol Rosegg

2008 Lenya Competition

Eight talented young singing actors won prizes totaling \$37,500 in the finals of the 2008 Lotte Lenya Competition, held on 12 April 2008 at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY. First prize of \$10,000 was captured by mezzo-soprano Rebecca Jo Loeb, 25, a Graduate Diploma student at New York's Juilliard School. Ariela Morgenstern, mezzo-soprano, 29, currently appearing in *Adding Machine* Off-Broadway, won the Second Prize of \$7,500. Twin Third Prizes of \$5,000 each were extended to Bray Wilkins, tenor, 27, and Maija Skille, mezzo-soprano, 30, representing a wide swath of geography: Wilkins comes from Moscow (Idaho), and Skille is a Norwegian student at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki (Finland). Coincidentally, another Competition winner was Norwegian: Tora Augestad, mezzo-soprano, 28, who now lives in Berlin, was awarded a Lys Symonette Award (named in honor of Kurt Weill's musical assistant on Broadway) of \$2,500 for her committed performances of a newly-composed opera



Competition judges Ted Chapin, Victoria Clark, and James Holmes



Lys Symonette Prize Winners, 1 to r: Lauren Jelencovich, Tora Augestad, Elizabeth Reiter, and John Brancy

aria and Weill's "Surabaya Johnny." Other \$2,500 Symonette Awards were earned by Lauren Jelencovich, soprano, 23, and 22-year-old soprano Elizabeth Reiter, both of New York City, for outstanding performances of individual selections; and by baritone John Brancy, 19, of Mullica Hill, NJ, for prodigious vocal promise.

Judges for the 2008 finals were Victoria Clark, Tony Award-winning star of *The Light in the Piazza*; conductor James Holmes, Head of Music at Opera North in Leeds, England; and Theodore S. Chapin, President of the Rodgers & Hammerstein Organization. James Holmes said "The Lotte Lenya Competition bridges two very different worlds, following the example of Lenya's husband Kurt Weill, whose compositions uniquely spanned the genres of opera and Broadway musical theater." Holmes praised the finalists for their courage to segue from one style to another, and for their ability to express the thoughts behind the text.

The 2008 Lenya Competition attracted over 160 young artists, with regional winners chosen by judges David Runzo, Carolyn Marlow, and Joyce Castle from live auditions in Rochester, Lawrence, KS, and New York City, and from video submissions. Each contestant was required to present a diverse program including an opera/opera aria, an American musical theater number, and two contrasting Weill selections. In addition to the prizewinners above, other regional winner/finalists were Diana Rose Becker, 22, soprano (East Northport, NY); Candice Bondank, 23, soprano (Lawrence, KS); Steven Ebel, 28, tenor (Astoria, NY); Steven Herring, 32, baritone (New York, NY); Ashley Logan, 25, soprano (Princeton, NJ); Margaret Peterson, 22, mezzo-soprano (New York, NY), and Michael Scarcelle, bass-baritone (New York, NY).



Rebecca Jo Loeb, 1st Prize



Ariela Morgenstern, 2nd Prize

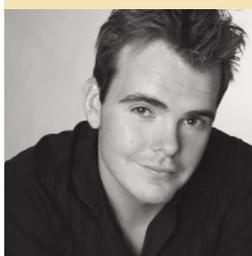


Maija Skille, 3rd Prize



Bray Wilkins, 3rd Prize

Updates on Past Lenya Competition Winners



James Benjamin Rodgers

James Benjamin Rodgers (First Prize, 2007) has won the 2008 Joy in Singing Award, given annually to an outstanding performer of art songs. Rodgers will be presented in a Lincoln Center debut recital on 18 October 2008, after playing the title role in Britten's *Albert Herring* this summer in San Francisco Opera's Merola Program. Erik Liberman (Second Prize, 2005) won a 2008 Helen Hayes Award (Washington, D.C.'s equivalent of a Tony) for Outstanding Supporting Actor, in recognition of his performance as Charlie Kringas in *Merrily We Roll Along* at the Signature Theatre. Richard Todd Adams (First Prize, 2004) currently plays the title role in the U.S. national tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*. Analisa Leaming (Second Prize, 2007) will spend the summer in China with the Asian tour of *The Sound of Music*, which goes on to Taiwan, the Philippines, and Thailand in the fall.

Boston Cantata Singers Focus on Weill

Conductor David Hoose and his Cantata Singers received a 2007 Kurt Weill Foundation Professional Performance grant covering their 2007–2008 Weill season, which began with a critically praised *Der Lindberghflug* (23 September 2007).

“Die Legende vom toten Soldaten” (9 November 2007)

“This season, the Cantata Singers are surveying the music of Kurt Weill. Friday’s offering (apart from solo songs, performed cabaret-style before the concert and during intermission) was a modest rarity, the Boston premiere of ‘Die Legende vom toten Soldaten’ (‘The Legend of the Dead Soldier’), a 1929 ballad with words by Bertolt Brecht, an acidulous story of a soldier, killed in battle, dug up and pronounced fit to serve. Weill laces the declamatory texture with subtly pungent chords; the unaccompanied choir snapped off the German diction with tough clarity, but woolly intonation kept the harmonies just out of focus.”
—Matthew Guerrieri, *The Boston Globe* (12 November 2007)

Propheten (18, 20 January 2008)

“Ever adventurous, the Cantata Singers presented two works—one brand new, one new to Boston—that were written in response to the Holocaust . . . the Boston premiere of *Propheten*, a ‘Twentieth-Century Bible Play,’ the fourth act of a spectacular theatrical epic, three years in the making, called *The Eternal Road* that was first staged at the Manhattan Opera House in 1937. . . . *Propheten* centers on the torments and lamentations of Jeremiah (Dana Whiteside); it ends with a sunburst of music about the building of the temple of Solomon (David Kravitz) and then a quiet epilogue in which a thirteen-year-old boy (Rebecca Danning) refuses to abandon his rabbi (Rockland Osgood). You can see that it’s contending with the increasingly frightening ‘Jewish question’ in Europe. . . . You can recognize the composer’s distinctive voice in every bar, and this ambitious score comes close to the level of *Dreigroschenoper* and *Mahagonny*, from the previous decade. The performance—the experience—was stunning.”—Lloyd Schwartz, *The Phoenix* (23 January 2008)

Cabaret (17 February 2008)

“Sometimes I despair that the great popular songs of the decades between the two world wars might become irretrievably neglected and abandoned. . . . The latest entry in the Cantata Singers’ exploration of the music of Kurt Weill, especially in relation to other composers, was a kind of cabaret at the Gardner Museum of songs . . . by Weill and two of his quite different contemporaries, Arnold Schoenberg and his close friend and tennis partner George Gershwin. . . . The afternoon’s biggest hit was Lynn Torgove singing Weill’s horrifyingly timely 1928 ‘Die Muschel von Margate (Petroleum Song),’ which he wrote for a German play based on Upton Sinclair’s novel *Oil* (same source as *There Will Be Blood*).”—Lloyd Schwartz, *The Phoenix* (21 February 2008)

Violin Concerto (14, 16 March 2008)

“The Cantata Singers continued their season-long exploration of the music of Kurt Weill with a compare-and-contrast concert highlighting Weill’s Teflon resistance to the weight of history. Instead of worrying over a place in the pantheon, Weill took pride in adapting his compositional personality to each successive *Zeitgeist*. . . . Weill’s 1924 Violin Concerto, dating from his brief stint as an atonal modernist, was a complete contrast [to Busoni’s ‘Berceuse élégiaque’], all hard edges. With an orchestra of ten winds, double basses, and percussion, Weill marries a Schoenbergian vocabulary to a Stravinskian instrumental sensibility. But in place of Neoclassicism or Romanticism are contemporary snapshots: A xylophone-spiked ‘Notturmo’ becomes a ragtime-infused night on the town, while the boisterously marching finale suddenly dissolves into an uncannily minimalistic bit of rocking machinery. David Hoose and the superb violinist Jennifer Koh fashioned a reading that was musically fiery while remaining emotionally cool and confident. Spinning off Weill’s intricate solo passages with a consistently taut, gleaming tone and sharp focus, Koh’s virtuosity appropriately suggested more technological mastery than melodramatic expression.”
—Matthew Guerrieri, *The Boston Globe* (19 March 2008)

In Berlin, On Broadway: A Kurt Weill Cabaret (6 April 2008)

“All season long, the Cantata Singers have been revealing that there’s more to Kurt Weill than ‘Mack the Knife.’ . . . Music director Alison Voth and stage director Lynn Torgove offered up the irresistible theater music that’s made so many people love Weill. A splendid group of singers from the Cantata Singers chorus, looking stylish in ’30s garb (women’s hats and men’s fedoras, boas, suspenders), and now happily individualized, sailed through Torgove’s imaginative staging. . . . The songs, many of the most famous ones (‘Surabaya Johnny,’ ‘Alabama Song,’ ‘The Saga of Jenny’), were delicious, some in brilliantly original arrangements by the New England Conservatory’s John Greer. But there was a classic Cantata Singers emphasis on more obscure works, like *Der Silbersee* and *Marie Galante*, that made me ache for full performances. Greer’s most masterful arrangement had mezzo Majie Zeller, on stage, singing ‘My Ship’ in counterpoint with Angelyne Hinson, a silver-voiced soprano . . . singing *Marie Galante*’s ‘J’attends un navire’ in the aisle. Pianist Miriam Charney and percussionist Dean Anderson joined Voth as the orchestra.”—Lloyd Schwartz, *The Phoenix* (15 April 2008)

Symphony No. 2 (9 May 2008)

“The concert opened with Weill’s Second Symphony. Written in 1933, it is a colorfully scored yet mostly unsurprising piece. Its musical logic is both unimpeachable and mechanical, and aside from some striking moments of anguish in the central slow movement, there is little emotional depth either. Somehow one ended up admiring the orchestra’s vigorous performance far more than the music itself.”—David Weinger, *The Boston Globe* (12 May 2008)

2008 Kurt Weill Fest, Dessau

Violin Concerto, Mahler Chamber Orchestra with Kolja Blacher (29 February 2008)

“With the performance of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, the Anhaltisches Theater played host to one of the most lively, exciting ensembles on the classical music scene. The young musicians were freshly returned from the Eilat International Chamber Music Festival in Israel. Weill’s Concerto for Violin and Wind Instruments, with the excellent soloist Kolja Blacher, was tempestuously received in Israel, and the Dessau audience encored the exultation and foot stamping. The former concertmaster of the Berlin Philharmonic infused his frenzied passagework with fiery, infectious passion, and captivated even more with his melodic sweep and glowing, expressive tone. As conductor, Blacher kept the tightly knit rhythmic threads well in hand, even without giving a heavily accented beat.”—Isabel Herzfeld, *Der Tagesspiegel* (2 March 2008)

Der Lindberghflug and *The Ballad of Magna Carta*, MDR Sinfonieorchester and MDR Rundfunkchor (2 March 2008)

“The human dream of flying in general and the first sensational Atlantic crossing without intermediate landing in particular inspired Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht in 1928–29 to create an ‘artistic memorial’ to this event, using the new form of a radio cantata. HK Gruber himself introduced the individual movements like a radio announcer. . . . It was thoroughly suspenseful, from the objective informative passages in which the pilot Lindbergh introduced himself and explained that he had, among other things, ‘a coil of rope, a big needle, and a rubber boat’ on board to the dramatic portrayal of the fog and snow storm endangering the experimental flight, as played by the large orchestra and sung by the opulent chorus. Oliver Ringelhan (tenor) shone as Lindbergh, characterizing the variously occurring moods of the pilot with extraordinary penetration and emotion. . . . The sovereign on the podium in Dessau was the inimitable HK Gruber. Leading clearly, urging the musicians on with telling gestures, pinpointing entrances, bringing about an emotion-filled quietude when appropriate—Gruber was almost an experience in himself. . . . In addition, Weill’s seldom-played cantata *The Ballad of Magna Carta*, to a text by Maxwell Anderson, was performed in the original English. Created in 1940 in the USA and conceived as a ‘radio school piece,’ the composition has as theme the American dream of freedom. Almost euphoric orchestral outbursts, wide-ranging choral dynamics, and impressive solo voices, in particular that of the baritone Egbert Junghanns, produced an enthusiastic reception from the audience at the well-attended concert.”—Helmut Rohm, *Magdeburger Volksstimme* (4 March 2008)



Oliver Ringelhan and HK Gruber. Photo: Kai Bienert

Broadway Dreams (9 March 2008)

“The idea came from the American director Jeremy Webb and the American soprano Teri Hansen, conceived for the Kurt Weill Fest. . . . A couple, ‘She’ and ‘He,’ return home from attending the theater and go to bed, all the while getting on each other’s nerves. As the two fall asleep, the ‘Dream’ begins. Teri Hansen and Edward Watt, who stepped in on short notice for the absent Nmon Ford, float from dream to dream, carried by songs including ‘Romance of a Lifetime’ (from *Unsung Weill*) and the very well known ballad ‘Youkali.’ And ‘He’ rocks and turns her bed in time to the catchy music. . . . Because life doesn’t always consist of only sweet dreams, the producers have also presented the sleepers with ‘Nightmares,’ represented by songs like ‘Tango Ballade’ (with dance sequence) and ‘Is It Him or Is It Me?’. While ‘She’ and ‘He’ were acting in the foreground, at the back of the stage the Anhaltische Philharmonie was playing under GMD Golo Berg, sometimes as complete orchestra and sometimes in swing band formation. . . . But the nightmare is soon over, thank God. ‘Reality’ returns. Among other songs, ‘This Is New’ and ‘One Life to Live,’ were included in this section. A good directorial idea was the creation of an ‘Outsider,’ who translated, conveyed the plot, and also took part in the action himself. Bernd Lambrecht, a member of the Anhaltisches Theater ensemble, was outstanding in this role. By and large, the public was pleased by *Broadway Dreams*. Songs from lesser-known, mostly American, Weill works were heard, and audiences had a chance to experience a piece of American musical culture.”—Helmut Rohm, *Zerbster Volksstimme* (13 March 2008)



Teri Hansen and Edward Watt. Photo: Jens Schlüter

Violin Concerto, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (14–16 March 2008)

“The highlight of the concert was concertmaster Steven Copes’ performance of the Violin Concerto by Kurt Weill. Composed in 1924, four years before *The Threepenny Opera*, it is a challenging modernist work, combining the intellectual rigor of Schoenberg with the wit of Stravinsky. But it also betrays the jazz and popular influences that would come to dominate Weill’s later work. Aside from a pair of basses, the solo violin is the only string instrument, and Weill sets up an almost adversarial relationship between the soloist and the ensemble. At times, the violin played romantically against the angular lines of the orchestra; at others, he executed a nearly endless series of cadenzas against monumental orchestral sound. The work demanded the full range of violin technique, from heartfelt emotion to extreme technical proficiency. Copes performed it all like the virtuoso that he is. Under Douglas Boyd’s leadership, the SPCO played the acerbic score with gusto, not softening any of the harsh edges and more importantly, providing an aural framework to showcase Copes’ stunning performance.”—William Randall Beard, *Star Tribune* (14 March 2008)

New Year’s Eve Concert, Ensemble Modern (Essen Philharmonie, 2 January 2008)

“Heinz Karl Gruber is one of a kind, an especially sympathetic personality, who deserves to be known far beyond the contemporary Austrian music scene. . . . Along with his own humorous commentary, yesterday he offered up a playground of exotic early twentieth century music: Antheil, Bernstein, Gershwin, Schwitters, Stravinsky, Weill. Up to *Rhapsody in Blue* everything was probably completely unknown to the greater portion of the public. . . . With Kurt Weill, the evening turned in a somewhat more popular and ear-friendly direction. Gruber included in his program excerpts from the ballet pantomime *Zaubernacht* and from the musical *Lady in the Dark*. The devil alone knows why this wonderful musical is not better known and more often performed. . . . All-around talent Ute Gfrerer is certainly on the way to becoming one of the great Weill interpreters in the world. In several duets with Gruber, she enchanted like a Broadway star. We will look forward to her next appearance, and I am sure we will hear much more from her. You must remember this name!”—Peter Bilsing, *Der Opernfreund* (3 January 2008)

US Premiere of *Marie Galante*

With soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian in the title role, Opéra Français de New York will mount the first United States production of *Marie Galante*, Weill’s 1934 collaboration with Jacques Deval, based on Deval’s novel of the same name. Yves Abel will conduct, with Jean-Philippe Clarac and Olivier Deloeuil as the directing team. Performances at New York’s French Institute: Alliance Française are scheduled for 16 and 18 November 2008.



Isabel Bayrakdarian



Yves Abel

Utah Symphony Plays Weill at Salt Lake City’s Maurice Abravanel Hall (25–26 April 2008)

“In an inspired programming choice, conductor Keith Lockhart paired *Carmina Burana* with a less well-known piece from Weimar-period Germany, Kurt Weill’s Symphony No. 2. The bittersweet Weill symphony, which deserves to be heard more often, made for an instructive contrast with the bombast of *Carmina*. The vaguely ominous opening and closing movements had a persuasive drive; the central movement had a burnished, autumnal sound with a shade of world weariness.”—Catherine Reese Newton, *The Salt Lake Tribune* (26 April 2008)

Wilson *Dreigroschenoper* on Tour

Robert Wilson’s acclaimed Berliner Ensemble production of *Die Dreigroschenoper* has been invited to the Festival dei 2 Mondi in Spoleto on 5–6 July, the first stop among several international appearances planned over the coming seasons.



Photo: Lesley Leslie-Spinks

Spotlight on Second Symphony

The Concertgebouw Orchestra premiered Weill’s Symphony No. 2 in Amsterdam on 11 October 1934. Bruno Walter conducted that night, and he repeated the work with the New York Philharmonic on 13 December of the same year. Although neither performance met with critical success, recent evidence shows that Symphony No. 2 is finally coming into its own. In the first six months of 2008, twenty-four performances have been reported in Europe and the United States, among them two tours: Neue Lausitzer Philharmonie (six concerts in Germany) and Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen (four concerts in Belgium). Orchestras in Seattle, Denver, Salt Lake City, and Boston have programmed the work, HK Gruber led it with the BBC Philharmonic in Sheffield, and Ernst Kovacic and the Grosses Orchester Graz played it in Austria. And in Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw, where it was first performed, two orchestras have included Weill’s Second Symphony in their 2007–2008 seasons: the Concertgebouw Orchestra with Markus Stenz (13 September 2007) and the Radio Kamer Filharmonie with Otto Tausk (31 May 2008). The latter performance was recorded for television broadcast by NPS Dutch TV, along with an introduction covering the work’s genesis and premiere. Symphony No. 2 has been recorded in a dozen different performances, most of which are currently available on CD.

Weillian Cabaret and Jazz

Weill/Gershwin Song Inspires a New Show

Building upon his popular cabaret act, on 30 April 2008 singer-pianist Mark Nadler opened a new one-man musical entitled *Russian on the Side* at Chicago's Royal George Theatre. Conceived around the song "Tschaikowsky" from *Lady in the Dark*, the show illustrates the Russian roots of the American songbook. "You can draw a line directly from Glinka to Guettel," says Nadler. "And everyone from the Gershwins and Irving Berlin and Vernon Duke (whose birth name was Dukelsky), to Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, are part of the trajectory."



Mark Nadler

"Rest assured that *Russian on the Side* provides enormous value for money. Nadler can play the piano. He can sing. He can do a soft-shoe. Actually, he can play, sing, and do a soft shoe all at once. . . . The premise of this show is that Nadler will teach the audience to recite the lyrics to the Danny Kaye patter song. . . . His pedagogical method is association—by playing and talking a bit about each of the composers in the song, he'll help us to remember them. . . . There are some dramaturgical holes in the show that need fixing before it goes to New York. Nadler never really sets up the context of the original song, leaving some people wondering where the heck it came from. And his smart notions of the interconnectedness of the music universe need much greater expansion. . . . But it is fun. And educational, to boot."—Chris Jones, *Chicago Tribune* (2 May 2008)

Weill Songs from Janet Roddick, New Zealand International Arts Festival, Wellington (12 March 2008)

"Mixing Weill's 1920s theatrical pieces with his later Broadway musicals, the troupe of New Zealand musicians—singer Janet Roddick, David Donaldson, Steve Roche, David Long, Chris O'Connor, and Jeff Henderson—produced a show that dripped with decadence and bittersweet heartbreak. . . . dressed like a femme-fatale teacher, singer and pianist Roddick commanded the stage in a demanding ninety-minute performance. She showed an astounding vocal range, tearing our ears off one minute only then to softly massage them. . . . There were continual touches of effective improvisation, as the band took to using clever but simple tricks, such as playing the guitar with a bow and letting a chain down on the drum kit. Many songs, such as the 'Ballad of the Soldier's Wife' and 'Lost in the Stars,' evolved into extended jam sessions in which subtle nuances were counterpointed with ripping electric guitar and driving rhythms."—*The Dominion Post* (13 March 2008)

Julie Wilson at New York City's Metropolitan Room

"For American audiences, the unsparing view of humanity expressed in many of the best-known songs of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill is usually camouflaged by their reputation as exotic European art songs. They are further distanced from us by their English translations and by the devil-may-care attitude of singers like Bobby Darin. But to hear 'Mack the Knife' and 'Surabaya Johnny' delivered as spoken monologues with piano accompaniment by the cabaret singer Julie Wilson was to discover them stripped naked under a surgeon's lamp."—Stephen Holden, *The New York Times* (21 April 2008)

Weill Variations CD, Grappa GRCD 4275



Tora Augestad

"Any ensemble with a female vocalist performing a program based on the songs of composer Kurt Weill calls for immediate comparisons to such iconic interpreters of the composer's repertoire as actress-vocalist Lotte Lenya (who was married to Weill) and actress-vocalist Ute Lemper. . . . but Music for a While is not afraid of such obvious references. . . . The casting of Augestad is brilliant. . . . she can be fragile and suggestive in her reserved delivery of 'Ballade von der sexuellen Hörigkeit,' ironic in 'Seeräuberjenny,' or detached and sorrowful in 'Mackie Messer,' all from *The Threepenny Opera*. Her performance of the tango-based 'Youkali' is sober, reflecting on Weill's wish to escape from Europe to the States (the Youkali, or land of our desires) but suggesting that there really is no such place. In 'Surabaya Johnny' and 'Je ne t'aime pas,' she alternates cleverly between anger, reconciliation, and ache over lost love."—Eyal Hareuveni, *AllAboutJazz.com* (12 February 2008)

Bebe Neuwirth Returns to Weill

Weill fans will recall Bebe Neuwirth's revue *Here Lies Jenny*, which played in New York and San Francisco,



Bebe Neuwirth

and this spring she unveiled her new cabaret show *Stories With Piano* at Feinstein's in New York City (20–31 May.) Accompanied by pianist Scott Cady, Neuwirth performed songs by Sondheim, Kander and Ebb, and Tom Waits in addition to Weill.

"My Ship" at the Oak Room, New York City (15–26 January 2008)

"Sandy Stewart and Bill Charlap turned the Oak Room of the Algonquin Hotel into a meditation room on Tuesday evening. As Ms. Stewart, a sphinxlike oracle planted on the club's tiny platform stage, sang 'My Ship,' accompanied on piano by Mr. Charlap, this Kurt Weill-Ira Gershwin standard with its Freudian imagery of a woman's love hoarded like a priceless treasure, assumed a Homeric dimension. Ms. Stewart became Penelope patiently awaiting the return of Odysseus, while Mr. Charlap's gleaming piano hinted at the rubies, jam, and spice under guard."—Stephen Holden, *The New York Times* (17 January 2008)

New Publications

BOOKS

Brecht, Bertolt. *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. Trans. Steve Giles. London: Methuen Drama, 2007.

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