

Kurt Weill

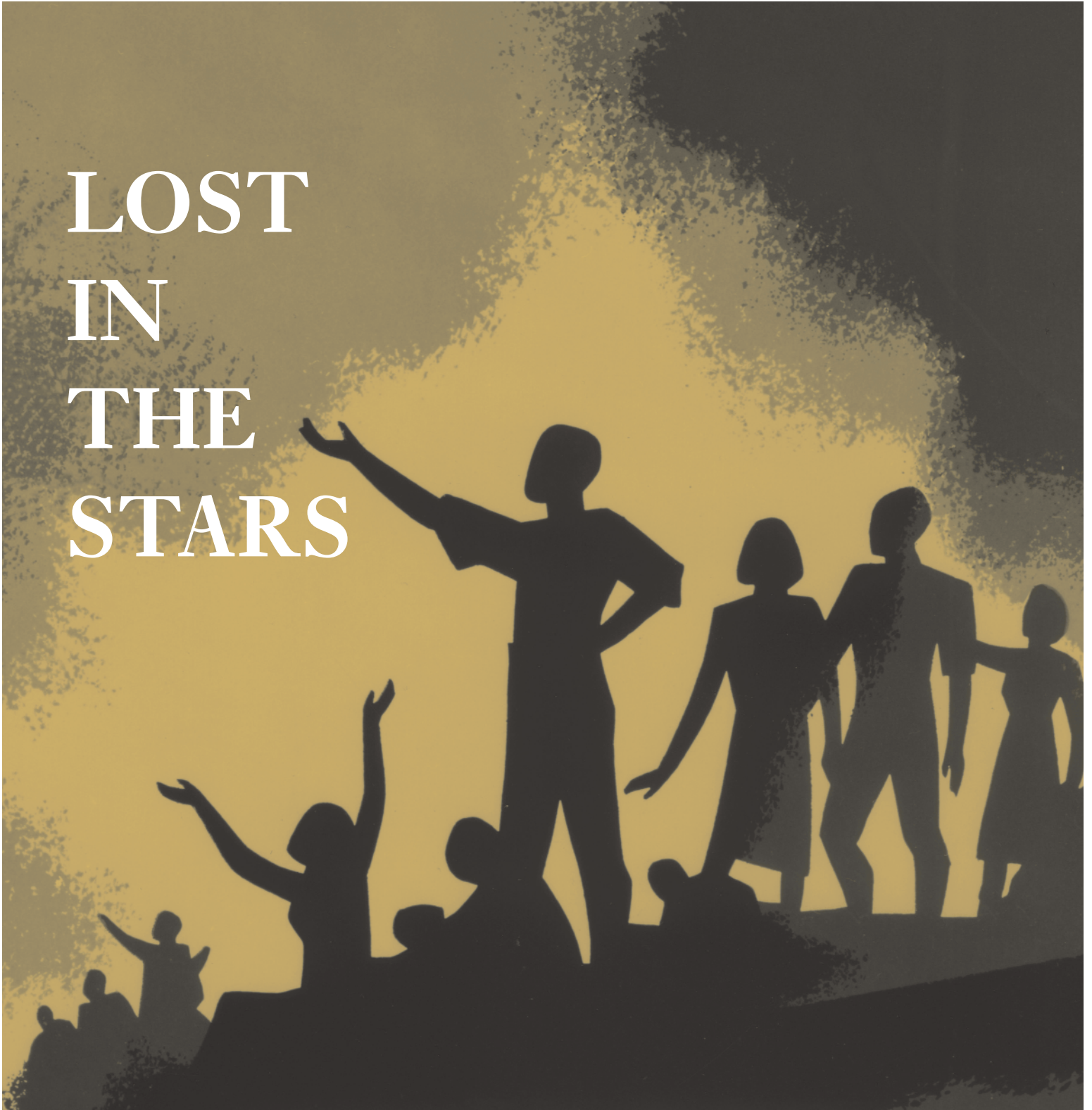
Volume 26

Number 1

Spring 2008

Newsletter

LOST
IN
THE
STARS



In this issue

Note from the Editor	3
<i>Feature: Lost in the Stars</i>	
The Story of the Song	4
Genesis, First Production, and Tour	6
The Eleanor Roosevelt Album	10
Later Life	12
<i>Books</i>	
<i>Handbuch des Musicals: Die wichtigsten Titel von A bis Z by Thomas Siedhoff Gisela Maria Schubert</i>	13
<i>The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century by Alex Ross Joy H. Calico</i>	14
<i>Artists in Exile: How Refugees from Twentieth-Century War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts by Joseph Horowitz Jack Sullivan</i>	15
<i>Performances</i>	
<i>Der Silbersee in Berlin Tobias Robert Klein</i>	17
<i>Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny in Mainz Robert Gonzales</i>	18
<i>Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny in Essen Robert Gonzales</i>	19
<i>Lady in the Dark in Oullins William V. Madison</i>	20
<i>Lost in the Stars in Pittsburgh Deane Root</i>	22
<i>Newsletter Reader Survey</i>	23
<i>Topical Weill</i>	1a–8a

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Newsletter

Volume 26

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A variety of opinions are expressed in the Newsletter; they do not necessarily represent the publisher's official viewpoint. Letters to the editor are welcome.

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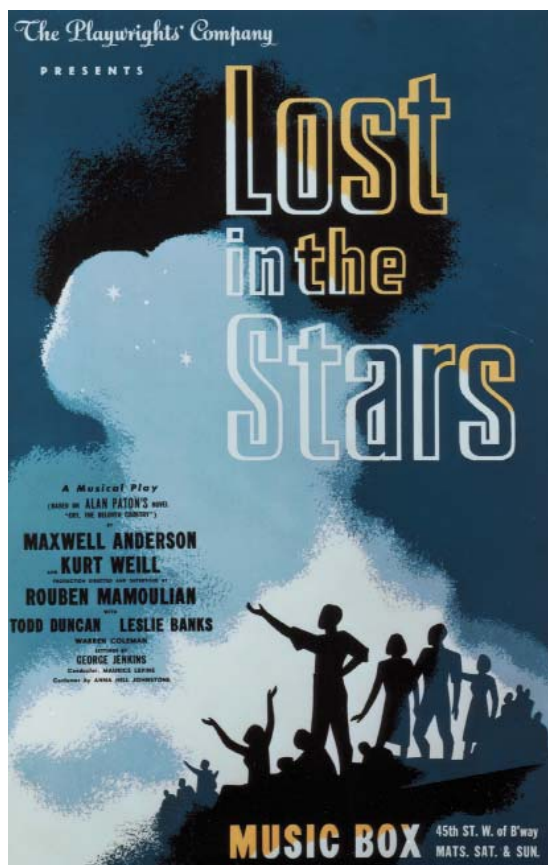
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Cover photo: Detail from window card for the original Broadway production of *Lost in the Stars*, Music Box Theater, 1949.



The window card for the original production in 1949.



Maxwell Anderson and director Rouben Mamoulian with Weill during preparations for *Lost in the Stars*.

Note from the Editor

It's been well over a decade since this Newsletter has featured *Lost in the Stars* (1949), Weill's last completed stage work, which—billed as a “musical tragedy”—turned Broadway's cherished “musical comedy” emphatically on its head. Based on Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1948), a novel that indicted South Africa's then recently adopted “apartheid” policy, *Lost in the Stars* utilized the book's message to criticize racial injustice in the United States. From today's perspective it seems almost unfathomable, but African-Americans who wanted to catch a performance of *Lost in the Stars* in several cities during its 14-week road tour were forced to watch it from the balconies of segregated theaters, and many a hotel would not accommodate the multi-racial cast. Though people have overcome “Jim Crow” laws and apartheid (encouraged by such charismatic figures as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela), racial injustice and persecution sadly persist in many parts of the world, so that today's performances of *Lost in the Stars* hold more than historical interest.

This issue of the Newsletter provides some ancillary information about the show and its reception, spotlighting little-known details. Weill and Maxwell Anderson had long planned a musical about racial inequality, and several of the songs found in *Lost in the Stars* were written in 1939 for such a project (entitled *Ulysses Africanus*), including the song “Lost in the Stars.” The project came to naught, but “Lost in the Stars” was published and recorded before it became a pivotal song in the eponymous 1949 stage work. Although Anderson expressed some universally applicable existentialist sentiments in this song, he and Weill always intended “Lost in the Stars” for an African-American character in the various stage scenarios that they discussed. While the song has become a classic, the “musical tragedy” *Lost in the Stars* is not (yet) frequently produced, but it has enjoyed heightened interest lately, as evinced by two recent productions in the U.S. (the latest reviewed on p. 22 in this issue). Theatre Three in Dallas has already announced a production for May 2009.

Elmar Juchem

Note to our readers: Thanks to all of you who responded to our Reader Survey from the Fall 2007 issue. We encourage anyone who has not responded to do so and help us plan the future of the Newsletter. Please see p. 23, or respond on-line: <http://www.kwf.org/survey.html>.

Lost in the Stars



A detail from Weill's original holograph fair copy of the song "Lost in the Stars" (1939). Original manuscript in the Weill-Lenya Papers (MSS 30), box 32, folder 442, Yale University Music Library.

A Song in Search of a Play

Weill and Anderson wrote the song "Lost in the Stars" for *Ulysses Africanus*, a musical play based on Harry Stillwell Edwards's popular Civil War novella, *Eneas Africanus* (1919). When the play could not be produced in the fall of 1939 because of disagreements with the rights holders and the unavailability of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson for the lead role, the authors shelved the play's basic idea and the musical numbers. Four songs would resurface a decade later in *Lost in the Stars*: "Lost in the Stars," "Forget" (as "Stay Well"), "The Place I'm Referring to Is Home" (as "The Little Gray House"), and "Lover Man" (as "Trouble Man"). In the interim, Weill and Anderson considered at least three ideas for shows that would incorporate "Lost in the Stars."

[unknown project] (1942)

On 27 April 1942, Weill turned down a request from Marc Blitzstein, who wanted to program "Lost in the Stars" in a concert. Weill wrote, "Anderson has a definite idea now how to write that musical play for which the song 'The Stars' was written." The same day, Weill wrote to Lenya, "I had the idea that it would be wonderful to take the finest negroe [*sic*] entertainers (singers, dancers etc.) and do a negro musical like *Porgy*, but the whole thing about the negroe question; the whole problem of race oppression combined with great entertainment."

Street Scene (1945)

In early August 1945, Weill considered Maxwell Anderson for the lyrics to *Street Scene*, and the two tried to work in "Lost in the Stars" and "The Little Gray House" (both would have been sung by Henry, the janitor). The song "Forget" would have been a duet for Rose and Sam, following Sam's recitation of Walt Whitman's "Lilacs" poem. But Elmer Rice appears to have been uncomfortable with Anderson—his colleague in the Playwrights' Company—as lyricist for the project, and shortly thereafter Weill and Rice engaged Langston Hughes.

"Spaceship" (1947)

In July 1947, Weill and Anderson were discussing the idea of a spaceship musical, but the exact nature of the theme was in flux: at one point, Weill reduced the theme to time travel, foreshadowing an idea for *Love Life*; Anderson thought of a play with only a few songs, where four youngsters who "don't know what to do with their lives" would live in an apartment in Manhattan, and an African-American cook would sing "Lost in the Stars" as the opening number.

Pre-1949 Recordings

Before the Broadway show ever opened, three distinguished singers had recorded “Lost in the Stars.”

Lotte Lenya (1943) for Bost Records

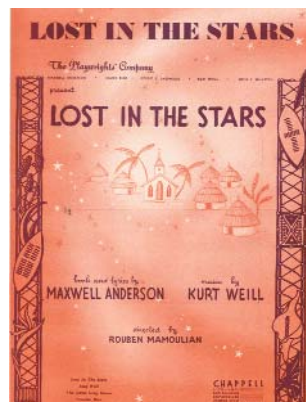
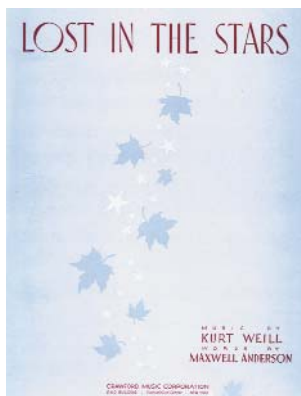
Walter Huston (1944) for Decca

Frank Sinatra (1946) for Columbia



Above: Label from Walter Huston’s recording of the song for Decca, made in October 1944 to go with his second recording of “September Song.” The subtitle printed on the label shows that it comes from a reissue of the recording, not an original pressing.

Below: Crawford (a subsidiary of Weill’s publisher, Chappell) issued “Lost in the Stars” as sheet music for the first time in September 1946 (below left); “September Song” was reissued at the same time with a similar cover. Frank Sinatra had recently recorded both songs. When *Lost in the Stars* opened on Broadway, Chappell published a modified sheet music version of the song (below right), along with three other numbers from the show.

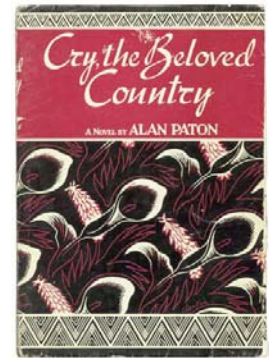


On 27 November 1943, Weill wrote to Cheryl Crawford, “Gadg [Elia Kazan] is here and energetically involved with the current project. I am taking my cue from him and arranging six songs for L[enya].” Manuscripts for some of these arrangements are held in the Weill-Lenya Papers at Yale, but not “Lost in the Stars.” The album cover is shown above.

25 Selected Recordings

- 1956 Sarah Vaughan
- 1956 Tony Bennett
- 1959 Abbey Lincoln
- 1961 Dick Hyman
- 1962 Sammy Davis, Jr.
- 1962 Gerry Mulligan Quartet
- 1963 Vic Damone
- 1964 Lena Horne
- 1964 Judy Garland
- 1965 André Previn
- 1966 Billy Eckstine
- 1967 Leonard Nimoy
- 1971 Kenny Burrell
- 1977 Patti Austin
- 1978 Anita O’Day
- 1982 Jane Ira Bloom
- 1985 Ben Sidran
- 1985 Carla Bley w/Phil Woods
- 1989 Sheila Jordan
- 1990 Bud Shank
- 1992 Dave McKenna
- 1993 Patti LuPone
- 1994 Elvis Costello
- 2002 Dee Dee Bridgewater
- 2004 Patricia O’Callaghan

In December 1947, Maxwell Anderson returned to the U.S. from a trip to Europe. Aboard the ship happened to be lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II and his wife. Dorothy Hammerstein had read Alan Paton's forthcoming novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, to be published by Scribner's in February 1948, and highly recommended it to Anderson for dramatization, even though (or because) her husband was not sure whether it could be adapted for the stage. On 1 March 1948 she gave Anderson a copy of the book, and the next day the playwright decided to adapt it as a musical with Weill.



Maxwell Anderson, letter to Alan Paton, 15 March 1948

"I hope I can convey to you, at so great a distance, something of the emotion with which I read *Cry, the Beloved Country* and which many Americans must feel now as they read it. For years I've wanted to write something which would state the position and perhaps illuminate the tragedy of our own negroes. Now that I've read your story I think you have said as much as can be said both for your country and ours."

Weill describes the creative process in letters to his parents:

"I'm deep into work on my new play; almost every day I go into town to see actors and singers and to work with the director. I work on the orchestral score in the morning before I leave the house and in the evening after I get back. We're having great difficulties finding an actor for the leading role . . . It is a very difficult part and until now we have not found anyone who would be good enough; but we hope to find him soon, since we want to start rehearsals in four weeks." (11 July 1949)

"Yesterday I finished the musical composition and now I'm working under high pressure to finish as much of the orchestration as possible before rehearsals start on 19 September. The play's new title is 'Lost in the Stars' . . . which also is the most important vocal piece. All summer long we have worked on the casting of this play. It has been extremely difficult and sometimes we thought we would have to give the whole thing up, because we couldn't find the right interpreters. But now, after all these efforts, we have an excellent cast, with the famous Negro baritone Todd Duncan in the leading role and the famous English actor Leslie Banks as the lead white character, along with a number of very good male and female Negro singers." (6 September 1949)

Lost in the Stars opened at the Music Box Theater on 30 October 1949, directed by Rouben Mamoulian and conducted by Maurice Levine.



The "Fear" scene from Act One of the original production. Photo: George Karger

The Music Critics

Virgil Thomson, *New York Herald Tribune* (13 November 1949)

“Not quite so incidental is the composer’s contribution to *Lost in the Stars*. Here there are solos, choruses, all sorts of set pieces. And they have form; they are ‘numbers.’ Even the passages of dialogue that separate them have a beginning, a middle and an ending. The whole spectacle is therefore a series of forms, some spoken and some sung; and the sequence of these makes a continuity, too, a narrative nowhere lacking in variety or in movement toward its goal. It is not, however, either purely or chiefly a musical narrative. It is a play with musical numbers, a singspiel. Whether you ‘like’ Mr. Weill’s numbers or not (I personally find the tunes weak but their scoring masterful), their relation to the play is a model of procedure. His music does all the right things at all the right times. Its layout is perfection. So is its performance, by the way.”

Olin Downes, letter to Weill, 9 December 1949

“It’s awfully interesting to me to see your hand getting firmer with each thing you are doing, and your new treatments and forms and new technical resources. It is wonderful that you’ve got such an opera over on the stage. This work, and the *Street Scene*, will be among the most significant steps which have so far been taken both to modernize and to popularize the operatic principle, and say something worth while in the artistic sense. But I am still waiting for the

day when you get exactly the subject which you can treat without the faintest consideration of public taste or expediency of any sort, while in the meantime you are constantly developing a reputation for making it more and more possible for you to do exactly what you want to do ultimately in the musical field.”

Weill’s response to Downes, 14 December 1949

“I was greatly interested in what you have to say about the formality of the song-form, because you have hit here on one of the basic problems of our musical theatre. It must be somewhat surprising indeed to find a serious subject treated in a form which (in this country at least) has been used so far only for a lighter form of entertainment. But that was exactly the nature of my experiment—to do a ‘musical tragedy’ for the American theatre so that the typical American audience (not a specialized audience) can accept it, and the real success of the piece to me is the fact that the audience did accept it without hesitation, that they accepted a lot of very serious, tragic, quite un-Broadway-ish music of operatic dimensions, together with some songs written in a more familiar style. Personally I don’t feel that this represents a compromise because it seems to me that the American popular song, growing out of the American folk-music, is the basis of an American musical theatre (just as the Italian song was the basis of Italian opera), and that in this early state of the development, and considering the audiences we are writing for, it is quite legitimate to use the form of the popular song and gradually fill it with new musical content. But I do agree with you that this infiltration of song in the musical theatre will gradually become more refined and more removed from its origins [*sic*].”

The Drama Critics

Howard Barnes, *New York Herald Tribune* (31 October 1949)

“A soaring musical tragedy has opened at the Music Box. *Lost in the Stars* has excitement, flavor, heart and a stern authority. Maxwell Anderson has adapted Alan Paton’s fine novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, with immense skill and fidelity. Kurt Weill has composed a beautifully integrated score, which makes dynamic use of both solo and ensemble numbers, while Rouben Mamoulian has staged the offering superbly. Since Todd Duncan, Leslie Banks, and their colleagues give every inflection to a work of true dimensions, there is virtually nothing wanting in *Lost in the Stars*. It is a harrowing theatrical experience, but one of deep satisfaction.

Anderson faced a stupendous job in translating a tale of Negroes and whites in South Africa to terms of a libretto and lyrics. He has handled it magnificently. Interlacing fragments of straight melodrama and moving drama with songs which continually add to the sense and momentum of the action, he has captured the full essence of the original in striking stage patterns. The singing ensemble acts as a sort of Greek chorus, while individual scenes are spotted rapidly in George Jenkins’s flexible and imaginative settings. The chief point is that the tragedy of the Negro minister, who discovers that his son has killed the greatest white benefactor of his race, is never lost sight of in the complexities of the mounting. The show moves to its climax inexorably and with a tremendous crescendo.

Duncan was the perfect choice for Stephen Kumalo, the Zulu man of God who typifies the agony of his race. He sings such num-

“My companion wept almost uncontrollably throughout the evening. So did the woman next to her. She, too, was moved, and deeply moved, by *Lost in the Stars*. . . . Indeed, one person has already reported that she was made so happily unhappy by *Lost in the Stars* that she felt like dropping in at *Death of a Salesman* just to cheer herself up.”

—John Mason Brown, *Saturday Review*
(26 November 1949)

bers as ‘Thousands of Miles,’ ‘The Little Gray House,’ or ‘Lost in the Stars’ with rich effect, but he is equally splendid in the dramatic passages which lead him from his small village in Ndotsheni to Johannesburg only to find his simple faith shaken to its foundations. . . .

Weill’s music is not overly distinguished, but it has some lovely melodies and stirring dirges which are perfectly supplementary to the book. When the chorus, led by Frank Roane, intones ‘Train to Johannesburg,’ ‘Fear’ or ‘Cry, the Beloved Country’ an engrossing theatrical symphony is performed at the Music Box. Miss Matthews has several fine songs, notably ‘Stay Well’; little Herbert Coleman is

enchanting in ‘The Mole’ and there is a hot number in a Shantytown dive called ‘Who’ll Buy,’ which gives variety to the musical texture.

The supporting players are all so good that it is difficult to give credit to more than a few. Warren Coleman is savagely right as the minister’s venal brother who runs a tobacco shop in Johannesburg, William Greaves is fine as a petty thief who involves Absalom Kumalo in a killing and Sheila Guyse is extraordinarily effective as a Negro trollop. That they all participate in *Lost in the Stars* with no confusion is, of course, largely due to Mamoulian’s inspired staging. There is rhythm, surging movement and an immaculate pace in this Playwrights’ Company production. It does great honor to the season.”

Brooks Atkinson, *New York Times* (31 October 1949)

“Mr. Paton’s novel is an epic in which the currents of racial hatred run deep and strong—so thoroughly a work of literary art that one might well hesitate to try transforming it into the art of the stage. Let it be said at once that Mr. Anderson and Mr. Weill have not

transformed it with obvious difficulty. They have to be literal and skimming in the narrative where the novel is allusive and rich. There are spots where ‘*Lost in the Stars*’ is patchy. People who have not fallen under the sublime spell of the novel may not fully appreciate the multitudinous forces that are running headlong through this tragic story. But Mr. Anderson has the taste and the integrity to know the quality of the material he is working with. . . . Being perhaps in a hurry, Mr. Anderson writes a good many of the early scenes sketchily, but when he comes to the overwhelming climax of this terrible tragedy he takes the time and has the words to write a grand and enlightening scene with unadorned beauty. . . .

Although the novel had more detail than Mr. Anderson has space for in the theatre, the novel did not have Mr. Weill’s music. And here the theatre has come bearing its most memorable gifts. In the past Mr. Weill has given the theatre some fine scores. But at the moment, which is forty minutes after the final curtain, it is difficult to remember anything out of his portfolio as eloquent as this richly orchestrated singing music. Some of it is as artless as a Broadway song. But most of it is overflowing with the same compassion Mr. Paton brought to his novel.”



31 October 1949, the day after the opening. Maxwell Anderson noted in his diary: “Victor [Samrock] called, spoke of a line at the Music Box. To the office at 11:30 – to discuss our policy with the play . . . Kurt, Rouben, and I drove to the Music Box to see what went on. A line stretching to the Piccadilly soda fountain. Wonderful.”

Walter White (Executive Secretary of the NAACP), *New York Herald Tribune* (6 November 1949)

“[*Lost in the Stars* is] both infinitely moving in its beauty and in its courage in picturing human waste and tragedy as basic as did *Death of a Salesman*. . . . Its story of the decay of the human spirit and body caused by prejudice and fear of the Malan government in the Union of South Africa is especially applicable to current awakening to the global universality of racial and religious bigotry whether it be under Hitler in Germany or Talmadge in Georgia or the Dutch in Indonesia or Malan in Johannesburg. You will find no off-color humor or burlesque wiggling of torsos in *Lost in the Stars* to titillate the senses of out-of-town buyers. Instead, you will find human dignity which can conquer tragedy, incomparable music and acting of such excellence that your evening at New York’s Music Box Theater will be one you will never forget.”



Left: Maurice Levine with Weill. Levine conducted *Lost in the Stars* on Broadway. Photo: George Karger
Right: Eugene Kusmiak, who conducted the road tour.



Trouble on the Road

When *Lost in the Stars* closed after 281 performances on Broadway, the production went on the road and soon faced a dilemma: whether or not to play in segregated theaters. On the one hand, the company wanted to spread the show's call for racial equality to the largest possible audience; on the other, it did not wish to support segregation. Decisions were made on a case-by-case basis. For example, *Lost in the Stars* played in St. Louis but boycotted Baltimore's Ford Theatre, where the local branch of the NAACP had urged the company not to perform: "While our boys are dying for Democracy in Korea we can make no less courageous a fight for Democracy at home" (letter from Lillie Jackson to the "Cast of *Lost in the Stars*," 25 September 1950). Tour manager Ben Rosenberg shared a hotel suite with Todd Duncan in Omaha, because the hotel did not rent suites to African-Americans (letter from Rosenberg to Samrock, 25 October 1950).

Road Tour (14 weeks)

San Francisco	Curran Theatre	7 Aug–2 Sep. 1950
Los Angeles	Philharmonic Auditorium	4–30 Sep. 1950
Omaha	Omaha Theatre	3–4 Oct. 1950
Kansas City, Mo.	Music Hall	5–7 Oct. 1950
St. Louis	American Theatre	9–15 Oct. 1950
Louisville	Memorial Auditorium	16–17 Oct. 1950
Huntington, W. Va.	Keith Albee Theatre	18–19 Oct. 1950
Cincinnati	Taft Auditorium	20–22 Oct. 1950
Columbus	Hartman Theatre	24–28 Oct. 1950
Chicago	Great Northern Theatre	30 Oct–11 Nov. 1950

Edward Brinkmann (stage manager) in St. Louis, letter to Victor Samrock (business manager of the Playwrights' Company) in New York, 14 October 1950

"All is quiet on our Western front. (Or should I say Southern front?) Everybody in St. Louis seems to hate the Negro. It's taken the better part of this week to get the kids and cast to act normal even with us whites with the Company. Todd has just been wonderful. . . . I went out to the negro sections on a few parties with members of the cast. I found that they will not sit up in the so-called "Negro heaven" [i.e., the balcony]. They that can will see it in Chicago. The rest just won't cross that picket line. Even though they really are dying to see it."

The Command Performance That Wasn't: *Lost in the Stars* at the White House

On 2 February 1950, the National Conference of Christians and Jews awarded its annual Brotherhood Award to the authors of *Lost in the Stars*. In addition, the organization collaborated with White House staff on plans for a "command performance" of *Lost in the Stars* with President Truman in attendance. The dates discussed were 12 February 1950, Lincoln's birthday (also commemorated as Race Relations Day), and 20 February 1950, for the beginning of the annual Brotherhood Week. It appears that political concerns caused these plans to be abandoned.

Everett Clinchy (President, National Conference of Christians and Jews), letter to John L. Sullivan (former Secretary of the Navy), 6 January 1950

"I had many shipboard conversations with playwright Maxwell Anderson urging that the American stage deal with the problems of intergroup relations . . . Later, in New York, Mr. Anderson and Oscar Hammerstein helped the National Conference to interest Thornton Wilder, Bob Sherwood, S.N. Behrman, Elmer Rice, and directors and composers Elia Kazan, Irving Berlin, Kurt Weill, Dick Rodgers, and others in the idea. One evening we had historian Arnold Toynbee stir up the minds of many of these stage leaders. The Anderson-Weill musical play *Lost in the Stars* is a direct result of these sessions."

Maxwell Anderson, diary entry, 24 January 1950

"Playwrights' meeting. Discussion of Clinchy, command perf. of *Lost in the Stars*. — Sullivan seeing it today (or eve). . . . To *Lost*

in the Stars — talked to Todd [Duncan] + [William] Greaves + Van [Prince] before the performance. Stayed throughout. Standees. A good performance."

Everett Clinchy, letter to Maxwell Anderson, 26 January 1950

"The Command Performance idea received long and careful consideration by the President and his staff. The decision today is negative. I can tell you some of the complications when I see you. They are international as well as national! Nor can the President come to New York this season for the play. The whole matter is, of course, confidential."

Maxwell Anderson, diary entry, 28 January 1950

"Letter from Clinchy, the command perf. is off. . . . Called Kurt and told him."



Eleanor Roosevelt, ca. 1949

The Kurt Weill Foundation recently purchased Eleanor Roosevelt's album of the original cast recording of *Lost in the Stars*. Mrs. Roosevelt attended a performance on 17 November 1949 and wrote about it in her syndicated newspaper column, "My Day," on 19 November, reprinted here. Nearly every member of the cast, crew, and creative team signed the album.

Rev. Stephen Kumalo (Todd Duncan) sings "Thousands of Miles" to his wife, Grace (Gertrude Jeannette). Photo: George Karger



My Day

Eleanor Roosevelt

19 November 1949

NEW YORK, Friday—Wednesday night was a very pleasant one for me, for after dinner at a little restaurant where the food was excellent we went to see "Lost in the Stars." Perhaps I should say "hear" as well as "see."

This play, written by Maxwell Anderson, is based on Alan Paton's novel, "Cry My [*sic*] Beloved Country." The production was directed and supervised by Rouben Mamoulian and he has done a most extraordinary job of stage setting. The sets merely suggest the situation and leave so much to your imagination that you can really hold the atmosphere of the play much more clearly than if he had attempted to put it realistically before you.

I did not think I would ever like Todd Duncan better than I liked him in "Porgy and Bess," but he is really wonderful in this. So is Leslie Banks, who plays Mr. Duncan's opposite number as the white man. When Mr. Duncan made his speech about the white race in South Africa I almost thought I was listening to a speech made in the Paris General Assembly last year in Committee Three by one of the delegates from that country.

One cannot single out any one actor for praise, however, because they were all so good, even the children. I think they do their parts with a real love of the production.

Maxwell Anderson has written some wonderful things for this play. The boy's confession in the court room is deeply moving, and the sentence by the judge is something that gives one pause.

Is there such a thing as justice possible when it is administered by human beings, no matter how carefully you adhere to the letter of the law?

There was no doubt in your mind as to which human being had a chance to be of value if he was allowed to live and I think people in whose country capital punishment is not permitted would have had a happier time than I had.

Which one of us can say that a human being should die or should live? Still, I have always felt that a life sentence was almost more cruel than death. But I suppose that as long as a man is alive, there is hope that he may someday be free.

Irina, the girl who loved Absalom, would certainly rather have kept him alive. And I have seen many a mother begging the Governor of the State of New York, or his representative, for the life of her son, who would have accepted a sentence of life imprisonment in preference to the death sentence.

The music in the play is haunting. Todd Duncan's song, "Thousands of Miles," and his prayer and "The Little Grey House" still stay in my mind along with many others. Perhaps reading the book, which gives a more complete picture of the whole problem, will make it difficult for some people to enjoy the play. But I was grateful for the beauty of the play, for its tragedy and the inescapable problem that it sets before us so vividly.

E.R.

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The original cast recording for *Lost in the Stars* consisted of six 78-rpm records. Selected images from the album presented to Eleanor Roosevelt are shown on these pages: the cover; the first album sleeve, which contains nearly all of the signatures; and a detail showing Todd Duncan's signature. Weill and Anderson placed their dedication in the upper left quadrant, while Todd Duncan signed boldly near the top center. Look for director Rouben Mamoulian, conductor Maurice Levine, and Robert McFerrin (Bobby's father) near the record label. Other notables: Leslie Banks (bottom right), Julian Mayfield (bottom left quadrant), and Inez Matthews (just below and to the left of Mamoulian).



Later Life

1958, New York City Opera

The City Opera broke new ground with a special five-week season of American operas in 1958, underwritten by a grant from the Ford Foundation. Music Director Julius Rudel winnowed a group of two hundred operas to ten, which were presented in April and May. They were *The Old Maid and the Thief* and *The Medium* (Gian-Carlo Menotti), *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (Douglas Moore), *The Good Soldier Schweik* (Robert Kurka), *Tale for a Deaf Ear* (Mark Bucci), *Trouble in Tahiti* (Leonard Bernstein), *Lost in the Stars*, *The Taming of the Shrew* (Vittorio Giannini), *Regina* (Marc Blitzstein), and *Susannah* (Carlisle Floyd). *Lost in the Stars* featured Shirley Verrett as Irina and Louis Gossett, Jr. as Absalom; Godfrey Cambridge and a young Patti Austin played minor roles. Although several reviewers doubted that *Lost in the Stars* qualified as opera, its partisans included respected critics Harriett Johnson and Robert Coleman.

Director, José Quintero; conductor, Gino Smart; Lawrence Winters played Stephen Kumalo.

1972, Imperial Theatre (Broadway)

The only Broadway revival of any of Weill's American shows ran 39 performances in April–May 1972. After tryouts in Boston and Washington, D.C., the show made its return to Broadway on 18 April. Critical reception this time was quite favorable, and a number of well-known names took part: sets by Oliver Smith; music direction by Lehman Engel (replaced by Karen Gustafson just before the Broadway opening); and cast members such as Rod Perry, Rosetta LeNoire, Damon Evans, and Giancarlo Esposito, in addition to Brock Peters in the lead role. Clive Barnes of the *Times* reserved his superlatives for Weill's "score of magisterial sweep. There are times when the music soars up in lyric splendor, and others when it underpins the dramatic action with subtlety and occasionally even wit" (19 April 1972).

Director, Gene Frankel; conductor, Karen Gustafson; Brock Peters played Stephen Kumalo.

1974, American Film Theatre

Veteran producer Ely Landau conceived a series of film adaptations of modern plays and musicals in the early 1970s known as American Film Theatre. Most of the resulting films were screened at theaters across the U.S., with proceeds benefiting the Martin Luther King Foundation. Many major stars participated, among them John Gielgud, Katharine Hepburn, Lee Marvin, Alan Bates, and Judi Dench. *Lost in the Stars*, a personal favorite of Landau's, was one of only two musicals immortalized; the other was *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*. The all-star cast included Brock Peters, Melba Moore, and Clifton Davis. The complete series of fourteen dramas has been issued on DVD by Kino Video (*Lost in the Stars* is catalogue number K293 DVD).

Director, Daniel Mann; musical supervisor, Alex North; Brock Peters played Stephen Kumalo.



Brock Peters in the 1974 film.

Some Other Theatrical Revivals

1952	Oslo Folketeatret (Norwegian premiere): director, Hans Jacob Nilsen and Johan Borgen; conductor, Sverre Bergh; Stephen, Ola Isene	1994	Tel Aviv, Habimah Theatre (Israeli premiere, Hebrew translation by Ehud Manor): director, Uri Paster; conductor, Rafi Kadishsohn; Stephen, Yossi Pollak
1961	Opernhaus Nürnberg (German premiere, translation by Lys Symonette): director, Karlheinz Streibing; conductor, Max Loy; Stephen, Leonardo Wolovsky	1998	Roodepoort City Opera (South African premiere): director, Mark Graham; conductor, Weiss Doubell; Stephen, Patrick Shabalala
1964	Munich, Cuvilliés-theater: director, Heinz Rosen; conductor Daniel Stirn; Stephen, William Ray	2001	Opéra-Comédie de Montpellier (French premiere): director, Didier Kersten; conductor, Michaël Dian; Stephen, Nicolas Volland
1986	New Haven, Long Wharf Theatre: director, Arvin Brown; conductor, Tom Fay; Stephen, Michael V. Smartt	2007	St. Paul, Skylark Opera: director, Randy Winkler; conductor, Steve Stucki; Stephen, Kenneth Overton
1991	Brighton, New Sussex Opera (U.K. premiere): director, Keith Warner; conductor, Lionel Friend; Stephen, Ewart James Walters	2008	Pittsburgh Opera/Virginia Arts Festival: director, Jonathan Eaton; conductor, Julius Rudel; Stephen, Herbert Perry (reviewed on p. 22)
1992	Boston Lyric Opera: director, Bill T. Jones; conductor, Christopher Larkin; Stephen, Robert Honeysucker		