

Kurt Weill

THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kurt Weill Foundation for Music Appoints HK Gruber Honorary Lifetime Trustee

Honor bestowed in recognition of Gruber's career-spanning contributions to the performance and understanding of Weill's music.

NEW YORK (January 29, 2018) — Kim H. Kowalke, President and CEO of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, is pleased to announce the appointment of composer and conductor HK Gruber as an Honorary Lifetime Trustee of the charitable organization entrusted with Weill's legacy. The honor, given on the occasion of Gruber's 75th birthday, recognizes his unrivaled contributions over several decades to the performance and understanding of Weill's music and its ongoing impact on the composition of new music.

Gruber first encountered Weill's music in the 1970s via a recording of his symphonies; he recalls: "I discovered Weill, when I was twenty, and step by step I developed great admiration for this unmistakable, many-sided composer and his musical and universal intelligence." When Gruber later signed with classical music publisher Boosey & Hawkes, he formed a close personal friendship with Weill expert David Drew, then its Head of Contemporary Music.

A consummate performer of Weill's music, both as conductor and vocalist, Gruber's affinity for Weill is evident in his own compositions. In its review of the world premiere of his Piano Concerto (2017), *The New York Times* noted, "Weill's ingenious merging of contemporary and cabaret styles remains a model for composers like Mr. Gruber." In a recent interview with *TheArtsDesk.com*, Gruber acknowledged the importance of Weill's influence on his own music, calling Weill and Hanns Eisler his two "forefathers," stating: "What I learnt from Eisler and Weill is how it is possible to simplify the musical language without losing the symphonic quality."

Kowalke said, "Gruber's performances and recordings as conductor and singer have set the gold standard for this repertory, and his championing of Weill's lesser-known works has introduced them to a new audience. His own oeuvre as a composer evinces the remarkable resonance Weill's music and aesthetic still finds in a postmodern global musical landscape."

Gruber's landmark appearances as conductor of Weill's music include numerous iterations of *Die sieben Todsünden*, *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, Symphony No. 1, and Symphony No. 2 with ensembles around the world; countless performances of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, including the 2009 tour starring Angelika Kirchschrager and Ian Bostridge, with Klangforum Wien, and a concert presentation with the Ensemble Modern, Max Raabe, Ute Gfrerer, and Sona MacDonald at the 2015 Salzburg Festival; and *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* at the 2008 Edinburgh International Festival. He performs frequently at the annual Kurt Weill Fest in Dessau, Germany.

On 15 and 17 February, he leads the Swedish Chamber Orchestra in a performance of selections from *Der Silbersee*.

His recordings include the definitive *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Ensemble Modern, Nina Hagen, Max Raabe); *Berlin im Licht* (Ensemble Modern); and *Charming Weill: Dance Band Arrangements* with Max Raabe and the Palast Orchester. Two more recordings are forthcoming this year: Gruber reteamed with the Ensemble Modern for the premiere recordings of the critical edition of *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *Chansons des quais*, along with *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*. The forthcoming film *Mackie Messer: Brechts Dreigroschenoper* (Süddeutsche Rundfunk, 18 March 2018) features Gruber conducting portions of *Die Dreigroschenoper* on its soundtrack, of which the film's producers also plan a commercial CD release.

Responding to the appointment, Gruber said, "Now with this birthday present I have the pleasure to belong to the Weill family. I promise, I will make the most of it!" Gruber joins a small but distinguished roster of honorary trustees, including Teresa Stratas, James Conlon, Stephen Davis, and Drew.

ABOUT THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc. (<http://www.kwf.org>) is dedicated to promoting understanding of the life and works of composer Kurt Weill (1900-1950) and preserving the legacies of Weill and his wife, actress-singer Lotte Lenya (1898-1981). The Foundation administers the Weill-Lenya Research Center, a Grant Program, the Kurt Weill Book Prize and the Lotte Lenya Competition, and publishes the Kurt Weill Edition and the Kurt Weill Newsletter.

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