

Pierre Audi, general director of the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, has announced that a new staging of *The Threepenny Opera* will open the 2023 festival, a coproduction with the Comédie-Française. Alexandre Pateau furnishes an entirely new French translation of the book and lyrics, Thomas Ostermeier directs, and Maxime Pascal conducts the Le Balcon Orchestra. Weill-Lenya Artist Marie Oppert takes the plum role of Polly (see p. 21). The first of ten performances at the Théâtre de l'Archevêché is set for 4 July; the production will transfer to the Comédie-Française in Paris for the 2023–24 season. The works of Weill, Brecht, and Hauptmann have done well recently at Aix, where Ivo van Hove's *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* bowed in 2019; that production continues to make the rounds of its coproducers.

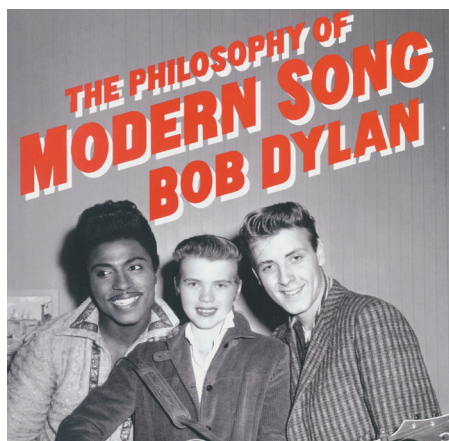


PHOTO: ALEC WHITE

Cabaret icon Jinkx Monsoon, winner of *RuPaul's Drag Race* season five, revealed last summer that she is "obsessed with the duo of Brecht and Weill" and that Weill is her favorite composer to sing. She has put together an entire show built around songs by Weill and Brecht. While her favorite song changes from time to time, as of last summer it was "Speak Low."

The great Al Hirschfeld is back! In book form, that is; his namesake foundation has released a new collection of the indispensable caricaturist's work, *The American Theatre as Seen by Hirschfeld 1962-2002*. The long-awaited chronicle of the second part of Hirschfeld's career includes his immortal depictions of the original cast of *Cabaret*, with Lenya, and Raul Juliá as Macheath (1976). The book's release on 15 November coincided with the grand opening of the Museum of Broadway in Times Square; the Museum currently features an exhibit devoted to the "Line King."

## Wide World of Weill



Bob Dylan, whose memoir *Chronicles* (2004) confirmed his debt to Weill's music and Blitzstein's lyrics in the off-Broadway cast recording of *The Threepenny Opera*, has published a book of over sixty short essays titled *The Philosophy of Modern Song*. Not surprisingly, the book leans heavily toward blues, country, and rock, but Dylan makes room for "Mack the Knife" in Bobby Darin's 1959 rendition. After he provides context for the song with a description of *The Threepenny Opera*, including a piquant comparison to *Porgy and Bess*, he adds, "'Mack the Knife' keeps on modulating till you think it will go through the roof. ... [Darin] was at his height here."

Gramophone Awards 2013 Artist of the Year Alison Balsom has made her name as one of the world's leading trumpeters, with a vast and varied discography. She augmented it over the summer with *Quiet City*, an exploration of 20th-century American music that includes trumpet standards (Ives's *The Unanswered Question* and the title work by Aaron Copland), trumpet novelties (*Rhapsody in Blue* reorchestrated to give the principal trumpet a prominent role), and two *homages* to Miles Davis, including her take on Gil Evans's arrangement of "My Ship." Now out on Warner Classics.

Salt Lake City's ThreePenny Theatre Company aims to serve poor and homeless people by training them in theater arts—not only writing and acting but carpentry as well—and by presenting timely, relevant work to audiences at low prices. Founders Cody O'Hare and Jonah Ericson have acknowledged Weill and Brecht's influence; their low-budget experiment in theater as community outreach aptly takes its name from one of drama's most searching and searing examinations of the exploitation of the poor.

The second volume of portraits by acclaimed German artist Oliver Jordan (Kehrer Verlag, 2022), devoted entirely to music and musicians, includes a reproduction of his 2019 oil painting of Weill, along with several studies. The artist relates that *Die Dreigroschenoper* attracted him early on. Weill scholar Andreas Eichhorn's commentary in German and English accompanies the portrait; he notes Jordan's fascination with Weill's eyes and praises the work: "Weill's inner intensity comes across in Jordan's sensitive portrait, which gently reveals Weill to today's viewers ... as if from a distance, bringing him to life in both his appearance and his essence."

Blitzstein lovers rejoice! The New York Festival of Song, long known for its innovative programming, has released a recording of a historical concert from 23 March 2000 under the title "From Rags to Riches," also the very first release for NY-FOS Records (mp3 only). The program included "Nickel under the Foot" (*The Cradle Will Rock*) sung by Stephanie Blythe and "Stay in My Arms," a tribute to Blitzstein's wife Eva Goldbeck, with William Burden. The concert also included "Thousands of Miles" from Weill's *Lost in the Stars*, again with Blythe. Let's not forget impresario, pianist, and musical institution Steven Blier, who not only accompanied the singers but conceived and designed the program.

Weill's hometown of Dessau, Germany will soon have a new synagogue. And it will be named not for Kurt, but for his father, Albert, who served as cantor when Dessau's old synagogue was consecrated in 1908. That house of worship was destroyed by the Nazis in 1938 and never rebuilt. In fact, Dessau's new temple is the first new synagogue built in the whole of the province of Saxony-Anhalt since the Nazi takeover of Germany. It is expected to open early in 2023. (See architect's rendering below.)



PHOTO: ARCHITEKTURBÜRO ALFRED JACOBY

## Just Around the Corner

As the 2022–23 season unrolls, Weill is riding high with a string of important new productions and revivals in Europe and the U.S. More to come in 2023! A few highlights to whet your appetite:



PHOTO: JOOST MILDE

New productions of *Lady in the Dark* have already opened in Switzerland and the Netherlands. Theater Basel gives the work in German translation, remaining in repertory throughout the season. Opera Zuid stages it in English, with ten performances in November and December. Directed by Martin Berger and Anna Pool, respectively.

*One Touch of Venus*, in a new production by Magdalena Fuchsberger, bows 17 December in Graz, Austria and runs in repertory through March. The German-language production stars Dionne Wudu in the title role and Lenya Competition prizewinner Christof Messner (Carolyn Weber Award, 2018) as her reluctant lover, Rodney. Once again, Roman Hinze provides the German text.



Oper Graz publicity image for *One Touch of Venus* featuring Dionne Wudu

*Der Silbersee*, recently performed with much success at Opera Ballet Vlaanderen, receives a new production at Weimar's Deutsches Nationaltheater opening 21 January, with performing materials from the Kurt Weill Edition. Director Andrea Moses sees it as a “tragicomic play about a utopian experiment” that turns on the “question of mercy in a remorseless world.”

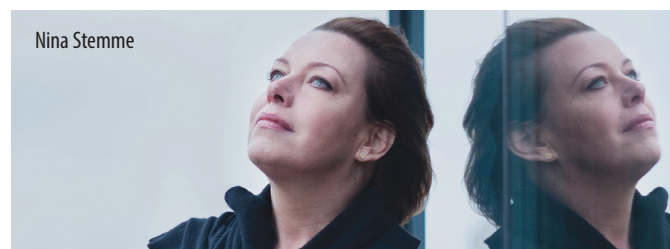
Get ready for a U.S. premiere at Madison Opera! Conductor John DeMain, director Kristine McIntyre, and choreographer Lisa Thurrell present *Die sieben Todsünden* in the recent and already widely performed orchestration for fifteen players by HK Gruber and Christian Muthspiel. Rehanna Thelwell plays Anna I. First performance: 3 February in a double bill with Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*.

Orchestra Miami soared to new heights last spring with a program of Weill's *Der Lindberghflug* and Blitzstein's *Airborne Symphony*. Conductor and Artistic Director Elaine Rinaldi takes a different tack on 4–5 February with *The Road of Promise*, the oratorio version of *The Eternal Road* prepared by Ed Harsh. The performance features two singers who figured prominently in the

2015 U.S. premiere, Anthony Dean Griffey as the Rabbi and Mark Delavan as Abraham, Moses, and Jeremiah; they may be heard on the premiere recording (Navona Records NV6059).

Berlin's Komische Oper last season got the attention of Weill fans with a daring new production of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* by Barrie Kosky. He is no longer the *Intendant*, but he is keeping his hand in with a new program of Weill songs in collaboration with vocalist Katharine Mehrling. A sequel of sorts to their song evening “Lonely House,” which spotlighted Weill's American songs, the new selection pays homage to Weill's German years under the title “... und mit Morgen könnt ihr mich!” A new twist: “Lonely House” was a duo-recital with Kosky himself at the piano; now Mehrling is backed by an orchestra, with the songs newly arranged by Kai Tietje. The staged revue premieres 26 March. Speaking of Komische Oper, it will present a revised version of the German musical formerly known as *Tom Sawyer und Huckleberry Finn*. The book writer for that show, John von Düffel, has revised the script, and a bouquet of new Weill songs has been integrated. Now known simply as *Tom Sawyer*, the show opens 18 February under the direction of Tobias Ribitzki with Kai Tietje conducting; Lenya Competition laureate Tom Schimon (Carolyn Weber Award, 2017) plays Tom. The company's website says it all: Exciting musical theater—not just for kids!

Weill and Georg Kaiser's one-act comic opera *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren* gets an airing in April and May at Oper Frankfurt. *Der Zar* was Weill's first big hit of 1928, before *Die Dreigroschenoper*; it purveys a completely different type of political satire. The opera also marked a technological advance as one of the first to feature recorded music, the “Tango Angèle” played on a gramophone. Paired with Orff's *Die Kluge* under the direction of Keith Warner, who has also staged *Der Silbersee* and *Die Dreigroschenoper*; conducted by Yi-Chen Lin.



Nina Stemme

PHOTO: NEDA NAVAEI

Perhaps the most tantalizing new event, from the fertile mind of HK Gruber, who carries on a longstanding collaboration with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra: an all-Weill program consisting of *Der neue Orpheus* and *Die sieben Todsünden*, both with Wagnerian soprano Nina Stemme, in fully staged performances directed by Sam Brown. In between, the orchestra takes over with a performance of Weill's *Fantaisie symphonique* (Symphony no. 2). The chronological outlier here is *Der neue Orpheus* (Iwan Goll), a cantata for soprano, solo violin, and orchestra dating from 1927, several years before the other two works. It is not frequently performed, but after this all-star group gets done with it, who knows? This Weill extravaganza first saw the light of day on 3 December in Örebro; plans are afoot for a tour and recording during the 2023–24 season.



## Dim the Lights

Two stalwarts of the Broadway musical, Seymour Red Press and Bruce Pomahac, have died this year. The Foundation mourns the passing of both.

Press's career as a Broadway fixture began in 1957 and persisted for more than half a century. He began as an orchestra musician and later became an in-demand orchestra contractor (a.k.a. musical coordinator), hiring musicians, scheduling rehearsals, and making sure musicians were paid. Press served as Musical Coordinator for all three Encores! productions of Weill's shows: *Lady in the Dark* (1994), *One Touch of Venus* (1996), and *Lost in the Stars* (2011). He held the same post in Harold Prince's Broadway production of *LoveMusik* (2007), based on the letters between Weill and Lenya, that included over 25 of Weill's songs.

Broadway orchestrator and vocal arranger Bruce Pomahac spent many years as Director of Music for The Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization. In that capacity, he played an outsize role in the R&H Theatre Library when it licensed performances of five of Weill's Broadway musicals as well as *The Threepenny Opera* (Blitzstein adaptation). Pomahac earned respect from Foundation staff for his high regard for Weill's compositions and his efforts to ensure that musical materials were complete and accurate. When there was any kind of problem, Bruce was there to help correct it.

We join the wider world of Broadway in expressing admiration and respect for both men and their long years of service to music and theater.



Jonathon Heyward

PHOTO: LAURA THIESBRUMMEL

## Conducting Fellowship Follow-Up

Barely thirty, Jonathon Heyward continues his meteoric rise with an appointment as Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra beginning with the 2023–24 season. On his way up, he received an assist from the Foundation in the form of a Julius Rudel/Kurt Weill Conducting Fellowship, awarded in 2016, which matched him with Jeffrey Kahane and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. Heyward worked with Kahane on a performance of *Lost in the Stars* in January 2017. The fellowship was one of many honors Heyward has received during the last ten years as he has conducted throughout Europe and the U.S.; he serves currently as Chief Conductor of the Nordwest-

deutsche Philharmonie. In Baltimore, he will succeed Marin Alsop, whose fourteen-year tenure has led to many innovations in programming and community outreach. Heyward commented, "I am passionate about the power of symphonic music to bring audiences together and to speak to all communities. The Baltimore Symphony's irresistible artistry, energy, and optimism were clear to me from the first moment we rehearsed together earlier this year. We shared a special chemistry then and in the concerts we have given since."

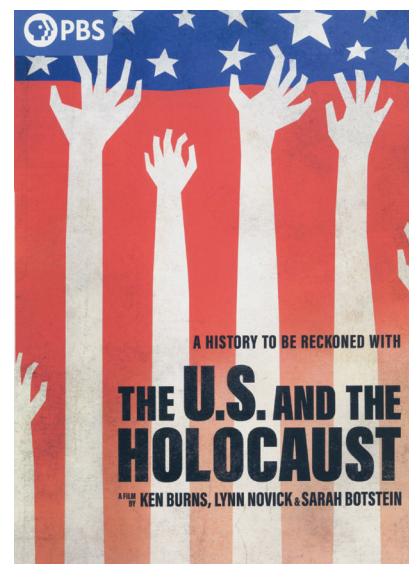
## Holocaust History

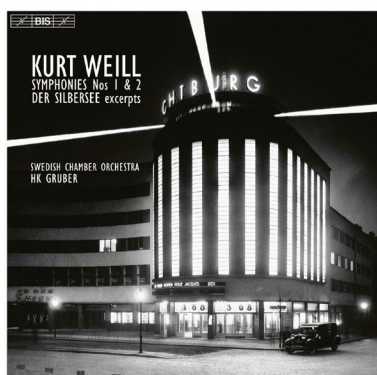
Ken Burns has trained his lens on the American response to Nazi atrocities in a six-hour PBS documentary, *The U.S. and the Holocaust*, co-directed with Lynn Novick and Sarah Botstein. First aired on PBS in September 2022, the complete film has been released on home video.

In wrenching detail, the film spells out not only the horrors deliberately inflicted on European Jews, but indifference and inaction at the highest levels of the U.S. government. The last of three parts covers the war years, chronicling the Allies' fight against the Nazis and the liberation of the death camps. It includes a segment on Ben Hecht's pageant *We Will Never Die*, premiered at Madison Square Garden on 9 March 1943 and produced in several cities around the U.S. Hecht's clarion call for a direct U.S. response to Germany's efforts to exterminate all Jews had little direct effect at the time, but it helped to push the issue into the open.

Weill provided the score for *We Will Never Die*. Though he doubted its effectiveness as a call to action—the film quotes him as saying, "All we have done is make a lot of Jews cry, which is not a unique accomplishment"—he did not hesitate to contribute to Hecht's effort. In 1941, he had tried to bring his family to the U.S. from Palestine. As he wrote in a letter to choreographer Ruth Page (28 June 1941), "Their only and last hope is that Russia holds out, otherwise—well I hate to think of the otherwise." Fortunately, his family did survive.

Longtime Foundation trustee Guy Stern, himself a refugee from the Holocaust, appears repeatedly in the film as commentator. Stern served in the U.S. Army during World War II as one of the Ritchie Boys, German exiles trained to interrogate prisoners of war. He not only shares his memories of returning to Germany (he never heard from any of his immediate family again) but pleads for a humane understanding that will inoculate us against the hatred and savagery that animated the Nazis.





## Mark Your Calendars

Another momentous day in the annals of Weill's discography: 3 February 2023, when HK Gruber's much-anticipated recording of Weill's symphonies with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra is due to be released on the BIS label. The CD (BIS-2579) includes the *Symphonie in einem Satz* (Symphony no. 1) and the *Fantaisie symphonique* (Symphony no. 2), both world premiere recordings of the Kurt Weill Edition scores newly edited by James Holmes. Selections from Weill's last work completed in Germany, *Der Silbersee*, round out the disc: the Overture, "Der Bäcker backt ums Morgenrot," a song originally recorded by Ernst Busch, and "Tango des Lotterie-Agents." Gruber himself serves as chansonnier on the last two.

The recording was captured shortly after a livestreamed performance of the complete program on 9 April 2021. It joins an extensive catalogue of Gruber's Weill recordings dating back to 1990, which includes *Die Dreigroschenoper* (BMG, 1999); *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* (Ensemble Modern Medien, 2019); *Charming Weill*, a collection of arrangements of Weill's songs (RCA, 2000); and a collection of Weill's songs and short works titled *Berlin im Licht* (Largo, 1990). And let us not forget: world premiere recordings (2019) of the critical edition of *Mahagonny Songspiel* and of *Chansons des quais*, a song cycle derived from *Marie galante*. One of the world's leading interpreters of Weill's music, Gruber adds to a long string of successes.

## Star Power Squared

Take two young, world-famous vocalists from different musical traditions and stir them together to deliver an all-Weill song evening. That's what happened on 18 August at La Jolla Music Society's SummerFest Synergy Initiative, when a pair of Grammy Award winners—jazz singer Cécile McLorin Salvant and countertenor Anthony Roth Costanzo—shared the stage. Salvant commented, "I record Weill's songs because I really love them. They are surprising, and funny, and moving." Her Weill recordings to date include "Somehow I Never Could Believe" from *Street Scene* and the First Threepenny Finale ("The World Is Mean"), far beyond the Weill repertoire plumbed by most jazz musicians. Costanzo, acclaimed powerhouse at the Met who received his second Grammy for his role in Philip Glass's *Akhmat*, praised Weill: "His music has both a wry element of wit and worldly melancholy to it. It's fun to play those two things off each other. There's a lot of grit in his music, which suits both me and Cécile."

## Weill/Lenya Artists

The Lenya Competition strikes again, as the Foundation has placed three Kurt Weill/Lotte Lenya Artists for the 2022–23 season, representing a variety of roles and locales. Ruth Achampong (Second Prize, 2022), has already completed her run as Irina in Annapolis Opera's *Lost in the Stars* (see review on p. 17). Christof Messner (Carolyn Weber Award, 2018) takes the lead male role, Rodney Hatch, in a new production (in German) of *One Touch of Venus* in Graz this winter. Not to be outdone, Marie Oppert (Trustees' Award, 2020) has a prime gig at next summer's Festival d'Aix-en-Provence—she is set to play Polly in a new production (directed by Thomas Ostermeier) of a new French translation (Alexandre Pateau) of *The Threepenny Opera*. The production moves to Paris for the 2023–24 season.

The Foundation has placed a total of eighteen Weill-Lenya Artists since 2014, from promising performers beginning their careers to established opera and theater stars. Each member of this season's group works with an organization that has never hosted a Weill/Lenya Artist before, representing a welcome expansion of a program that has already done so much to boost careers.

## Exemplary Immigrant

On Labor Day, NPR listeners enjoyed an hour-long program on Weill hosted by Jenn White and led by cultural historian Joseph Horowitz. Horowitz has championed Weill for many years, both as writer and producer. Architect of "Kurt Weill's America" (a suite of performances and educational events funded by the NEH), Horowitz took it to several universities and festivals, including Brevard (2017) and UT-El Paso (see the Spring 2018 *Newsletter*). The new radio program, from the series "More Than Music," part of "The 1A" produced by WAMU-FM, presents Weill as a sterling example of an immigrant to the U.S. who made immediate and lasting contributions. The program unsurprisingly focused on Weill's Broadway shows, particularly *Knickerbocker Holiday* and *Street Scene*, with expert commentary from John McWhorter and Kim Kowalke. It also dipped into Weill's European career with emphasis on his first work composed after leaving Nazi Germany, *Die sieben Todsünden*, explored by Boston Pops conductor Keith Lockhart. We also hear excerpts from two of Weill's own interviews in English and his demo recording of "Speak Low." Stream the complete program on [www.the1a.org](http://www.the1a.org).

## 2022 Mid-Year Grant Recipients

### Professional Performance

Annapolis Opera, Annapolis, MD. *Lost in the Stars*.  
Bærum Kulturhus, Sandvika, Norway. *Zaubernacht*.  
Little Opera Theatre of New York, New York, NY. *Down in the Valley*.  
Madison Opera, Madison, WI. *The Seven Deadly Sins* (U.S. premiere of 15-player version).  
Opera Zuid, Maastricht, The Netherlands. *Lady in the Dark* (touring production).

### College/University and Amateur Performance

Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA. *The Threepenny Opera*.  
Musicians for the World, Lima, Peru. String Quartet no. 1, op. 8.  
The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, Houston, TX. *Street Scene*.  
Vegas City Opera, Las Vegas, NV. *The Threepenny Opera*.



## Remembering Milton Coleman (1923–2021)

Only recently I received the belated news of Milton's death in August 2021, just three weeks shy of his 98th birthday. He was the last surviving link in "the Foundation's family" extending back to Kurt Weill himself. Just out of NYU with an accounting degree in 1948, Milton landed a job with Jack Horowitz, who was Weill and Lenya's accountant at the time. Although he didn't have much direct contact and interaction initially, after Weill's death, Milton helped to prepare the Estate's accounting. Lenya stayed on with the firm, bringing royalty and bank statements to the office every few months and seeking assistance with year-end tax returns. When Horowitz died in 1962, Milton and two colleagues started their own firm (Horowitz, Coleman & Waldman), retaining Lenya as a client. Milton soon became her exclusive contact there, and he persuaded her that it would be more efficient and less stressful for her if he worked on her account monthly, making house calls to her apartment on East 55th Street. She agreed, and gradually Milton became her trusted financial advisor.

In 1970, she invited him to join the Board of Trustees of the Foundation. Though the Foundation was largely unfunded and only sporadically active, Milton finally persuaded Lenya to donate \$20,000 worth of AT&T shares—the only asset on the books when I was elected President after Lenya's death in 1981. Milton was officially elected Treasurer at that same meeting. He immediately led the search for an estate lawyer specializing in litigation that resulted in our hiring Robert Slaughter of White & Case. Bob battled for us and succeeded in having the defective will reformed, resulting in the Foundation's inheriting not just the royalties deriving from Weill's works, but also Lenya's copyright interest in them. A few years later when the lease on a converted bicycle room at Lincoln Towers was not renewed, Milton (abetted by the Foundation's archivist David Farneth) persuaded the Board (and me) that we should purchase the third floor of a condominium in the Flatiron district, where a number of music pub-



PHOTO: WEILL-LENYA RESEARCH CENTER

Milton and Marge Coleman in  
Duisburg, Germany, 1990

lishers were located. We bought and remodeled the two units, which still house the Foundation's offices and research center at 7 East 20th Street.

As the Foundation's income, investments, expenditures, and complexities increased, Milton double-functioned as its accountant and the Board's treasurer. He was a veritable historian of financial Weilliana, a treasure trove of valuable experience and information. Remaining treasurer and a key member of the Finance Committee until 2007, when he was elected vice-president, his active tenure outlasted several generations of staff members, who all looked forward to Milton's bi-weekly visits to "do the books." When he resigned as an active trustee in 2009 at age 86, he was unanimously elected Trustee Emeritus.

Milton became my friend and financial mentor. I still smile as I remember his manifold stories about his interactions with Lenya, especially the time in 1979, when the Met was premiering *Mahagonny* with Teresa Stratas as Jenny. Lenya agreed to be interviewed during the intermission for the PBS telecast. She told Milton that she really needed a new dress, and it might be expensive. And then asked if he thought she could afford it. Milton shook his head and reassured her, "Lenya, you can afford twenty new dresses and, while you're at it, buy a new coat too!"

Milton lost his vivacious wife Marge in 2019. He is survived by his son Scott and daughter Freeda (and their spouses), three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. He lived independently in his home in New Jersey until the moment of his sudden death, after a long life, well-lived and much-loved.

**Kim H. Kowalke**

In the early 1950s, Milton recorded Weill and Lenya's income for each year from 1941 through 1950. Seen here: 1941 and 1942, which shows Weill's royalties from *Lady in the Dark* (with a separate line for royalties from a brand of perfume that took its name from the show title), Lenya's salary for performing in *Candle in the Wind*, etc.

PHOTO: WEILL-LENYA RESEARCH CENTER

Kurt and Karoline Weill Income & Expenses for years 1941 to 1950 inc			
	YEAR 1941		YEAR 1942
Sam H. Harris - Lady in the Dark	34740 92		23161 08
Ascap	888 00		1101 84
Brandt + Brandt:			
Dramatists Guild (Lady in the Dark)	125 00		
Dramatists Play Service (Knickerbocker Holiday)	266 67		
Salary (Lotte Lenya)	1500 00		2625 00
Chappell Co. Inc.			447 64
Perfume - Lady in the Dark			130 00

## Richard Taruskin (1945–2022): In memoriam

*The most productive and wide-ranging musicologist of his generation, Richard Taruskin, who considered Kurt Weill “perhaps the twentieth century’s most problematical major musician,” died in Oakland, California, on July 1, aged 77. Stephen Hinton, who teaches at Stanford University, pays tribute to his Bay Area colleague by recalling a memorable written exchange that Taruskin had with the Weill scholar David Drew.*

Although he saw himself as “an outsider to Weill research,” Richard Taruskin wrote a voluminous amount about the period in which the composer lived—and about much else besides. What made Weill “problematical” for him was not “the music itself,” a notion he emphatically rejected, so much as the broader critical and historiographical conventions of reception, which he spent his entire career interrogating.

Like Joseph Kerman, whom he succeeded at Berkeley in 1987, Taruskin garnered recognition as both a specialist and a generalist. Like Kerman, he also practiced musicology as a form of criticism. Prolific authors in a variety of text types, they both displayed considerable literary gifts, albeit with distinctively different styles. If Kerman was the very model of concision and elegance in his writing, Taruskin’s more ornate prose tended toward maximalist expansiveness. No American musical scholar has enjoyed a more commanding presence during the last three decades, both in and outside the academy. For all the marked differences in tone, temperament, and methodology, he can be compared to Carl Dahlhaus, his polymath German counterpart from the previous generation, who had a similarly broad, field-shaping impact.

After a Columbia dissertation on *Opera and Drama in Russia: As Preached and Practiced in the 1860s*, published in 1981, Taruskin went on to produce *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions: A Biography of the Works through Mavra* (1996), a massive two-volume study that painstakingly demonstrates, in 1,792 pages, how the composer sought to obscure his Russian past in order to fashion himself as a cosmopolitan European. There followed, almost a decade later, the six-volume *Oxford History of Western Music* (2005), a monumental achievement by any scholarly standard. Not only did he seem to have read almost everything there was to read about his vast subject matter; he also possessed the enviable ability to recall most of it in scholarly debate. And debate he did—passionately, fearlessly, and provocatively—as both scholar and engaged critic. As a skilled performer of early music on the viola da gamba, he also took a keen interest in the historical performance practice movement, whose objectivist aesthetic he charged with being anachronistically Stravinskian.

Taruskin’s scholarly engagement with Weill began with a characteristically trenchant review of *A New Orpheus* (see the Fall 1986 *Newsletter*), in which he situated the 1986 collection of essays on the composer in the broad critical discourse about modernism. The review in turn prompted a belated riposte (Fall 1987) from “the dean of Weill studies today,” as Taruskin apostrophized David Drew, and whose contribution he had given far more space and attention than any of the others. Never one to back down from lively and disputatious exchanges, Taruskin ended up offering two further responses (Spring 1988).

Conducted with evident mutual respect, the spirited back-and-forth eventually elicited this marvelously immodest concession: “I am very glad to have irritated Mr. Drew into producing another pearl!” Taruskin gave as good as he got, as these two uncommonly articulate scholars traded their dazzlingly baroque verbal pearls. Basing the second response largely on his unpublished review of Drew’s *Kurt Weill: A Handbook*, Taruskin placed the author “in the forefront of those dealing with what seems one of the really pressing tasks of contemporary musicology: the project—now that high modernism has become a movement of the past—of taking its proper historical measure and deconstructing its mythology.” Weill, Taruskin argued, had fallen victim to modernist myths or “constructions.”

While the essay collection signaled a “new era” in Weill scholarship, Taruskin called for “the exorcism of some of the demons, survivors from the old era, that continue—needlessly, in my opinion—to haunt these essays.” He identified three principal demons: 1) Brecht; 2) “Weill’s bad reputation among many whose reputations, at least in academia today, are unassailable,” such as “Schoenbergian modernists,” especially Theodor W. Adorno, a frequent target of Taruskin’s flak; 3) Broadway Weill. Drew, with mordant irony worthy of Winston Churchill, cast aspersions on this diagnosis: “Once the reader has been alerted to the necessity of rigorously searching for marks of the cloven hoof in every summary of an argument and every gloss on a direct quotation, Taruskin’s delinquent demonology can be seen for what it is—a price that has to be paid for his splendid freedom from conventional pieties.”

If the exchange seemed like a pivotal moment at a time of incipient postmodernism, the generational differences between these brilliant antagonists have meanwhile faded enough to reveal deep commonalities. Each had his reasons to question the unity of Weill’s oeuvre. In Drew’s case, Taruskin laid the blame squarely at the feet of Adorno: “A pesky modernist superego personified in Adorno has been pressing Drew himself back from this view [that the two Weills were irreconcilable] toward one that locates the seeds of Weill’s American style in the horrors of Nazism and holocaust, which overwhelmed the ironically detached modernism of the Weimar period and fostered a new escapism.” Taruskin, for his part, pitted the “ironically detached” German Weill against the later American one who resisted modernist co-opting. “It is only by facing up to the demon and acknowledging both his opportunistic sentimentality and his commercial instinct that he will be exorcised,” Taruskin concluded.

Maybe this all explains why Weill’s American works are omitted from any consideration in the *Oxford History*. Weill is celebrated there as “a composing prodigy ... given a training of the most elite caliber.” Exhibit A is *Die Dreigroschenoper*, with “its tone of unmitigated anger and sarcasm,” which “makes a fascinating comparison with [Berg’s] *Wozzeck*.” The “austere” *Jasager* also receives detailed commentary. The later output, especially “Broadway Weill,” does not fit neatly into the musicologist’s narrative of Western music, which he defines as “what is usually called ‘art music’ or ‘classical music.’” In that narrowly selective “literate” context, Weill remains the same “problematical major musician” that Taruskin had declared him to be two decades earlier.



THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC, INC.

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New York, NY 10003-1106

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# *Save the Date!*

**Saturday and Sunday 29 – 30 April 2023, Rochester, NY USA**

## *Lotte Lenya* **THE LENYA COMPETITION** **25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

**A series of events celebrating 25 years of the one-of-a-kind theatrical singing contest.**

*Saturday 29 April, Kilbourn Hall*

**10:30 am:** In conversation: past ESM winners

**11:30 am:** Other perspectives: past and present judges

**1:00-4:30 pm:** Final round of the 2023 Lenya Competition

**8:00 pm:** 25th Anniversary Gala Alumni Concert  
and Awards Presentation for 2023 Finals

*Sunday 30 April*

**Wholly Weill:** Scenes from his European and American  
Stage Works

**Exhibits of Lenya Competition highlights and Kurt Weill  
manuscripts all month**

**All events open to the public and free of charge.  
Visit [kwf.org/lenya25](http://kwf.org/lenya25) for more information and updates.**