

# Happy End

## Theater Heidelberg

Premiere: 5 April 2012

“A wonderful piece of nonsense that Mr. Weill, Mr. Brecht and some others have dreamed up here,” says stage director Philipp Tiedemann about *Happy End*. The formulation gives him a neat way to sidestep not only questions about the work’s authorship but also any search for deeper meaning—and note that he places Weill’s name first. His staging offers the audience a pleasant farewell to the temporary home of the theater in Heidelberg, a large tent erected three years ago near the train station.

Tiedemann’s production comes across as nostalgic in its conjuring of three old-time genres of entertainment. First, the circus: not only is the temporary tent reminiscent of a circus, but the cast often acts like clowns. Sawing people in half—which happens to the Governor—becomes a recurring feature of the evening. And just as in a circus, the small orchestra supplies sound effects to go with certain gestures and theatrics. This would also be appropriate in genre number two, silent film, which seems to have inspired a lot of the plot’s slapstick, but also the clichéd interactions between gangsters and the Salvation Army. Genre number three: *commedia dell’arte*. There are two flats, one higher, towards the back of the stage, and one lower, towards the front. The combination creates two stage areas, front and back—so the entire playing area looks like a puppet theater. Designer Stephan von Wedel has sewn miniature legs made of fabric to the performers’ costumes, so they can stand behind the lower flat and toss the fake legs over, making it look like they are sitting on top of it. The entire cast has rehearsed jerky puppet movements to perfection, and one quickly forgets that there are actual human beings on stage with their real legs hidden from view. The effect is funny and touching at the same time, perhaps made more convincing by the band of real live musicians sitting downstage, adding sound effects every now and then.

Clemens Dönicke (Bill Cracker) and Claudia Renner (Lilian) form the production’s backbone. At first I found Renner’s high-pitched voice a little thin, but it quickly gained in substance as the evening progressed. Hence “Surabaya Johnny” becomes both a high point and turning point in the relationship between the cool

gangster and the clever Salvation Army girl. Bill—cigar in mouth at all times—does take it out during the last stanza, peacefully swaying to the music and eventually coming to a halt, rapt, in front of Lilian as her song ends. It’s a pity that his “Lied von der harten Nuss” was cut.

Hajo Wiesemann (piano/conductor) leads the band with the right kind of drive and feeling for Weill’s score; he overlooks none of the songs’ musical and textual subtleties. Katharina Quast has a field day playing the inscrutable Lady in Gray. Hans Fleischmann portrays a tough Salvation Army major, so that Lilian really seems to be in a bind during the Christmas festivities. Steffen Gangloff (Sam Worlitzer), Hans Fleischmann (the Governor), Olaf Weißenberg (Jimmy Dexter), Andreas Seifert (Bob Merker), and Florian Mania (Johnny Flint) comprise a hilarious, beautifully rehearsed group of gangsters. Within the whole puppet premise, I had no difficulty accepting the Christmas-y happy ending. Gangsters and evangelists, united and at peace, all sit in a row on the upper curtain, dangling their tiny puppet legs. It’s not

quite clear why they launch into “Hosiannah Rockefeller,” since Tiedemann cut the famous line, “Robbing a bank’s no crime compared to owning one.” Too bad he didn’t come up with a smart transition to the song.

It is fascinating to see how the puppeteering effects transform a hastily concocted piece from 1929 into something effortless and timeless. German poet/playwright Heinrich von Kleist was onto something when he wrote that marionettes exude a natural appeal that conscious human beings lack (“On Marionette Theater,” 1810). And Richard Wagner was exhilarated by a *Kasperle* performance that he encountered at a market fair after attending an overly stylized performance at the local court theater (“Über Schauspieler und Sänger,” 1872). He called the puppets “a light of hope for the prolific German people’s spirit.” Kleist and Wagner are not all that remote. After all, Heidelberg was a center of German

romanticism and has preserved that aura into the present. Weill probably wasn’t thinking about this when he wrote “Punch and Judy Get a Divorce” for *Love Life*, but he probably would have enjoyed this Heidelberg performance of “Bill and Lilian become lovers.”

Andreas Hauff  
Mainz



The puppet theater set, with cast members “seated” atop the flats, and the orchestra downstage.

PHOTO: KLAUS FRÖHLICH

# Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny

## Oper Leipzig

Premiere: 28 April 2012

Eighty-two years after its scandalous world premiere on 9 March 1930, Weill's magnum opus has returned to the Leipzig Opera. Musically speaking, Leipzig provides an exquisite performance of the work; from a dramatic standpoint, however, the staging regrettably lacks all inspiration, with vast stretches simply mis-conceived. It is a "makeshift production" of sorts, as the executive committee had canceled the contract with its stage director and set designer shortly before preparations began. The director, in turn, forbade the use of the set design. The newly contracted director had only about four weeks to come up with a new set and rehearse the cast. That could hardly go well—as we shall see.

Musical preparations appear to have escaped the chaos unscathed: the Leipzig production featured one of the strongest performances of Weill's score I've heard in recent years. Engaged by the Leipzig Opera after holding several positions in Europe and in the U.S., British conductor William Lacey led the Gewandhaus Orchestra, the soloists, and the choristers in a remarkably unified achievement. Lacey shows an excellent grasp of the refined, well-devised texture of Weill's score. He chooses the right tempos, he carefully develops the dynamic architecture, and he always maintains an excellent balance between singers and orchestra. Thus the "Benares Song" becomes a high point of the evening. The musicians seem truly devoted to their conductor—one very seldom hears the softer and more subdued passages played with such intensity. The superb standard of musicianship set by the orchestra is matched by both the cast and the experienced Leipzig choir. Soula Parassidis, a Canadian singer with Greek roots, delivered a performance as Jenny that was nothing short of sensational! Unfortunately, I didn't witness the Metropolitan Opera's 1979 production featuring Teresa Stratas, but it must have been similar: a seductively beautiful voice and refined phrasing combined with glorious acting and stellar looks. Parassidis's renditions of "Alabama Song" and "Denn wie man sich bettet" become truly riveting combinations of song and aria, unwaveringly true to Weill's style. At her side we have Stefan Vinke as Jim Mahoney; the youthful *Heldentenor* (with Bayreuth experience), active in Leipzig since 2006, leaves nothing to be desired. Swedish mezzo Karin Lovelius as Begbick, and Leipzig mainstays Jürgen Kurth as Fatty and Martin Petzold as Dreieinigkeitsmoses, were equally convincing.

Stage director Kerstin Polenske, who has been working for various German theaters (mainly on productions of musicals), had no time (as noted) to come up with a concept for her staging. One look at the set, which she developed in collaboration with Steffen Böttcher, makes it obvious: black metal scaffolding with some staircases built in, much too small for the dimensions of the stage, tricked out with a few Ikea-style red chairs and tables (all replaced by green ones later on), a Cinemascope-size projection screen with a bridge placed in front, where the chorus members



Jim and Jenny seated in the foreground; Begbick oversees the revelry.

PHOTO: ANDREAS BIRKIGT

when entering appear as black silhouettes in front of the projections. From the very first moment it exudes a lifeless atmosphere, and it reminded me of agitprop or political theater of the 1970s. So it seems fitting that a gray-haired actor announces the scene titles like an old-fashioned documentary voice-over, lacking any hint of Brechtian concision (or irony, for that matter). Equally unsatisfying are the characterizations; for instance, the bad-guy trio of Begbick-Fatty-Moses lacks all sinister qualities. Worse is the director's penchant for mindless show effects, ostensibly to introduce elements of operetta or revue. Time and again, we see masses of paper money thrown onstage, either being tossed gratuitously into the air by the actors or raining down from the flies. Begbick must then stuff the money into a bright red leather bag, while Fatty uses a shopping bag. Brilliant! The program credits Polenske also with "choreography," although that term hardly applies here, because all we get are some aimless movements reminiscent of a Paul Lincke operetta from around 1900. The men's chorus is required to shift weight from one foot to the other, which is supposed to give us a sense of the rolling seas. In addition to this dull hopping they pretend to eat with knives and forks during "Eating," lift imaginary glasses to their mouths during "Drinking," zip and unzip their flies during "Loving" and—you guessed it—shake their fists during "Boxing." The projections are likewise uninspired. The creative team might have responded to their predicament by setting up a big cyclorama and using Caspar Neher's ingenious and timeless projections, taking a leaf from the world premiere. But instead we see the same old images of a spinning globe, skyscrapers, and a shark tank, flanked by tumbling financial charts. An intended *coup de théâtre* backfired: a video of a well-known German TV anchor reading the announcement of the approaching hurricane provoked so much whispering in the audience that it completely destroyed any sense of impending danger onstage.

The bottom line, then, must be "Auf nach Mahagonny!"—or to Leipzig, anyway, for those who wish to hear Weill's music as well as it can be played. Those who want to see it adequately staged are better off staying home.

**Jürgen Schebera**  
Berlin

# Lost in the Stars

## Glimmerglass Festival Cooperstown, New York

Premiere: 22 July 2012

At the emotionally devastating conclusion of Glimmerglass's new production of *Lost in the Stars*, I encountered a sight unprecedented in my five decades of theatergoing. The star (Eric Owens as Stephen Kumalo) got so deeply immersed in the tragic final scene that a tidal wave of emotion carried him into the curtain call; he was unable to stop shaking and weeping as he took his bravos. I, too, was near tears—overwhelmed not just by Owens but by the inspired *coup de théâtre* of the groundbreaking revised ending premiered in this production. The finale of Weill's last completed work, in Tazewell Thompson's production (co-produced and originally staged by Cape Town Opera), has been rewritten with a masterstroke. Instead of the pat sentimentality of James Jarvis's patronizing curtain line "I have a friend" and a reprise of "Thousands of Miles," *Lost in the Stars* ended here with a reprise of "Cry, the Beloved Country." As Rev. Kumalo is overcome with horror at the mercilessness of the universe after his son's execution, the chorus echoes his sense



Eric Owens as Stephen Kumalo.

PHOTO: KARLI CADEL / THE GLIMMERGLASS FESTIVAL

of cosmic abandonment. For those who know the piece, the effect is cataclysmic. This ending should become the standard performing version.

Having seen Thompson's sparkling direction of the Weill revue *Jam and Spice* (Westport Playhouse, 2006), I came to Glimmerglass expecting great things. But apart from the overwhelming new ending and Owens's immense vocal and dramatic power, I found the production only intermittently moving, likeable but logy, and was surprised to find Thompson and South African scenic and costume designer Michael Mitchell staging *Lost in the Stars* in often confusing ways.

The primary confusion involved their treatment of the chorus, the most important character in *Lost in the Stars* after Stephen Kumalo. The choristers have to act as well as sing, and they have to be directed as individuals, not just in groups. But until late in the second act the chorus displayed hardly any emotion and moved like dead weight, apparently oblivious to the dramatic action. At the

beginning of "The Wild Justice," the Leader sang stage center as the white chorus members emerged from a door at one side of the stage while the blacks squeezed through a smaller door at the other side of the stage, but this clever bit of staging was sabotaged

### FROM THE ARTISTS:

#### Eric Owens, bass-baritone (Stephen Kumalo)

"This past summer I had the great privilege and pleasure of performing one of musical theater's masterpieces. Taking on the role of Stephen Kumalo in Kurt Weill's *Lost in the Stars* was a heartfelt journey that was, in every way, a life-changing experience. Singing the extraordinary strains of Weill's magnificent music was, and will always be, a tremendous honor!"

#### Wynn Harmon, actor (James Jarvis)

"The last performance was so spiritual and special; never have I been in a production where there was a collective need for the cast to embrace each other over and over again after the curtain came down. Afterwards a man came up to me outside and said, 'I want to give you something.' He then told me that a man had murdered his brother and had been in prison for 24 years. Based on the experience this man had watching our production, he had decided to write a letter of forgiveness to his brother's murderer. Then at dinner afterwards, so many people came over to talk and some said, 'We drove ten hours to see this, and are so grateful.'"

"The next morning I went to the Cooperstown Presbyterian Church. The minister had come to *Lost* with a group, and I had met her at a talkback. During her sermon, she quoted the last speech of *Lost* and then thanked me and our production from the pulpit. Never in my life... A woman sitting near me leaned over and said, 'I will never forget it for as long as I live.' These are some examples of how we have touched and influenced people through what we do."

#### Tazewell Thompson, director

"The Glimmerglass Festival provided me with a large chorus of both black and white young artists, plus young artists from South Africa. It was wonderful to introduce and bring together, through *Lost in the Stars*, these talented and diverse young people at the very start of their careers, many of whom did not know the work at all. The Anderson book was compelling and important and still resonated for all of us. Weill's astonishing, eclectic score was fiercely embraced and proudly performed by the entire company with complete and enthusiastic ownership. Altogether, it was a beautiful, enriching, and unforgettable experience."



by the choristers' blank faces. Toward the end of the second act, Thompson had each individual parishioner of Kumalo's church step downstage and fan out across the apron as they sang "Bird of Passage," each with individual expression. Bravo! Then the whites entered Kumalo's church and shook hands with the black parishioners. Good touch. But in the first act's choral numbers ("Train to Johannesburg," "The Search," "Murder in Parkwold"), the whites and blacks also mingled freely. Under de facto apartheid? It made no sense.

Though I have seen three productions of *Lost in the Stars* and studied the original script, I had genuine difficulty following the action in Act I—partly because of the mishandling of the chorus; partly because of cuts in the text (more about that shortly); and partly because the unit set did not illustrate the varied scenes or establish any palpable sense of the terrain of South Africa. Mitchell's backdrops abdicated narrative function and pictorial representation, leaving that to chairs and tables and other small stage properties appropriate for a semi-staged concert but not a full production. The only backdrops were either darkness (sometimes starlit) or a curtain of simulated corrugated tin, painted gold—which does not tell the audience whether the action is taking place in Ndotsheni or Sophiatown. The jail had no bars or cells; it was reduced to a trapdoor through which the prisoner emerged. Another enigma: Why was Arthur Jarvis's murder replayed in dumb show?

The costume designer was careful to create authentic costumes; the plain apparel of the Afrikaner women informed the

eye that not all whites were privileged. But costume design cannot overcome fuzzy staging, and in one case the costume designer contributed to it. The Leader (Sean Panikkar) wore a bright white uniform with elaborate belts and armbands and jeweled bracelets that made him look like a Las Vegas crooner (he did sing wonderfully). Only later when I reviewed photographs and videos of the production could I see workman's tools dangling from his belt and pockets, and then it became clear that the Leader was dressed

as a mine foreman—but a mine foreman in a clean, pressed white uniform? Panikkar's oddly ingratiating rendering of a singing role that should be charged with anger and alienation added to the confusion. For all the emotional sincerity of the material, there is a subtle Brechtian distancing implicit in the device of the Leader and the chorus, and it was missed here.

Virgil Thomson rightly remarked that *Lost in the Stars* is a "play with musical numbers, a *Singspiel*." The fact that several major characters (e.g., Absalom

and James Jarvis) don't sing at all isn't a flaw in the design, it is the design, and dialogue has an essential expository function. Perhaps a little of Maxwell Anderson's sometimes stiff dialogue needs to be cut, but too much was lost here. The scene in Act II where Kumalo seeks Jarvis's intercession in Absalom's trial ended before its dramatic arc was finished. Later their final reconciliation scene was so abridged that extremely important details about Jarvis were lost and the actor (the effective Wynn Harmon) was left to play a cutout version of a complex character. Restoration



James Jarvis (Wynn Harmon) consoles Stephen Kumalo (Eric Owens) after Absalom's death.

PHOTO: KARLI CADEL/THE GLIMMERGLASS FESTIVAL

ADDITIONAL REACTIONS

**John DeMain, conductor**

"The final performance was a deeply emotional one for stage and audience. I could hear the audience crying at the end. The standing ovation was like the opening night; Wynn was crying real tears through many of the scenes. He is just wonderful, and Eric was again magnificent. The orchestra played superbly, and one violist paid me a lovely compliment that in twenty years of playing at Glimmerglass, she had never experienced such deep emotion coming from the pit. It was a deeply rewarding experience."

**Michael Mitchell, set and costume designer**

"A story so iconically South African as *Lost in the Stars* was going to require an exceptional effort and an outstanding team to retain its South African identity and esthetic on American soil, so it was with some trepidation that I arrived in Glimmerglass. Tazewell Thompson had reassured me that the production team and cast would rise to the occasion, and they did with such passion it took my breath away. They not only preserved its unique character without compromise, but they were able with perspective given them through distance to bring out latent themes that enriched the production."

**FROM THE AUDIENCE:**

**Jürgen Thym, Professor Emeritus of Musicology, Eastman School of Music**

"What a spectacular production of *Lost in the Stars* at Glimmerglass! My wife and I were deeply moved (to the point of shedding tears). Weill's last opera touched us beyond measure. And an opera it is, or a *Singspiel*, but generic terms do not mean a thing in this case. What a great piece of musical theater, gripping us with its relevance more than sixty years later."

**John Conklin, scenic designer**

"*Lost in the Stars* was: (extraordinary) (stunning) (beautiful) (moving) (rich) (elegantly simple) (profoundly touching); you choose. Everyone—production staff, ushers, old audience friends—said it was the best of the season, and they were right."

**Jonathan Pell, Artistic Director, Dallas Opera**

"Yesterday's matinee of *Lost in the Stars* was a performance I will carry with me for the rest of my life. Superbly conducted by John DeMain, the work has now been restored to the repertoire and needs to be seen and heard by more people than were able to attend the performances in Cooperstown."

of some dialogue in the first act would have clarified the savage irony of Arthur Jarvis's murder; other cuts obscured the desperation and fatigue of Stephen and Absalom. Such gaps in our understanding ironically caused the action to move more sluggishly than in other productions I've seen. On the other hand, the production restored two otiose musical numbers cut from the original Broadway version, "The Little Tin God" (sung by Stephen's brother John Kumalo) and "Gold!," a dance number. The former sounded like a warmed-over Rodgers & Hammerstein verse soliloquy, and the latter lacked the melodic punch of Weill's other forays into popular dance music (this score already contains a fine example in "Who'll Buy?"). Both should be returned to the drawer.

Owens succeeded in bringing out the benignity in Stephen Kumalo without making him seem simple—not an easy task. "O Tixo, Tixo, Help Me!" has probably never been sung with such a combination of power and pinpoint dramatic clarity. It sounded as if Pinza or Chaliapin were singing it. Also notable for his outstanding acting was baritone Amos Nomnabo as John Kumalo. Ernestine Jackson as Grace Kumalo and Maurio Hines as Matthew Kumalo were effective non-singing actors. But Linda (Chrystal E. Williams) in "Who'll Buy?" was much too chaste for credibility in the raunchy bar scene. And the conspiracy scenes between Matthew Kumalo, Johannes Pafuri (Thesele Kemane), and Absalom were insufficiently villainous.

Because Absalom doesn't sing, he must be an adequate actor. Makudupanyane Senaohana, a young tenor from South Africa, was the weak link in the cast. His Absalom was bland and impassive, even at moments of high emotion. (Or was it that Thompson thought that because young blacks in 1940s South Africa deferred to their elders, they can't show any fire onstage?) The audience liked Brandy Lynn Hawkins as his love interest Irina. She sang "Trouble Man" and "Stay Well" winsomely, but her acting was rudimentary. Both black and white actors were coached to speak with native accents, but they didn't always project well.

Weill arranged *Lost in the Stars* for 12 players with only 5 strings (no violins) but his scoring requires three versatile reed

doublers and a pianist who doubles on the accordion. For Glimmerglass, musical director John DeMain split the reed books among additional players and added a few extras on string parts for tutti sections, bringing the total personnel to 22. There was also a synthesizer in the pit to provide an organ sound in the chapel scenes, and a dedicated accordionist. Yet I could not hear the pungent accordion melody in "Train to Johannesburg." Two changes to the score paid off: cutting the entr'acte, and reprising the title song during the second act.

The Alice Busch Opera Theater has marvelous acoustics, blessedly devoid of sound design. Yet a small orchestra in its large, open pit exfoliates into a larger orchestra sound than Weill intended, posing a balance problem for DeMain. I was delighted to hear clip-clopping wood blocks for the first time in "Little Gray House," but it was difficult to hear dialogue over many passages of underscoring, and smaller solo singing voices didn't carry above the orchestra. Young Caleb McLaughlin was charming as Alex in the rousing "Big Mole," but no child could reasonably be expected to be heard in such a cavernous space without a microphone. (In Act II the corrugated tin backdrop, when lowered further downstage, seemed to provide more of a sounding board for both singing and dialogue, both of which I heard more clearly thereafter.)

The first staging of this production at Cape Town Opera, with native actors and raucous but respectful audiences, might have been a more stirring experience than its successor in Cooperstown. Yet in the shattering finale at Glimmerglass, the gifted Eric Owens swept the production onto his large shoulders and made you forget its shortcomings. Though this earnest but uneven *Lost in the Stars* was by no means definitive, the beauty and power of the material still rang through.

**Mark N. Grant**  
New York

**Francesca Zambello, recently appointed Artistic Director of Washington National Opera, is working with Eric Owens to schedule a time to bring the production to the Kennedy Center.**

#### FROM THE CRITICS:

##### **Heidi Waleson, *Wall Street Journal***

"Francesca Zambello has hit a home run. The high point is Kurt Weill's *Lost in the Stars*. . . . This hybrid of opera and music theater is ideally served by Tazewell Thompson's sensitive, understated production; the splendid Glimmerglass chorus; . . . and especially the towering, heartfelt performance of Eric Owens. . . . Michael Mitchell's simple set suggesting the corrugated metal of South African shanty towns, Mr. Thompson's subtle stage direction and John DeMain's thoughtful conducting let the deep emotion of this piece come through."

##### **David Shengold, *Opera***

"The best Glimmerglass season in years. . . . Its main triumph was the performance of . . . *Lost in the Stars*, in Tazewell Thompson's powerful production. . . . Thompson utilized the chorus superbly to create a sense of communities in uneasy interrelation. Owens's performance as Stephen Kumalo—wonderfully sung and alert to the part's moral complexity—carried the day. . . . Sean Panikkar's strong, dynamically varied tenor and excellent diction suited the narrating Leader very well. . . . John DeMain was an inspired choice to conduct."

##### **Anthony Tommasini, *New York Times***

"With the lush, urgent conducting of John DeMain and the full-voiced singing of a winning cast, the production, directed by Tazewell Thompson in a dark, affecting and fluid staging, draws out the operatic resonances of Weill's score. Mr. Owens triumphed in the lead role. . . . It was unbearably moving to see Mr. Owens's husky body slump under Kumalo's crushing weight of despair as the son . . . faces execution."

##### **Fred Cohn, *Opera News***

"Especially welcome. . . . The Glimmerglass mounting . . . showed it well worthy of revival. The score is prime Weill, characteristically mixing high operatic style with lowdown showbiz pizzazz."

##### **James Sohr, *Opera Today***

"Tazewell Thompson is a director of such taste and imagination that he made the whole meticulously coordinated evening seem improvised, spontaneous and effortless. . . . Choreographer Anthony Salatino supported Thompson's vision with apt period choreography, especially for the naughty "Who'll Buy." . . . The story of apartheid and repression is sadly still relevant. But *Lost in the Stars* also embodies themes of redemption and deliverance that are important, welcome, and cathartic. . . . This was powerful lyric theater of the top tier."

# Magical Night

Ravinia Festival  
Highland Park, Illinois

19 July 2012

James Conlon, music director of both the Ravinia Festival (summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) and the Los Angeles Opera, has devoted himself to a worthy mission. For years now, in an initiative dubbed “Breaking the Silence,” he has led programs designed to bring attention to the work of composers whose lives were either brutally snuffed out or utterly upended by the Holocaust. Many of these composers have remained largely unknown. Some, including Kurt Weill and Erich Wolfgang Korngold, fled Europe just in time, and were able to reestablish their careers in the United States, or elsewhere, by the mid-1930s.

As Conlon admitted during his introductory talk to the audience at the July 19th concert at Ravinia dedicated to pieces by Franz Schreker and Weill, not every recovered work is a “lost masterpiece.” Yet there is great value in bringing back to the active classical repertory “the collective voice” of these composers and their era—a time of extraordinary dynamism in Berlin and Vienna undermined by the onslaught of the Nazi regime.

Conlon’s program opened with *Der Wind* (1909), a “dance allegory” for violin, clarinet, horn, cello and piano by the Viennese-bred Schreker (who did not live to see his music officially banned, but was destroyed by being fired from prestigious music school positions). The work is a less-than-memorable pastiche of Richard Strauss, Mahler, Puccini and Debussy. But the main event of the evening was the American premiere of the critical edition of Weill’s *Zaubernacht* (1922)—“*Magical Night*”—a children’s pantomime commissioned by the Russian impresario Wladimir Boritsch, when Weill was a student of Ferruccio Busoni. It was Weill’s first professionally produced theater work. The score, lost for eighty years, was reconstructed for the Kurt Weill Edition from a set of original instrumental parts discovered at Yale University in 2005 (see the Fall 2006 issue of the *Newsletter*).

Weill’s score, designed to complement the action onstage, was gently dissonant. An ensemble of nine expert musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (on flute, bassoon, percussion, piano, and strings) played beautifully, but I did not find the score particularly intriguing. *Zaubernacht* is a student work—though Weill created a popular concert suite from it the following year that saw a number of performances—more of an intriguing curiosity than a lost treasure. Among the more effective moments at Ravinia were soprano Janai Brugger’s elegant renderings of the two songs for the Toy Fairy and a somewhat demonic waltz danced by two mimes, who played a mock bride-and-groom.

The pantomime devised and staged by Chicago’s T. Daniel Productions (the mime artists T. Daniel and Laurie Willets and their troupe) didn’t help matters. Clumsily choreographed and performed in front of the musicians on what became a rather



The magician (center) steps in.

PHOTO: RAVINIA FESTIVAL

cluttered stage, the amateurish theatrics detracted from the music rather than enhancing it. The program most likely would have tried the patience of a children’s audience. At Ravinia the audience, composed entirely of adults, was simply underwhelmed.

The action was set in motion as a brother and sister (portrayed by Omar Robles and Lori Finkel) were put to bed by their mother. They soon proceeded to sneak out from under the covers and open a trunk of toys that contained surprisingly lifelike, willful dolls—a Raggedy Ann type (played by Alex Suha), and Doofus (Noel Williams), the fellow who is forever in pursuit of her, and who at one point is so unhappy he almost hangs himself. Also joining in the goings-on was a downright creepy top-hatted magician (Daniel) who initially emerged as the life-size version of a puppet in a toy theater box.

Although the original scenario for *Zaubernacht* is lost, enough historical accounts of the stage action remain to reveal that the story line resembled E.T.A. Hoffmann’s “Nutcracker.” Watching the Ravinia version (which featured bright, doll-like costumes and pajamas by Tatjana Radisic), some might also have been reminded of *Peter Pan*, or even more of Maurice Sendak’s stories about mischievous kids whose imaginations grow unusually restless when they should be sleeping.

The loveliest bit of mime came when the gracefully impish Willet, as The Old Lady, performed a sleight-of-hand bit of levitation. But it was a long slog before that one dreamy bit of night magic occurred.

**Hedy Weiss  
Chicago**

## In the Press

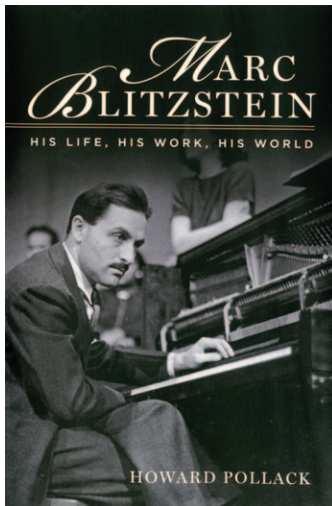
“Ravinia is to be commended for returning to Weill’s original [score] of *Zaubernacht* . . . Conlon and his nonet of CSO players threw themselves into the score with great relish and vitality, clarifying the chugging counterpoint while investing Weill’s jaunty dance-rhythms with proper zing.”

— John von Rhein, *Chicago Tribune*

“A captivating series of musical numbers . . . In its diversity *Zaubernacht* embraces the mordant, bittersweet Weill to come but also contains straightforwardly tuneful, neoclassical episodes.”

— George Loomis, *Financial Times*





# Marc Blitzstein: His Life, His Work, His World

by Howard Pollack

New York: Oxford, 2012. 618 pp.  
ISBN: 978-0-19-979159-0

Marc Blitzstein (1905-1964) remains a curious case in American music and theater. Simultaneously insider and outsider, esteemed and neglected, he attained his greatest fame in 1937 with the legendary premiere of

*The Cradle Will Rock*, for which he wrote the book, lyrics, and music. Essentially banned by the WPA's Federal Theatre Project, *The Cradle Will Rock* opened in defiance of its sponsor when Blitzstein joined John Houseman and Orson Welles, directors of the production, in marching the audience to a different theater. This act of civil disobedience made the front page of the *New York Times*, and the resulting celebrity seemed to ensure Blitzstein's future success. But he never garnered consistent acclaim. He became a key figure in the movement to create the hybrid genre of "Broadway opera," and a substantial series of pieces flowed from his pen in many genres—operas, musicals, film and radio scores, orchestral and choral music, chamber music, and songs. Not all of them took flight, however, and Blitzstein's reputation remains in limbo, secured as much by his translation and adaptation of *The Threepenny Opera* as by his own compositions.

In a richly researched and thoroughly engrossing new biography, Howard Pollack confronts "the relative unfamiliarity of Blitzstein's work" (p. 4). Digging deep into Blitzstein's papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society, Pollack offers copious detail and insightful analysis. A leading biographer of American composers, he has published comprehensive studies of John Alden Carpenter, Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, and Walter Piston. Blitzstein fits neatly into this group, having studied composition during the 1920s in Paris (with Boulanger) and Berlin (with Schoenberg) before pursuing an accessible style to reach "the people," as a catch-phrase of the New Deal put it. Pollack builds on important earlier studies of Blitzstein—particularly those of Robert J. Dietz (1970), Eric Gordon (1989), and Leonard Lehrman (2006)—and enriches existing scholarship with newly available archival sources (especially from the papers of Copland and Leonard Bernstein), providing sustained analysis of Blitzstein's compositions. He also explores Blitzstein's sexual identity, which encompassed both a lifelong history of gay relationships and marriage to Eva Goldbeck.

The most riveting section of the book focuses on *The Cradle Will Rock*, filling two chapters. The first charts the work's lineage and compositional process, dating back to 1930, when Blitzstein wrote three popular songs for the *Garrick Gaieties* (none made it to the stage). *The Cradle Will Rock* emerged from Blitzstein's pursuit of a "new form," as Goldbeck put it, one that was "simple, straight, straight from the heart too, 'real'" (pp. 153–154). Pollack consistently refers to *The Cradle Will Rock* as an "opera" while ac-

knowledging that genre labels for the work have shifted over time. Blitzstein himself objected to "operetta" and "musical comedy," settling initially on "a play in music." When the New York City Opera mounted a production in 1960, Blitzstein called it an "opera," giving it a highbrow upgrade. The second chapter on *Cradle* recounts the first production and subsequent performance history. Fascinating tidbits emerge (some drawn from earlier authors), such as the fact that Theodore (Ted) Thomas, associate producer of the original production, was the father of conductor Michael Tilson Thomas, and that the African-American dancer Clarence Yates helped choreograph the musical numbers, albeit without credit. Pollack devotes two similarly meaty chapters to *Regina*, Blitzstein's Broadway opera from 1949.

Weill aficionados will turn to Pollack's discussion of the production of *The Threepenny Opera* that opened at the Theater de Lys in 1954 and ran until 1961, a story told here from Blitzstein's perspective. His embrace of *Threepenny* grew out of a commitment to agit-prop theater and was anchored in a transatlantic ethos. During the 1920s and early 1930s, Blitzstein migrated from the U.S. to Europe and back again, and he participated in an international movement to create a leftist style. His marriage to Eva Goldbeck, an important early translator of Brecht, added to the work's attraction. Goldbeck died in 1936, and shortly afterwards Blitzstein wrote "Few Little English" for Lotte Lenya, who by then was living in New York. At the same time, Weill developed a disdain for Blitzstein, regarding him, in Pollack's words, "as an epigone who profited by imitating his work" (p. 157). Fifteen years later, when Blitzstein sang his translation of "Pirate Jenny" over the phone to Weill and Lenya, a partnership was launched, however uneasy, but Weill died before the adaptation was completed. Pollack insightfully analyzes Blitzstein's "rather free approach" (p. 354) to translation, balancing sensitivity to rhyme and scansion with a respect for the original German, and he also explores the phenomenal commercial success of Blitzstein's lyrics for "Mack the Knife."

Another of Blitzstein's key relationships—with Leonard Bernstein—surfaces repeatedly in the book. The two men were "telepathically close" (p. 185), as Blitzstein put it, and Bernstein became a high-profile champion of Blitzstein's music, conducting several important premieres and revivals, including the try-out of Blitzstein's adaptation of *The Threepenny Opera* at Brandeis University in 1952. Yet they also ran into conflicts, especially as Bernstein's stage works gained a level of acclaim that eluded Blitzstein. Pollack quotes a particularly trenchant—albeit harsh—observation from Ned Rorem: "Although Lenny Bernstein would never have been quite what he was without the firm example of Marc Blitzstein, there's nothing Marc did that Lenny didn't do better" (p. 187).

Throughout Pollack's account, Blitzstein's indomitable work ethic shines through, as does his commitment to fusing creative expression with social responsibility. As a longtime admirer of Blitzstein, I left the book hopeful that his substantial and appealing oeuvre may yet attract the widespread respect it deserves.

Carol J. Oja  
Harvard University

# “Wouldn’t You Like to Be on Broadway?” Stephen Hinton Redraws the Map

by David Savran

Kurt Weill is hardly terra incognita. *Die Dreigroschenoper* remains one of the most popular pieces of interwar music theater, *Mahagonny* has become part of the standard operatic repertoire, while his Broadway works are now regularly performed in his native land at Staatsoper and Staatstheaters and in the United States on many university and concert stages. The improbability of a Broadway revival of one of his musicals is the result more of the crushing economics of commercial theaters in the U.S. than of these pieces’ continued theatrical viability. Nor has Weill failed to attract first-rate scholars since David Drew, in Elmar Juchem’s words, “almost single-handedly put Weill back on the map of twentieth-century music and musical historiography” (*Kurt Weill Newsletter*, Fall 2009, p. 3).

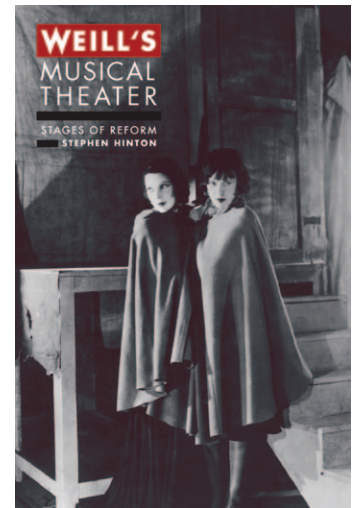
Because of Weill’s prolific creativity, the musical and theatrical richness of his oeuvre, his well-documented collaborations with some of the most distinguished playwrights and other theater professionals in Germany and the United States, and the considerable body of essays, interviews, and letters he left behind, he might seem a figure whose life and work could be compassed with relative ease. Yet he remains an elusive, enigmatic figure: at once erudite and popular, *echt deutsch* and real American, idealistic and pragmatic, politically seditious and politically accommodating. Because almost all of his music theater works challenge generic boundaries and deconstruct the opposition between elite and popular forms, critics and scholars have struggled to chronicle his life and work plausibly and convincingly. For decades, many have attempted to account for his negotiation of these antitheses by creating the myth of the two Weills, the serious composer of intellectually rigorous, if sometimes bitterly ironic European art music, and the sell-out to Broadway. This myth has been repeated ad nauseam in part because the two disciplines that lay claim to him, musicology and theater studies, have long attempted to sequester—and denigrate—popular forms and vernaculars. But with the relatively recent legitimization of the study in each field of popular music and the Broadway musical, respectively, it has become easier both to quash the myth of the two Weills and to analyze its origins and dogged persistence.

Because of Weill’s very elusiveness, the adjectives I might employ—definitive, magisterial—to describe Stephen Hinton’s *Weill’s Music Theater: Stages of Reform* do not quite fit. The book is far and away the richest, most comprehensive study of Weill’s work, but Hinton is too aware of the manifold interpretive challenges Weill’s canon raises to issue facile, categorical proclamations. From the beginning, Hinton aims not only to shatter myths, especially the myth of the two Weills, but more important, to analyze how and why the myths were constructed in the first place and what cultural work they have performed. Rather than write a teleological, evolutionary narrative, he uses influential figures and works, most notably Ferruccio Busoni and *Die Zauberflöte*, to tie together the disparate threads and stages of Weill’s career. Hinton, moreover, approaches his subject with a

deep and well-researched understanding of the many histories one must master to contextualize Weill: German musicology and philosophy, the mixed reception of Weill’s works up to the present day, the performance traditions of several music theater subgenres, and the social and political chronicles, which span two continents, of the most tumultuous decades of the twentieth century. He appreciates the performance imperatives for this man of the theater for whom the genesis of works “did not precede but was inextricably bound up with the process of realization for specific events” (p. xiv). And while Hinton does not explicitly declare Weill the central figure in music theater during the first half of the twentieth century, his book could readily be used to support that claim.

Although Hinton constructs a roughly chronological narrative, his chapters are organized thematically so that most begin with a theoretical, historical, and musical-analytical introduction to the different conventions (“Epic Opera”), genres (“Stage vs. Screen”), and ideas (“Concept and Commitment”) with which a particular cluster of works is associated. This allows him to analyze in detail both the history and the historicity of the key terms that critics have employed to analyze Weill’s work. It also enables him, for example, to spread over four chapters and cover creatively yet systematically Weill’s collaborations with the one playwright, Bertolt Brecht, who is mistakenly thought to be the principal architect of their jointly-composed works and whose dramaturgy in too many chronicles is taken to eclipse that of the composer. Hinton’s conceptually driven approach, moreover, carries through even to his careful selection of musical examples, accompanied by skillful analyses that explain how and why a given musical form makes theatrical sense and produces calculated, specific effects. His broad musical erudition and analytical skills allow him to position Weill’s work in relation not only to European art music, but also to the highly specialized and sophisticated conventions of Broadway and Tin Pan Alley.

*Weill’s Musical Theater* is one of those rare works of scholarship that give interdisciplinary studies a good name. Because Hinton understands that the study of music theater requires more than the simple addition of theater history to musicology, his book breaks new ground methodologically. It demonstrates that from *Die Zauberflöte* to *Street Scene*, drama is always inflected through music, and vice versa. Yet musicology and theater studies remain uneasy bedfellows, not least of all because too many musicologists focus on the printed score at the expense of performance while too many theater scholars are unschooled in musical analysis. Hinton’s work proves that it is possible to master both disciplines and as such, is virtually unique in a field





that remains as sharply divided between disciplines as between opera and the Broadway musical. Opera composers have long been consecrated by musicologists with multi-volume biographical-historical studies, but Broadway composers have been slighted, despite the belated recognition of the landmark status of musicals written during what is usually, if problematically, referred to as Broadway's Golden Age.

Because *Weill's Musical Theater* redraws musicological and theater-historical roadmaps, it would serve well as a prototype for future monographs. Other composers who sought to challenge generic boundaries, like George Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, and Stephen Sondheim, have inspired biographers to write more or less detailed (and in the case of Bernstein and Sondheim, more or less sensationalized) accounts of their lives and works. But even one of the best of this ilk, Howard Pollack's estimable *George Gershwin: His Life and Work*, does not attempt to provide the rich historical contexts, theoretically informed readings, and illuminating musical analyses that fill Hinton's book. The volumes in Yale University Press's Broadway Masters Series (written by musicologists) do not aspire in length, breadth, or depth to Hinton's study. So those of us with a passion for the full range of Weill's music theater—and an abiding interest in knotty questions about modernist performance—can rejoice that we finally have a book whose author understands that doing justice to its subject requires nothing less than a full-scale interrogation of the most consequential and contested aspects of twentieth-century culture.

**Stephen Hinton. *Weill's Musical Theater: Stages of Reform*. University of California Press, 2012. 569 pp. ISBN: 978-0-520-27177-7.**

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PHOTO: WIENER STAATSOPER/MICHAEL POEHN

Stephanie Houtzeel as Jenny.

## Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny

Wiener Staatsoper

22, 27 & 30 September 2012

The premiere of this production in January, which I reviewed in the Spring 2012 *Newsletter*, included several frustrating alterations to the score. The deficiencies of the staging remain, but the music has received much better treatment in the revival. The

“Kraniche-Duett” is restored; “Alabama Song” and “Denn wie man sich bettet” are now sung as written. “Gott in Mahagonny”—essential to the meaning of the work—is still glaringly absent.

The improvements were made possible by casting Stephanie Houtzeel as Jenny, replacing Angelika Kirchschrager, whose miscasting led to most of the transpositions and alterations. Houtzeel provided several astounding revelations. I almost fell off my seat as I heard a perfectly-executed trill shortly before a sustained, floated high A-natural in the third verse of “Alabama Song.” Houtzeel delivered much-needed sex appeal, but her fidelity to Weill's score—such as a diminuendo on another sustained high A, at the end of the phrase “ein Mensch ist kein Tier” in “Denn wie man sich bettet”—made her, musically, the best Jenny I've ever heard.

After only one performance, Houtzeel succumbed to the flu. Her understudy, newcomer Ulrike Helzel, displayed a smallish, light mezzo lacking at both ends of her range (no trill in “Alabama Song” and stabs at the A-naturals, one falling flat). Among other newcomers, Herbert Lippert showed a lovely lyric tenor as Jim, but lacks the *Heldentenor* qualities for the big moments. Wolfgang Bankl was just beginning to find his way with Dreieinigkeitsmoses when he, too, became ill.

Ingo Metzmacher again gave an unbelievably gorgeous, unforgettable reading of the score. Now if only he could restore “Gott in Mahagonny” . . . Houtzeel commented, “I never thought I'd sing this repertoire. Kurt Weill has been a wonderful discovery for me, and I know I have just scratched the surface.” We look forward to more.

Larry L. Lash  
Vienna

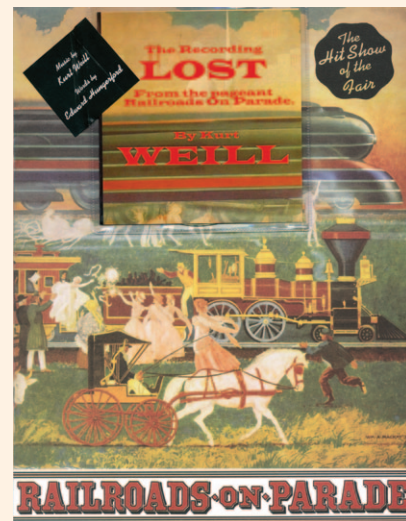
## NEW RELEASE

### Railroads on Parade CD Now Available!

As more and more of Weill's works have become available on commercial recordings, it seemed that *Railroads on Parade*, a pageant on the history of American railroading composed for the 1939 World's Fair, would never see the light of day. Weill's manuscript has survived, and a concert suite based on the original score has been performed, but no recording of the World's Fair performance was known to exist. All that has changed with a new CD containing over half the work as performed at the Fair in 1940, now available from Transcription Recordings, Inc.

The pageant premiered in April 1939 and ran all summer, one of the Fair's most popular attractions. The 1940 production used an abridged script and additional musical material. Approximately an hour long, the show played four times per day and featured real locomotives and train cars moving on and off the stage. The orchestra, singers, and actors worked in an enclosed room under the stage, and the sound was broadcast into the amphitheater (the actors on stage did not speak or sing). It was a monumental event that disappeared with hardly a trace.

But now it can be heard. A set of four discs from a broadcast on the World's Fair radio station was discovered several years ago in New York by collector Guy Walker, who has produced the CD. The deluxe packaging includes a complete facsimile of the original souvenir program and playbill from the Fair, with liner notes by Weill scholar Bruce McClung and audio restorer Aaron Z. Snyder. The original acetates are housed at the Archive of Recorded Sound at Stanford University. Railroad buffs, World's Fair fanciers, Weill fans, and students of Americana have an unprecedented opportunity to discover how *Railroads on Parade* sounded.



# Lotte Lenya Competition

## Sweet Fifteen in 2013

The Lotte Lenya Competition celebrates its fifteenth anniversary next year! Founded in 1998 to commemorate the centenary of Lotte Lenya, the Lenya Competition has grown from a local contest in Rochester, New York, to an international competition recognizing the top singer/actors of tomorrow. Just last year, the First and Second Prize winners also took home other major prizes: Matthew Grills was a Grand Prize Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and Jacob Keith Watson won First Prize in the inaugural National Music Theater Competition of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS). Inquiries about repertoire are already picking up, and we're looking forward to receiving a big pile of applications by 1 February 2013!

Two significant changes were made to the guidelines this year:

- **Eligibility:** The eligible age range has been extended by two years from last year, so artists ages 19-32 may compete in 2013.
- **Repertoire:** Contestants are still required to perform four selections from the same categories—one from the opera or operetta repertoire, one theatrical selection by Weill, and two numbers from the American musical theater repertoire (one pre-1968 and one from 1968 or later). Weill selections have always been required to be sung in their original musical versions, keys, and languages. However, in the Weill category only, authorized English translations for selections from *The Threepenny Opera* and *Happy End* will now be permitted.

The Foundation is pleased to announce a new program of career development grants intended specifically for First, Second, and Third Prize winners from past Lenya Competitions. The Foundation also helps Lenya Competition winners by arranging performances; next year's Kurt Weill Fest in Dessau features concerts with six past winners (see p. 23).

## PREVIOUS WINNERS

### Highlights of recent and upcoming performances:

**Caitlin Mathes** (1st Prize, 2011) sings the lead role of Sister Dorothy Stang in the original cast recording of a new opera by Evan Mack, *Angel of the Amazon* (Albany Records). "She sings the part with a remarkably inviting, directly communicative delivery, retaining both clarity and lyricism in her high register" (*Opera News*). Caitlin is a Resident Artist at Portland Opera this year, alongside **Matthew Grills** (1st Prize, 2012).

**Lauren Worsham** (2nd Prize, 2009) will sing Flora in *The Turn of the Screw* at New York City Opera in 2013. In September, she took part in a new opera, *Dog Days*, by David T. Little (music) and Royce Vavrek (libretto), at Montclair State University. The *New York Times* noted Worsham's "preternaturally girlish soprano," and praised her rendering of "a self-possessed heroine who maintains dignity and charisma in spite of harrowing conditions."

**Zachary James** (3rd Prize, 2009): After putting in some time as Lurch in the national tour of *The Addams Family*, Zachary will create the role of Abraham Lincoln in the world premiere of Phillip Glass's new opera, *The Perfect American*, at English National Opera and Teatro Real, January–June 2013.

**Rebecca Jo Loeb** (1st Prize, 2008), now in her second season at the Hamburg Staatsoper, has some plum roles coming up: Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, and Hänsel in *Hänsel und Gretel*.

**James Benjamin Rodgers** (1st Prize, 2007) has just completed a concert tour of New Zealand to promote his soon-to-be-released recording with pianist Kenneth Merrill, *Exiled: The Journey of Kurt Weill*. "Rodgers is . . . an artist of world class. Interpreting the lyrics with deep feeling, facial expression and gesture, Rodgers drew his audience into the magic of musical theatre" (*Marlborough Express*). In December, James returns to the U.S. as tenor soloist with the National Chorale in Handel's *Messiah* at Avery Fisher Hall.

**Rodell Rosel** (2nd Prize, 2006) marked his debut with the Los Angeles Opera as Goro in *Madama Butterfly*. In 2013 he will play the title role in *Albert Herring* at Florentine Opera in Milwaukee, then returns to Los Angeles Opera to sing Spoletta in *Tosca*.

**Jonathan Michie** (1st Prize, 2005) is keeping busy this season at Oper Leipzig, with roles in *Die Zauberflöte* (Papageno) and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Figaro). He sang Count Dominik in *Arabella* at Santa Fe Opera last summer, and returns to the U.S. in January to play Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* with Florida Grand Opera.

**Liam Bonner** (2nd Prize, 2005) played Henri de Valois in Chabrier's *Le Roi Malgré Lui* at Bard SummerScape and reprised the role at Wexford Festival Opera. He drew a rave from *Musical America*: "Anyone who has ever heard the young Gérard Souzay caress Henri's music with his suave baritone is spoiled forever, but Liam Bonner's dashing young King is at the very least a worthy successor, as easy on the ears as he is on the eyes."



# More Weill Festivals!



## Kurt Weill Fest

The Kurt Weill Fest in Dessau, Germany, marks its twentieth anniversary in 2013 with the theme, “New York New York!” which follows “Berlin im Licht”

(2011) and “Hommage à Paris” as the last of a series covering the three periods of Weill’s career. With a focus on Weill’s American works and on Broadway more generally, the Fest promises a number of exciting performances, including the world premiere of a new oratorio derived from *The Eternal Road*, a performance of the folk-opera *Down in the Valley*, and several concerts featuring past Lenya Competition prizewinners. The Artist-in-Residence will be conductor James Holmes, a fixture at Dessau, who conducted the successful *One Touch of Venus* in 2010.

*Der Weg der Verheißung* (*The Eternal Road*), Weill’s largest stage work, premiered in New York in January 1937. A new oratorio version of the work, *Die Verheißung*, prepared by Ed Harsh, will see its first performance 28 February 2013, with soloists,

chorus, and orchestra of the Anhaltisches Theater conducted by Antony Hermus. This concert version will make performances of Weill’s magnificent score much easier to arrange in the future.

The Fest will open with a gala concert, “**New York—New York**,” starring Lenya Competition prizewinners Richard Todd Adams, Amy Justman, Analisa Leaming, Kyle Scatliffe, and Jacob Keith Watson, with the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz. Led by James Holmes, these rising stars of the musical theater will perform songs by Weill and other Broadway composers. Justman and Scatliffe will return later in the Fest in “**Wouldn’t You Like to Be on Broadway?**” with Holmes at the piano, joined by fellow Lenya Competition prizewinner James Benjamin Rodgers.

Rodgers will also perform Weill’s four *Walt Whitman Songs* with the MDR Sinfonieorchester and join Justman, Scatliffe, and Holmes in *Down in the Valley*, paired with the five songs from *Huckleberry Finn*, Weill’s last works. The Fest runs from 22 February through 10 March 2013 with a variety of staged performances, concerts, films, exhibitions, and other attractions.

For detailed information, visit: <http://www.kurt-weill.de>

Lenya Competition prizewinners performing in Dessau (l to r): Richard Todd Adams, Amy Justman, Analisa Leaming, James Benjamin Rodgers, Kyle Scatliffe, and Jacob Keith Watson.



## Kurt Weill Woche

Berlin will see a packed mini-festival of Weill’s works from 18–24 January 2013, hosted by the Komische Oper. A mixture of concerts and staged performances, the festival includes revivals of two of their productions: *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (19 January; pictured below) and *Die sieben Todsünden* from last season with Dagmar Manzel (21 and 23 January). Weill’s satirical operetta, *Der Kuhhandel*, will be given twice in concert under the baton of Antony Hermus, with Ina Kringelborn and Vincent Wolfsteiner in the lead roles. Audiences can also attend a chamber music concert (19 January) and an appearance by Ute Lemper, performing her new program, “**Last Tango in Berlin**” (20 January). The festival closes with an orchestral concert conducted by Kristiina Poska of the Komische Oper. The program includes the *Violin Concerto*, *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, and *Das Berliner Requiem*.



PHOTO: MONIKA RITTERSHAUS

## FOUNDATION NEWS

### Sponsorships and Grants

In addition to the grants awarded last December, the Foundation made the following awards during 2012:

#### Sponsorships

University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Weill festival. Kurt Weill Gesellschaft Dessau. Kurt Weill Fest 2013. Opera America, Julius Rudel Archives, New York. Establish collection of Kurt Weill scores and libretti.

#### Mid-Year College and University Grants

Linköpings-Universität. *Berliner Requiem*. University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY. *The Threepenny Opera*. Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. *Mahagonny Songspiel*.

#### Contingency Grants

Glimmerglass Festival, Cooperstown, NY. *Lost in the Stars*. St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN. *Street Scene*.

For detailed information, visit: <http://www.komische-oper-berlin.de/festivals/kurt-weill-woche>



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