

The Threepenny Opera

Atlantic Theater Company
New York

Premiere: 7 April 2014

Just because a show has a half-curtain doesn't mean it has to be half-hearted.

Martha Clarke's production of the Blitzstein adaptation of *The Threepenny Opera* at Atlantic Theater Company delivered some of the sexual goods while avoiding the far more important aspects of crime, poverty, and the underworld. Clarke turned out to be more interested in sex than danger.

The first images were seedy successes. An actual bulldog was seen licking the body of a prostrate woman. A nearby prostitute got a leg up on her competition by displaying her legs in their entirety and her panties-less backside. One could argue that as these erotic machinations continued they drew attention away from the Macheath-Polly-Lucy-Jenny love quadrangle. But theatergoers obviously had the choice of looking where they wanted. Besides, the much-publicized female nudity (and mostly heterosexual sex acts) was of the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't variety. Flimsy fabric covered braless bodies far more often.

What was missing? The hard edges of gangsterism, violence, and corruption. Macheath seemed so unthreatening that he came across as Mack the Knife, blunted. To be fair, Clarke may have wanted to show an out-of-gas criminal. Michael Park had salt-and-pepper hair, which said he was at least middle-aged. Costume designer Donna Zakowska felt that at his age he'd dress better, so she gave him a Savile Row suit. That may have been fine for the boss, but Macheath's followers all looked equally dapper. Yes, standards were higher in those days, but not for guys like that. Clarke further drained flavor by dropping the toadies' colorful and time-honored nicknames. Filch retained his moniker, but Ready-money Matt, Crookfinger Jake, Bob the Saw, and the others were simply identified as "Ensemble."

Park sang beautifully throughout and made the most of his duets with Laura Osnes (Polly), another marvelous singer. Clarke, like plenty of other directors, strayed from Blitzstein's adaptation and reverted to Weill and Brecht's original concept, taking "Barbara Song" from Lucy and giving it to Polly. But she also did something new by moving it to the wedding scene. Having Polly

explain her feelings for Macheath to his henchmen doesn't pack nearly as much wallop as when she sings the number to her parents, no matter how expert the performance.

Sally Murphy scored in "Pirate Jenny" and literally backed herself into a corner for "Solomon Song" (whose last stanza was sung first, for no apparent reason). To make Lucy Brown more noticeable, Clarke gave her "Ballad of the Drowned Girl," from *Berliner Requiem*, which Lilli Cooper delivered solidly. Yes, it was irrelevant both to Lucy and the plot, but it granted her some emotional depth and introduced her to the audience before her jail scene with Macheath and Polly. (While many Lucys have implied that they're pregnant, Clarke had her well into her second trimester.)

What? Beautiful voices in *Threepenny*? Weill and Brecht cast good actors who could also sing; they would have been pleased with F. Murray Abraham and Mary Beth Peil as the

Peachums. Famed downtown performance artist John Kelly brought an appropriately world-weary sound to "The Ballad of Mack the Knife." Generally, in terms of how songs were delivered, Clarke made another split-the-difference decision: part Brecht, part Broadway. Early in the show, characters sang to each other in traditional musical comedy fashion, then abandoned the convention and faced front. Yet the fourth wall was most decisively swept aside when a cop tore off Peachum's hat and threw it into the audience. Abraham spotted the theatergoer who'd caught it and offered a \$10 reward for its return. (At the 9 April performance, the return throw only reached the first row; another patron then lobbed it to Abraham. "Five bucks each," he quipped.)

Even in terms of structure, Clarke once again went halfway—literally. She eschewed the normal three acts in favor of two. How odd to look at a program and see "First Threepenny Finale" with four songs to go in Act One and then "Second Threepenny Finale" as the third song in Act Two. But Clarke did adhere to tradition by keeping the orchestra in a little room far upstage. (The seven-player ensemble was excellent). And Clarke, famous for her "moving paintings," did offer a few arresting images. When Macheath

put the noose around his own neck, Polly, Lucy, and Jenny rushed towards him, as if they each wanted to prevent the hanging. Then, when Queen Victoria's reprieve was announced, we got a glimpse of Her Majesty—in the guise of that aforementioned bulldog, sporting both tiara and cape while riding in a child's wagon. Was this a comment on Victoria's appearance, given her legendary lack of physical appeal? At last there was something in this *Threepenny Opera* to unnerve theatergoers.

Peter Filichia
New York



The Street Singer (John Kelly), Mrs. Peachum (Mary Beth Peil), Macheath (Michael Park) and Polly (Laura Osnes) in the opening sequence.

PHOTO: KEVIN THOMAS GARCIA



The Peachums (Mary Beth Peil and F. Murray Abraham, seated) with their company of beggars.

PHOTO: KEVIN THOMAS GARCIA

The Threepenny Opera

Signature Theatre
Arlington, VA

Premiere: 22 April 2014

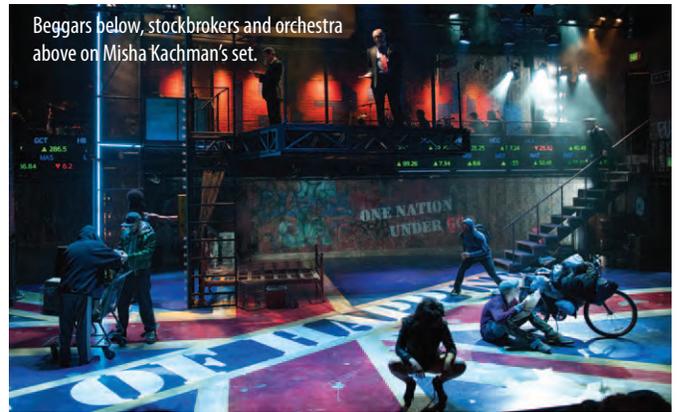
It took 24 years, but finally the Tony-winning Signature Theatre added Weill and Brecht to its exhaustive musical-theater repertory with an estimable mounting of *The Threepenny Opera*. And even if the strongly-sung revival reveals anew some of the challenges of invigorating this theatrical milestone for modern audiences, it also underlines the show's enduring strength as a conscience-pricking piece of narrative art.

Director Matthew Gardiner's production, in Signature's 270-seat main-stage theater, is buoyed by several fine portrayals, including Broadway veterans Nataschia Diaz (*Seussical*) as prostitute Jenny and Mitchell Jarvis (*Rock of Ages*) as reptilian underworld kingpin Macheath. In the roles of the Peachums, Signature stalwarts Bobby Smith, Donna Migliaccio and Erin Driscoll introduce a bracing dose of vinegar into Brecht's parasitic brood of money-grubbers.

With such an accomplished gallery of performers in leading roles, the mechanics of Brecht's story should be well-served, and in some instances they are, particularly in the elucidation of the tangled love affair between the duplicitous Macheath and the vengeful Jenny. Still, the updated version of *Threepenny* used here—an adaptation by Robert David MacDonald, with lyrics by Jeremy Sams, that was first performed at London's Donmar Warehouse in 1994—hamstrings the production by anchoring it so specifically in a particular moment of financial history.

It's Margaret Thatcher's wild, high-flying London of the late '80s that this reimagined *Threepenny* excoriates, with a focus on the dog-eat-dog rapaciousness of the nouveau riche and the social inequity festering in every precinct of the city. Some of the updating is satirically apropos, as in "The Cannon Song," in which Macheath affirms his bond with an old army buddy, the corrupt police chief Tiger Brown (John Leslie Wolfe). They sing of the British Army's aptitude for annihilation all over the globe, "from Basra to Goose Green," the latter a locale in the Falkland Islands. "We'll help the foreigner / To meet the coroner," they croon, "brown or black or khaki / Afghani or Iraqi."

At some other times, though, the story unnecessarily ties itself up in knots in the pursuit of invented contemporary relevance. As the latest stock quotes flash across Misha Kachman's modern brick and metal set, the various characters take note of the tight security surrounding the celebration of the crowning of a new monarch: Prince William, after his father, Prince Charles, has renounced his claim to the British throne. Making a show of reining in the criminal



Beggars below, stockbrokers and orchestra above on Misha Kachman's set.

PHOTO: MARGOT SCHULMAN

excesses of the city, the police go after the notorious Macheath, who has been turned in by the thwarted Jenny.

One of the advantages of Signature's space—unusually intimate for the kind of large-scale productions the company regularly presents—is the robustness of the listening experience. So the Weill-Brecht score, expertly performed by an eight-member orchestra conducted by Gabriel Mangiante, crackles thrillingly. This impression is triggered right off the bat, with Diaz's sultry rendition of "Mack the Knife," here rendered as "The Flick Knife Song." (This production restores the number to the show's opening moments; the Donmar version placed it deeper in the proceedings after Macheath has been arrested and jailed.)

As Polly, the Peachums' daughter who happily relinquishes the respectability her craven parents seek for her in favor of a more dangerous alliance with Macheath, Driscoll uses her babydoll mien to particular advantage: this Polly only looks like a Girl Scout. As the actress reveals through her vibrant soprano in "Pirate Jenny," Polly has a surprisingly deep kinship with darkness. The sense of the abiding mystery of identity is also reflected in a rewardingly coarse portrayal of Lucy Brown, one of Macheath's other dalliances, by the actor Rick Hammerly. (His presence is one of the smarter concessions to up-to-the-minute sexual mores.)

The plot's seamy underpinnings are filtered satisfactorily through Jarvis's bravura performance as Mack the Knife. He's as convincingly oily as you would want from a character who steals and slaughters and still manages, at the moment of execution, to slip out of the hangman's knot. No justice exists in the ethical swamp that is Macheath's London, a fact that on this occasion leaves an aptly acidic aftertaste.

Even so, the modernized setting of *Threepenny*, a show that originated in Germany of the 1920s, isn't an ideal match for the transparent moralizing with which we're sent into the night. Today's audience is far more aware of the paradoxes and complexities of our economic system than Brecht and Weill allowed for. And yet, the electricity of *Threepenny* retains its high voltage, enough in Arlington, certainly, to give us all a charge.

Peter Marks
Washington, D.C.



Polly (Erin Driscoll) and Mack (Mitchell Jarvis).

PHOTO: MARGOT SCHULMAN

The Threepenny Opera

Graeae Theatre Company

(Touring production, seen at Birmingham Repertory Theatre)

Premiere: 21 February 2014

A group that employs disabled and non-disabled actors on equal footing and incorporates both signing and audio/visual description into the performance is bound to give its audience an unusual insight into the process of theatrical illusion, and there's no denying that the Graeae provided a memorable *Dreigroschenabend*, shot through with a refreshing sense of the company pulling together and taking over the theatre. Performers warmed up *a cappella* in the foyer as we took our seats; once in the auditorium, its walls covered with spray-painted slogans, John Kelly's engaging and confident Narrator introduced the cast and the tattered curtain rose on Neil Murray's stark gray brickwork, stained with the rusty hue of dried blood. It soon became clear that the signing and description were not extraneous but fully integrated into the staging; sign-language interpreter Jude Mahon and "audio describer" Wayne Norman were as eloquent as any other member of the cast. Like the occasional wheelchair and cane, they proved a natural part of a cohesive performance. Peachum's dictum that feigned disability tugs the heartstrings more than the real thing received no undue emphasis: Jenny Sealey and Peter Rowe's production seemed secure in its own skin, unashamedly contemporary in—and by—design, not overly concerned with being "Brechtian." All the same, you couldn't help but wonder what the playwright would make of its rather particular kind of *gestus*. He might approve the screens rolled on or flown in to project the text, for instance, while wondering about the effectiveness of the wildly diverse images, both still and moving, flashing behind it. Their hectic pace proved distracting at times (and they must have cost more than a beggarly sum).

Brecht might also be intrigued by Graeae's decision to take the score out of wholly specialist hands by using actor/musicians; Weill, on the other hand, would surely be more worried. Players

whose attention is divided by the demands of acting and—crucially—movement obviously have extra problems of ensemble and balance to overcome. To their credit, the company fielded all the instruments, and Joey Hickman did a sterling job in keeping things together. But elements central to Weill performance—the sharp, clear articulation of motor rhythms, the focus on harmonic shifts and subtlety, the blend within the ensemble—were bound to be compromised, as the emphasis fell on broad brushstrokes at the expense of telling details. Tempos were generally judicious, but some moments were hobbled by a lack of crispness (the machine-gun last bars of the "First Threepenny Finale" provided a small but significant example) while others needed, if not exactly a slower tempo, more breathing space. Cici Howells's feisty Polly, for instance, motored a shade too fast through both "Barbara Song" and "Pirate Jenny" to point up subtleties in the lyrics. In short, the actor/musician approach requires the actor/singer to take extra care of the text; while Robert David MacDonald's translation of the dialogue was generally delivered with pace and panache, Jeremy Sams's pungent lyrics (succinctly updated) received more varied shrift. Among the more successful were Garry Robson's urbane Peachum (his scene near the beginning of Act Three with Will Kenning's well-judged Tiger Brown was one of the best played of the evening), Natasha Lewis's Lucy, and Victoria Oruwari's too young Mrs. Peachum (she didn't project well at first, but made a good impression in the final verse of "Ballad of Sexual Dependency"). Milton Lopes's Macheath was more problematic, at his best in sudden flashes of violent temper, but less comfortable with the character's menacing charm and sounding pale (and a touch insecure) in the songs. "Ballad of the Easy Life" (again taken a bit too fast) found him lost in background choreography, while the sound enhancement seemed rather woolly from center orchestra. Weill would certainly be at his most perturbed here. At the other extreme, the stage emptied for Jenny's "Solomon Song," and we were left with just the harmonium (synthesized but still effective) while Amelia Cavallo's admirably focused, thought-out delivery left a telling air of quiet approval in the house. Suddenly the production seemed to trade its broad, serrated blade for a scalpel, and we were reminded of what Harold Clurman called the "sweetly poisonous nostalgia" inherent in Weill's score.

More of that would have been welcome, but that is not to decry either the production's vigor or its value. It has apparently played to large parties of young people, introducing a new audience to the work, and the company is undeniably qualified to make that introduction. Almost ninety years on (two hundred ninety after Gay and Pepusch) London still has too many dispossessed people—socially, financially, physically—whom the state cannot or will not care for. Here was a spirited reminder that *Dreigroschenoper* is alive and kicking—while at the same time leaving us with the uncomfortable feeling that it remains all too relevant.

James Holmes
London



Macheath (Milton Lopes) sings "Tango Ballad"; Jude Mahon (standing, on chair) provides sign-language interpretation.

PHOTO: PATRICK BALDWIN

Street Scene

Staatsoper Hannover

Premiere: 2 November 2013

In Germany, a production of *Street Scene* more often than not becomes a referendum on the American Dream. In the new Staatsoper Hannover production of Weill's Broadway opera, the dream is turned into a starred-and-striped nightmare in which a proliferation of red, white, and blue flags, costumes, and popsicles signifies little more than hypocrisy and exploitation. Director Bernd Mottl and designer Friedrich Eggert have chosen a bright palette for the musical tragedy to fortify the ironic juxtaposition of romantic dreams and homicidal violence. Benjamin Reiners's idiomatic and powerful musical direction, meanwhile, proves that Hannover has become a destination for those who wish to see musicals performed on a theatrical and musical scale no longer economically feasible in the U.S. Blessed with a strong cast, he and Mottl coaxed deeply musical and engaged performances from the principals, most notably Kelly God as an impassioned Anna Maurant, whose first-act aria was as emotionally and musically precise as her "A Boy Like You" was heartbreaking.

Mottl discarded the opera's titular thoroughfare for a high-school basketball court turned into an emergency shelter for working-class New Yorkers displaced by tragedy (Hurricane Sandy?). This allowed him, especially in the first act, to dramatize the crushing reality of private lives forced into the public eye. And like the piece itself, the *mise-en-scène* gave a terrible reality to the passionate enmities and jealousies that flourish among working-class (or any other) families forced, by poverty and oppressive circumstances, into uncomfortably intimate quarters. Playing much of the piece on the apron also gave free rein to the vigorous theatricality of the many numbers that seem almost to declare themselves by their genre: aria, love duet, swing number, Italian-opera sextet, etc. In Mrs. Maurant's aria, the unhappy narrative was enacted upstage by the children as a sad, Disneyesque, fairy-tale *tableau vivant*. On the other hand, "Moon-Faced, Starry-Eyed" was danced to a gritty, sexy frenzy by Wolfgang Schwingler and Nini Stadlmann.

Despite occasional excess, Mottl's foregrounding of fantasy underscored the potency of the illusions that the characters—and the community—maintain in order to survive. The most dramatically and musically transporting of these fantasies were, as the piece warrants, given to Rose and Sam. For "What Good Would the Moon Be?" Rose slipped on a white fur coat to become a torch-singing star parading in front of a spangled theater marquee, while "Remember That I Care" was sung by the couple bathed in blue moonlight as the rest of the characters, seated behind them on cots, blew soap bubbles that eventually filled the stage. This simple device played up the unreality and fragility of the couple's fantasies of escape and was followed up at the end of



PHOTO: JÖRG LANSBERG

the second act, during the song's reprise, when Mr. Fiorentino, in the cold light of morning, blew a lone strand of quickly bursting bubbles.

With such elaborate staging, there is always the danger that the scenic effects will clash with the music or upstage the singers. Mottl for the most part avoided these pitfalls, although the abundance of red, white, and blue sometimes overplayed *Street Scene's* nationalist particularity and became too easy a source of comedy and ridicule. In the "Ice-Cream Sextet," the music was overwhelmed by pom-pom waving cheerleaders marching in formation like a halftime event at the Super Bowl. Moreover, the costuming of Mrs. Fiorentino in a huge fat suit seemed intended to underline the problematic assumption that working-class Americans are McDonald's-eating, Coca-Cola-swilling gluttons. There were other troubling choices, including costuming Henry as a stage Indian, perhaps to compare the oppression of Native Americans to that of African-Americans. "I've Got a Marble and a Star," however, alludes to the blues and has nothing to do with the culture or history of Native Americans. A more deep-seated problem was enacting the murder offstage, after the director had so meticulously demonstrated that the private is always public. Shootings may be difficult to stage, but this choice sabotaged the production's concept.

My objections aside, the principals turned in well-focused performances, both musically and dramatically. Kelly God's resplendent Anna Maurant was matched by a strong Brian Davis, who portrayed her husband less as a villain than as a shell-shocked casualty of one of the U.S.'s many wars. Ania Vegry proved an ardent Rose and although Ivan Turšič's Sam never matched her vocally or dramatically, their duets were genuinely affecting. The orchestra, moreover, had a good command of American swing style, which is not always the case in German opera houses. This production makes it clear that of all of Weill's Broadway scores, *Street Scene* seems best served by the German lyric theatre because of its kinship not with operetta, but with gritty realism, and its irresistible pastiche of American popular song styles.

David Savran
Berlin

Symphony no. 2

New York Philharmonic
Jeffrey Kahane, conductor

20–25 March 2014

Pianist and conductor Jeffrey Kahane led exciting performances from the keyboard of concertos by Maurice Ravel and George Gershwin with the New York Philharmonic in March. The real highlight, however, was Kurt Weill's Symphony no. 2, heard on a Philharmonic program for the first time since 1934. More than ever, especially after hearing it live, I cannot understand why this extremely effective and cleverly orchestrated work—which offers tons of tuneful solo opportunities to members of the orchestra—is not a mainstay of the repertoire. It is true that Weill's extensive contributions to theater music have overshadowed his much smaller corpus of concert works, but that's only part of the story.

Two years ago, the New Jersey Symphony's performance of Weill's Symphony no. 1 during Carnegie Hall's Spring for Music festival (it was the 1921 work's Carnegie debut!), though spirited, seemed dwarfed by the other works on that program: Busoni's monumental piano concerto, and the wacky *Nocturnal*, the final composition of Edgard Varèse, who, like Weill, was deeply influenced by Busoni. Given that common lineage, the program was brilliantly logical in the abstract, but the works were so dissimilar as to make Weill's remarkable, youthful, single-movement symphony sound both formally amorphous and unduly brash (though, in that context, perhaps not brash enough).

At least the New Jersey Symphony avoided the usual treatment accorded to unfamiliar concert pieces: presenting them alongside utterly unrelated but well-known works, so they come across as music that doesn't fit or belong. Look no further than the 1934 Philharmonic (and U.S. premiere) performances of Weill's Symphony no. 2, under the direction of Bruno Walter—two months after he led the Concertgebouw Orchestra in its world premiere in Amsterdam—where it was definitely the odd work out. It was sandwiched between two concertos as in Kahane's program, but they were very different—a Handel organ concerto and Beethoven's Violin Concerto. Also on the program was Mozart's "Haffner" Symphony. As if to add insult to injury, Weill's piece, though resolutely tonal and also scored for a smaller, Mozart-sized orchestra, was the only work played that evening that was not in the key of D. Walter led the Philharmonic in one additional performance a week later, replacing Beethoven and the Mozart symphony with a Mozart piano concerto (that he played himself) and Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, closing the program with Weill's symphony—an even more peculiar sequence.

The symphony's world premiere in Amsterdam had been no more auspicious. Walter asked Weill beforehand to add percussion to the timpani specified in the original score; Weill seems not to have been happy with the result. (The posthumously published score edited by David Drew includes timpani only, which is how it was performed under Kahane.) Perhaps even more telling, in an effort to appease critics for whom the word "symphony" carried specific expectations, Walter encouraged

Weill to change the title; it was billed as "Symphonische Fantasie" in Amsterdam and as "Three Night Scenes: A Symphonic Fantasy" in New York. Walter's suggestions didn't work; critical response in both cities was nearly unanimously negative, though surviving accounts describe the Amsterdam audience as appreciative. The symphony proved to be Weill's last purely orchestral work. Walter conducted it only once more, in Vienna in 1937. It was not given again until 1967 in London under Gary Bertini.

Since then Weill's Symphony no. 2 has been performed all over the world, with recordings led by top international conductors including Julius Rudel, Marin Alsop, and Mariss Jansons. But the piece may have found its most devoted champion in Jeffrey Kahane, who has introduced it with numerous orchestras and feels a strong personal connection to it. During his introductory comments, Kahane got emotional describing a performance he had led in Hamburg. He talked about discovering that he is distantly related to Weill; his own immediate family, like Weill's, fled Germany just before the worst Nazi atrocities began. But the Philharmonic performance was particularly effective because of Kahane's programming. It was presented alongside contemporaneous, and closely related, works that perfectly captured Weill's musical milieu. Ravel's Piano Concerto, premiered only a year before Weill began composing his symphony, also blends idiosyncratically harmonized melodies with meticulous orchestration; it too would be its composer's final orchestral work. Gershwin, who also straddled theater and concert hall, gave us the equally melodious and rhythmically exciting Concerto in F, from the previous decade. European and American, theater and concert hall: Kahane's choices scrupulously observed Weill's dualities and contributed to the success of the Philharmonic's rendering. The large audience received Weill's symphony with great enthusiasm, offering generous applause to each of the orchestra's principals, whom Kahane singled out for bows. And this time around *The New York Times* gave Weill's symphony a rave review—finally!

Frank J. Oteri
New York

ASCAP Award-winning composer and music journalist Frank J. Oteri is the Composer Advocate at New Music USA and the Senior Editor of its web magazine NewMusicBox (www.newmusicbox.org).

From Zachary Woolfe's *New York Times* review (21 March 2014):

"Most valuably, Mr. Kahane led the orchestra in its first performance of Kurt Weill's moodily nocturnal Symphony No. 2 since Walter's in 1934 . . . Kahane said that he hears in it a work of exile. After a brooding introduction, the first movement features broad Romantic melodies, perhaps an evocation of a vanishing past, that yield to martial rhythms. Those curt pulses suddenly relax, though not without an ominous tinge, into something suaver, like a tango, before the movement ends hard, loud and pummeling. Suavity is also under siege in the central Largo movement, more vigorous than relaxed or reflective. The mood is dirge-like, yet gains a strange sensuality from alluring instrumental combinations: cello with flute, horn with plucks from the strings. A firm timpani heartbeat fades into a murmur. The finale is a swirling, savage dance that becomes yet another march, more sardonic than the first movement's, before a sinister, full-throated gallop to the end. The music was anxious and harried enough to infect the concertos programmed on either side of it . . . The result was that happy rarity: a symphonic concert with a sustained mood. In this case, it was a feeling of worried, restless pleasure, a trace of the uniquely feverish quality of the period between the world wars."

One Touch of Venus

Melissa Errico, Brent Barrett, Ron Raines;
National Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Owen
Edwards and James Holmes

JAY Records CDJAY2 1362 (2 CDs)

If the category “forgotten hit” is appropriate for Broadway musicals, *One Touch of Venus* belongs in it. The story (book by S.J. Perelman and Ogden Nash; lyrics by Nash) of a statue of Venus that comes to life and enchants both a wealthy art collector (Whitelaw Savory) and an ordinary barber (Rodney Hatch) definitely pleased audiences when it opened in 1943. It enjoyed the longest Broadway run (567 performances) of any of Kurt Weill’s American musicals, it was recorded, it toured, it was filmed (unrecognizably altered, but that was standard for the era), it was telecast, it has remained available for performance, and it has been accorded an occasional regional or concert production. Yet somehow it has never ranked among the classic titles, the ones that get regular revivals and inspire heated arguments in musical theater chatrooms.

Maybe that’s because of the plot (whether it’s a question of construction, audience expectation, or focus), its status as a vehicle for just the right star, its production demands (e.g., a series of Agnes de Mille ballets), or just bad luck. Whatever the reason, the score absolutely deserves the complete recording it has never had until now.

And here it is at last, every note on two CDs, with three cut songs as bonus tracks, plus a booklet containing the complete lyrics, along with commentary and a helpful synopsis by Mark N. Grant. This release brings us one gratifying step closer to a com-



prehensive Weill discography; of his American shows, only *Love Life* now lacks a complete recording.

One Touch of Venus did get an original-cast recording, having opened to critical and audience acclaim in 1943, just after *Oklahoma!* set entirely new standards for such things. But the 32-minute Decca album, which featured only two cast members (Mary Martin as Venus and Kenny Baker as Rodney, the latter annexing one of Savory’s songs) and included two pieces of ballet music and the final reprise of “Speak Low,” inevitably underrepresents the score. By contrast, the JAY production contains an overture for each act (the first of which has the only non-Weill orchestration in the show), fourteen songs, six encores

CD1 / Act One

1. INTRODUCTION* National Symphony Orchestra
2. NEW ART IS TRUE ART* Savory, Attendant and Students
3. ONE TOUCH OF VENUS* Molly and Girls
4. VENUS AWAKENING Rodney and Venus
5. CURTAIN MUSIC Scene One* Molly, Stanley and Savory
6. HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU Rodney and Gloria
7. VENUS ENTRANCE I* Rodney and Venus
8. MRS. MOATS FALLS Mrs. Moats, Rodney and Venus
9. I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF Venus
10. FORTY MINUTES FOR LUNCH – BALLETT* National Symphony Orchestra
11. INCIDENTAL MUSIC* National Symphony Orchestra
12. WESTWIND Savory and Venus
13. WAY OUT WEST IN JERSEY* Mrs. Kramer, Gloria and Rodney
14. WAY OUT WEST IN JERSEY Encore* Rodney, Mrs. Kramer and Gloria
15. THAT'S HOW I AM SICK OF LOVE Rodney and Gloria
16. ONE TOUCH OF VENUS Reprise* Chorus
17. VENUS ENTRANCE 2* Savory and Venus
18. FOOLISH HEART Venus and Savory
19. FOOLISH HEART DANCE National Symphony Orchestra
20. THE TROUBLE WITH WOMEN Taxi, Savory, Stanley and Rodney
21. GLORIA DISAPPEARS Venus and Gloria
22. SPEAK LOW Venus and Rodney
23. ARTISTS' BALL* National Symphony Orchestra
24. DOCTOR CRIPPEN* Savory, Mrs. Kramer, Dr. Crippen, Police Lieutenant, Rodney and Venus

CD2 / Act Two

1. ENTR'ACTE* National Symphony Orchestra
2. VERY, VERY, VERY* Molly
3. VERY, VERY, VERY* Encore Molly
4. SPEAK LOW Reprise Rodney and Venus
5. CATCH HATCH* Savory, Molly, Taxi, Stanley, Mrs. Kramer and Anatolians
6. THAT'S HIM Venus
7. WOODEN WEDDING Rodney and Venus
8. VENUS IN OZONE HEIGHTS – BALLETT* Venus and Rodney
9. BACCHANAL* Chorus
10. STATUE RETURNS* Savory and Rodney
11. FINALETTO Savory, Rodney and Girl

Bonus Tracks

12. VIVE LA DIFFERENCE* Victoria Clark, Ron Raines and Melissa Errico
13. WHO AM I?* Ron Raines
14. LOVE IN A MIST Melissa Errico (Jim Holmes, Piano)

National Symphony Orchestra Conducted by John Owen Edwards and James Holmes*

*Vive la Difference” was written for the provisional script prepared by Bella Spewack in 1942 and then transferred to the Perelman-Nash book where it followed “I’m a Stranger Here Myself” in Act I, sung by two mannequins in a shop window, with Venus chiming in. Weill had nearly finished the orchestration when it was cut shortly before the beginning of rehearsals.

*“Who am I?”, also written for the Spewack script, became a solo for Whitelaw Savory at the opening of Act II, but John Boles of the original cast could not sing it, and it was dropped during the tryout.

*“Love in a Mist”, again written for the old script, found its way into the new script in a scene in Act II (Venus alone at the waterfront) that was dropped early on. The song was never orchestrated.

or reprises, five dance sequences, and eight incidental bits. (The only thing missing: two encore verses for “The Trouble with Women.”) As with many musicals written between 1940 and 1970, the two acts are of decidedly unequal length: as recorded here without the dialogue (save a handful of lines heard as lead-ins, or over underscoring), Act I runs just over an hour, Act II just over half an hour.

Much of this material has not been recorded in its original form before, although most of the songs have turned up in at least one recorded anthology. The music left off the original-cast recording includes two comic songs for Savory’s wisecracking secretary Molly, one of them the title song (the original Molly, Paula Laurence, did record these in new arrangements decades later). Rodney has a soliloquy, “How Much I Love You,” seasoned with typical Ogden Nash whimsy, and shares a rambunctious trio with his fiancée Gloria and her mother, “Way Out West in Jersey,” that after several refrains and vaudevillian interludes explodes into an unexpected boogie-woogie. Savory tries to trap Rodney at the end of Act I by presenting the cautionary tale of “Dr. Crippen,” with chorus and dancers—a fusion of “The Saga of Jenny” and *Hamlet’s* play within a play. When Rodney finds himself on the run in Act II, nearly the entire cast joins in a contrapuntal ensemble, “Catch Hatch.” In addition to the dances previously recorded, “Foolish Heart” gets a balletic continuation (concluding with “What Shall We Do with a Drunken Sailor?”) and the Artists’ Ball that ends Act I has party underscoring that links the previous song (“Speak Low”) to the next one (“Dr. Crippen”). The magical appearances and disappearances that punctuate the story all get their appropriate musical flourishes.

As for the bonus material: “Who Am I?” was cut from the show at a late stage (and has been restored in a few productions); it provides a suitably bewildered moment for Savory at the top of Act II, with the kind of word-mangling that Nash’s light verse made famous. “Vive la Différence,” a trio for Venus and two bit players, appeared in two early scripts but was never performed (and its orchestration stops a few measures short of the end; I provided the continuation used here). “Love in a Mist,” a solo for Venus, was never orchestrated at all; this recording uses piano accompaniment.

All of it sounds wonderful, thanks to conductors John Owen Edwards and James Holmes, both of whom capture the appropriate style and sound to an extraordinary degree. Some of the instrumental demands, such as string sections performing swing rhythms (even pizzicato) or brass providing the softest of backgrounds, can be challenging, but the National Symphony Orchestra handles them without difficulty. All the playing sounds thoroughly comfortable, as if mastered during a run of performances, even though this is a studio recording.

Melissa Errico’s Venus is well worth the wait: lovely in sound, warm and unmannered, as seductive as the goddess of love needs to be. She brings a soprano shimmer to “Foolish Heart” and a soft urgency to “Speak Low.” Best of all is her disarmingly simple and intimate delivery of “That’s Him.”

Ron Raines, who played Savory in a 1983 concert, handles his songs with smooth assurance and an appropriate touch of formality, his solid baritone undiminished over the years. Rodney the barber needs comic facility plus a sweet tenor suitable for both patter and ballads, requirements that Brent Barrett meets handsomely.

The fine performers cast in the smaller roles—Victoria Clark as Molly, Lauren Worsham and Judy Kaye as Gloria and her mother, Michael “Tuba” McKinsey and Jacob Smith as two toughs on the trail of the statue—all fulfill their responsibilities so satisfactorily that criticism may seem gratuitous. Yet a hint of overstatement does come across on occasion, suggesting early readings of a text not quite fully absorbed. That isn’t too surprising in a recording with a cast assembled only in the studio, new to their roles (Errico and Raines excepted in this case), with no credited stage director. And though singers of literature like this are entitled to some freedom, one or two places in Weill’s vocal lines might have been read a bit more literally, given that this recording will become a standard reference by default.

Such quibbles matter little when weighed against the feast provided for us here: a complete, sumptuously sung, stylishly conducted and played rendition of Weill’s biggest Broadway success, a mere seventy years late. Anyone aware of the show will surely have bought it by now. Others have a delightful discovery ahead of them.

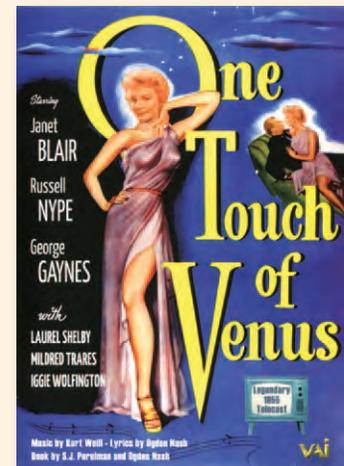
Jon Alan Conrad
Newark, DE

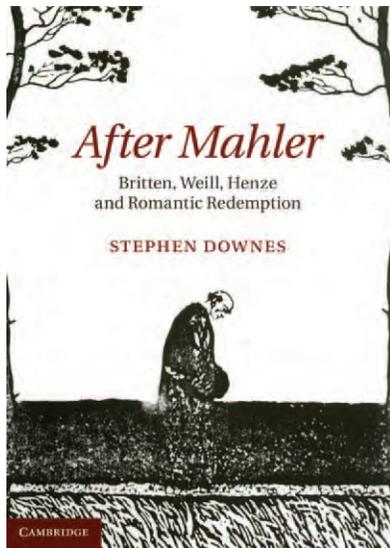
One Touch of Venus on DVD

In 1955, NBC broadcast *One Touch of Venus* in a television adaptation derived from a successful staging of the show that summer at the Dallas State Fair. The broadcast, though cut down somewhat (running time of about 80 minutes) offers no fewer than ten songs and both ballets. Directed by George Schaefer and choreographed by Edmund Balin, the cast featured Janet Blair (Venus), Russell Nype (Rodney), and George Gaynes (Savory).

Fans of the original Broadway show will welcome this home video release. The 1948 film adaptation (Ava Gardner and Robert Walker) eliminated most of the score and substantially rewrote the script. The 1955 broadcast, now available from Video Artists International (VAI 4568) follows the original script and score much more closely. Blair makes a regal Venus, and Nype is charmingly unassuming as the humble barber who attracts the goddess.

The video, like the original broadcast, is in black and white. The DVD is playable in all regions but is in NTSC (U.S.) format. Numerous chapters make navigation easy, with a complete list given on a printed insert. The original commercials for Oldsmobile are included separately, as a bonus.





After Mahler: Britten, Weill, Henze and Romantic Redemption

by Stephen Downes

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 276 pp. ISBN: 978-1-107-00871-7

The subject matter of this erudite study is really *post*-romantic. At issue is music in which “romantic redemption” is something partially invoked rather than fully realized, whose gestures, according to

Mahler scholar John Williamson apropos Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde*, “remember the style of musical romanticism without reproducing it” (11). Williamson is one of many authors that British musicologist Stephen Downes cites to support the main argument and thereby justify the title of his book. According to Downes, Benjamin Britten, Kurt Weill, and Hans Werner Henze should be considered “after Mahler,” not just in the trivial chronological sense, but in the esthetically substantive one that they, too, employed such gestures in their music. In this they demonstrate “richly comparable relationships” to Mahler’s work through “tentative, fragile, broken echoes of the redemptive symbol” (59).

This, then, is as much a book about Mahler as it is about the composers who followed post-romantically in his wake. The expository first chapter (“Mahler’s moment”) presents a terminological framework, beginning with Goethe’s distinction between symbol and allegory, which Downes summarizes as follows: “In allegory, the poet is seeking access to the general *through* the particular. In symbol, it is *in* the particular” (28). “In Mahler,” he observes, “remnants of a symbolic art, the moments of suggestive repleteness and fulfilment, coexist with allegorical melancholy and fragmentation” (31). Later, after detailed analysis of several works, he diagnoses this coexistence as follows: “Mahler’s evocations of the musical symbol in the romantic tradition are part of a crucial reflection, in the post-Nietzschean age of scepticism, of Mahler’s relationship to the Wagnerian aesthetics of the ‘Beethoven’ and ‘Religion and Art’ essays, and of his investment in the ideas of the early Romantics. Mahler’s music presents a series of especially fascinating and diverse examples in the story of the competing claims of allegory and symbol” (58). The diversity of the examples runs the gamut from the Eighth Symphony, which Downes calls “Mahler’s most monumental exploration of how allegorical hierarchies might ascend towards an ultimate affirmation of the romantic symbol,” to the Ninth, in which “the cadential figures to which Mahler repeatedly turns as musical evocation of the symbolic are chromatically subverted or peter out into silence” (59).

Subversion constitutes the critical crux of Downes’s study, at once its *idée fixe* and its blind spot. His analyses are indebted above all to the critical theory of Theodor W. Adorno, who in

1930 “cautioned that Mahler should not be ‘summarily severed’ from romanticism; rather he ‘remains dialectically linked to it’ and its ‘archaically corroded material’” (151). Downes quotes Adorno’s *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy* and other writings more liberally than those of any other writer. The author’s knowledge of the critical literature is impressively encyclopedic, even if he often “cordons off” his citations, highlighting how they support the book’s underlying thesis while avoiding or glossing over underlying historical or ideological differences.

In the chapter on Weill (“Real and surreal: Weill and Mahler”), Downes refers to “a varied response from recent critics” to the dialectical connection to Romanticism posited by Adorno. And here he brings an essential methodological challenge to the fore. Subversion, whether its nature or its degree, is hardly a given; it can be found only through interpretation. In the Fourth Symphony, Raymond Monelle sees “montage” and “rupture” and Kofi Agawu opposes “organic connectedness” to “disjunction” and “discontinuity,” whereas David Schiff hears a “seamless, unifying developmental web of the ripest late romanticism” (151). Unity, in other words, is a function of reception dependent on a variety of assumptions that inform notions of musical coherence. For example, where Adorno interpreted the caesuras in *The Threepenny Opera*’s “Love Duet” as “wheezing” and the orchestral accompaniment as suggesting that “there are holes” in an imaginary barrel organ, others might just hear a hesitation waltz. The subversive ambiguity arises in this case more from the text than the music: “Love lasts—or it doesn’t last.”

Although one may beg to differ with Downes’s readings of the musical passages he analyzes and illustrates with numerous and substantial engraved examples, and thus take issue with the esthetic implications of the analyses’ theoretical underpinnings, his discussions are invariably stimulating and eloquently presented. His focus in the Weill chapter on musical “surrealism,” which via Adorno he traces back to Mahler, leads him to restrict his selection of works to Weill’s German period and to pay particular attention to the settings of Iwan Goll, which he contrasts with the later collaborations with Brecht. “If we buy Adorno’s hearing, it seems clear that the ambivalent ambiguity of the music of the Goll works, in which at important moments long-range cadential or teleological implications remain symbolically in play and leading-note tensions are intensified in a manner clearly echoing romantic style, has been cast aside for a more simple, short-windedly direct idiom” (188). He leaves it for others to find any post-Mahlerian “romantic redemption” in the music Weill composed after he left Germany. *The Eternal Road* would be a likely starting point, though the investigation should hardly end there.

Stephen Hinton
Stanford University

The 2014 Lotte Lenya Competition

Outstanding Singer-Actors Win Top Prizes

Each year the talent pool for the Lenya Competition grows stronger and stronger, and this year was no exception. Fourteen finalists—up from 12 last year—vied for top prizes in the finals of the 2014 Lotte Lenya Competition, held on 12 April 2014 in Kilbourn Hall at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Five had reached the finals before, making it an extremely competitive year. Two hundred contestants had been winnowed to 29 semi-finalists, who auditioned live in New York in early March. Rebecca Luker and Jeanine Tesori served as adjudicator/coaches at the semi-finals, evaluating the contestants and challenging them to improve their performances.

For the daytime final round, each contestant presented a diverse program that included an opera or operetta aria, two American musical theater songs (one from the pre-1968 “Golden Age” and one from 1968 or later), and a theatrical selection by Weill. That evening, finalists performed selections before an enthusiastic audience and the panel of judges: two-time Tony Award winner Judy Kaye, Broadway conductor and New York City Center *Encores!* Music Director Rob Berman, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis Artistic Director James Robinson.

At the conclusion of a terrific concert, Foundation President Kim Kowalke announced the winners. Natalie Ballenger of New York, a returning finalist who had won a Lys Symonette Award in the 2012 Competition, took the Third Prize of \$7,500, and Arlo Hill, also of New York, earned the \$10,000 Second Prize. The coveted First Prize of \$15,000 was awarded to Ben Edquist, of Houston, the youngest of the finalists.

Swaggering on stage as Gaston from *Beauty and the Beast*, Edquist began his dynamic program with an amusing performance of “Me.” Then he transformed into a touching Gabey, singing “Lonely Town” from *On the Town*, followed by a lush “This is New” for his Weill selection. He finished his program with an emotionally powerful aria, “She Called Him ‘Curt,’” from Jake Heggie’s *Three Decembers*. Judges praised Edquist for his “idiomatic performance of a wonderfully varied program, ability to communicate with every number, connection to the audience and to the texts, and for making the audience both laugh and cry.”

Hill made a strong impression with his “wonderfully sculpted and intelligent program,” beginning with a rollicking “I Am a Pirate King” from *The Pirates of Penzance* and then bringing the house down with a frenetic “Buddy’s Blues” from *Follies*. Judges extolled Hill’s “total commitment to each moment, risk-taking, detailed physical realization, and incredible comic achievement.” Ballenger captivated with her “wide range of repertory so idiomatically performed, beauty and control of voice, emotional depth, and connection to text and character.” Highlights were her nuanced and moving performances of Weill’s “Je ne t’aime



L to R: Prizewinners Ben Edquist, Arlo Hill, and Natalie Ballenger performing in the 2014 Lotte Lenya Competition.

PHOTO: KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

pas” and “I Want Magic!” from Andre Previn’s *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

In addition to the top prizes, the judges presented four Lys Symonette Awards of \$3,500 each, named in honor of Weill’s musical assistant on Broadway. Awards for Outstanding Performance of an Individual Number went to Robert Ariza, of Ann Arbor, Mich., for “She’s a Woman” (*Kiss of the Spider Woman*); Diana Rose Becker, of Northport, N.Y., for “Emily’s Goodbye Aria” (*Our Town*); and Briana Elyse Hunter, of New York, for “I Never Has Seen Snow” (*House of Flowers*). A fourth Lys Symonette Award went to Katie Travis, of New York, for Outstanding Dramatic Interpretation of her program, which included songs by Guettel, Hague, Copland, and Weill. The remaining seven finalists each received an award of \$1,000: Rachel Cordeiro, Carter Lynch, and Lauren Michelle, of New York; Norman Garrett, of Silver Spring, Md.; Heather Phillips, of Philadelphia; Jim Schubin, of Matawan, N.J.; and Mikalai Znaharchuk, of Minsk, Belarus.

The Kurt Weill Foundation distributed a record \$65,000 in prizes this year. Since 1998, the Foundation has awarded more than half a million dollars to outstanding young performers and continues to support previous winners with career development grants.



Lys Symonette Award winners (L to R) Diana Rose Becker, Robert Ariza, Katie Travis, and Briana Elyse Hunter.

PHOTO: KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

**Winners’ performances may be viewed at:
[YouTube.com/KurtWeillFoundation](https://www.youtube.com/KurtWeillFoundation)**

Lenya Competition News

Lenya Competition Documentary Broadcast Premiere

After a successful online release of *Singing the Story*, a short documentary about the Lotte Lenya Competition produced in 2013 by the Kurt Weill Foundation, WXXI public television in Rochester, N.Y. invited the Foundation to lengthen it for broadcast. The extended, half-hour film aired on WXXI-TV on 23 March and 5 April 2014. *Singing the Story* traces the journey of the 2013 Competition, on stage and off, through the semi-finals, finals, and an all-Weill concert at New York's Symphony Space that featured eight past winners. Through live footage and interviews, *Singing the Story* reveals the rigorous and unique nature of the Lenya Competition and its impact on a new generation of



singer-actors. The documentary was filmed, directed, and edited by Granny Cart Productions. The shorter version may be viewed online at:

www.YouTube.com/KurtWeillFoundation

Lenya Winners On Stage

Lauren Worsham (2nd Prize, 2009) was nominated for a Tony Award and a Drama Desk Award for best featured actress in a musical, and won a Theatre World Award for Outstanding Broadway Debut Performance, for her depiction of Phoebe D'Ysquith in *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* on Broadway. She is the first Lenya Competition winner to be nominated for a Tony Award!

Cooper Grodin (Lys Symonette Award, 2010) is starring as the Phantom in the new national tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*: "Cooper Grodin . . . offers up a sexy, lean Phantom with a huge voice" (*Huffington Post*); "A beautiful, even thrilling singer. Grodin is an interesting actor with all kinds of promise" (*Chicago Tribune*); "Powerhouse performances by the Phantom's Cooper Grodin, his ardent tenor as supplicating as 10,000 valentines" (*Chicago Theater Beat*).

Liam Bonner (2nd Prize, 2005) played the title role and **Jonathan Michie** (1st Prize, 2005) was Donald in *Billy Budd* at the Los Angeles Opera, directed by Francesca Zambello and conducted by James Conlon: "Liam Bonner's engaging Billy is a standout" (*Los Angeles Times*); "Bonner . . . creates a gentle, innocent and lyrical hero . . . a deeply affecting performance. Look for him singing this role worldwide" (*Huffington Post*); "Jonathan Michie was a charismatic, vocally distinguished Donald" (*BachTrack*).

Noah Stewart (Lys Symonette Award, 2001) was Rodolfo in *La bohème* at New Orleans Opera, with **Liam Bonner** (2nd Prize, 2005) as Marcello: "The find of the night . . . was tenor Noah Stewart. A fine lyric tenor with an elegantly rounded tone, Stewart also has the heft and power in his voice to signal some of opera's heavyweight roles in his future. That dark, rich timbre, along with Stewart's fine acting, gave the character of the tempestuous lovelorn poet added depth . . . Baritone Liam Bonner gave Marcello an equally vivid voice and characterization, finding



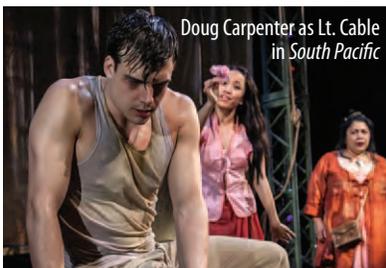
Cooper Grodin as the Phantom

PHOTO: MATTHEW MURPHY



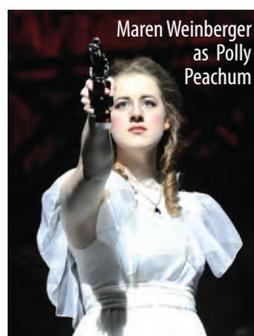
Liam Bonner as Billy Budd

PHOTO: ROBERT WILLARD



Doug Carpenter as Lt. Cable in *South Pacific*

PHOTO: JERRY DALLIA



Maren Weinberger as Polly Peachum

PHOTO: RALPH DUKE/AMARILLO OPERA

more dimension to the role than we usually see" (*New Orleans Times-Picayune*).

Doug Carpenter (1st Prize, 2013) played Cable in *South Pacific* at the Paper Mill Playhouse: "Doug Carpenter nails the heart-tugging part of Lt. Joseph Cable . . . with a wrenchingly vivid characterization and a classically beautiful voice" (*Newark Star-Ledger*).

Maren Weinberger (2nd Prize, 2013) was Polly in *The Threepenny Opera* at Amarillo Opera: "Maren Weinberger . . . revealed an impressive lyric soprano . . . She was also believable as the nice pretty girl next door who just happens to have no moral aversion whatsoever to a life of crime" (*Theater Jones*).

Justin Hopkins (2nd Prize, 2012) was Leporello in *Don Giovanni* at Houston's Opera in the Heights: "The undisputed star of the evening was Hopkins . . . [who] steals every scene with vaudevillian lightness and incomparable singing . . . His singing was as richly detailed as his characterization" (*Houston Press*).

Analisa Leaming (2nd Prize, 2007) starred as Sara Jane in Polly Pen's *Arlington* at the Magic Theatre, San Francisco: "Leaming . . . is top-to-toe magnetic . . . She sings sweetly . . . and comically . . . and gives us operatic intensity when nightmares take over" (*San Francisco Chronicle*); "Leaming is so captivating . . . Her performance is both fresh and carefully wrought" (*San Jose Mercury News*).

Kyle Scatliffe (Lys Symonette Award, 2010) is playing Enjolras in the Broadway revival of *Les Misérables*: "A smashing Broadway debut. Tall and with a mighty voice, he cuts an impressive figure" (*New Jersey Record*); "Kyle Scatliffe is a commanding Enjolras . . . one you'd certainly follow into battle" (*NBC New York*).

Jacob Keith Watson (2nd Prize, 2012) is making his Broadway debut in the ensemble of *Violet*, with music by Lenya Competition semi-finals coach/adjudicator Jeanine Tesori.

Foundation News

KWF Sponsors Young Artist at Glimmerglass

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music and the Glimmerglass Festival join in announcing an exciting collaboration. The Foundation is undertaking an annual sponsorship of a Kurt Weill/Lotte Lenya Glimmerglass Young Artist, a talented emerging singer who has previously reached the finals of the Lotte Lenya Competition. The Glimmerglass Young Artists Program annually trains 48 individuals selected from a pool of nearly 1,400 applicants, a testimony to the program's quality and reputation.

Foundation president Kim Kowalke hopes "that this will be the start of a wonderful, ongoing association that will help both organizations accomplish missions which have much in common." Glimmerglass, which stages a Broadway musical every year along with three operas, is an ideal destination for Lenya Competition prizewinners, who must demonstrate superior ability as both operatic and musical-theater performers. Two years ago, Glimmerglass did a memorable production of Weill's *Lost in the Stars*, directed by Tazewell Thompson.

The first Kurt Weill/Lotte Lenya Young Artist will be Ben Edquist, who won First Prize in this year's Lenya Competition and who will play Jigger Craigin in *Carousel* in Cooperstown this summer.

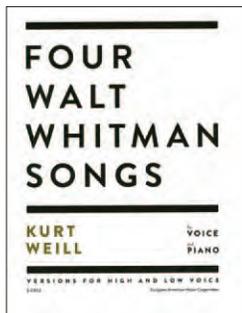


Ben Edquist

More Sponsorship News:

The Foundation has provided funding in support of two new musicals selected for development in the 2014 National Music Theater Conference of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center: *The War Department* by Jim Bauer and Ruth Bauer and *The White City* by Julia Gytri and Avi Amon.

New Edition of Walt Whitman Songs



European American Music has issued a new piano-vocal edition of Weill's settings of Walt Whitman (EA 853) that includes all four songs in two different vocal ranges. In 1942, Weill set three Walt Whitman poems—"Beat! Beat! Drums!," "O Captain! My Captain!," and "Dirge for Two Veterans"—hoping that baritone Paul Robeson would perform them. In 1947, he added a fourth, "Come up from the Fields, Father," to

create a cycle which was then recorded by tenor William Horne. The new edition addresses the different ranges of the original compositions by presenting all four songs in two separate sets: one for higher voice, one for lower voice. In the first set, "Come up from the Fields" is transposed down; in the second, the other three songs are transposed up. Orchestral material for the complete cycle in both ranges is also available from publisher European American Music. Of course, it will still be possible to perform all four songs in the original keys.

2014 Grant Recipients

Professional Performances

Kurt Weill Fest, Dessau, Germany. *Das Berliner Requiem*, *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, Violin Concerto, *The Firebrand of Florence*.

Opera Parallèle, San Francisco, CA. *Mahagonny Singspiel*.

Jacaranda Music at the Edge, Santa Monica, CA. Violin Concerto, *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*.

University Performances

Five College Opera, Amherst, MA. *Street Scene*.

Lawrence University Conservatory of Music, Appleton, WI. *Street Scene*.

Florida State Opera, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL. *Street Scene*.

Simpson College, Indianola, IA. *Street Scene*.

Stanford Live, Palo Alto, CA. *Die sieben Todsünden* and ancillary activities.

University of Missouri – Kansas City Conservatory, Kansas City, MO. *Street Scene*.

Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI. *Walt Whitman Songs*.

Kurt Weill Mentors

Stage Directors and Choreographers Foundation, New York, NY.

For Kurt Weill Fellowships for two early-career directors to observe rehearsals for *The Threepenny Opera* at Atlantic Theater Company, NY (Martha Clarke, dir.) and Signature Theatre, VA (Matthew Gardiner, dir.).

Research and Travel

Siobhan Dowling Long, County Cork, Ireland.

Research for article on the reception of the Bible in *The Eternal Road* and other works by Weill.

Berlin Creates Kurt-Weill-Platz

On 8 May 2014, the city of Berlin formally dedicated Kurt-Weill-Platz, a new plaza commemorating Weill's life and work, in the Hellersdorf district. A block-long street nearby has also been designated Kurt-Weill-Gasse. This area already contains several streets and plazas named after well-known Weimar Republic artists, replacing the names of government officials of the former East Germany. The formerly overgrown and unmaintained area has been newly graded and paved, with young trees added. A number of seats and benches, designed by Sabine Nier, show caricatures of Weill and Lenya along with characters from *Die Dreigroschenoper* (including the shark!). The design also reflects Weill's exile from Germany, with references throughout the park to the different places he lived and worked. Prof. Dr. Walter Londong, Vice President of the Kurt-Weill-Gesellschaft in Dessau, delivered an address at the dedication ceremony, which marked the second time in eight months that Weill was honored. In September 2013, the city of Berlin added a historical marker at Altonaer Straße 22, now the site of Grips Theater but formerly one of Weill's Berlin addresses, during his student days. (The building in which he lived was destroyed during World War II.)



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