

# Kurt Weill Newsletter

VOLUME 33

NUMBER 1

SPRING 2015



## FEATURES

The Kurt Weill Edition

A Promising Match: The Collegiate Chorale and Weill

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Cover photo: From the U.S. premiere of *The Road of Promise* at Carnegie Hall (see p. 10). Projections designed by Wendall K. Harrington. Photo by Erin Baiano.

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Published twice a year, the *Kurt Weill Newsletter* features articles and reviews (books, performances, recordings) that center on Kurt Weill but take a broader look at issues of twentieth-century music and theater. With a print run of 5,000 copies, the *Newsletter* is distributed worldwide. Subscriptions are free. The editors welcome the submission of articles, reviews, and news items for inclusion in future issues.

A variety of opinions are expressed in the *Newsletter*; they do not necessarily represent the publisher's official viewpoint. Letters to the editors are welcome ([newsletter@kwf.org](mailto:newsletter@kwf.org)).

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## UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

### Swept Away Festival

The Continuum Ensemble, London, UK  
Philip Headlam, conductor.

**Vom Tod im Wald; Mahagonny Songspiel.** 19 June

**Berliner Requiem.** BBC Singers. 21 June

**Violin Concerto, op. 12.** Hugo Ticciati, violin. 21 June

**Weill songs** ("Berlin in Light: Cabaret–Revue Songs in the 1920s." Anna Dennis, soprano; Lucy Schauer, mezzo-soprano; Philip Headlam, piano. 21 June

### One Touch of Venus

The Ohio Light Opera, Wooster, Ohio, USA  
Steven Daigle, director; J. Lynn Thompson, conductor.  
25 June – 8 August

### Symphony No. 2

Young Philharmonic Orchestra Jerusalem  
Michael Sanderling, conductor.  
2 August, Weimar; 4 August, Wolfsburg; 6 August, Berlin;  
8 August, Chorin

### Salzburg Festival

Salzburg, AUSTRIA

**Die Dreigroschenoper** in concert. Ensemble Modern; HK Gruber, conductor. 15 August

### "Mack the Knife – A Salzburg Threepenny Opera"

Julian Crouch, Sven-Eric Bechtolf, directors; Martin Lowe, Holger Kolodziej, music directors. 11–27 August

**Weill songs** ("Life in the Cities: Kurt Weill and His Time." Angela Denoke, soprano; Tal Balshai, piano; Norbert Nagel, wind instruments; Tim Park, cello.)  
22 August

### Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny

Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Rome, ITALY  
Graham Vick, director; John Axelrod, conductor.  
6–17 October

### The Seven Deadly Sins

Victorian Opera, Melbourne, AUSTRALIA  
Tahu Matheson, conductor; Meow Meow, Anna I.  
6 November

To learn about the many other Weill performances coming up around the world, view the performance calendar at:

[www.kwf.org](http://www.kwf.org)



The final scene of *Mahagonny* at the Stratford Festival, 1965.

## EDITORS' NOTE

With this issue we provide an inside look at the Kurt Weill Edition, the Foundation's long-term project of publishing all of Weill's performable works in authoritative critical editions. After two decades, it's high time to assess the progress and impact of the Edition. Who better to do so than Managing Editor Elmar Juchem, who granted us a wide-ranging interview in which he discusses the satisfactions, and suffering, that arise from the variety of complex tasks that go into producing these remarkable volumes. In our second feature, we celebrate the U.S. premiere of *The Road of Promise*, a concert adaptation of *The Eternal Road*, with a chronicle of the long-term partnership between the Foundation and the Collegiate Chorale, which marked its fourth all-Weill program in eleven years with the performance at Carnegie Hall in May.

And now Dave must take over to report a changing of the guard at the *Newsletter*: Co-editor Kate Chisholm is leaving the Foundation to enter the Lincoln Center Scholars program and teach theater arts in the New York City public schools. Kate has been an essential member of the staff since 2009, and a driving force in the Foundation's promotional activities, on-line presence, and publications. We took over joint editorship of the *Newsletter* in 2012, and Kate's gifts as writer, editor, and layout guru have been an integral part of our success since then. We will all miss Kate here at the office, and our readers will miss her, too. Thank you, Kate, for everything.

Kate Chisholm and Dave Stein

## Letter to the Editors

Love the *Newsletter* on *Mahagonny*. I was 14, traveling to the Stratford Ontario Festival with my grandmother, who made an annual pilgrimage each summer. Monday night at the Avon Theater, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. By two authors whose work I did not know: Weill and Brecht. Allowing for slightly faulty memories, I recall some very interesting music followed by a pickup truck driving onto the bare stage. In the back was a lot of stuff which was pulled out over the course of the evening and assembled as the driver and passengers created an ideal city, free from all the troubles of the world from which they came. As the play went on, they discovered there can be no such thing as an ideal city. As it all began to fall apart, I kept looking at that truck, which remained on stage in the position from its entrance, which was now surrounded by the new city, and there was no way the truck could leave. The whole experience remains one of the seminal theater experiences of my childhood.

Ted Chapin

**Correction:** "Mahagonny: A Chronology" in the Fall 2014 issue contained two errors that we would like to correct:

- In the entry for 21 December 1931, the performance venue was the Theater am Kurfürstendamm, not Schiffbauerdamm.
- In the entry for December 1963, the date of the second edition of the *Mahagonny* vocal score should have read 1968, not 1967.

# The Kurt Weill Edition

None of Weill's stage works, not even *The Threepenny Opera*, was published in full score during his lifetime.

The Kurt Weill Edition exists in part to make his music as readily available to the public as that of other composers of his stature. It's clear by now that the Edition has gone far beyond meeting this basic need. Nearly every volume has won a Paul Revere Award from the Music Publishers Association; in 2013, *Johnny Johnson* took home the Claude V. Palisca Award for best scholarly edition or translation bestowed by the American Musicological Society. The awards honor both the intensive scholarship and attention to presentation that goes into each volume. The Edition produced its first edited volume in 2000 (*Die Dreigroschenoper*) and has published a variety of Weill's stage and concert works since then in critical editions. As *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *Lady in the Dark* make their way to press, the man at the center of it all, Managing Editor Elmar Juchem, talked to us about some of the theoretical and practical questions he has grappled with over the years. In addition to the interview, we have Juchem's account of some of the detective work involved in preparing a critical edition and a step-by-step guide to producing a volume. We've also requested observations from Stephen Hinton of the Editorial Board and from conductor James Holmes, who has made extensive use of Edition scores and parts in performance. We're proud to present an overview of one of the Foundation's most important, and successful, projects.



## The Critical Eye: An Interview with Elmar Juchem



Managing Editor Elmar Juchem

**Nine published volumes, awards galore, rave reviews, and impact on other critical editions: the Kurt Weill Edition has made its mark. What's next?**

More of the same, I hope. The next two volumes will present two of Weill's key works: *Mahagonny Songspiel*, his first collaboration with Brecht, and *Lady in the Dark*, his first wholly successful attempt to reimagine American musical theater. Both were turning points in his career.

**And, not surprisingly for Weill, they were both stage works, which must be extremely difficult to edit. With a symphony or a string quartet, you have the composer's score to work with and not much else, but how do you even get started with a stage work?**

It helps that all musical theater works require similar material. You have to have a full score, a vocal score, material for singers—either chorus parts or parts for the principals, instrumental parts, libretti or lyric sheets, and you usually have drafts. The score is hardly the only source, and the Edition doesn't just engrave Weill's holograph and call it a day.

The biggest challenge is a work with a lot of sources. Abundant source material means a richer and more informed edition, but it also means more time, effort, and conflict, and all the agony that goes with that. Two thoroughly intelligent and musical peo-

ple can look at the same sources and come up with different solutions. That's where the give-and-take among the Volume Editor, the Managing Editor, and the Editorial Board becomes important. Everyone has to agree not only on the general approach, but on specific decisions. We have to arrive at a consensus. Our guidelines are not so strict that they produce only one possible solution to editorial dilemmas.

**Which sources are most useful for reconstructing a stage work?**

The orchestra parts have been underestimated by some editions, but we've realized how crucial they are for Weill's works. Some things were simply not recorded in the full score, especially in the American works, because Weill entrusted a lot of on-the-spot decisions to his longtime friend and associate, conductor Maurice Abravanel. Or we'll find a cryptic or illegible marking in the score, and then we look at the parts and suddenly understand what it means. That's happened many times with *Firebrand of Florence*, and it's happening with *Lady*, *One Touch of Venus*, and *Love Life*. The parts don't tell you everything, but it's a real problem when we don't have them, as for *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *Street Scene*, or *Lost in the Stars*.

When you take readings from the parts, you have to assess very carefully when the parts were used and for what purpose. In the case of *Johnny Johnson* and *Lady in the Dark*, some of the parts were used later for recordings; they would have had different needs in the recording studio. Interpreting markings makes for the hardest decisions. Sometimes they may reflect players' decisions, and markings in the parts are much more chaotic than in the full score.

## **You might assume the holograph orchestral score would be the most significant source.**

It's certainly important; if we don't have a complete musical manuscript, in most cases we can't edit the work at all. But the score doesn't tell you everything you need to know. In Weill's American works, for example, he left the vocal lines out of the full scores because it saved him time.

For Weill, a composition wasn't finished when the ink had dried, so the notion of "Urtext" can safely be put to rest. The kinds of changes we see in Weill's musical theater works are very similar to those in other composers' stage works—Verdi, Wagner, Meyerbeer, Mozart. Cuts were made, additional material was interpolated for later performances, there were revisions of the orchestration to accommodate certain singers or cast changes. Those are all things you find throughout Weill's stage works, but he didn't write out a new score every time.

## **It seems as if changes made by other collaborators may be as significant as changes made by Weill.**

There's no universal approach to any of these issues; they have to be evaluated case by case. In general, we do attach more importance to Weill's intentions, assuming we can figure out what they were. Here again, assessing markings in the sources is a whole separate layer of editorial work. Are they authentic if they aren't in Weill's hand? If they were made by Maurice Abravanel, we know that Weill would often have given him instructions or asked him to handle minor problems. So in rehearsal he might say, "A little less in this spot," and we see a decrescendo or a *tacet* marking in Abravanel's hand. Usually such changes were not one-time decisions but were valid for extended periods of time during the run of the original production, or at least as long as it remained in the same theater. But even if Weill himself was responsible for revisions, were they meant to be permanent? In a twisted way, it brings to mind Weill's famous line, "I don't give a damn about writing for posterity."

## **How useful are published scores?**

Well, there weren't any. Only two stage works, *Threepenny Opera* and *Happy End*, were ever published in full score, both long after Weill's death. We have vocal scores, of course, but there are big differences from publisher to publisher. Universal Edition often printed the vocal scores before the premieres, and then everybody scrambled to deal with the changes resulting from performance. Chappell published vocal scores for only three of Weill's Broadway shows during his lifetime—*Lady in the Dark*, *Street Scene*, and *Lost in the Stars*. We know that Weill approved all three, but in the case of *Lady* we are not entirely sure about the score's intended purpose. One thing the published score can help with is the question of transpositions. The relationship of keys of different numbers is a big factor, because that sometimes helps to hold the score together. If a number gets transposed up a half-step during rehearsals, it becomes a different world. And we don't automatically prefer the version that was originally performed. In the vocal scores, sometimes Weill upheld the original key, sometimes the revised key. So that offers clues about what Weill was comfortable with, or what he thought would best serve the character or structure of the work.

## **What about lyrics and dialogue? How do you handle them?**

We try to establish lyrics with the same rigor as the music, and we

generally rely on a musical source for the lyrics, such as a rehearsal score. The dialogue doesn't have to meet as strict a standard. We look for all available sources, but we don't set out to create a literary-critical edition of the book.

## **O.k., but surely you must encounter conflicting sources for the dialogue, just as you find scores and parts that present different versions of the same number. You still have to have some way of settling on a particular version of the book of a Broadway show, for example.**

The script was published for the majority of Weill's works. But at least in the case of his American works, the published scripts are longer than the performing scripts because they don't reflect changes made during rehearsals or tryouts, and they were intended to be read, not staged. That's the case with *Lady*, *Venus*, *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *Johnny Johnson*. In many cases, even the dramatic publisher or licensor reprinted the literary version, so that became common currency; if you rented the materials, that's what you got. For *Lady in the Dark*, we will print the script used on Broadway, just as we printed the original performing script of *The Threepenny Opera*.

## **And how do you figure that out? We don't have live recordings of the shows.**

For *Lady in the Dark*, we're lucky to have an assistant stage manager's script, which reveals all the changes made leading up to the Broadway opening. During the editing process, we found a script that belonged to the original producer, Sam Harris. It's basically a clean typescript of the book that was used on Broadway; it consolidates all the changes marked in the stage manager's script. We have a similar situation with *One Touch of Venus*. What we're not doing is throwing the long text at readers and telling them to make their own decisions. We present the decisions the authors made. In the case of *Lady in the Dark*, Moss Hart wrote and staged the book scenes, so we know that any changes had his approval. Usually the Edition maintains a focus on performability for the words as well as the music.

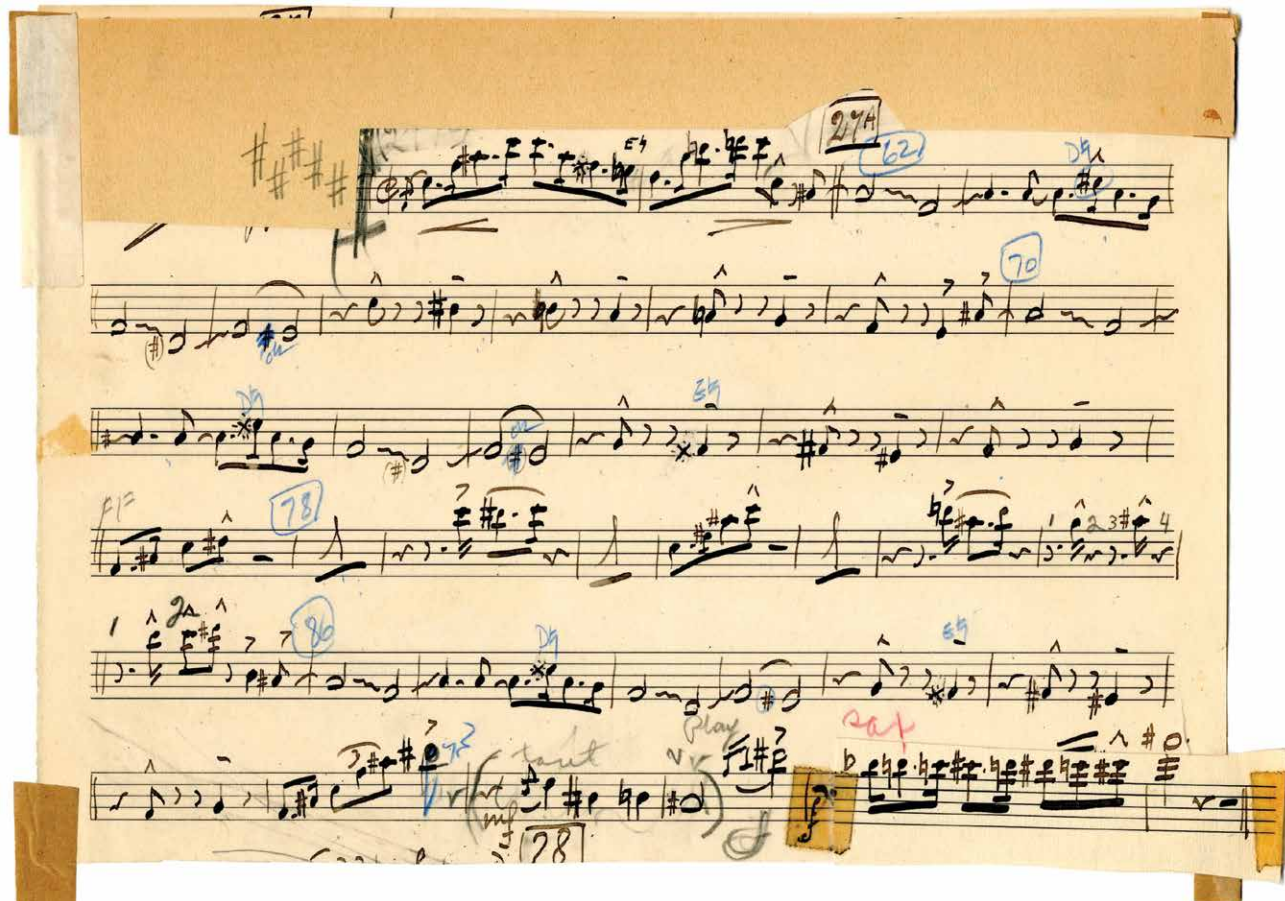
## **Now wait a minute. The function of the Edition is to derive a definitive score from the available sources. That's not the same as making a performing edition. How do you reconcile those two goals?**

It's not a performing edition in the usual sense of the word, but we never neglect matters of performability. We're very critical and very thorough, and we aim for the best possible result that upholds scholarly standards. But the text must also take into account performance issues and performers' needs.

## **Haven't you run across passages where a crucial source presents music that is unplayable or impossible? In a case like that, how do you produce a score that doesn't impede performers? Wouldn't the traditional response be, "Weill wrote it that way, so I'm reproducing it even if it doesn't make sense"?**

We do not allow editors to retain unplayable or excessively awkward passages without offering an alternative. That's taking the easy way out, leaving performers in the lurch, because they don't have the sources. The editors do. Some examples are easy to understand. In "Dance of the Tumblers" from *Lady in the Dark*, Weill wrote a low D-flat and a low C for the piccolo, whose lowest possible note is a D-natural. He probably lost track and thought it was the flute, which bottoms out at middle C. So our edition of

*(continued on p. 7)*



Above: An excerpt from the Broadway Reed 1 book from *Lady in the Dark* ("One Life to Live"). The excerpt is a paste-over (now detached) that a copyist had created and inserted into the original book during rehearsals. It shows that the production accommodated Gertrude Lawrence's vocal range by transposing the number up a half step. A second layer of paste-overs was added during the show's tryout in Boston. The paste-over at the top simply marks a cut and the key change (although one sharp sign is missing). The paste-over at bottom right transmits a changed ending that Weill scored during the tryout. Below: The excerpt from the Reed 1 part derived from the Kurt Weill Edition score corresponds to the last two-and-a-half lines of the original part shown above. Original parts are a valuable source of information, but the editors cannot simply use everything they find in the parts; they must weigh evidence from many sources (including another set of parts created during *Lady's* Broadway run) in order to arrive at an authoritative score.

(continued from p. 5)

*Lady* will offer a footnote explaining how the player handled the passage in the original production. Another example that turns up in *Lady* has to do with Broadway woodwind doublings. There are places where a player doesn't have time to switch from one instrument to another, for example. We place footnotes in the score to call attention to things like that. What we generally don't do is indicate with special signs where material has been added or amended—no square brackets or dotted lines in the score. Brackets are very helpful for a scholar, because you can see right away what was “editorial” in nature. But for conductors and players, dotted lines tend to cause confusion. Extraneous signs make an edition more difficult to use, and they detract from the beauty of the score. If the score and parts are easy to read and look good, that makes a good impression on the conductor and musicians. They'll approach such music differently than they would convoluted scores or sloppy parts. The parts derived from the critical edition of the score are really just a spin-off of the Edition, but we take pains with them anyway. We try to produce really high-quality parts: good layout, easy to read, sensible rehearsal letters, with page turns in the right places. That takes more than pressing a button in the software.

### **Has the Edition's attention to performers' needs paid off?**

Several of Weill's works were virtually unperformable before the Edition, including *Firebrand of Florence* and *Johnny Johnson*, because the materials were in such bad shape. The rental score for *Der neue Orpheus* was a barely legible copy of Weill's holograph. Now, when we send out perusal materials they're not rejected out of hand because the parts are illegible. The hit production of *Firebrand* in Dresden two years ago made good use of Edition materials. Everyone has been much happier with the materials for *The Threepenny Opera* since we published the critical edition in 2000.

### **So you create scores and parts that are easy to use, but it's still a critical edition. Aside from occasional footnotes in the score, how do you inform readers of editorial decisions, variant readings, etc.?**

We publish a complete Critical Report as a separate volume. It documents every editorial decision and offers source descriptions, discussion of the sources and their relative importance, and general editorial policies. Policies may vary from work to work, because each Weill score is in some way unique and requires specialized commentary.

The majority of critical editions these days are moving away from the two-volume format, because it's rather expensive. Many editions have the critical apparatus after the main musical text, in the same volume. That requires people to flip back and forth, which is cumbersome.

### **Do you have basic rules or principles for the Critical Report? Not just what goes in it, but means and methods of presenting information?**

One of the goals of the Weill Edition is to limit the information in the critical report to what is really useful. We don't want people to get lost in a sea of information. The critical report shouldn't be longer than the score.

A user should be able to open the critical report and simply read any note. We're more wordy than other editions, but that's because we avoid jargon and awkward abbreviations. We do use sigla [codes that denote specific sources], which is unavoidable, but we try to keep them as simple as possible. Another difference:

we do not list every variant from every source. We don't try to give readers so much information that they can recreate every source from the Weill Edition, as some other editions have tried to do.

I should also mention the introductory essay in the main volume, which in the case of the Weill Edition has become a really significant part of the total package. We mandate a certain structure and certain issues that must be addressed in the essay. We talk about the genesis of the work and its early production history and reception. Then we talk about editorial problems and solutions. The last section is performance practice, which every conductor and performer should read. We have to limit our focus to the work itself, with minimal treatment of the period in which the show was created or the work's place in Weill's career.

### **Let's step back and look at more general issues. You've dealt with a number of outside Volume Editors, but you also acted as a Volume Editor yourself, for instance for Weill's first stage work, *Zaubernacht*. Did that experience change your approach at all?**

That was probably the quickest volume we ever produced, and the editing was done entirely in-house. That's a different model of editing. In the past, nearly all critical edition projects, including ours, hired outside editors as experts on particular works. Most critical editions, as far as I know, have moved away from this model to in-house editing, because we all have realized that it's too difficult to teach each new person all the things they need to know. Even the most brilliant scholar doesn't necessarily make a good editor; editors need a different mindset and specialized experience.

One of the ways we've moved in the direction of the in-house model is by taking advantage of our Editorial Board. Having Giselher Schubert (*Mahagonny Songspiel*) or Stephen Hinton (*Happy End*) or Joel Galand (*Love Life*) editing volumes currently really helps. They're not just first-rate scholars; they're experienced and they accomplish things. The expertise is already there on the Board, and ideally we'd like to stay within that group. But we've learned to question the notion that an edition can be done by one person. The exception was Tim Carter, who really got the job done on *Johnny Johnson*! So we invited him to join the Editorial Board, and I'm very pleased to say he accepted.

### **You've been Managing Editor now for almost ten years and edited or overseen several volumes. What have you learned?**

I've realized that preparing a critical edition is more difficult than I originally believed. At first I thought, “You have a couple of sources, and you pick the best one. And then you compare it to the others, write down the differences, transcribe it, and you're done. A twelve-year-old can do that.” But there are so many little decisions that have to be made. And big decisions. Sometimes every possible solution will have drawbacks, and there's no right answer. That's really frustrating, but we still have to come up with something.

Each volume—each decision—adds to our knowledge. After shepherding “Music with Solo Violin” through the press, I understand the difficulties better for *Lady in the Dark*. And after *Lady in the Dark* is done, I'll know what to watch out for with *Love Life* and *One Touch of Venus*. Editorial decisions, assessment of sources, all of it. I'm still learning new things myself, after years on the job. And that keeps things exciting!

## Turn Out the Volume: The Kurt Weill Edition Step by Step

*Each volume of the Kurt Weill Edition presents its own challenges and special circumstances, but they all must go through certain stages before publication in order to ensure the best product possible. Here is a soup-to-nuts guide to the steps that the Board and the editors must take before a volume appears.*

**Initial Decisions** – Which works will form part of the Edition, and in what order should they appear? Works which lack essential source material (e.g., the original orchestral score of *Royal Palace*) cannot be edited. Establishing the order involves evaluating existing performance materials and other considerations, including European vs. American works and stage vs. instrumental works. The Edition seeks to balance such factors to demonstrate the full variety of Weill’s catalogue rather than lumping like works together and issuing them one after another.

**Commission** – The Editorial Board reviews a prospective editor’s proposal and an edited sample from the work under consideration. Upon approval, the Board commissions the Volume Editor(s), who normally has expert knowledge of the work and experience in critical editing. The Board assigns one of its members to the volume to assist the editor(s) and act as a liaison.

**Source Round-up** – Even before commissioning a volume, the Editorial Board must determine that sufficient sources exist to make a critical edition possible. Once that is clear, the Managing Editor confers with the Foundation Archivist to establish which sources are already on hand at the Foundation or available in other repositories, either as originals or adequate photocopies or scans. Sources include scores, instrumental and vocal parts, scripts or libretti, lyric sheets, correspondence, production photographs or set designs, reviews of early productions, programs, and recordings. Sketches, drafts, intermediate versions, and fair copies of musical and textual material must all be inventoried. The Managing Editor then identifies sources that have not been accounted for, and Foundation staff members attempt to find those sources; the Volume Editor may also assist. Although editing does not begin until the major relevant sources have been identified and assembled, significant sources for nearly every work are discovered after editing is well underway.

**Source Evaluation** – Every source will have something to contribute, and it will also present pitfalls or distractions. There’s no guaranteed method for evaluating a source, which might be essential for editing one number but misleading for another in the same work. This step, one of the trickiest, includes two sub-steps:

**Select Printer’s Copy** – Which score makes the most sense to use as a model for the engraver? It may be a photocopy of Weill’s autograph score or a modern edition that’s easier to read. Both methods have advantages and disadvantages. Sometimes the engraver just can’t read Weill’s handwriting. But if you select a score prepared or edited by someone else, changes that have nothing to do with the original score may have crept in.

**Determine “Source Privileging”** – The terminology is somewhat confusing, but basically this means selecting the preferred source for musical and textual readings. It does *not* mean choosing one source that will always overrule every other source. Privileging is best thought of as a convenience for the editors. Any reading from a privileged source may be adopted by the Edition without comment; variants in non-privileged sources likewise need not be noted. If a reading that contra-

dicts the privileged source is adopted from another source, then the editor must make a note in the Critical Report.

**Editing** – The thorniest question of all: how to establish the best possible readings given several sources that may disagree on minor details or major moments in the work while taking into account not only the sources but the needs of performers. The Volume Editor collates information about the music and text, resolves doubtful passages with reference to the available information, and marks up the printer’s copy. The Managing Editor reviews the marked-up score and either sends it back to the Volume Editor for revision or passes it to the engraver.

**Engraving** – First the engraver gets the printer’s copy and creates the first engraved draft, which you might call a “zero proof.” The engraver sends that back, and the Managing Editor or Volume Editor corrects it. The corrected “zero proof” goes back to the engraver, who uses it to create the first proof. After that, the process continues until no more mistakes are found. The number varies from volume to volume, but three proofs are about normal.

**Proofreading** – Done by some combination of the Volume Editor, Managing Editor, Foundation staff, and outside proofreaders. Proofreading takes place after each proof stage, both as a means of checking the engraver’s work and the decisions made by the editors.

**Board Approval** – At a late stage of editing, before every last correction has been made, the Editorial Board meets and considers whether the volume meets the standards for formal approval. The Board reviews the volume with the Managing Editor and makes a decision.

**Creating and Testing Instrumental Parts** – At an advanced proof stage, the time comes to generate parts, which usually leads to finding more errors. Then the parts are tested by an ensemble already working on a performance or specially hired for the purpose. The conductor and musicians may find further errors or problems of layout, unclear indications, etc. The score may be amended or annotated to alert performers to problems.

**Creating Vocal Score for Stage Works** – If an existing vocal score doesn’t need too many changes, it may be used as the starting point for a vocal score based on the Edition. If there is no satisfactory vocal score, then one must be derived from the edited score and engraved.

**Preparing Other Edition Components** – A catch-all stage that includes but is not limited to: editing and laying out the critical report, editing the introductory essay submitted by the Volume Editor, selecting images to reproduce in facsimile, etc.

**Printing and Binding** – When all the decisions have been made, corrections entered and engraved, and accuracy ensured throughout the main volume and Critical Report, the electronic files are sent to the printer. After a few months, the bound volumes emerge and are distributed, ready to be performed and studied.



## The Process

Professor Stephen Hinton, member of the Editorial Board and editor of *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Series I, Volume 5) and *Happy End* (forthcoming), discusses the Board's work and the interplay between the Board and Volume Editors.



"Board meetings are always full of lively discussion and not a little gallows humor. Those discussions run the full gamut, from addressing matters of general policy to quite specific issues such as source evaluation, aspects of notation, etc.

"Initially the Board drew up guidelines for Volume Editors and set the parameters for the Edition in broad, general terms. As individual volumes began to be edited, we had to deal with specific instances of how those guidelines were and were not being implemented. Such concrete issues and problems prompted us to rethink certain aspects of general policy—hardly surprising, given the range of Weill's oeuvre.

"Most of us on the Board have edited a volume, and we have all served as Board Representative, helping and advising Volume Editors. That role can vary enormously depending on the Volume Editor. Some editors are quite self-sufficient and need little help, except for small editorial suggestions here and there; others with less experience benefit from a more hands-on approach. Experience editing a volume no doubt informs how one thinks about the Edition in general, just as years spent discussing the Edition with other Board members feeds into how one goes about editing a particular work."

## The Product

Opera and music theater conductor James Holmes explores his experience with Edition materials and their impact on Weill performance.



"From the moment Jon Alan Conrad provided a very early draft of *One Touch of Venus* for a production at Opera North, it was clear to me that the Edition is a wonderful thing. Even with countless editorial questions still to be resolved, seeing the score logically set out on the page in clear modern print marked a huge advance over careless reproductions of the original manuscript marred by additions, corrections, and crossings out. Since then, I have conducted *Zaubernacht* and the Violin Concerto from Edition scores. The print quality is first-rate, the layout easy on the eye, the critical material comprehensive and informative.

"And yet—thinking back to the circumstances of these works' creation, I wonder anew how definitive any edition can ever be. Not every contentious note may be wrong, nor every inconsistency unintentional. At a distance of many decades, who can provide every answer? I am grateful for every bar the editors illuminate, but I am glad their labor is not always 'definitive.' In my experience, one's own take on a piece is often shaped by ambiguity. For in confronting an inconsistency, you have to ask, 'How does it relate to the character, the text?' Then the work starts to come off the page and coalesce into a dramatic whole again—something that Weill, with his passionate interest in every aspect of the creative process, would surely welcome. So, from those of us in the pit, thank you for all the illumination. But thank you too, for having the wisdom to leave the little things unsaid."



## Detective Work

Locating and interpreting sources both involve the kind of scholarly detective work that Managing Editor Elmar Juchem has down to a science. Locating sources requires one kind of sleuthing—scouring library catalogues or studying correspondence to determine where a manuscript might have wound up. *Popular Adaptations, 1927–1950*, with its comprehensive collection of sheet music facsimiles, relied on that sort of work. But once found, sources do not yield their secrets easily, and ferreting out the true meaning of a manuscript score or heavily annotated instrumental part is just as important. Juchem offers examples from two volumes currently in preparation: *Lady in the Dark* and *Mahagonny Songspiel*.

"One source, the copyist's score of *Lady in the Dark*, was under our noses all along, but it took us a long time to grasp its importance. We received it from Tams-Witmark, which didn't take over the materials until 1965, so we all simply assumed that the score dated from 1965 or later. But then I recognized the hand of one of the original copyists who had created the parts, which allowed us to narrow down its true date. It was created during the original Broadway run and confirms many of the cuts and reorchestrations we know about from other sources. It freezes the shape of the show as of the summer of 1941, when the show had stabilized during the original run.

"I've come to recognize many Broadway copyists, and that helped me figure out there were certain systems in place. There was usually one copyist who accompanied Weill to the tryout to write out parts, even if they hired additional copyists in Boston to fill in because there was too much work. For certain shows, I was

able to determine which copyist went to a tryout, and that allows us to establish when certain revisions and paste-overs were made.

"I'm not as much of an expert on European copyists, but Universal Edition had its own stable of copyists, arrangers, and orchestrators. Sometimes they stamped or signed the parts they copied, and once you can identify someone's hand you can link certain things. One of the crucial problems we encountered with *Mahagonny Songspiel* was determining the validity of a manuscript vocal score. We didn't know where it came from; it's not mentioned in any correspondence. It bears a stamp from Universal Edition, but it doesn't look like a stamp from the late twenties. It's clear that it's an early score and a crucial source for the Edition, although we don't know who wrote it out. But we can deduce that it had to have been created after November 1927 and before the Paris version [December 1932], presumably late 1927 or early 1928. During the war, it was in the possession of Hans Curjel; he turned it over to Universal Edition around 1950, and that's when they stamped it. So the stamp is actually deceptive in this case. Paper types are really important, too, and the paper type tells us that in all likelihood, the score was created not in Vienna, but Berlin. Some of the copying services that Weill used in Berlin—there were two—used that kind of paper; it shows up in parts for *Happy End*, for example. So it's very likely that this score was created in Berlin and Weill knew about it. You have to find out as much as possible about a source and its origin, even when nothing on the surface tells you when and where it was created. So you hunt for clues and follow whatever trail you can piece together. It's like a trial based only on circumstantial evidence—no witnesses or confession."

# A Promising Match: The Collegiate Chorale and Weill

On 6 May 2015, New York saw and heard the U.S. premiere, and the world premiere of the English-language version, of a new oratorio, *The Road of Promise*, adapted from that colossal, legendary stage work, *The Eternal Road*. The sheer number of performers bore witness to the scale of the event, with the Carnegie Hall stage so packed with musicians that the vocal soloists had only a couple of feet in which to maneuver. The performance assembled twelve soloists, both actors and singers (including three Lenya Competition prizewinners), along with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and one of New York's leading choral groups, The Collegiate Chorale. It marked but the latest chapter in a fruitful, longstanding partnership between the Chorale and the Kurt Weill Foundation that began in 2003 and continues to flourish.

The Chorale has a storied past, having been founded in 1941 by the legendary Robert Shaw at the Collegiate Memorial Church in New York (hence the name—the group is not affiliated with a university). Its history encompasses numerous world premieres, commissions, and performances or recordings under the likes of Toscanini, Bernstein, and Levine. In 1979, Robert Bass became Musical Director. Soon the Chorale began presenting concert premieres of little-known operas, including works of Dvořák, Respighi, and Strauss; in 1998 they initiated the practice of performing one opera in concert every season. They recruited

top-notch opera singers and other guest artists as well. One star that joined the stable was English actor Roger Rees (known especially for *Nicholas Nickleby*), who narrated a concert performance of Weber's *Oberon* in 2002 and went on to take roles in several Chorale productions. Behind the scenes, Bass brought in a young composer, Edward Barnes, as a programming advisor. Rees and Barnes both loom large in the collaboration between the Chorale and the Foundation.

It's no accident that Weill has played a key role in the recent development of The Collegiate Chorale, which has embraced his shows because they offer features that appeal to audiences and performers alike. One is his ability to combine more traditional classical elements with a popular style and the showmanship required of Broad-

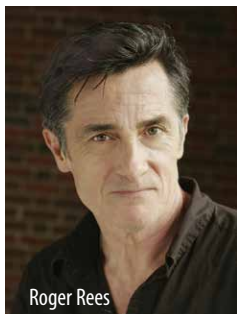
way musicals. An audience that prefers the operatic appreciates Weill's extensive classical training and his skill in harmony, voice leading, and orchestration. But the Chorale also has audience members who prefer pizzazz, and Weill offers that as well. Barnes pointed out, "Operatic-type shows became a brand for the Chorale. Weill has a whole repertoire of them, and no one else really does." Weill's use of the chorus (see p. 12) in his Broadway shows is an equally important factor. Two of the works the Chorale has undertaken, *The Firebrand of Florence* and *Lost in the Stars*, make far more extensive and integral use of the chorus than other Broadway shows of the time (or since). *Firebrand* is full of ingenious choral writing, and scholar Mark N. Grant has said of *Lost in the Stars*, "In no other musical in the Broadway literature does the chorus provide so much momentum, or interact so seamlessly with the parallel score of solo songs." No wonder that a solid, experienced chorus accomplished in a variety of vocal styles would gravitate to Weill.

Barnes first encountered Weill during a stint as assistant conductor at Los Angeles Opera, where he took part in fundraising events as an accompanist. One singer gave him the sheet music of "Surabaya-Johnny." He recalled, "I loved it. We performed it everywhere, and it stopped the program cold every time. It triggered my interest in Weill." Barnes soon schooled himself in Weill's oeuvre; when Bass hired him to help come up with new repertory, it didn't take him long to recommend Weill's music. Bass needed little convincing, and the two began to look around in earnest for Weill scores to perform.

As the Chorale launched its exploration of Weill, they learned that Roger Rees was already working with Bebe Neuwirth on an all-Weill stage show that later became *Here Lies Jenny*, performed in New York and San Francisco a few years later, so it seemed logical to work with them. Barnes and Bass made a fateful visit to



PHOTO: ERIN BAIANO



Roger Rees



Edward Barnes

the Kurt Weill Foundation in search of repertoire. There they met Carolyn Weber, longtime Director of the Foundation, who immediately recognized the potential of a collaboration with The Collegiate Chorale. Weber recommended *The Eternal Road* and *The Firebrand of Florence* right off the bat; these proved too grand to serve as a starting place, but the seeds were planted. Barnes and Bass soon found that other Weill works offered plenty for a good choir, and they settled on selections from Weill's final Broadway show, *Lost in the Stars*. They also found two shorter choral works, a setting of the Kiddush, the Hebrew prayer for sanctifying the Sabbath wine, and "Ho, Billy, O!" a madrigal for a *cappella* chorus from *Love Life*. To showcase Neuwirth, they chose numbers from *Marie Galante* and *Happy End*, and what Barnes called a "mixed-bag program" was born. The performance took place on 4 February 2004 at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center, the Chorale's first all-Weill program.

The presence of Neuwirth and Rees (as narrator) assured pre-concert buzz, so the hall was nearly full, and the audience was treated to a broad selection of Weill's work, from his days in Berlin, Paris, and New York. From the Chorale's point of view, it was an eye-opener, with *Lost in the Stars* making a particular impression on choristers and administrators alike. Barnes noted, "If you're in the chorus doing 'Train to Johannesburg,' that's a hell of a lot of fun. It's much different from singing 'Kyrie Eleison.'" Weber recalled, "Their enthusiasm and curiosity about the Weill catalogue were impressive, and the concert was very enjoyable. Shortly after that evening, Edward told us that the Chorale wanted to program complete Weill works."

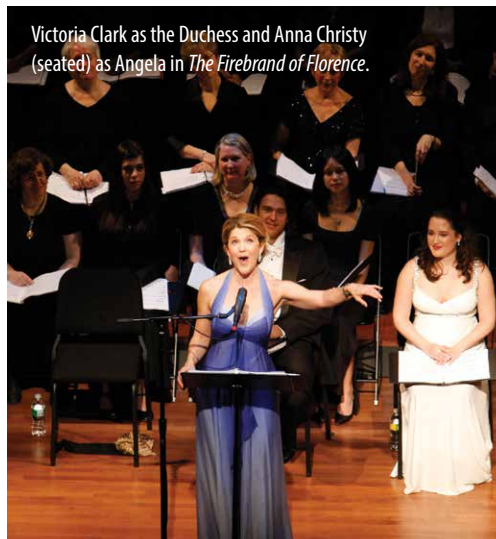
That next step in the partnership between the Chorale and the Foundation, *The Firebrand of Florence*, was five years in the making, for both sides had to do some work to make it happen. The Foundation had to address the state of the existing vocal score and parts, which did not yet fully reflect Joel Galand's critical edition of the full score, published in 2002. The Foundation worked with the publisher to edit the vocal score and parts so they would match the critical edition exactly. *Firebrand* has a great deal of music in it, played by a thirty-piece orchestra, so this was not a simple undertaking. Meanwhile, the Chorale was performing some experiments of its own. The Weill concert sparked their interest in American musical theater, and they soon found that concert performances of musicals play better with a little staging. By experimenting with projected slides and different ways of presenting the script, the creative team began to develop a new style for producing this kind of work with Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* in 2006 and Bernstein's *White House Cantata* (adapted from *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*) in 2008. Projections proved to be an essential element of their presentation of *Firebrand* in 2009, and again for *The Road of Promise*, for which they hired Broadway designer Wendall K. Harrington. *Firebrand's* book needed to be cut and reshaped for concert presentation; the

Chorale brought back Roger Rees to act as narrator and added actors to the cast. Rees supplied his own addition to the script: after the Duke of Florence sang a number about his struggle to find a word that rhymes with the name of the heroine, Angela, Rees went lyricist Ira Gershwin one better with "glandular"! (It sounds better with an English accent.)

Bass and Barnes were involved in preparations for *Firebrand* all along the way. But tragedy struck in the summer of 2008 when Bass died. He had been especially enthusiastic about *Firebrand* because the music came close to the operatic style he loved so much, but the story had the snappier pace of a Broadway show. He saw it as another means to expand the audience, and the Chorale followed through on the performance already planned for March 2009. Bereft of a conductor, they went to Broadway veteran Ted Sperling, who stepped in to conduct the score as Rees directed the semi-staged concert.

Everyone involved was startled at how brilliantly the performance came off. No one knew that a nearly forgotten work would go over so well sixty-five years after it was written. Barnes commented, "It was beautiful; once you've done it, you wonder why everyone else isn't performing it. The chorus loved it, everybody did," including the Chorale's Board and audience. The production concept—soloists Nathan Gunn, Anna Christy, and Victoria Clark sharing the stage with actors, some dialogue and even blocking, and the projections providing a *de facto* set—also worked like a charm. The Foundation was pleased not only with the quality of the performance, but with the glowing reviews, which demonstrated that *Firebrand*, the least known of Weill's Broadway shows, still appealed to critics.

PHOTO: ERIN BAIANO



Victoria Clark as the Duchess and Anna Christy (seated) as Angela in *The Firebrand of Florence*.

**"Weill's marvelously diverse score and Gershwin's often hilarious lyrics . . . truly are musical theatre gems . . . . Once the performers began delivering Gershwin's delectable lyrics, it was almost impossible not to be swept along by this dizzily daffy tale." – *Backstage***

That concert marked a turning point in relations between the Foundation and the Chorale. Putting on *Firebrand* required extensive behind-the-scenes consultation and cooperation, with both sides working together on the whole gamut of issues raised by the project. Barnes recalled, "That was the first time we worked with the Foundation at all levels: musical materials, promotion, funding, everything. I came down to talk to Carolyn about casting, and she was quick to suggest singers' names. That was when we really started to build a relationship. Our first Weill concert wasn't funded because it didn't meet the guidelines, but from *Firebrand* on, we have received grant or sponsorship funding." *Firebrand* convinced everyone involved that working together was mutually beneficial, and preparations for the next project began right away.

After one all-but-forgotten musical made a splash, it made sense to try another, and *Knickerbocker Holiday* by Weill and Maxwell Anderson suggested itself. The show offers a significant role for the chorus and lends itself to a similar style of presentation. Less than two years later, the Chorale put on the next Weill show in Alice Tully Hall. Broadway stars Kelli O'Hara, Bryce Pinkham, and Ben Davis took leading roles (Victor Garber sang

the immortal “September Song” as Pieter Stuyvesant), and the performance retained more dialogue than in *Firebrand*. Just as part of *Firebrand*’s appeal had been the fact that it had not been put on in New York for many years, the score of *Knickerbocker* had never been recorded, so the Chorale decided to issue the score on CD (still available from Ghostlight Records). The decision was partly driven by regret; Weber and Barnes noted independently that it was a shame that the *Firebrand* performance was not preserved. But how to do it? A studio recording was too expensive, so it had to be recorded live. That decision, in turn, quickly suggested another: two performances instead of one. (With two complete takes to choose from, the recording could utilize the better rendition of each number.) Once again, a Weill work pushed the Chorale to new methods and new experience, which it has put to use in recording *The Road of Promise* this spring for the Navona label, distributed by Naxos.

As the Chorale forged ahead after *Firebrand*, with notable concert performances of *The Mikado* and Ricky Ian Gordon’s *Grapes of Wrath*, the artistic team continued searching for the next Weill work. The one that kept coming up was *The Eternal*

*Road*, or more precisely, a new concert adaptation by Ed Harsh, completed in 2012. (For Harsh’s commentary on the concert version, see the Spring 2013 *Newsletter*.) Another largely forgotten work, *The Eternal Road* entered New York theater annals in 1937 through its sheer size and expense. The work has been revived on stage only once, and it has long been clear that it needed to be reimagined in order to be viable for performance. Harsh’s oratorio version, which retains a substantial amount of the original score while slimming down the cast and story, fulfilled all the requirements: an infrequently performed, and never recorded, work by Kurt Weill with a big role for the chorus. (*The Road of Promise* actually calls for a double chorus.) With two performances in Carnegie Hall in May 2015, and a forthcoming recording, the Chorale and the Foundation have written the latest chapter in their collaboration.

But it is not the last chapter. An arrangement that has worked to everyone’s benefit is set to continue as the Chorale settles on its next Weill work. That decision has not been made, but Barnes mentioned *Street Scene*, *Love Life*, *Lady in the Dark*, and even the most forgotten American work of all—*Railroads on Parade!*

This pageant, composed for the New York World’s Fair, ran for both years of the Fair (1939 and 1940), four shows per day. The Weill show that saw more performances, and very likely was seen by more people, than any other of his American works, is ironically the least known, although a recent recording of part of the show has surfaced and appeared on CD. *Railroads* would be a big job, but it would be an even bigger coup.

The partnership of the Collegiate Chorale and the Foundation, now at twelve years and counting, has grown with each performance, as both parties have drawn on their own resources and developed methods of working together to create a New York tradition. By presenting Weill’s works, the Chorale

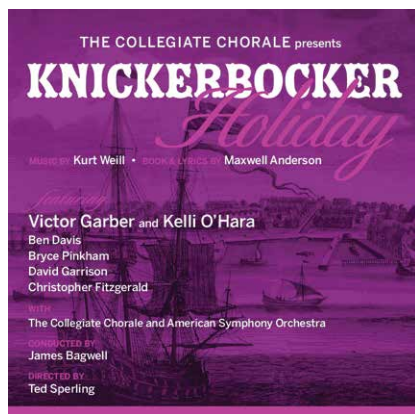


PHOTO: ERIN BAIANO

## Chorus Master: Weill as Choral Composer

The Collegiate Chorale’s embrace of Weill confirms a quality not often mentioned: his pre-eminence as a composer of choral music. Some major concert works feature the chorus—*Das Berliner Requiem*, *Der Lindberghflug*, *Recordare*, and the *Ballad of Magna Carta*—and some shorter works as well: *Die Legende vom toten Soldaten*, *Zu Potsdam unter den Eichen*, *Kiddush*, and “Ho, Billy O!” Several stage works also boast choral riches, notably *Die Bürgschaft*, *The Eternal Road*, *The Firebrand of Florence*, and *Lost in the Stars*. We asked Edward Barnes to discuss Weill’s unique standing as a choral composer.

“Weill is a theatrical choral writer, not a symphonic choral writer. His choral music tells a story, and that’s different from the Berlioz *Requiem*, where it’s about sound and texture, and the drama that comes from that. You don’t have to get the words across because everyone already knows them. The thing Weill does that most theater composers can’t do is write for the chorus in a way that makes the storytelling very clear and enhances the show as a whole. It’s not background; the chorus is a participant. In *Lost in the Stars*, for example, the chorus plays an essential role. It’s telling the story and providing background, characters’ feelings, and atmosphere all at once. Those people

singing ‘Train to Johannesburg’ are on that train. That’s what it sounds like. So if you’re singing in a chorus, why wouldn’t you want to do this music?”

“That’s very different from symphonic choral work, which is what the Collegiate Chorale has traditionally done. To me that understanding of chorus as character is what makes Weill brilliant, and you don’t see it on Broadway from many other composers. Sondheim’s ensemble numbers wouldn’t really be described as “choral,” more like music that individual characters happen to sing at the same time. When choral writing does get fleshed out on Broadway, it sounds sort of church-like, but it never does with Weill. He’s very clever about going from unison to two-part harmony to four, and in the case of *Road of Promise* huge double choirs. And he’s not doing it just for fun.

“The skill in choral writing comes from classical training, learning from masters like Mozart. That’s something Weill can do that Jerry Herman, say, can’t. It seems to me that when Weill was writing and putting on his Broadway shows, his use of the chorus must have seemed a little bit radical. Look at *Lost in the Stars*, where he makes the chorus the anchor of the whole piece. That’s a conceptual change that is very modern, and it holds up. It still feels unique and relevant, even now.”

has expanded not only its musical repertoire, but its production capabilities, its programming strategy, and its audience. The successful sequence of programs has warranted increasing support from the Foundation; the *Knickerbocker Holiday* and *Road of Promise* concerts and recordings were awarded sponsorships, which offer a higher level of funding for professional or educational organizations undertaking major projects and initiatives.

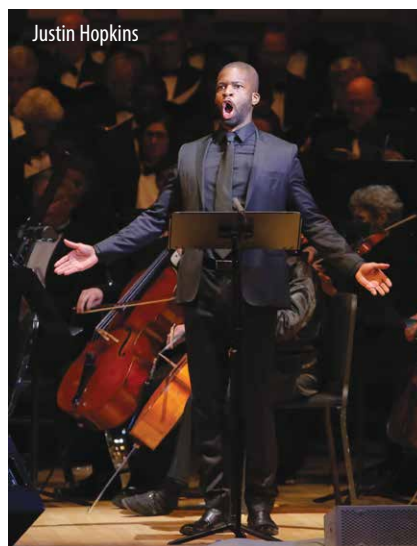
As Carolyn Weber pointed out, the support has paid off: “Underperformed Weill works have received recordings and New York City exposure, and the Chorale has been very supportive of Lenya Competition winners [see below], giving them the opportunity to perform in major venues.” The partnership offers an outstanding model and gives us all something to look forward to as the work continues.



Lauren Michelle



Megan Marino



Justin Hopkins

PHOTOS: ERIN BALIANO

**“Megan Marino demonstrated a lovely mezzo as Miriam and Ruth, and the soprano Lauren Michelle sang beautifully as Rachel and Naomi.”**  
*– New York Times*

## How to Succeed in Show Business

**“Lenya Competition prizewinners are great. It goes without saying by this time.”**

Thus spoke Edward Barnes, Producing Director of the Collegiate Chorale. Many prizewinners have made their mark since the Competition was founded in 1998. And because of their extraordinary vocal talent, musicality, and dramatic ability, several of them have caught the eye of the Chorale. Lauren Michelle (First Prize, 2015), Megan Marino (Third Prize, 2012), and Justin Hopkins (Second Prize, 2012) were singled out for solo roles in *The Road of Promise* at Carnegie Hall. Last year, Lauren Worsham (Second Prize, 2009) appeared in a comic Monty Python oratorio, *Not the Messiah*, and Zachary James (Third Prize, 2009) was cast in Handel’s *Susanna* (postponed to 2015-16). Worsham also played Pitti Sing in the Chorale’s 2012 Carnegie Hall presentation of *The Mikado*, along with Amy Justman (First Prize, 2004) as Peep-Bo and Analisa Leaming (Second Prize, 2007), who understudied Kelli O’Hara’s Yum Yum. Barnes recalled that Worsham was not only a quick study but was a creative force in rehearsals: “She had ideas for her numbers with Kelli [O’Hara] and Amy, and they tried them out and they worked great.” Worsham has since taken home a Drama

Desk Award and a Tony nomination for her performance in *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder* on Broadway.

Barnes credited former Foundation director Carolyn Weber with alerting the Chorale to these promising young singer-actors, and now the Chorale’s leadership takes an active interest in the Competition. “We’ve started looking to see who’s winning prizes, and I’m checking out the finalists as well, because these are people we want to work with. It’s almost like pre-selecting, where we can just offer them a role that we know they will do well.” There’s no mystery about the appeal of Competition prizewinners to the Chorale or any other performing group. “They can do any kind of cross-over between opera and musical theater,” Barnes explained. “They know how to communicate the story, they sing really well, and they’re usually extremely well-trained, unbelievable musicians. The style could be very modern, it could be pop, and they’re gonna be fine.” Little wonder that so many of them are forging careers in opera houses, Broadway and regional theaters, and recital halls all over the U.S. and Europe.



Amy Justman (left) and Lauren Worsham (right) with Kelli O’Hara in *The Mikado*.

PHOTO: ERIN BALIANO