

# KURT WEILL NEWSLETTER

Volume 12, Number 2

Fall 1994

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## Die Dreigroschenoper in Frankfurt with the Ensemble Modern

The Frankfurt Schauspielhaus premieres a new production of *Die Dreigroschenoper* on 2 October. Thirteen members of the Ensemble Modern, one of Europe's leading exponents of twentieth-century music, perform in the orchestra pit under the baton of Austrian composer-conductor HK Gruber. Gruber has painstakingly studied the original score and is determined to adhere strictly to the composer's musical intentions. The Ensemble also plans a new studio recording of *Dreigroschenoper*.

Yvonne Lötz and Simone Plate design the set and costumes of this new production by Hans Hollmann, which remains in repertory with 18 additional performances through January 5, 1995. The principal singers are Friedrich-Karl Praetorius (Macheath), Jürgen Holtz (Mr. Peachum), Ingeborg Engelmann (Mrs. Peachum), Katherina Lange (Polly Peachum), and Carola Regnier (Jenny). The Hessischer Rundfunk plans to broadcast the performance on German television, along with a one-hour documentary on the preparations for performance.

Gruber and the Ensemble Modern also present in October three all-Weill concerts at the Berlin Konzerthaus and the Frankfurt Alte Oper, the final one also broadcast on Hessischer Rundfunk. All three concerts feature the same program: *Berlin im Licht*, *Violin Concerto* (soloist: Freya Kirby), *Vom Tod im Wald*, *Suite Panaméene* (from *Marie Galante*), *Ölmusik*, songs from *Johnny Johnson*, and *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*. Gruber will also be the featured baritone soloist.

## Venus Visits Sweden

A new Swedish version of Weill's Broadway collaboration with S. J. Perelman and Ogden Nash, *One Touch of Venus*, premieres on October 21 in Malmö, on the southern coast of Sweden. With a text translated by Sven-Hugo Persson, this production will run until January 1995, with a total of 32 performances. At the podium is American conductor Michael Adelson, who has been active in Scandinavia in the past few years. The director is Lars Rudolfsson.

## Dreigroschenoper in London

Recently lauded in the *New York Times* as "a theatrical pacemaker in the aging heart of the West End," the Donmar Warehouse will present a new production of *The Threepenny Opera* that opens on 8 December and will continue until 18 March 1995. Just a stone's throw away from London's Covent Garden, the Donmar Warehouse has become widely recognized as a premiere home for small-scale contemporary musicals. The theater is presently under the leadership of Sam Mendes, a theater professional respected by his peers for his entrepreneurship in fostering the Warehouse's success.

Phyllida Lloyd, well-known for her innovative stagings at Opera North, the Royal Opera House, and the Royal Court Theatre, directs this new production of *The Threepenny Opera*. Vicki Mortimer designs the set and costumes, and Gary Yershon is the musical director. Robert David MacDonald's translation of Brecht's text will be used.

## Two New Recordings of Die sieben Todsünden in the Original Keys

Teldec Classic International has just released a new compact disc recording of *Die sieben Todsünden* by the New York Philharmonic (Teldec 4509-95029-2). Conducted by Kurt Masur, now in his fourth year as the musical director of the Philharmonic, *Die sieben Todsünden* is performed by soprano Angelina Réaux and members of Hudson Shad (Hugo Munday, Mark Bleeke, Peter Becker, Wilbur Pauley). Also included on this recording is Berg's *Lulu Suite*.

Another new compact disc recording of *Die sieben Todsünden* will be released by Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft (DGG) in October (in Europe) and November (in the U.S.); Anne Sofie von Otter is the featured soloist with the North German Radio Symphony Orchestra of Hamburg, conducted by John Eliot Gardiner (CD 439 894-2). Apart from *Die sieben Todsünden*, von Otter sings selections from *Lady in the Dark*, *Happy End*, and *One Touch of Venus* in their original orchestral form. A few songs for voice and piano by Weill are also included, for which the soprano is joined by pianist Bengt Forsberg.

## Kurt Weill Foundation Grant Program

Reminder: 1 November 1994 is the application deadline for 1995 funding by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music. To request guidelines, call (212) 505-5240.

### KURT WEILL NEWSLETTER Vol. 12, No. 2; Fall 1994

© 1994 Kurt Weill Foundation for Music  
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New York, NY 10003-1106  
Tel. (212) 505-5240  
Fax (212) 353-9663

ISSN 0899-6407

The Newsletter is published to provide an open forum wherein interested readers may express a variety of ideas and opinions. The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the publisher's official viewpoint. The editor encourages the submission of articles, reviews, and news items for inclusion in future issues. The submission deadline for the next issue is 15 February 1994.

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## Mahagonnys Around the World

### Düsseldorf

Kurt Horres's new production of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* premieres on 9 October 1994 at the home of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. Conducted by Walter E. Gugerbauer and with set and costume design by Andreas Reinhardt, this production features Trudeliene Schmidt (Begbick), Alfons Eberz (Fatty), Hermann Becht (Trinity Moses), Gabriele Reinholz (Jenny), and Mario Brell (Jim Mahoney) as the principal singers. The Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra will be in the pit. A total of ten performances are scheduled between the premiere and 18 December.

### Stuttgart

Between 7 and 24 May 1995, the Stuttgart State Opera will present a revival of its 1992 production directed by Ruth Berghaus (set designer: Erich Wonder; costume designer: Marie-Luise Strand; dramaturgy: Klaus Zehelein). The five scheduled performances will be conducted by Janos Kulka. Most of the singers from the 1992 production will return to the stage: Jörn W. Wilsing (Trinity Moses), Dagmar Pecková (Jenny), Gabriel Sadé (Jim Mahoney), Karl-Friedrich Dürr (Joe), Michael Austin (Jack/Toby Higgins), and Mark Munkittrick (Bill); the only new member among the principals is Elisabeth Canis (Begbick).

### London

London's Coliseum, the home of the English National Opera, will be the venue for a new production of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. The 10 June 1995 premiere will be the first of ten scheduled performances. Sian Edwards will conduct the initial performances, with James Holmes – who was musical director for both the ENO *Street Scene* and a recent BBC documentary on Weill's American years – assuming conductor's duties for those remaining.

This production will mark the London operatic debut of the dynamic co-founders of the theater company Cheek by Jowl: director Declan Donnellan and set designer Nick Ormerod. Sally Burgess and Lesley Garrett will co-star as Leocadia Begbick and Jenny. Both singers have Weill credentials: Ms. Burgess appeared in *Mahagonny Songspiel* in 1984; Ms. Garrett played Rose Maurant in ENO's *Street Scene*.

## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR FIRST KURT WEILL PRIZE

The Board of Trustees of the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music is pleased to announce the establishment of a new Kurt Weill Prize to encourage distinguished scholarship addressing issues in twentieth-century music theater, including opera. Submissions are welcome from the disciplines of music, theater, dance, literary criticism and history, or any interdisciplinary combination thereof.

The Prize, in the amount of \$2,500, will be awarded annually in association with the American Musicological Society, the American Society for Theatre Research, and the Modern Language Association. The inaugural award will be presented in 1995.

Four distinguished scholars representing each of the sponsoring organizations will serve on the selection panel: Charles Hamm (American Musicological Society), Julian Mates (American Society for Theatre Research), John Rouse (Modern Language Association), and Kim Kowalke (Kurt Weill Foundation for Music).

### Nomination Guidelines:

1. Nominated works must address issues in twentieth-century music theater or opera. Works dealing with the American musical theater are particularly encouraged.
2. Nominated works must have been first published in the calendar years 1993 or 1994.
3. Nominated works may be in the form of a book; a major scholarly article, chapter, or essay; a critical edition; or a publication in other media.
4. Nominations are solicited from individuals, publishers, and institutions. Self-nominations are encouraged as well.
5. Authors of nominated works need not be members of the sponsoring organizations, nor are there citizenship or language restrictions.
6. Nominating submissions, including contact information for the author and five copies of the nominated work, must be forwarded before 1 April 1995 to Joanna C. Lee, Associate Director for Business Affairs, the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music.

### Toronto

Preparations are underway for the 2 November 1995 premiere at the Prince of Wales Theater, Toronto, of another *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. Directed by Robert LePage and using Andrew Porter's newly translated libretto, this Canadian Opera Company production will also result in a television film and a compact disc recording. Following the premiere in Toronto, which will be supplemented by a scholarly symposium on the work, LePage's production will travel to New York (Brooklyn Academy of Music, January 1996), and to Glasgow and Edinburgh (Scottish Opera, April-May 1996). Negotiations with other venues will be finalized in the coming months.

### New York

The Metropolitan Opera will present a revival of *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* in November and December of its 1995-96 season.

### Street Scene in Germany

On 17 December 1994, an English-language *Street Scene* opens at the Theater im Pfalzbau in Ludwigshafen, just across the Rhine from Mannheim. This co-production of the Houston Grand Opera, Theater im Pfalzbau, and the Theater des Westens of Berlin was first performed in Houston in January of this year; transportation costs were funded in part by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music. The director of this co-production is Francesca Zambello, while the conductor for the performances in Germany is James Holmes. The principal singers include: Ashley Putnam, Wendy Hill, Lee Merrill, Teri Hansen, and Janice Felty. In January 1995, the cast will travel to Berlin for a six-week run at the Theater des Westens, opening on the 14th.

### Hampson/McGlinn recording of Weill's American works scheduled for 1995

Baritone Thomas Hampson has joined forces with conductor John McGlinn, the London Sinfonietta, the Ambrosian Chorus, and singers Elizabeth Futral and Jean Lehman to record an album devoted to the music of Kurt Weill's American years. Recording sessions took place in June 1994; EMI Classics has scheduled the release for late spring or early summer of 1995. The compact disc will include selections from *Love Life*, *The Firebrand of Florence*, and *One Touch of Venus*, as well as a few individual songs Weill wrote between 1935 and 1950. Mr. Hampson has also recorded Weill's *Dirge for Two Veterans* for his upcoming compact disc devoted to settings of Walt Whitman.

### Conferences

#### Jazz and the Germans

The Department of Music, University of Missouri-Columbia, announces a conference entitled "Jazz & The Germans – the Influence of 'Hot' American Idioms in the Land of Bach and Beethoven," 7-9 April 1995. The purpose of the conference is to draw attention to the flow of powerful musical ideas from the United States to Central Europe and to the influence of these ideas on various music-making traditions. The keynote speakers will be Frank Tirro (Yale University School of Music), Josephine Wright (The College of Wooster, Ohio), Heinz Werner Zimmermann (Composer, Hochschule für Musik, Frankfurt), and Carlo Bohländer (German jazz musician).

Musical performances will include a workshop presentation of excerpts from *Jonny spielt auf*, an evening of cabaret music, and a gala concert featuring the world premiere of Zimmermann's *Berlin Te Deum*, a work composed to commemorate the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The program committee has issued a call for papers; abstracts (no longer than 2 double-spaced pages) fully describing the topic proposed, the materials studied, the procedures used, and the resulting conclusions may be submitted for review. Performance of appropriate repertory and lecture-demonstrations are also encouraged. Send abstracts to the following address prior to 21 November 1994: Michael J. Budds, Dept. of Music, FA #140, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211; (314) 882-0927.

### Brecht Conference in Augsburg

The International Brecht Society (IBS) announces a conference, 10-11 March 1995, in conjunction with the Annual Brecht Week and the first award of the Brecht Prize (12 March 1995) in Augsburg, Germany. Topics include "Brecht, Music, and the Other Arts," and "Brecht and Company," focusing on issues of performance, relations between the arts, and Brecht's collaboration with other artists and writers. Selected papers from the conference will be published in the *Brecht Yearbook*. For information, contact: Siegfried Mews, Department of Germanic Languages, University of North Carolina, CB# 3160, 438 Dey Hall, Chapel Hill, NC 27599. Fax: (919) 962-3708.

### Weill-Lenya Research Center Completes NEH Cataloging Project

The staff of the Weill-Lenya Research Center recently completed work on a one-year cataloging project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, Division of Preservation and Access. Collection-level records and in some cases item-level records have been added to the Research Library Group's RLIN database for manuscript scores, holographs, scripts and libretti, correspondence, small collections, performance documentation, audio and video recordings, films, and oral history interviews. Detailed finding aids are available for the cost of duplication and mailing from the Research Center in photocopy or word-processing files.

The RLIN database is currently available in most American academic and large public libraries using RLIN's new search system, Eureka. (Eureka uses the NISO Common Command Language, Z39.58.) Institutional access from Europe and Asia is still limited largely to national libraries, but dial-in and Internet-access accounts may be arranged by contacting the Research Library Group's RLIN Information Center in Mountain View, California at (800) 537-7546.

The preservation component of the project included a survey of the unpublished audio recordings on disc (aluminum, glass, Vinylite, shellac, polyester, and acetate) and reel-to-reel formats, prepared by an expert in audio restoration and preservation, Adrian Cosentini. Cosentini made recommendations for storage and outlined a preservation plan. The Research Center will seek outside funds to accomplish the recommended preservation work.

Staff members for the project were David Farneth (Project Director), John Andrus (Project Archivist), and David Stein (Archives Assistant).

### Foundation Welcomes New Staff Members

The Kurt Weill Foundation announces the appointment of two new staff members: Joanna C. Lee (Associate Director for Business Affairs) and Brian Butcher (Administrative Assistant).

Joanna C. Lee joined the staff in September in the newly-created position of Associate Director for Business Affairs. In this capacity, Ms. Lee will deal with financial affairs and copyright administration, liaison with publishers and presenters, and will oversee the grant program, facility maintenance, the newly-created Kurt Weill Prize, and other special projects.

Ms. Lee received her Ph.D. in musicology from Columbia University in 1993 with her dissertation, "György Ligeti's *Aventures* and *Nouvelles Aventures*: A Documentary History." She also holds Master of Philosophy (1989) and Master of Arts (1987) degrees from Columbia. While at the Royal College of Music, University of London, she earned the Bachelor of Music degree and diplomas in piano performance, piano teaching, and flute teaching. Ms. Lee has presented papers and published numerous articles on film music, Chinese popular music, and American Christian hymnody in China. Previously Ms. Lee was program coordinator for J & D Music Services in New York.

Brian Butcher accepted the position of Administrative Assistant in August. He carries out the day-to-day operations of the Foundation, including reception, word processing, communications, database management, and scheduling. He also assists the staff in accomplishing all program activities.

Mr. Butcher holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in Music Performance (French Horn) from Northwestern University and has performed professionally in Chicago, Milwaukee, and New York. He has held positions at Northwestern University's Music Library and Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, as well as at the Weill-Lenya Research Center, where he transcribed and indexed oral history interviews under the NEH archive grant.



## Kurt Weill Edition Report

The Kurt Weill Edition reached a number of important milestones in the late spring of 1994. April 1 marked the beginning of support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. As reported in the last Newsletter, the NEH awarded the Weill Edition a major grant providing funding for the many activities associated with editing manuscripts for publication. The onset in late spring of the first of those activities marked the successful end of the Edition's first organizational stage. With the beginning of the next stage, the Weill Edition initiates its central mission: the editing and publication of Weill's music.

Before volume editors can begin their work, each must have access to the full range of source materials bearing on the given composition. The assembling and

preparation of source materials for the first eight commissioned volumes (see the Fall 1993 issue for a list) was the primary occupation of the KWE during the summer months of 1994. The nature of Weill's music necessarily brings into play a range of source types wider than does the traditional scholarly edition. Rather than simply being a matter of collecting autograph full scores, the KWE's project of source acquisition must spread a much wider net. To arrive at the ideal form of most of Weill's stage works, one must consult evidence such as programs, stage managers' scripts, and original orchestral parts. The Weill-Lenya Research Center already possesses an impressive array of this sort of material, but still to be found are a number of vital items for volumes soon to be commissioned. (See notice below).

With most of the requisite sources for the first commissioned works now assembled, the volume editors' work has begun in earnest; the first edited manuscripts are scheduled to be submitted to the KWE in late spring of 1995. In the meantime, the efforts of the KWE staff will be centered upon the next stage of organization and planning. This involves establishing the physical and notational design for the Edition, an effort to be coordinated among the staff and professionals in the field of book design, engraving, and music composition, many of whom already serve on the Edition's Advisory Board. Work continues as well on the prefatory material to accompany the *Dreigroschenoper* manuscript facsimile, which is to initiate the active publication of the Weill Edition in late 1995.

### ATTENTION: ALL HOLDERS OF WEILL-RELATED MATERIALS

#### The Kurt Weill Edition is looking for sources

Particularly vital are any documents relating to (or information about) the production process of any of Weill's stage works.

Documents may include, but are not limited to:

*Stage director's scores or scripts*  
*Conductor's score and/or notes*  
*Rehearsal scores or chorus parts*  
*Orchestral parts*  
*Original recordings*

Valuable information may include but is not limited to:

*Personal recollections about the development of a Weill stage work*  
*Personal contacts with individuals who might have such recollections*  
*The location and disposition of the materials listed above*  
*The location of personal papers of individuals who were associated with first productions*

Those who possess materials or information of this kind are encouraged to contact the Weill Edition:

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# Henry Marx

## An Appreciation



**Henry Marx**  
(3 November 1911 - 22 June 1994)  
at an 80th Birthday Celebration  
*Photo: Lys Symonette.*

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music and its friends are mourning the death of Henry Marx, one of the most beloved and effective members of its Board of Trustees. In its bereavement, the Foundation does not stand alone. Henry Marx, active in innumerable fields of endeavor, touched and enriched the lives of all those who shared his work, his goals, and his visions.

He was an inspiring journalist, an astute and sensitive music and theater critic, and an unconventional, imaginative administrator of a German cultural institute — a bridge builder between Germany, his country of birth and the United States, his adoptive homeland. His books, often written in collaboration with his wife, Carin Drechsler-Marx, brought the joy of reciprocal discovery to the citizens of both continents.

We, at the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, will remember him with great fondness and a sense of profound indebtedness for his accomplishments. The history of our Foundation is inseparably linked with his untiring efforts on its behalf. He served on its executive board from its earliest days onward, becoming its vice president and the first editor of its prestigious newsletter. He marshalled the first public exhibit on the life and work of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya. Our archives are replete with rare memorabilia of Weill and Lenya gathered and preserved by him.

But enumerating all his concrete contributions only suggests what we lose by his passing. He was our friend, the wise counselor in times of difficulties and in times of progress. A single remark at a meeting would provide direction. And his humanity, unshaken by his ordeal under fascism, warmed each of our encounters with him. His zest for achievements set an example.

The words of Rilke, which a youthful Kurt Weill once chose as his guide, also characterize the life of our friend Henry Marx: "Let us not brood about life, but rather place our existence in the service of mankind."

*Guy Stern*  
*Secretary, Board of Trustees*

## Letter from Berlin

by Jürgen Schebera

In November it will be five years since the Berlin Wall fell, and only four since German reunification. Regardless of all the related problems and general signs of turbulence that are still in our midst today – above all in economic matters – November 1989 marked a historic moment in post-war Europe.

Even though Berlin is once again the capital of Germany, it will still take a few years until the government ministries and parliament move to the banks of the Spree. Because Berlin has long been a cultural capital, one would have thought that reunification would have stimulated a grand revival of the art from the period when Berlin was the great European metropolis; but no such revival has taken place. Unfortunately, Kurt Weill has been among the neglected. None of the three Berlin opera houses has mounted a single production a Weill work since before the wall fell, even though *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* or *Die Bürgschaft* would have presented particularly poignant references to the current situation in Germany. None of the major orchestras has included Weill's symphonies or his Violin Concerto in its program. And, what about experiments with the French or American Weill? Berlin failed again – one had to go all the way to the East German provinces to see *Der Kuhhandel* in Bautzen or *One Touch of Venus* in Meiningen.

In spite of that, two 1994 Berlin productions warrant comment because they so aptly illustrate the current misperceptions in dealing with Weill's works. The Staatsoper Unter den Linden (with its new, as-yet-unsuccessful intendant Georg Quander, the former head of the music department at Berlin's RIAS radio station, and Daniel Barenboim, the new musical and artistic director) premiered an evening of ballet entitled *Dix*, which combined choreography by Roland Petit, expressionist paintings by Otto Dix, and music from the twenties. What was the result? A rather incoherent musical mélange that included Schoenberg's *Begleitmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene*, op.34 and excerpts ranging from Berg's *Lulu-Suite*, Hindemith's *Concerto for Orchestra*, op.38, and Stravinsky's *Symphony in Three Movements*, to the utterly obscure *Concerto Grosso for Jazzband and Large Orchestra* (1926) by Eduard Künneke. The choreographed scenes, for the most part, lacked in originality and had little to do with the Dix paintings projected onto the stage's backdrop.

Three of the ten scenes were choreographed to Kurt Weill's music. The second movement (Largo) from Weill's *Second Symphony* accompanied a scene entitled "The Painter and his Model," with a projection of Dix's "Lovers Standing" (1921) serving as a backdrop – a complete misunderstanding of the work, since this movement is anything but dance-like! Likewise debatable was

"Tango," in which three couples sinfully whirled about the stage to the fifth movement (Tango-Ballade) of *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*. But even worse was the scene "Der Matrose und das Straßenmädchen," in which the sixth movement (Kanonen-Song) of *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik* accompanied stereotypical revue-like choreography with Dix's "The Three Maidens," providing a most unsuitable backdrop. This music, of course, has nothing to do with the romance of the docks; thus the scene degenerated into nothing but an embarrassing farce. The only positive attribute of the evening was the competence of the Staatskapelle, conducted by its Kapellmeister Ascher Fisch, who once assisted Barenboim in Tel Aviv.

Not far from the Staatsoper is the home of the once world-renowned Berliner Ensemble, which, at the start of the season, was taken over by a "band of five" very different players: Peter Zadek, Peter Palitsch, Matthias Langhoff, Heiner Müller, and Fritz Marquardt. (After a bout of internal dissension, Langhoff distanced himself from the entire scene and returned to Paris.) Here, too, disappointment was the order of the day, with mediocre productions of Brecht's *Baal*, *Fatzer*, and *Der Brotladen*. Only Zadek's production of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (which originated at the Burgtheater in Vienna) and Rolf Hochhuth's provocative play about the German reunification, *Wessis in Weimar* (directed by Einar Schleeff), were able to attract an audience. The greatest flop of the season was *Der Jasager und Der Neinsager*, which was much touted as "Zadek's first production of a work by Brecht!" The director came up with the ingenious idea of removing all of Weill's music, so that Brecht's didactic play from 1930 could be performed "purely." He should have left well enough alone. The performance was notably static, like a dry recitation, with little movement at all from the actors. Audience and critics

responded with a suitably devastating reaction. If nothing else, the evening demonstrated convincingly what a significant part the music plays in the collaborative works of the Weill-Brecht team. Presenting *Der Jasager* without Weill's score, without its utterly theatrical music to drive and comment on the text, is like chopping one-and-a-half legs off an animal and expecting that it can still walk!

So, after a dearth of activity in 1994, Weill-lovers in Berlin are looking ahead to Houston Grand Opera's production of *Street Scene* at the Theater des Westens next year. But when will the intendants and programmers at the city's theaters and orchestras wake up and explore the ways that Weill's music could satisfy their deprived audiences?

translated by Kathleen Finnegan



Houston Grand Opera's production of *Street Scene* moves to Germany in December. Photo: Jim Caldwell.