

CSUSB OPERA THEATRE PRESENTS

THE NEXT WHISKY BAR



APRIL 24 & 25, 2024 • 7:30 PM
MUSIC RECITAL HALL (PA 102)

DIRECTED BY STACEY FRASER **MUSIC DIRECTION BY** ALASTAIR EDMONSTONE
FEATURING GILBERT ARCHULETTA, LAURA CIFUENTES, RAYMOND HENLEY, DAVID HENRY, KELLEN MCNEIL, GABRIEL OROZCO, CASSANDRA PEREZ, AND EVE SILIEZAR

THE NEXT WHISKY BAR



Welcome to the CSUSB Opera Theatre spring production of *The Next Whisky Bar*, a musical revue conceived by Jay Turvey and Paul Sportelli featuring the music of Kurt Weill and some of his most iconic collaborators including Bertolt Brecht, Ira Gershwin, Maxwell Anderson and Alan Jay Lerner. The CSUSB Opera Theatre is now in its 17th season, having produced a rich and diverse repertoire of music theatre works that range from Mozart to Philip Glass and from Missy Mazzoli to Astor Piazzolla. Every year I carefully research what will work well for each new cohort of opera students, this has led to the discovery of interesting and challenging works that are rarely performed or are on the cutting edge of 20th and 21st-century opera.

The work we present tonight features some of Weill's most famous songs which you will undoubtedly recognize (perhaps The Doors adaptation of "Alabama Song" will come to mind, or Bobby Darin's rendition of "Mack the Knife" from *Threepenny Opera*). Some lesser-known songs from Weill's German period are also included, such as the devastating "Nanna's Lied" which tells the story of a 16-year-old prostitute, and "The Ballad of the Soldier's Wife" a song that documents the end of WWII and the pillaged countries who suffered at the brutality of the Nazis, songs that remained unpublished long after Weill's death until his muse and widow Lotte Lenya made them available to the great Canadian soprano Teresa Stratas. Lenya was spellbound by Strata's performance in the role of Jenny in *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* and told her that, "nobody can sing Weill's music better than you do". Stratas recorded the songs for Nonesuch in 1981 and the *New York Times* called it a "landmark" recording that "blended theatrical spunk with classical vocalism." This specific recording was my first introduction to the music of Kurt Weill when I was an undergraduate student at the University of Toronto. I had finally found music that spoke to me as a classical singer, music that allowed me to use my classical technique but to explore the theatricality of Weill's music. I have been a Weill devotee ever since.

This evening's performance has a cabaret feel, although Lotte Lenya was known to have stated that Weill "never wrote a single song for the cabaret" and that his music demanded a legitimately trained voice. Tonight we cross that line, which I believe works for this particular production and for this cast who have something interesting and special to share, whether they are coming from a strictly classical technique or more of musical theatre or popular aesthetic. I think this provides an all-inclusive opportunity for the cast and audience alike.

Many thanks to my colleagues in the Theatre Arts department who year after year have been great supporters of our Opera Theatre program. And of course, to my colleagues in music who collectively train and support these young musicians.

Enjoy the show!

Stacey Fraser

Stacey Fraser, Director

PROGRAM

The Next Whisky Bar

Musical revue of Weill's songs conceived by Jay Turvey and Paul Sportelli. Orchestrations by Paul Sportelli (based on Weill's original orchestrations).

FIRST PERFORMANCE: 21 August 2015, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, Shaw Festival, Jay Turvey, dir., Paul Sportelli, conductor.

Synopsis

The story of one evening in a dockside bar in Rostock, Germany in 1924. A group of sailors descend on the bar and experience an evening of camaraderie, loss, and self-discovery while interacting with the prostitutes who work there. The narrative is delivered entirely through the music of Kurt Weill and his various collaborators, most notably Bertolt Brecht.

MAGDA: Early 50s. Barkeep and prostitute. Looks after the other prostitutes in the bar. Has seen it all.

KURT: Mid 20s. Orphan, taken in by Magda. Works in the bar and serves as prostitute for some of the male clients. Dreams of being a Broadway star.

GISELA: Early 30s. Waitress and prostitute. Tried to have a career as a film star in Berlin and somehow ended up in Rostock.

ELLI: Early 20s. Widow of a successful career soldier. Once wealthy, she has fallen on hard times. Waitress and prostitute. A bit of a Blanche DuBois, she struggles to hold on to her former glory. Fragile mental state.

HORST: Late 50s. Sailor. Wheeler-dealer. Fun-loving, capable of violence. Former lover and pimp of Magda.

GUNTHER: 40s. Sailor. Black sheep of a wealthy family. Intellectual. Brutally honest.

JAKOB: Late 20s. American cabaret performer who moved to Berlin to make his name. After a failed career he joined the German navy. Party lover. His German girlfriend, a cabaret artist, was drowned at sea.

Cast

Magda	Eve Siliezar
Kurt	David Henry
Gisela	Laura Cifuentes
Elli	Cassandra Ellis
Horst	Raymond Henley
Gunther	Gilbert Archuletta
Jakob	Kellen McNeil/Gabriel Orozco

Song list

Unless otherwise noted, original German lyrics by Bertolt Brecht.

Mack the Knife

Alabama Song

Song of the Rhineland (lyrics by Ira Gershwin)

Tango Ballad

Bilbao Song

Mandalay Song

Ballad of Sexual Dependency

As You Make Your Bed

Nanna's Lied

Wouldn't You Like to Be on Broadway? (lyrics by Langston Hughes)

Berlin Im Licht

What Keeps Mankind Alive?

Surabaya Johnny

Ballad of the Soldier's Wife

My Ship (lyrics by Ira Gershwin)

The Drowned Girl

September Song (lyrics by Maxwell Anderson)

Youkali (original French lyrics by Jacques Deval)

Lost in the Stars (lyrics by Maxwell Anderson)

Kurt Weill (1900-1950) began his career in the early 1920's, after a musical childhood and several years of study in Berlin. By the time his first opera, *The Protagonist* (Georg Kaiser), was performed in April 1926, he was an established young German composer. But he had already decided to devote himself to the musical theater, and his works with Bertolt Brecht soon made him famous all over Europe. He fled the new Nazi leadership in March 1933 and continued his indefatigable efforts, first in Paris (1933-35), then in the U.S. until his death. Certain common threads tie together his career: a concern for social justice, an aggressive pursuit of highly-regarded playwrights and lyricists as collaborators, and the ability to adapt to audience tastes no matter where he found himself. His most important works: the Violin Concerto (1925), *The Threepenny Opera* (Bertolt Brecht and Elisabeth Hauptmann, 1928), *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (Brecht and Hauptmann, 1930), *The Pledge* (Caspar Neher, 1932), *The Seven Deadly Sins* (Brecht, 1933), *Lady in the Dark* (Moss Hart and Ira Gershwin, 1941), *Street Scene* (Elmer Rice and Langston Hughes, 1947), *Lost in the Stars* (Maxwell Anderson, 1949). He died of heart failure in 1950, shortly after he and Anderson began work on a musical adaptation of *Huckleberry Finn*, leaving behind a large catalogue of works and a reputation that continues to grow as more of his music is performed.

Weill was raised in a religious Jewish family in Dessau, Germany. Although he was not observant, he composed a number of "Jewish" works, from a vast score to *The Eternal Road* (1937, Franz Werfel) to a setting of the Kiddush. He married actress Lotte Lenya in 1926; they maintained a close relationship throughout his life despite their divorce in 1933 (they remarried in 1937).

Personnel

Stacey Fraser, Director
Alastair Edmonstone, Music Director
Allie Morones, Stage Manager
Sandy Sooter/David Henry, Choreography
Catherine Erickson, Costume Design
Terry Donovan Smith, Fight Consultant
Andrew Yanez, Scenic Design and Build
Eric Mulz, Scenic Consultant and Build
Cash Tijerina, Technical Director

Band

Clarinet (ten. sax)	Margaret Worsley
Accordion (musical saw)	Lara Urrutia
Banjo	Satchel Henneman
Piano	Alastair Edmonstone
Drums	Frank Lenz
Bass	Marlon Martinez

THE CSUSB OPERA THEATRE is an auditioned ensemble that stages a major opera production on campus every year. The innovative, modern, and zany adaptations of both standard operatic repertoire and new operatic works that have been produced by the CSUSB Opera Theatre have led to sold-out performances, as well as rave reviews across the Inland Empire community. Past productions include Offenbach's *Monsieur Choufleuri*, Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Mozart's *Impresario* and *Così fan Tutte*, *Maria de Buenos Aires* by Astor Piazzolla, *Monkey See Monkey Do*, *Tango, Concert Suite from Frida*, *La Curandera* by Robert Xavier Rodriguez and their acclaimed Quentin Tarantino inspired production of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. CSUSB Opera Theatre produced the first abridged university production of Philip Glass' *Einstein on the Beach* featuring an all-Hispanic cast. Recent productions include a film adaptation of Missy Mazzoli's *Song from the Uproar*, an original staging of John Adams' *I was looking at the ceiling and then I saw the sky* and *Book of Longing* by Leonard Cohen and Philip Glass. Collaborators of the CSUSB Opera Theatre have included dancer/choreographer Faith Jensen-Ismay of the critically acclaimed San Diego-based dance company Mojalet Dance Collective, Brightwork newmusic, GRAMMY-winning pianist Nadia Shpachenko, the lotusflower new music project, Southern California-based conductors John Mario, Anthony Parnter and Kosta Popovich, Emmy-winning designer Jacqueline Saint-Anne as well as several CSUSB faculty and alumni. The CSUSB Opera Theatre is a proud seven-time recipient of the City of San Bernardino Fine Arts Commission grant and the National Endowment for the Arts.

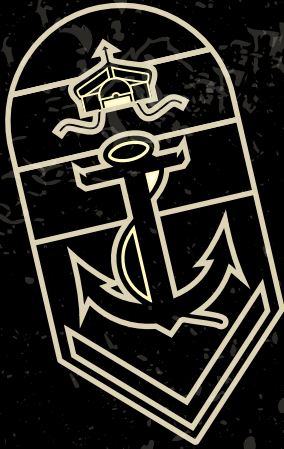
Acknowledgments

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THE CSUSB OPERA THEATRE



THANK YOU FOR COMING TO THE SHOW!



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