

Kurt Weill Revisited notes and credits

There are certain composers whose music never ages. Times and styles may change, but somehow certain music lives on because the voice of the composer somehow remains fresh and unique, seeming to defy time. Born in 1900, Kurt Weill was one of those composers. His music, whether for the concert hall or popular song or the theater, was unlike anyone else's. He worked with extraordinary collaborators, including Bertolt Brecht, Maxwell Anderson, Langston Hughes, Ogden Nash, Ira Gershwin, Alan Jay Lerner, and produced such classics as *The Threepenny Opera*, *Street Scene*, *One Touch of Venus*, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, *Knickerbocker Holiday*, *Lady in the Dark*, *Lost in the Stars*, and many others. "Mack the Knife" became a huge pop hit for Bobby Darin, "Alabama Song" became a huge pop hit for The Doors, and songs like "Speak Low," "My Ship," "September Song," "The Saga of Jenny," "I'm a Stranger Here Myself," "Lost in the Stars," and many of the songs from *The Threepenny Opera* have been interpreted by incredible singers like Sinatra, Streisand, Billie Holiday, Tony Bennett, Ella Fitzgerald, Rosemary Clooney, Doris Day, Judy Garland, Nancy Wilson – well, the list could go on and on. His music was also a favorite of jazz artists. His music has influenced any number of shows and composers. And his concert works are equally great, including his two symphonies, his violin concerto and *Quodlibet* among others.

Weill died young, at fifty, a tremendous loss. He was married (twice) to the great Lotte Lenya, who kept his legacy alive after he passed. And every new generation seems to rediscover the artistry of Weill.

Ben Bagley's *Kurt Weill Revisited* was one of the most interesting in his long series of *Revisited* albums. As always with this series, Ben unearthed some great gems and of course we don't get any of the hits, which was never the point of these albums. He assembled a terrific cast for this one, including Paula Laurence, Ann Miller, John Reardon, Chita Rivera, Arthur Siegel, and Jo Sullivan, and Dennis Deal was responsible for the arrangements and orchestrations. The previous CD release was one of the few that did not have any extra material on it, so it was a fairly short run time of forty-three minutes. So, we decided to add our own bonus material. We have Lotte Lenya's 1930 recording of "Alabama Song," performed with The Three Admirals and conducted by Theo Mackeben and his Jazz Orchestra. It is nightmarish and wonderful. And the major bonus is a 1930 recording of *The Threepenny Opera* in German with Lenya, Kurt Gerron, Willy Trenk-Trebitsch, Erich Ponto, Erika Helmke, with the Theo Mackeben and Lewis Ruth Band. These are historic recordings and have been cleaned up by mastering engineer James Nelson, and sound pretty amazing given their age.

And as with our other Bagley releases, we have spruced up the sound quite a bit, as the quality of the original LPs and their subsequent CD releases was never optimal, sound-wise. And, of course, the classic cover art is by the one and only Harvey Schmidt, whose paintings help make this series so unique.

Bruce Kimmel

This CD produced by Bruce Kimmel

Mastered by James Nelson at Digital Outland

Art Direction and Package Design: Doug Haverty for Art & Soul Design

Cover art by Harvey Schmidt, used by permission of the Schmidt Intellectual Property Trust

Thanks to Ken Patton, Brad Bennett, and the memory of Ben and Harvey.

1. Songs from One Touch of Venus (lyrics by Ogden Nash) Paula Laurence, Arthur Siegel, Chorus

Vive la Difference, One Touch of Venus, That's How Much I Love You, Very Very Very

2. This Time Next Year (from an unfinished musical of Huckleberry Finn – lyrics by Maxwell Anderson) Ann Miller

3. You Understand Me So (cut from Love Life – lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner) Chita Rivera

4. I Remember It Well (from Love Life – lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner) Jo Sullivan and John Reardon

5. Moon-faced, Starry-Eyed (from Street Scene – lyrics by Langston Hughes) Ann Miller

6. Youkali Tango (from the 1934 Casino de Paris Revue – lyrics by Fernay) Paula Laurence, Arthur Siegel, Chorus

7. Dr. Crippen (from One Touch of Venus – lyrics by Ogden Nash) Chita Rivera and the Men

8. Italy in Technicolor (cut from Street Scene – lyrics by Langston Hughes) Jo Sullivan

9. Poor Mrs. Peachum (written for the Paris production of The Threepenny Opera – lyrics by Yvette Guilbert – English translation by Michael Feingold) Paula Laurence

10. You Are Unforgettable (cut from Lady in the Dark – lyrics by Ira Gershwin) Arthur Siegel

11. Love in the Mist (cut from One Touch of Venus – lyrics by Ogden Nash) Jo Sullivan

12. Is It Him or Is It Me? (from Love Life – lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner) Ann Miller

13. Locker Room (from Love Life – lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner) John Reardon, Arthur Siegel, and the Men

Vocal and Musical Arrangements: Dennis Deal

Bonus tracks

14. Alabama Song Lotte Lenya (1930 recording with The Three Admirals, conducted by Theo Mackeben and his Jazz Orchestra)

The Threepenny Opera (1930 German recording, with the Theo Mackeben and Lewis Ruth Band, sung by Lotte Lenya, Kurt Gerron, Willy Trenk-Trebitsch, Erich Ponto, Erika Helmke)

15. Overture and Ballad of Mack the Knife

16. Pirate Jenny

17. Cannon Song

18. Love Song

19. Barbara Song

20. First Threepenny Finale

21. Farewell

22. Pimp Ballad

23. Ballad of Pleasant Life

24. Jealousy Duet

25. Second Threepenny Finale

26. Song of Inadequacy

27. Ballad and Final Chorale