



MUSIC, CINEMA AND MODERNISM

THE WORKS AND HERITAGE OF KURT WEILL

BETWEEN EUROPE AND AMERICA

Virtual Conference, 20-21 May 2021

CENTRO STUDI
OPERA OMNIA
Luigi Boccherini

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UNIVERSITÀ
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Kurt Weill

THE KURT WEILL FOUNDATION FOR MUSIC

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The conference is funded in part by the

Kurt Weill

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The Kurt Weill Foundation, Inc. promotes and perpetuates the legacies of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya by encouraging an appreciation of Weill's music through support of performances, recordings, and scholarship, and by fostering an understanding of Weill's and Lenya's lives and work within diverse cultural contexts. It administers the Weill-Lenya Research Center, a Grant and Collaborative Performance Initiative Program, the Lotte Lenya Competition, the Kurt Weill/Julius Rudel Conducting Fellowship, the Kurt Weill Prize for scholarship in music theater, and publishes the Kurt Weill Edition and the Kurt Weill Newsletter. Building upon the legacies of both Weill and Lenya, the Foundation nurtures talent, particularly in the creation, performance, and study of musical theater in its various manifestations and media. Since 2012, the Kurt Weill Foundation has administered the musical and literary estate of composer Marc Blitzstein. <www.kwf.org>.



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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

MUSIC, CINEMA AND MODERNISM

THE WORKS AND HERITAGE OF KURT WEILL

BETWEEN EUROPE AND AMERICA

Organized by

Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini, Lucca
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, DAMS – CAM

Under the Auspices of the
Università degli Studi di Torino

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The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music

Virtual Conference, 20-21 May 2021

Programme Committee

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Keynote Speakers

NILS GROSCH (Universität Salzburg)

STEPHEN HINTON (Stanford University)

THURSDAY 20 MAY

13.30-14.00 **Opening and Welcome**

- GIULIA CARLUCCIO (Università degli studi di Torino)
- KIM KOWALKE (The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music)
- FULVIA MORABITO (Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini, Lucca)

14.00-16.00 **Session 1**

(Chair: Andrea Malvano, Università degli studi di Torino)

- WOLFGANG RUMPF (Radio Bremen), *Treading the Line Between Operetta, Dance Music, European Avant-Garde and American Jazz: The Work and Heritage of Kurt Weill*
- KARA MCKECHNIE (University of Leeds), *Street Scene – Adaptation and Intercultural Blend*
- SARA TORRENZIERI (Università degli studi di Bologna), *La musica nel teatro brechtiano: teoria musicale e collaborazioni con Weill*
- ROBERTO CALABRETTO (Università degli studi di Udine) – ANTONIO FERRARA (Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi), *L'instabile esistenza delle canzoni di Kurt Weill nella distribuzione cinematografica internazionale: due casi di studio*



16.15-18.15 **Session 2**

(Chair: Tim Carter, University of North Carolina)

- WILLIAM A. EVERETT (University of Missouri, Kansas City, KS), *Kurt Weill and the American Operetta Tradition: «The Firebrand of Florence» and «Where Do We Go from Here?»*
- TOBIAS FASSHAUER (Universität der Künste Berlin), *«Hard to Distinguish from Cole Porter»: On the Deeper Truth of an Invektive by Adorno*
- NAOMI GRABER (The University of Georgia, GA), *'Steel Veins': Technology, Nature, and the Documentary in «Railroads on Parade»*
- REBECCA SCHMID (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), *Street Scenes*

18.15-18.30 **Break**

18.30-19.30 **Keynote Speaker 1**

(Chair: Kim Kowalke, The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music)

- STEPHEN HINTON (Stanford University, CA): *Weill's Cinematic Imagination*

FRIDAY 21 MAY

9.30-10.30 Session 3

(Chair: Marida Rizzuti, Università degli studi di Torino)

- ANDREW HOLDEN (Oxford Brookes University), *Weill's «Lestofanti» in Italy: Changing Perspectives on «Die Dreigroschenoper» 1930-1950*
- VALENTINA GARAVAGLIA (Università IULM, Milano), *Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill e il Piccolo Teatro*

10.45-11.45

(Chair: Giaime Alonge, Università degli studi di Torino)

- PAOLO SODDU (Università degli studi di Torino), *Brecht-Weill nazionale popolare? «L'Opera da tre soldi», Strehler, Milly, Milva, Modugno e gli altri*
- STEFANO LOMBARDI VALLAURI (Università IULM, Milano), *Weill Reception in Popular Song: Vocal Interpretation from Louis Armstrong to Lou Reed to... Kurt Weill*

11.45-13.15

(Chair: Pietro Cavallotti, Università degli studi di Torino)

- GIACOMO ALBERT (Università degli studi di Bologna), *Prismi di idee: diffrazione dell'immagine di Weill nella critica e nella musicologia italiane*
- LEO IZZO – ANGELA IDA DE BENEDICTIS (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel), *Weill e l'avanguardia italiana del secondo dopoguerra*



15.00-17.30 Session 4

(Chair: Ilario Meandri, Università degli studi di Torino)

- FRANCESCO FINOCCHIARO (Conservatorio 'C. Pollini', Padova), *On the Principle of Concertante Music: Kurt Weill's Solution to the Problem of Film Music*
- CAROLIN STAHRNBERG (Anton Bruckner Privatuniversität Linz), *Multiple Voices: Casting, Dramaturgy and Composition in German Premieres of «The Threepenny Opera», «White Horse Inn» and «Call Mr. Plim»*
- JULIA HEIMERDINGER (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien), *«I think if we had more freedom, we would all of us write better and possibly more contemporary music»: Discovering an Unknown 1945 Hollywood Panel Discussion on the 'Role of Modern Music in the Modern Film'*

- PIETER MANNAERTS (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), *Dancing with the Vampire: Wolfgang Zeller's Music for Carl Theodor Dreyer's «Vampyr» (1932)*
- CAROLINE HOEBENS (Sorbonne Université, Paris), *The View on Sound in Film of the Dutch Avant-garde Movement Filmliga and the First Sound Films of Joris Ivens*

17.30-18.00 Break

LESSON - SONG PERFORMANCE

(Music by Kurt Weill)

Introduction by Andrea Malvano

Laura Capretti, mezzosoprano - Sandro Zanchi, pf

Programme:

Speak Low, Salomon Song,

Mack the Knife, Pirate Jenny,

Foolish Heart, Lost in the Stars

18.00-19.00 Keynote Speaker 2

(Chair: Alberto Rizzuti, Università degli studi di Torino)

- NILS GROSCH (Univeristät Salzburg), *How many Weills?: Negotiating a Musician's Identity*

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- **STEPHEN HINTON (Stanford University, CA): Weill's Cinematic Imagination**

Weill's formation as a composer for the musical theater was intimately bound up with his experience of the new media. Even though he professed a «Commitment to Opera», to cite the title of a manifesto of his from 1925, he understood the relationship between musical theater and the new media to be reciprocal. The paper explores this relationship as it evolved throughout his career, with examples both from his musical theater works and from his various film projects (finished and unfinished).

- **NILS GROSCH (Univeristät Salzburg), How many Weills?: Negotiating a Musician's Identity**

Are Kurt Weill's oeuvre and his artistic attitude characterized by a unifying, stable identity, or are they best framed according to various periods and parts? This question appears to be fundamental to the appreciation, reception, and research of the composer and his output. And the responses have turned out to be crucial in the history of the interpretation and performance of Weill's works. My paper analyzes strategies of identity management and image construction, from Weill's own identity policy, through critical reception, to the models provided in the scholarship on Weill. I am interested in the tensions that accrue around a composer who worked in different fields and on different stylistic levels, and whose life was split by persecution and escape. I will therefore use Stephen Greenblatt's concept of cultural mobility to challenge understandings of cultural identity, artistic coherence, and spacial belonging.

PARTICIPANTS

- **WOLFGANG RUMPF (Radio Bremen), Treading the Line Between Operetta, Dance Music, European Avant-Garde and American Jazz: The Work and Heritage of Kurt Weill**

After moving to the United States 1935, composer Kurt Weill was interviewed by American Radio where he recalled his prior image of the New World: «We liked everything we knew about this country. We read Jack

London, Hemingway, Dreiser, Dos Passos, we admired Hollywood pictures [...]. America was a very romantic country for us». In addition to his classical training in Dessau under Ferruccio Bussoni, Weill's own music was influenced by American Jazz and Blues, as well as the operetta and the dance- and popmusic of the era. Swing and Charleston had detached the traditional Waltz from the 19th century. He played with these influences (instruments and sounds) and soon developed his own style which linked all these elements. Weill saw jazz imports from America as an enrichment: «The rhythm of our time is jazz, the Americanisation of the entire way we live, which is slowly but surely taking place, finds its strangest expression here». Weill raves about the brilliant jazz bands of the 'Negro Revues' and writes polemically of the «miserable, primitive pop music of the pre-war period» (means the Years before 1914), which was completely fading away «against the richness of modulation, the rhythmic and sonorous achievements of jazz». The theory began to take shape in early 1928 when Brecht and Weill were commissioned to rewrite John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* for a German audience. Kurt Weill combined elements of modern e-music with popular elements of American jazz and ragtime. He tried out various unusual band arrangements: Wind instruments, trumpets, saxophones, percussion — as most evident in the *Ballad of Mack the Knife*. Seven years later, he was emigrated to the USA with his wife Lotte Lenya, he composed famous songs for Broadway-Musicals and the Hollywood-Cinema (like *Lady in the Dark*, *Lost in the Stars*...), his *September Song* landed 1967 on the Setlist of 'The Doors'. Weill liked America and has been an American citizen since 1943 and never returned to Germany. His heritage was present till the 1980s: 35 years after his death (1950) big names from Jazz and pop came together to celebrate the very successful project «Lost in the Stars – the Music of Kurt Weill»: John Zorn, Sting, Carla Bley, Tom Waits, Charlie Haden, Aaron Neville, Lou Reed.

• **KARA McKECHNIE (University of Leeds), *Street Scene – Adaptation and Intercultural 'Blend'***

This paper examines *Street Scene* as a series of adaptations involving four creative artists: 1) Composer Kurt Weill, in pursuit of writing a 'Broadway Opera' and working towards integration of content, musical numbers and spoken word. 2) Playwright Elmer Rice, who found changes brought about by genre hard to accept. This meant the work ended up being «more similar to the play than Kurt Weill would have hoped» (Kim Kowalke, February 2020). 3) Lyricist

and poet Langston Hughes, who encouraged Weill to investigate the rhythms, catchphrases and sounds of 1940s New York as part of the adaptation process. 4) Director Charles Friedman, whose alleged preference was where the money was: the big Broadway number to whom it fell to adapt/ adapt to the other creatives' ideas. Adaptation is both process and product, and this dramaturgical analysis of *Street Scene* considers both of these. Despite necessary artistic compromise, the innovation of *Street Scene* was considerable, but Weill was pushing for more integration up to the last minute («We have not yet succeeded in blending the elements of the show. In some places, we try to be too legitimate, in other places, too musical comedy»; KW, 1946). The different building blocks can be broadly described as the 'operatic seam'; the Broadway numbers and the dialogue (including melodrama). Discussions continue over genre — Broadway Opera or American Musical? I will also consider intercultural elements of the work, where personalities, languages and traditions are thrown together in a confined space. *Street Scene* poses complex questions around identity, integration and immigration — so a distinction can be made between numbers which deliberately exemplify clashes and adaptations, and underdeveloped aspects of the dramaturgy which don't easily contribute to Weill's ambitions for overall integration. This was a collaboration which demanded adaptability from Weill, Rice, Hughes and Friedman. The paper will profit from being able to examine *Street Scene's* dramaturgy 'on its feet' through the 2020 Opera North production.

• **SARA TORRENZIERI (Università degli studi di Bologna), *La musica nel teatro brechtiano: teoria musicale e collaborazioni con Weill***

La teoria musicale e l'antica collaborazione con Kurt Weill sono parte integrante del teatro epico brechtiano. Nell'*Opera da tre soldi*, scrisse Brecht, «le musiche di scena vennero per la prima volta usate secondo una prospettiva moderna. L'innovazione più vistosa consisté nel fatto che le parti musicali erano nettamente distinte dalle altre». Nelle note ad *Ascesa e rovina della città di Mahagonny*, la musica è uno degli elementi fondanti la distinzione fra opera drammatica ed epica. In entrambi i lavori, Brecht e Weill attuano un rinnovamento dell'opera attraverso «l'irruzione dei metodi del teatro epico»: lo scopo è indurre lo spettatore ad una presa di posizione critica rispetto ai contenuti della rappresentazione. Negli scritti sul teatro, Brecht parla spesso di 'musica gestuale': la musica deve esprimere una posizione politica, e comunicare attraverso la sua traduzione in uno specifico gesto.

• **ROBERTO CALABRETTO (Università degli studi di Udine) – ANTONIO FERRARA (Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi), L'instabile esistenza delle canzoni di Kurt Weill nella distribuzione cinematografica internazionale: due casi di studio**

Non è con l'avvento del film sonoro che la musica ha avuto la certezza di stabilire un legame definitivo e immodificabile con le immagini in movimento. La 'perdita dell'esperanto visivo' del film muto e l'iniziale indisponibilità tecnica di utilizzare il missaggio tra musica, dialoghi e rumori ha determinato, nei primi anni del film sonoro, la nascita del fenomeno assai singolare delle versioni multiple di pellicole destinate ad avere un mercato internazionale. Con modalità non standardizzate, le produzioni cinematografiche si ingegnavano ad adottare strategie per riproporre uno stesso film in un altro paese, diverso da quello in cui era stato originariamente concepito e realizzato. In questa pratica, la musica veniva riadattata o anche riscritta per le differenti versioni nazionali del film, mettendo in discussione non solo la sua originalità, ma spesso anche il legame con l'artefice iniziale. Non sono esenti da questa instabile esistenza anche le canzoni di Kurt Weill, già peraltro spesso tradite nel passaggio dal palcoscenico al set cinematografico. Come primo caso di studio, questa ricerca intende dunque mettere a confronto le due versioni filmiche, tedesca e francese, del *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1931), entrambe riportanti la regia di Georg Wilhelm Pabst. L'introduzione del missaggio ha consentito finalmente di dare più stabilità alle musiche e ai rumori presenti nelle pellicole destinate a una distribuzione internazionale. Rimaneva il problema delle voci che, specie in Italia, è stato sempre ovviato con il doppiaggio, spesso utilizzato anche per gli inserti canori: una questione di grande rilevanza anche per la ricezione italiana delle canzoni di Kurt Weill. Il ritrovamento di materiale musicale relativo a *Le schiave della città*, la versione italiana del film hollywoodiano *Lady in the dark* (1944), infarcito di *songs* tratte dall'originale musical, consente, caso più unico che raro, di utilizzare fonti primarie per analizzare questi interventi 'artigianali' di trasformazione e alterazione. Con questo secondo caso di studio si intende proprio ripercorrere il processo di trasformazione subito da queste canzoni di Weill.

• **WILLIAM A. EVERETT (University of Missouri, Kansas City, KS), Kurt Weill and the American Operetta Tradition: «The Firebrand of Florence» and «Where Do We Go from Here»?**

During the 1940s, operetta in the US was neither completely dormant nor especially vibrant. While newer approaches to musical theatre by the likes of

Rodgers and Hammerstein were becoming increasingly popular, operetta was being kept alive through a series of special or short-lived New York revivals of works by Viennese favorites Johann Strauss, Jr. and Franz Lehár, the Parisian titan Jacques Offenbach, and especially the Central European immigrants Sigmund Romberg and Rudolf Friml. Beyond the bright lights of Broadway, operetta continued to live through studio recordings and radio broadcasts of already-classic American works from the 1920s (e.g., Romberg's *The Desert Song* with Kitty Carlisle) as well as performances at outdoor summer theatres across the country. Hollywood film operetta fared worse, for it was experiencing a decided dip between the two decades that in many ways defined the genre, the 1930s and the 1950s. It was in the midst of this general operetta slump that Kurt Weill's Broadway operetta *The Firebrand of Florence* (opened March 22, 1945, Alvin Theatre) and operetta-influenced film *Where Do We Go from Here?* (released May 23, 1945, Twentieth-Century Fox) appeared, both featuring lyrics by Ira Gershwin. This presentation will demonstrate how in both instances Weill and his collaborators infused identifiable tropes from canonic Broadway operettas into works that reflected Weill's own operatic aspirations and fascination with film. *The Firebrand of Florence* and *Where Do We Go from Here?* each alluded to and indeed continued the American operetta tradition through various intertextual references.

• **TOBIAS FASSHAUER (Universität der Künste Berlin), «Hard to Distinguish from Cole Porter»: On the Deeper Truth of an Invective by Adorno**

In his 1956 article 'Vortrupp und Avantgarde', Theodor W. Adorno noted that Kurt Weill was «hard to distinguish from Cole Porter» in regard to his American oeuvre, save for the fact that «the light [Broadway] idiom caused him some difficulties». For later Weill scholars, it was precisely this statement that encapsulates Adorno's ignorant and prejudiced attitude towards the composer's artistic development. However, a comparison of, for example, Porter's *Begin the Beguine* (1935) and Weill's *Speak Low* (1943) would demonstrate that a certain similarity in style and compositional procedure cannot be dismissed easily, regardless of whether one shares the value judgement implied in Adorno's verdict or not. Interestingly, a common reference point can be identified quite early in Porter's and Weill's artistic careers, namely the direct or indirect connection to French musical modernism of the 1920s with its synthesis of

art and entertainment, inspired by American popular culture. Already in 1923, Porter's Cocteau-esque aesthetic background, which he had acquired during his residency in Paris, became apparent in his ballet *Within the Quota*. Both Porter and Weill were to re-import musical Americanism, as filtered through European culture, to the United States. This paper aims at a comparative analysis of songs by Porter and Weill on two levels. First, some striking structural and 'gestic' similarities in their work will be highlighted. On a second, more general level, the strategies are examined by which Porter and Weill, two popular composers who strove for more than mere commercial success, met a fundamental challenge: How can originality, individuality, and artistic ambition come into their own in a highly standardized genre? And how can lyrics and music unite to form a both meaningful and comprehensible structure?

• **NAOMI GRABER (The University of Georgia, GA), 'Steel Veins': Technology, Nature, and the Documentary in «Railroads on Parade»**

As scholars such as William Stott and Jeff Allred have observed, U.S. culture of the 1930s was gripped by a documentary impulse. Composer Kurt Weill showed an interest in this aesthetic in several works from early in his U.S. career, especially *Railroads on Parade*, a largescale pageant with a libretto by Edward Hungerford, which played at the 1939-1940 World's Fair. This paper examines *Railroads on Parade* as part of a larger cultural fascination with documentary film and theater. With its voice-over narration, folksong-based score, episodic construction, and live historical and replica engines, *Railroads on Parade* resembles the contemporary documentary pictures made by Frontier Films and its successor, American Documentary Films, especially Pare Lorentz's *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936) and *The River* (1937), which played at the Fair. Like *Railroads*, both films explore the relationship between technology and nature, accompanied by Virgil Thomson's score based in hymn tunes, minstrel numbers, and cowboy songs. In this context, folk music represents natural beauty, which is later despoiled by human plundering, accompanied by a modernist turn in the music. *Railroads on Parade* begins similarly, with sweeping folk-like melodies, images of pristine plains, and grandiose narration. But *Railroads on Parade* seamlessly links the idyllic past to the technologically-advanced present through the score, which seamlessly flows from folk tunes to nineteenth-century popular styles, forging an organic connection between the railroad nature. The visual and musical language of the documentary encourages the audience to

see railroads as both a modern convenience and a part of American national heritage. The techno-pastoral mood of *Railroad*. Hearing *Railroads on Parade* with the contemporary documentary in mind shows that, for Weill, the language of musical film and that of musical theater were not always separate.

• **REBECCA SCHMID (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), *Street Scenes***

Weill hoped that his Broadway Opera *Street Scene* would «open new vistas for American composers» (KW 1946). Less than a decade after his death, Leonard Bernstein reached the cultural mainstream with *West Side Story*. A comparative analysis reveals that Weill's formal experimentation tilled the soil for what Bernstein hoped would be the «one, real moving American opera» (LB 1982). That Bernstein reportedly scoffed at *Street Scene* on more than occasion only corroborates musical evidence of his inability to escape Weill's precedent. The numbers of Rose and Sam share not only structural but motivic and harmonic parallels with those of Maria and Tony. My analysis builds upon previous studies of *Street Scene* to illustrate how allusions to Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* serve a narrative function. Bernstein, meanwhile, includes cross-references to Beethoven, Wagner and, most importantly, Marc Blitzstein, that distract from *West Side Story's* kinship to *Street Scene*. This aesthetic legacy reveals the extent to which *Street Scene* and other American-period works reified Weill's mission to renew opera with formal hybrids that spoke as directly to a native sensibility as they rooted themselves in Old World tradition.

• **ANDREW HOLDEN (Oxford Brookes University), *Weill's «Lestofanti» in Italy: Changing Perspectives on «Die Dreigroschenoper» 1930-1950***

As in other countries, the early production history in Italy of Brecht and Weill's *Die Dreigroschenoper* showed the work open to a wide variety of readings and adaptational strategies. The opera reached Italy quickly in translation by Alberto Spagni and Corrado Alvaro as *La Veglia dei Lestofanti* (literally "The vigil of the con-men"), produced as a 'Commedia-Jazz' by futurist artist Anton Giulio Bragaglia. The production opened in Milan's Teatro Filodrammatici in March 1930, and toured to Parma before arriving at the Teatro di Torino in the final season under the progressive impresario Roberto Gualino. The first new post-war Italian production of the opera as *L'Opera da tre soldi*, came only in 1956 at the beginning of Giorgio Strehler's reign at the Piccolo Teatro di Milano, now translated by Ettore Gaipa. In the intervening period Roman Vlad

had re-worked both score and text to create a subversive reading of the work in wartime Rome as *L'Opera dello Straccione*. This paper will return to the Bragaglia production but expand the standard chronology of the opera in Italy through a revival of this production in 1950 by the Teatro San Carlo in its summer season at the Villa Floridiana. As well as Bragaglia's adaptation and staging, it was notable for its cast which included as Mrs Peachum soprano Giulia Tess, who had sung at Gualino's Teatro di Torino as *Compositore* in the first Italian production of Strauss's *Arianna a Nasso*, and as Polly, Lia Origoni, one of the most versatile singer/actors in post-war Italy. This early post-war return to Brecht-Weill through the lens of a 1930 futurist concept will help shed new light on how artists, critics and audiences viewed the return of Weill to Italian stages amid the changing aesthetic and political values of the *dopoguerra*.

• **VALENTINA GARAVAGLIA (Università IULM, Milano), Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill e il Piccolo Teatro**

Il 1956 inaugura il sodalizio tra il Piccolo Teatro e Bertolt Brecht: un'esperienza esistenziale e artistica capitale nella vita dello Stabile della città di Milano che sfocerà in allestimenti indimenticabili. Le regie strehleriane delle opere del maestro di Augusta saranno capaci di rappresentare un punto fermo non solo nell'iter creativo del regista, ma anche nella fortuna critica dei testi e dell'autore, saranno il viatico per introdurre il pubblico italiano alla drammaturgia brechtiana e alla poetica del teatro epico, inaugurando uno studio di esse sistematico e prolungato nel tempo. Folgorato dalla poetica strehleriana, Brecht ne darà un giudizio lusinghiero, decidendo di affidare l'intera propria opera drammaturgica al Piccolo che, da quel momento, assumerà la responsabilità di gestirne ogni ipotesi di rappresentazione in Italia. Per Strehler, Brecht si rivelerà un vero maestro, al pari di Jacques Copeau e Louis Jouvet: la sua lezione è profonda, poiché si riferisce non a un teatro fuori della storia, fuori del tempo, non al teatro eterno, di sempre, non alla storia contro il teatro, ma alla *storia a teatro*, a mondo e vita nello stesso tempo, in un rapporto dialettico continuo, difficile, talvolta doloroso, ma sempre attivo, sempre attento al divenire generale. Forte di quella che egli considera la virtù brechtiana per eccellenza, la capacità di dubitare, Strehler instillerà nei suoi attori l'idea di un teatro che è scuola di responsabilità morale. Il rapporto tra Bertolt Brecht e il Piccolo è dunque il rapporto tra due idee di teatro totali, convinte che il teatro, come tutte le arti, debba servire all'arte più grande di tutte: quella di vivere.

• **PAOLO SODDU (Università degli studi di Torino), Brecht-Weill nazionale popolare? «L'Opera da tre soldi», Strehler, Milly, Milva, Modugno e gli altri**

La relazione ricostruisce il modo in cui Kurt Weill è stato recepito in Italia nel primo trentennio del secondo dopoguerra con gli allestimenti da parte del Piccolo Teatro dell'*Opera da tre soldi*. Nelle regie di Giorgio Strehler nei due allestimenti degli anni Cinquanta e degli anni Settanta, ad attori affermati e strettamente inseriti nelle dinamiche culturali del Piccolo Teatro si aggiunsero interpreti nazionali popolari. Nell'edizione del 1956 Peachum fu Mario Carotenuto, attore caratterista di molta commedia all'italiana; Jenny delle Spelonche Milly, celebre interprete musicale e soubrette dell'avanspettacolo degli anni Venti-Trenta. Nella messa in scena degli anni Settanta la interpretò Milva, una delle cantanti di musica leggera di maggiore successo degli anni Sessanta. Accanto a lei, nei panni di Mackie Messer Domenico Modugno — assunto a fama globale nel 1958 con *Nel blu dipinto di blu*, scritta con Franco Migliacci —, e Gianni Agus, reso popolare dal varietà televisivo, come capo della polizia. Si ricostruisce la nuova stagione culturale delineate in quel ventennio dagli artisti e intellettuali della sinistra italiana. Essa operò con un disegno complessivo che percepiva la diffusione di un sentire democratico, abbattendo le distanze tra cultura alta e cultura popolare, senza mettere in discussione la qualità della proposta. Le edizioni dell'*Opera da tre soldi* con la regia di Strehler erano manifestazione di questa stagione, volta a operare una trasformazione generale. Avveniva all'interno di una visione segnata profondamente dall'assorbimento della riflessione gramsciana. Fu però un fatto effimero, culminato nell'edizione dell'*Opera da tre soldi* con Milva, Modugno e Agus. Dopo di allora si aprì una nuova stagione: mutò radicalmente, anche a sinistra, il senso del nazionale popolare, divenuto, con intenti palesemente spregiativi e diminutivi, nazional-popolare.

• **STEFANO LOMBARDI VALLAURI (Università IULM, Milano), Weill Reception in Popular Song: Vocal Interpretation from Louis Armstrong to Lou Reed to... Kurt Weill**

Besides favouring a second life of Weill-Brecht's masterpiece in English-speaking theatres, Marc Blitzstein's translation of the *Dreigroschenoper* also grounded the success of many of Kurt Weill's songs as evergreens of the world repertoire of popular song, properly understood as a non-theatrical genre. The

paper investigates the reasons for the elective affinity between Weill's songs and popular song. Since the former were not created by Weill directly for the popular concert/recording circuit, but have penetrated it from the outside, we can suppose that the penetration took place through a process of adaptation. My hypothesis is that vocal interpretation is the field where Weill's original song-objects were able to adapt most fittingly to the needs of the popular genre. Popular song is the only genre where it is permissible to sing with absolutely any technique and style, or even without any technique. Therefore the reception in popular song of a non-popular author entails that his songs are vocally interpreted in the most disparate ways. But for this to happen, the songs themselves must allow such openness and technical-stylistic variability in the vocal conduct: they must not have certain characterising elements — regarding range, timbre, dynamics, rhythm, phrasing — compulsorily proper to this or that non-popular genre. In this sense, some of Weill's songs, although conceived outside popular song, are born ready to transform themselves into it. I will argue this assertion through a historical stylistic path, in three steps: 1) Louis Armstrong, a musician undoubtedly ascribable to jazz, but linked to the pre-jazz Afro-American vocality, model of all the singing anomalies typical of popular song; 2) several rocker-songwriters (Jim Morrison, David Bowie, Sting, Lou Reed etc.), who instead orient the voice towards a semi-spoken type of singing, taking advantage of the theatrical or narrative matrix of the songs; 3) finally Weill himself, with a surprise.

• **GIACOMO ALBERT (Università degli studi di Bologna), Prismi di idee: diffrazione dell'immagine di Weill nella critica e nella musicologia italiane**

L'intervento offre una panoramica ampia della ricezione di Kurt Weill nella critica e nella musicologia italiane. Si investigheranno la rappresentazione e la narrazione della musica weilliana operate attraverso generi letterari diversi: in primo luogo nelle enciclopedie e nelle storie della musica, per osservare da una parte l'evoluzione della presenza e dell'accettazione della sua musica nel contesto italiano, e dall'altra la cornice, le principali idee e categorie estetiche che sono state di volta proiettate sulla sua opera. In secondo luogo, mostrerò l'evoluzione della presenza di Weill in una testata, il *Corriere della Sera*, per osservare quali sue composizioni siano state eseguite in Italia, nello specifico a Milano, e come sono introdotte al grande pubblico. Infine, per approfondire l'orizzonte di idee attraverso cui la figura di Weill è stata di volta in volta interpretata, mi concentro sugli

scritti di alcuni critici e musicologi importanti, come Della Corte, Pannain, Gatti, Rognoni, Manzoni, Mila, D'Amico, Bortolotto, Isotta, etc. Indagare un quadro così ampio permette di evidenziare come l'evoluzione delle idee sul compositore rispecchi lo stato del dibattito estetico italiano. Ad esempio, se il discrimine nei giudizi espressi nel primo Novecento è soprattutto di matrice politica (in senso positivo per musicologi come Magni Dufflock o Rognoni, negativo per Della Corte o Pannain), un giudizio radicalmente negativo come quello di Bortolotto si inquadra in un orizzonte intellettuale diverso e palesa una mutata concezione nei fondamenti estetici dell'arte e della musica. Kurt Weill diviene così terreno per la rappresentazione dello scontro sulle idee di modernismo, musica d'uso, musica di consumo, etc. Anche l'evoluzione della ricezione dei repertori americano e tedesco è interessante: dalle recensioni del *Corriere* risalta un percorso lungo, ma tutto sommato lineare, che porta a una tardiva accettazione del Weill americano, che, però, negli ultimi anni, sembra addirittura soppiantare quello tedesco. Il dibattito sui 'due Weill', poi, nella musicologia è più articolato di quanto potrebbe apparire a una prima occhiata: basti pensare alla voce dell'Enciclopedia Ricordi del 1964, che, se è introdotta da una nota critica di Fellegara basata su un'estetica 'modernista', che sottolinea la cesura tra i repertori (buono e cattivo), evidenzia, nella descrizione delle opere curata dalla redazione diretta da Sartori, la continuità della produzione weilliana: impensabile non solo negli anni Sessanta, ma anche in molte storie della musica recenti.

• **LEO IZZO – ANGELA IDA DE BENEDICTIS (Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel), Weill e l'avanguardia italiana del secondo dopoguerra**

A partire dagli anni Cinquanta, la figura di Kurt Weill riveste un ruolo di riferimento tra i compositori che vanno lentamente profilandosi come i maggiori rappresentanti dell'avanguardia post-bellica, in un fenomeno di ricezione che fin dall'inizio è inquadrato in un contesto internazionale. In questo panorama i casi di Luciano Berio e Bruno Maderna sono i più rilevanti. Nella loro opera il termine 'ricezione' si declina in modi di volta in volta differenti, abbracciando la ricezione interpretativa, teorica, politico-contestuale e autoriale, l'appropriazione formale e infine i casi di 'meta-ricezione'. Leo Izzo analizzerà la presenza di Weill nella musica di Bruno Maderna, approfondendo le forme musicali e le circostanze contestuali in cui questa presenza si estrinseca. Il discorso toccherà necessariamente casi di ricezione diretta, ma anche indiretta e/o mediata attraverso l'azione di un'artista come Laura Betti. La posizione di

Maderna nei confronti dei songs di Weill sarà esaminata in relazione al dibattito coevo intorno ai generi musicali e sarà affrontata principalmente attraverso l'analisi delle partiture, mettendo in luce modalità e strategie autoriali di volta in volta differenti. Angela Ida De Benedictis approfondirà la presenza di Weill in Luciano Berio, aprendo l'analisi a un'ulteriore protagonista di questa catena ricettiva, Cathy Berberian. La lettura porterà anche a rivedere quelli che sono i confini 'nazionali' della ricezione di Weill in Berio, ampliandosi necessariamente al panorama culturale statunitense. Nel quadro politico-culturale dell'Italia di quegli anni, ci si interrogherà altresì su un caso di ricezione 'ex-negativo', ossia sulla non-presenza o rifiuto di modelli weilliani nella musica e nel pensiero di Luigi Nono.

• **FRANCESCO FINOCCHIARO (Conservatorio 'C. Pollini', Padova), *On the Principle of Concertante Music: Kurt Weill's Solution to the Problem of Film Music***

In his interview with Lotte Eisner titled 'Musikalische Illustration oder Filmmusik?', Kurt Weill declared his personal program for the emancipation of film music from the age-old principle of illustration. The accompanying music — he claimed — should not simply illustrate the events that take place onstage, but should have a 'purely musical shaping', a formal and structural integrity of its own. After this reflection, he strongly criticized Edmund Meisel's principle of *Lautbarmachung*: this idea of the acoustic manifestation of reality, which had informed Meisel's score for *Potemkin* (1926), would have never been able to provide a «solution to the problem of film music». According to Weill, this long-awaited solution was to be achieved through an «objective, almost concertante film music». In film, music should be an independent component that stands in a dialectical relationship with the staged events, instead of sedulously illustrating them. Through this 'concertante' quality, music can become an essential part of the 'epic character' of the artwork. Through the tension that it establishes with the action or the visual sphere — for instance by providing an antiphastic counterpoint to it, or by interrupting its flow — music unmasks the illusion of realism of the narrative fiction. The principle of concertante music was widely applied in many scores for German cinema of the early 1930s by art-music composers and film-music specialists such as Paul Dessau, Hanns Eisler, Walter Gronostay, and Weill himself. A thorough analysis of audiovisual montage casts light on a variety of dramaturgic choices, from dramaturgical counterpoint to

horizontal collage, all of which share two basic features: the preservation of some degree of formal coherence for the musical component and the tendency to treat music and sound like any other montage material.

- **CAROLIN STAHERNBERG (Anton Bruckner Privatuniversität Linz), *Multiple Voices: Casting, Dramaturgy and Composition in German Premieres of «The Threepenny Opera», «White Horse Inn» and «Call Mr. Plim»***

In times when the Weimar Republic struggled, musical theatre did not only mix different styles and genres, it also staged multiple voices, by combining character, performance personae and the body of the performer. In two of the most successful shows, *The Threepenny Opera* (*Die Dreigroschenoper*, 1928) and *The White Horse Inn* (*Im Weißen Rößl*, 1930), as well as in the today less known 'cabaret opera' by Mischa Spoliansky, *Call Mr. Plim* (*Rufen Sie Herrn Plim!*, 1932), the production was cast with singers who came from operetta as well as cabaret, straight theatre, film, dance, folk and opera. These diverse casts, featuring stars as well as ensemble players, had impact on the structure and reception of the shows and on the popular musical theatre routines of the Weimar Republic in general. The paper will analyse the different backgrounds and voices of the premiere singers connected to their performance personae and its function in the musical and dramaturgical structure of the pieces. Press reviews by leading critics will highlight how the multiplicity of voices and characters was interpreted regarding the sociological and political context.

- **JULIA HEIMERDINGER (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien), «I think if we had more freedom, we would all of us write better and possibly more contemporary music»: Discovering an Unknown 1945 Hollywood Panel Discussion on the 'Role of Modern Music in the Modern Film'**

In this paper I will talk about a panel discussion on the 'role of modern music in the modern film', which took place on May 17, 1945 at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Los Angeles. This event, which is apparently unknown to research until now, was organized by the *Hollywood Quarterly*, a film journal launched in the same year resulting from the cooperation of the Hollywood Writers Mobilization and the University of California Press during wartime. Participants of the panel were the musicologist Walter Rubsamen, as well as

the composers Ingolf Dahl (in whose papers a copy of the transcript was discovered by William Rosar, editor of *The Journal of Film Music*), Leigh Harline, and Hugo Friedhofer, while colleagues in the audience joined the discussion, film composer David Raksin among them. Major points of discussion were the definition of the contemporary idiom in modern music and the autonomy of modern music in relation to modern films. It is especially interesting to observe which music for which films were considered modern or contemporary by whom — and why. One of many aspects worth consideration is how individual remarks apparently align with what Hanns Eisler (whose absence from the event is at one point expressly regretted) had stated about film music, especially in his paper ‘Prejudices and New Musical Material’, published in the proceedings of the *Writers’ Congress*, a conference held in 1943, which already addressed issues from his then upcoming book *Composing for the Films* (1947). A look at the panel discussion reveals that Eisler was certainly not the only one in Hollywood with similar criticism.

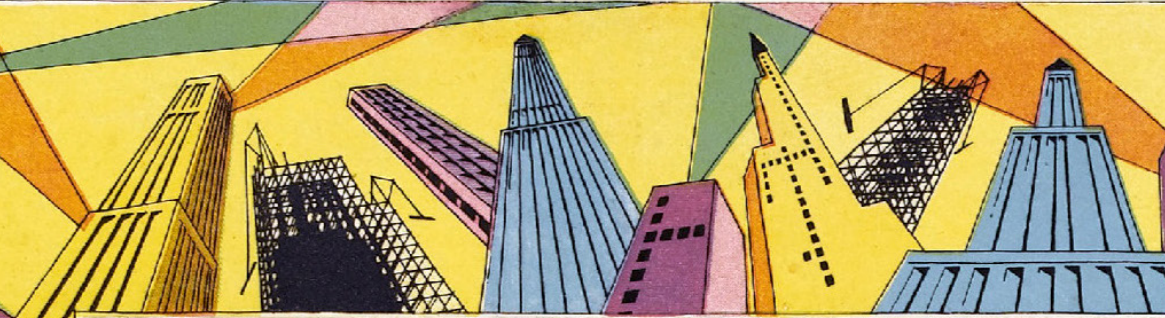
• **PIETER MANNAERTS (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), *Dancing with the Vampire: Wolfgang Zeller’s Music for Carl Theodor Dreyer’s «Vampyr» (1932)***

By 1937, when in New York Kurt Weill composed his film score *You and Me* (dir. Fritz Lang), recorded sound in film had long become a standard commodity since its first appearance in a feature-length film (*The Jazz Singer*, dir. Alan Crosland) a decade earlier. While in the US sound film had found fast acceptance, its popularity in Europe grew considerably slower. To get a better view on the strategies employed by the European directors and composers to implement sound in their films, it is revealing to study those films that form the ‘transition’ stage between silent and full-grown sound films. Famous examples include the first British ‘talkie’, Alfred Hitchcock’s *Blackmail* (1929), and its French counterpart, *Le Collier de la reine* (dir. Tony Lekain and Gaston Ravel, 1929). The present paper proposes a closer look at yet another, equally celebrated ‘transition’ film, *Vampyr* (1932). The film was the result of an internationally oriented undertaking, directed by the Danish director Carl Theodor Dreyer, shot in France, produced in Berlin, released in French, German, English and Danish editions, and provided with an orchestral film score by the German composer Wolfgang Zeller. A reading of Zeller’s manuscript score, in conjunction with the original version of the script and with the final cuts of the film, provides

valuable insights on the use of music and recorded speech and sound in this landmark film of the early 1930s, which Hitchcock dubbed «the only film worth seeing twice».

• **CAROLINE HOEBENS (Sorbonne Université, Paris), *The View on Sound in Film of the Dutch Avant-garde Movement Filmliga and the First Sound Films of Joris Ivens***

In the years of the introduction of the sound film, European intellectual film societies discussed the use of sound in cinema. The renowned Dutch avant-garde movement 'Filmliga', active in the years 1927-1933, organized international debates on the sore subject and devoted diverse articles from different viewpoints to the topic in its eponymous review. In 1929, the famous avant-garde film director Vsevolod Pudovkin was invited by the Dutch Filmliga to give a lecture in Amsterdam. As one of the Soviet writers of the revolutionary manifest 'Statement on Sound' (1928), he had inspired Filmliga members and artists. According to the Soviets, sound could be valuable in film if it is applied according to the principles of counterpoint. This means that music in film has to be used in contrast to the image on screen, instead of synchronising with the visible movements, so that an aural visual dissonance arises. This way, Pudovkin claimed, sound could create a greater emotional expressivity. Joris Ivens, an important founding member of the Filmliga and admirer of the Soviet directors, was one of the first filmmakers to fully explore the possibilities of sound technology within film. In close collaboration with composer Hanns Eisler, he experimented with sound and montage during the realisation of his first sound films directed soon after the Soviet statement was released. Hans Eisler, a former student of Arnold Schoenberg and a member of the same Berlin group of leftist artists as Kurt Weill, agreed on a cinematographic level with the Soviets' counterpoint theory. He, too, argued that music should comment the cinematic image and narrative, retaining its own line rather than illustrating the screen's image. The first results of Eisler's and Ivens' cooperation were the films *Komsomol*, produced in 1932 and *Nieuwe Gronden*, produced in 1933.



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