Upcoming Events

Friday, October 19, 7:30, $, Dem Hall
Jazz Orchestras

Sunday, October 21, 7:00, Cook Recital Hall
Haute Ecole de Musique de Lausanne String Quartet

Monday, October 22, 7:30, Wharton Center’s Cobb Great Hall, $ Concert and Campus Bands

Tuesday, October 23, 7:30, People’s Community Church, $ University Chorale and State Singers

Wednesday, October 24, 7:30, Cook Recital Hall Recital Hall, $ Walter Verdehr, Violin

Thursday, October 25, 7:30, Wharton Center’s Cobb Great Hall, $ Wind Symphony

Friday, October 26, 8:00, Wharton Center’s Cobb Great Hall, $ Symphony Orchestra

Saturday, October 27, 8:00, Wharton Center’s Cobb Great Hall, $$ Spartan Spectacular

Saturday, October 27, 8:00, Hart, FREE
Katherine Eberle-Fink, Mezzo-Soprano: Guest Lecture

Sunday, October 28, 3:00, Cook Recital Hall, WCS West Circle Series: All American

$ - General Admission tickets are $10 for adult, $8 for senior (age 60 and older), and free for students with ID and those under age 18. These tickets are available at the door before each performance, online at music.msu.edu, over the phone at 517.353.5340, or in person in Room 102, Music Building, 333 W. Circle Dr., M-F, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., or at the Wharton Center, 517.423.2000, or 800.WHARTON. A $2.50 restoration fee added if purchased through Wharton Center.

WCS - West Circle Series tickets are $15 for adults, $12 for senior (age 60 and older), and $5 for students with ID and those under age 18. These tickets are available at the door before each performance, online at music.msu.edu, over the phone at 517.353.5340, or in person in Room 102, Music Building, 333 W. Circle Dr., M-F, 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

$$ - Special Admission tickets are $20 for adults, $18 for seniors (age 60 and older), and $10 for students and those under age 18. These tickets are only available at the Wharton Center, at whartoncenter.com, or 517.423.2000, or 800.WHARTON. A $2.50 restoration fee will be added to tickets purchased at Wharton Center.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | COLLEGE OF MUSIC

presents

Kurt Weill 2012:
But the Days Grow Short

Mahagonny Songspiel
Selected Songs

MSU Community Music School Auditorium
841 Timberlane Street, East Lansing
October 19 and 20, 2012, 8:00 p.m.
October 21, 2012, 3:00 p.m.

These performances are funded in part by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc., New York, NY. The 2012-2013 MSU Opera Theatre season is generously supported by the Worthington Family Foundation.
A Note from the Director

When we discovered that the Fairchild Theatre was going to be extensively renovated for the benefit of the College of Music and the Department of Theatre, of course we were thrilled! But then the news came that MSU Opera Theatre would have to find alternative spaces for our 2012-2013 productions. While we look forward to a gorgeous new space – if you haven’t seen the new Cook Recital Hall at the Music Building, stop by and visit, it’s an excellent preview of what Fairchild will become – there have been creative benefits to doing our opera productions in a non-traditional space.

At first I was looking for an office building lobby – I had always wanted to set Mahagonny Songspiel in an airport lobby, and Homeland Security at Capital City Airport said no (an interesting conversation which actually led to our production this evening). The cost would have been prohibitive, and with the help of Rhonda Buckley, the amazing leader of the MSU Community Music School (CMS), we decided to do the production in their auditorium, which was a decommissioned church sanctuary. Interestingly, ours will be the last MSU performance in this space as the University Reformed Church and CMS are literally trading spaces. So I sat for about an hour, just looking at the space, trying to figure out how to make a relevant theatre piece for the music of Kurt Weill.

Lots of factors came into the creative process – the look of the space, the fact that it was 2012 (the year in which the Mayans predicted the world would end), the election – and I realized that this was the perfect place to create a vision of a post-apocalyptic America. When we started rehearsal, we spent six hours just talking about everyone’s perception of disaster. It was fascinating to hear the students (mostly 19-24 years old) talk about their memories of things happening in America in their childhood. It was hard for me to fathom that most of them were around 10 years old on 9/11. Those in my generation probably remember the Kennedy Assassination as the first national event we really recall; for the students, it was 9/11.

September 11, 2001, for me was a completely bizarre day. It was my first year teaching at MSU, and I was writing a singing translation for my first MSU Opera Theatre production, Cimarosa’s The Secret Marriage. I was under time pressure so I would get to the office about 7a.m. and write for the hours before my first lessons. My first lesson that Tuesday was not

Mark your calendars!

Home for the Holidays
Featuring excerpts from
Die Fledermaus
And the MSU Children’s Choir,
Children’s Ballet of Michigan,
Faculty and students of the
College of Music.
This will be the best holiday party ever!
December 1, 2012, 8pm
Great Hall, Wharton Center
Tickets available through
1-800-Wharton

A Little Night Music
Stephen Sondheim’s romp in ¾ time
Pasant Theatre, Wharton Center
April 5-7, 2012
Tickets available through
1-800-Wharton
of any mortal man set above is fellow creatures and he’ll hate the undertaker when at last he dies if he hears a note of arrogance above him where he lies. He does his own living he does his own dying. Does his loving, does his hating, does his multiplying. Without the supervision of a governmental plan, and that’s an American.

Ballad of the Robbers
When first men fled from Eden fair and spread upon the ground, the honest men were much annoyed by thieves that hung around. They stole the horses from the barns, they stole the eggs and hams, made inroads on the cattle and among the sheep and lambs,

And so the honest men sat down around a pot of ale, And made a law that all the thieves should be confined to jail. Whereas the thieves were all confined behind those dismal bars, so honest men could walk abroad for businesses or wars.

But then there was a clever thief, who up and said, said he, the honest men have grown so few so numerous are we. But if we band together now, against the honest men. The honest men will go to jail, and we’ll go free again.

So then the thieves and robbers rose by twos and threes and fours, and put the honest men away behind those clanging doors, And since that time it has obtained and will obtain no doubt, The honest man sit in the jails the robbers they are out.

The One Indispensable Man
Huh, huh, huh, I’m the one indispensable man,
In every government whatever its intent,
There’s one obscure official with a manner innocent.
His job invisible is purchasing good will With wads of public money taken from the public till, I’m the one indispensable man.

There’s little said about him, but you cannot do without him, for of governmental measures, there’s just one omnipotent. It’s the measure of your treasure and just where and how it’s spent by the one indispensable man.

until 11 o’clock, and I hadn’t left my office. We had had tornados in East Lansing the night before, and I asked my student if she had seen any (I had). She looked at me, ashen, and said, “don’t you know what’s happened?” When she told me the World Trade Center towers were gone, I was speechless. I lived in New York City for 22 years and will always be a New Yorker. And literally two weeks before I started my new life at MSU, I had been house and dog sitting a block away from the Twin Towers (where incidentally I had been a temporary word processor on the 107th floor early in the ‘80s). I spent a panicked 72 hours waiting for word of my friends who were so close to ground zero. They were fine but traumatized, as was the nation.

The timeline of human history is filled with branches not taken. That is where we began the story of Weill 2012: But the Days Grow Short. Kurt Weill was among the most famous of avant-garde composers in Weimar, Germany. But with the rise of the Nazis, he and his wife and muse, Lotte Lenya, moved to Paris. When he had a chance to come to America to do a theatre piece, he jumped at it. On another timeline, Weill stays in Germany and is killed in a concentration camp (he was the son of a Jewish cantor). Instead, he had 15 years to bring his music to America, doing innovative, politically-motivated work on the Broadway stage that still stands. Take a look at some of the lyrics in the back of this program. You’ll be astonished at how relevant they are today.

I salute the cast and music staff of this production. They have taken countless risks and are living their roles. I am also grateful to the Kurt Weill Foundation who generously gave a $3,000 grant to the production. With that money, we brought in a Weill expert, Lyndon Meyer, who coached our students and inspired them musically. I’m also proud of our young graduate conductor of the Mahagonny Songspiel and music director of the evening, Matthew Forte. It’s been a great collaboration and I foresee great things for this terrific musician. We are also fortunate to be the recipient of a $20,000 grant from the Worthington Family Foundation for the second year.

I hope that you are entertained, shocked and moved by this production. It has come from all of our hearts. We hope it touches yours.
The Premise

After September 11, 2001, a multitude of attacks on the Nation completely shut down society and commerce. As foreign and domestic terrorists escalated the violence, the Government felt itself forced to take drastic measures. In order to maintain control, borders were completely shut and citizens were put under constant surveillance.

To restore some semblance of order, it was decided that once a year all citizens would gather to be registered. During a 24-hour period, they would report and be confined in a high school gym, town hall, or church sanctuary. During that one long day, government psychologists would observe and catalog every facet of their behavior: how they talked, moved, laughed, cried … even how they slept.

In this precinct, the citizens gather at a local church. The registrants include the precinct captain, a local law enforcement official, members of an acting troupe sponsored by the church, and everyday citizens. They are constantly being evaluated, even as their real lives expose their flaws and weaknesses, as well as their humanity.

National Registration Initiative – Regulations

1. Once a year, Citizens of the Nation will be required to report to a previously determined place for a 24-hour period for the Registration. It is the responsibility of the precinct leader to provide the space and work with police to ensure 100% compliance of all Citizens currently in the district, whether resident or non-resident.

2. Citizens will be evaluated as to the level of threat they pose to the Nation. Evaluators are government-certified psychologists and sociologists who have been deemed devoid of threat to the Nation.

3. There are three levels of assessed threat:

   a. Level One: deemed devoid of threat to the Nation. Level One Citizens will be released to their homes with full civil rights.

   b. Level Two: deemed a possible threat to the Nation. Level Two Citizens will be relocated to re-education communities and denied contact with family, friends, or associates until the next Registration.

   c. Level Three: deemed a positive threat to the Nation. Level Three Citizens will be taken to confinement communities in remote areas of the Nation and kept in custody until they are deemed a non-threat.

4. The evaluative decisions of the National Registration Initiative are final. There is no process for appeals.

Members of the MSU Symphony Orchestra
Kevin Noe, Director of Orchestras
Matthew Forte, Conductor

Violin I: Andrea Rohr
Violin II: Gretchen Renshaw
Clarinet I: Sara Marasreh
Clarinet II: Steven Cook
Trumpet I: Nathaniel Bean
Trumpet II: David Lea
Alto Sax: Connor Mikula
Tenor Sax: Nicole Tallon
Trombone: Mitchell Clark
Piano: Rachel Baljeur, Neill Campbell
Percussion: Ben Mapes and Mike Armendariz

Selected Lyrics

How Can You Tell An American?

Verse 1: How can you tell an American, has he any distinguishing flavor? Could you spot him on an elephant in Turkestan or floating on a raft fifty miles from sea? As you’d know a single leaf from the sassafras tree, by its characteristic savor. It isn’t that he’s short or tall, it isn’t that he’s round or flat. It isn’t that he’s civilized or aboriginal nor the head size of his hat. No it’s just that he hates and eternally despises the policeman on his beat and the judge at his assizes. The sheriff with his warrants and the bureaucratic crew, for the sole and simple reason that they tell him what to do. And he insists on eating he insists on drinking, he insists on reading he insists on thinking. Free of governmental snooping and a governmental plan, and that’s an American.

Verse 2: How can you tell an American, has he any distinguishing notion. There’s something in the essence of a good champagne that makes you certain you’re not imbibing rain. And you won’t succeed in growing an American man, on the opposite side of an ocean. It isn’t that he’s good or bad, it isn’t that he’s gay or grim. It’s only that authority repels him as a lad and never goes down with him. Yes it’s just that he hates and he damn all the features
Staff for MSU Opera Theatre

Producer/Stage Director  Melanie Helton♦
Conductor  Matthew Forte
Scenic Coordinator /Technical Director  Mark Willoughby♦
Lighting Design  Brent Wrobel*
Costume Design  Juliana Kartsimas
Production Stage Manager  Katharine Nunn
Story Concept  Melanie Helton, the cast
Coach/Musical Arrangements  Lyndon Meyer**
Prop Master  Juliana Kartsimas
Assistant to the Producer  Allison Yoder
Assistant Stage Manager  Emily Parker
Projection Design  Emily Parker
Recording Services  Jennifer Shangraw♦, Jon Whiting♦
Publicity, MSU College of Music  Kathleen Adams♦
Rehearsal Accompanists  Neill Campbell, Shu-han Lu,
Rachel Baljeur

♦MSU faculty/staff
*Faculty, Oakland University
**Guest Artist sponsored by the Kurt Weill Foundation

Grateful Acknowledgments

MSU Vocal Arts Area Faculty: Richard Fracker (chair), Molly
Fillmore, Melanie Helton,
   Harlan Jennings, Peter Lightfoot, Anne Nispel, David Rayl,
Jonathan Reed, Sandra Snow
Jason Helipolous, Associate Pastor, University Reformed Church
James Forger, Dean, College of Music
Kevin Noe, Director of Orchestras, College of Music
Rhonda Buckley, Associate Dean of Outreach, Executive Director,
CMS, Jaime Demott
Deborah Moriarty, Chair, Keyboard Area
MSU Department of Theatre, Kirk Domer (Chair), Brian Dambacher,
Allison Dobbins
Rebecca Surian, Director of Development, College of Music
Mike Morgan, Assistant Director of Development, College of Music
Debra Galehouse, Budget Director, College of Music
Amy Rivard, Shawn Mahorney, Charlene Wagner, College of Music

Kurt Weill: 2012
But the Days Grow Short

Cast of Characters

Mahagonny Songspiel
Music by Kurt Weill
Libretto by Bertolt Brecht

Charlie: Florian Montesque
Billy: Johnny Smith
Bobby: Chris Peters
Jimmy: Cyprus Stark
Jessie: Annie Torch
Bessie: Jennie Smith

But the Days Grow Short

Officials and Citizens of the District
Richard Grayson,  Harry Greenleaf
   a local police official, exempt from registration
Victoria (Tory) Grayson, his lonely wife  Allison Yoder
Logan Vasquez,  Adrian Sanchez
   the precinct captain in charge, exempt from registration
Claire Levant Vasquez, his estranged wife  Elizabeth Hoard
Sam Kaplan, an idealistic citizen  Evan Snyder
Rose Maurrant,  Caite Lenahan
   a young girl at her first registration, obviously traumatized
Sister Mary, a religious aid worker  Melissa Eisensmith
Sister Katharine, a religious aid worker  Katharine Nunn

The Sanctuary Players, an acting troupe resident in the church
Florian Montesque, a flamboyant actor  Joshua Gronlund
Johnny Smith, an angry actor  Jonathon Oakley
Chris Peters, actor and class clown  Peter Boylan
Cyprus Stark,  Zachary Niedwiecki
   an actor and long-ago lover of Claire Vasquez
Annie Torch, a worldly-wise actress  Tara Metcalf
Jennie Smith, Johnny’s abused actress wife  Anne Weiss
Lennie Epstein, music director of the acting troupe  Matthew Forte

Government Psychiatrists, Government Security
Kate deYoung, Kate Heine, Jenna Washburn, Steve Martin, Joe Caigoy, Darius
Gillard, Nick Kreider
**Mahagonny Songspiel**  
*Music by Kurt Weill, Libretto by Bertolt Brecht*

**Part I: Prologue**  
No. 1: Off to Mahagonny!  
No. 2: Alabama Song

**Part II: Life in Mahagonny**  
No. 3a: Vivace (Orchestra)  
No. 3: If you had five bucks a day  
No. 4a: Vivace assaid (Orchestra)  
No. 4: Benares Song  
No. 5a Sostenuto: Chorale (Orchestra)  
No. 5: God in Mahagonny

**Part III: Revolution in Mahagonny**  
No. 6: Finale: People only dream of Mahagonny

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**But the Days Grow Short**  
*Music by Kurt Weill*

From *Lost in the Stars*  
Lost in the Stars  
Lost in the Stars  
Rose

From *The Eternal Road*  
Biblical text,  
David’s Psalm, trans. by Ludwig Lewisohn  
Sister Katharine

From *Knickerbocker Holiday*  
How Can You Tell an American?  
Cyprus

From *Love Life*  
Here I’ll Stay  
Tory

From *Knickerbocker Holiday*  
Ballad of the Robbers  
Richard

From *Love Life*  
Economics  
Annie

From *One Touch of Venus*  
I’m a Stranger Here Myself  
Claire

From *Knickerbocker Holiday*  
The One Indispensable Man  
Logan, Richard

From *Street Scene*  
Lonely House  
Remember That I Care  
Sam

From *Happy End*  
Bilbao Song  
Remembrance  
Sam, Rose

*Intermission*

From *Happy End*  
Are You There?  
Sister Mary

From *Lady in the Dark*  
Tchaikovsky  
Sister Mary

From *The Threepenny Opera*  
Tango Ballad  
Sister Mary

From *Love Life*  
Is it Her or is it Me?  
Logan

From *Happy End*  
Surabaya Johnny  
Jennie

From *Lady in the Dark*  
My Ship  
Sister Mary

From *Knickerbocker Holiday*  
It Never Was You  
Richard, Tory, Logan, Claire

From *The Firebrand of Florence*  
There’ll Be Life, Love and Laughter  
Sister Katharine

From *Lost in the Stars*  
A Bird of Passage  
Sister Katharine, Citizens

From *Johnny Johnson*  
Johnny’s Song  
Richard

From *Lost in the Stars*  
Lost in the Stars  
Sister Mary, Citizens