



# A Whole Lotte Lenya

a one-woman show with LINN MAXWELL  
featuring the music of KURT WEILL  
written and directed by DAVID TABATSKY



## A WHOLE LOTTE LENYA

**INSPIRED BY THE LIFE AND LEGEND** of Lotte Lenya and the music of Kurt Weill, Alto Productions is pleased to offer *A Whole Lotte Lenya*, a new, one-woman show featuring the acclaimed concert artist Linn Maxwell, in the role of Lotte Lenya. Theatrical icon, muse and champion of Kurt Weill's music, Lenya was the foremost interpreter of his songs after his death. Written and directed by David Tabatsky, this production runs without intermission and is designed for theatres, schools, libraries, community arts centers, senior citizen groups and university audiences.

*A Whole Lotte Lenya* spotlights stories from Lenya's life, beginning in Vienna, moving through Zurich, Berlin and Paris, and culminating with her life in America. While paying tribute to Lenya, the show treats audiences to the music of Kurt Weill—a rich treasure trove of songs written in English, German and French, including *Alabama Song*, *Pirate Jenny* and *I'm a Stranger Here Myself*, as well as lesser known gems, such as *Youkali*, *Bilbao* and *Berlin im Licht*.

Lenya's unique performances in early stage works, such as *Threepenny Opera*, *Mahagonny* and *The Seven Deadly Sins*,

and her subsequent international stage, film, and recording career form a legacy unmatched in the last century.

After Weill's death in 1950, Lenya was driven by one overriding obsession: to keep his music before the public so that his genius would not fade into obscurity. Her valiant mission is chronicled in detail by Donald Spoto, in his landmark biography, *Lenya: A Life*.

"Lenya always sustained a deep belief in—and an authentic commitment to—the art of Kurt Weill," Spoto writes. "He would never have a more ardent devotee than she, and to him and his art, she always submitted herself and her own place in history."

In today's fast-moving world of media consumption, *A Whole Lotte Lenya* offers a live, heartfelt portrait of this legendary woman, and welcomes all generations of theatre and music lovers.

Lenya once said, "I hope Kurt won't be forgotten too quickly in a time that has no time to remember what happened yesterday."

*A Whole Lotte Lenya* shares in that sentiment and, likewise, we hope that Lenya will never be forgotten.





**LINN MAXWELL** (performer) enjoys a rich and varied career that's taken her to the stages of major orchestras, opera companies and recital halls across the U.S. and throughout 25 countries. She has

performed as a soloist with orchestras in Toronto, Cleveland, Chicago, Seattle, Puerto Rico, Kansas City (where she appeared with Leonard Bernstein), Mexico City and Brooklyn.

Ms. Maxwell has appeared with the Bach festivals of Rochester, New York, Oregon (with Helmuth Rilling) and Carmel. After one of her California performances, *The San Francisco Chronicle* wrote: "Her technique was flawless, her tone and phrasing were beautiful."

The founder of the Grand Rapids Bach Festival, Ms. Maxwell has also appeared with the Oratorio Society of Washington at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Pro Arte Chorale at New York's famed Carnegie Hall, the Oratorio Society of Utah (in a nationally televised performance of Handel's *Messiah* broadcast

from the Mormon Tabernacle), and with Musica Sacra at New York City's famed Lincoln Center.

Her operatic career began in Europe where she sang leading roles in Strassbourg, Lyon, the Netherlands, and with the Hungarian State Opera and the Berlin Radio Orchestra. Numerous operatic appearances in the United States include the San Francisco Opera in the role of Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, conducted by Placido Domingo. She performed in the off-Broadway production of *The Mother of Us All* by Virgil Thomson, directed by Stanley Silverman.

Ms. Maxwell was a winner of the Joy in Singing Award, enabling her to present her New York recital debut at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. Of that performance, *The New York Times* called her "a true mezzo soprano, graced with an appealing plangency of timbre."

During tours of South America, Ms. Maxwell gave recitals and master classes with the National Symphony of Peru and the Bogota Orquesta Filarmonica. She is also a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Solo Recitalist Grant. As a cabaret artist, Linn Maxwell enjoys presenting her one-woman shows in New York and around the country.

**DAVID TABATSKY** (author/director) has worked in theatre as an actor, variety artist, teacher and director. He has written ten solo plays, performed throughout the United States, Europe, Israel, Japan and Australia. Reviewing his performance at the Edinburgh Festival, *The Stage* in London, called him, "a supremely skillful performer and a fine actor, reaching levels which no other comics have matched at this Fringe."

Mr. Tabatsky was awarded his Master of Arts in Theatre Education from Adelphi University in New York, and has



taught and directed in many professional and collegiate settings, including Adelphi, Bard College, Wesleyan University, American School of London, Governor's Magnet School of the Arts in Virginia, and die Etage in Berlin.

His New York affiliations include work with The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, The Bond Street Theatre, the Gene Frankel Theatre, City Lights Youth Theatre, The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, The United Nations International

School, The New York City Board of Education and The Big Apple Circus.

Playing a significant role in the resurgence of the Varieté movement in Germany, Mr. Tabatsky performed numerous shows to critical acclaim, and conceived and directed *Kinderzirkus Taborka* at the renowned Tempodrom in Berlin. His non-theatrical writing includes *What's Cool Berlin*, a comic travel guide, as well as essays for *The Forward*, *Parenting* and *Checkpoint* magazines.

Mr. Tabatsky currently lives in New York City with his two children, both aspiring acrobats in their own fashion.

**REGIS BENOIT** (piano) holds a Master's degrees from the Juilliard School of Music where he was a pupil of Beveridge Webster and Sergius Kagen. He was twice awarded Fulbright grants and studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, Jeanne-Marie, and Pierre Bernac. He has appeared throughout Europe as a soloist and chamber musician while assistant director of Le Centre de Musique. His tours to Colombia included concerto performances with the Bogota Orquesta Filarmonica, solo recitals and TV appearances.

Both as a soloist and accompanist, Mr. Benoit has performed in Alice Tully Hall,

Carnegie Hall and Town Hall in New York as well as throughout the United States. He has recorded for Westminster, ABC Paramount, Orion and Centaur record companies. A popular champion of twentieth century music, his recordings include works by Szymanowski, Bartok and American composers Paul Turok, John Alden Carpenter, MacDowell and Arthur Foote. His most recent CD with mezzo soprano Linn Maxwell features songs by Pfitzner and Strauss.

Mr. Benoit teaches and performs in the New York area and currently resides in Westport, Connecticut.

**ANDRE EMELIANOFF** (cello) is Instructor of Cello and Chamber Music at the Juilliard School in New York City. He has appeared as a soloist in London, New York, Japan and Russia. After winning a Fulbright to study in Paris, Mr. Emelianoff instead elected to join the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell and Pierre Boulez, and was later principal cellist of the New York Chamber Symphony. He has premiered over 70 works as cellist of the Naumburg Award-winning Da Capo Chamber Players. As artist-faculty of the Perlman Program, he has given master classes in Israel, Shanghai and Korea.



Linn Maxwell appears  
courtesy of the Actors  
Equity Association

## Thank You...

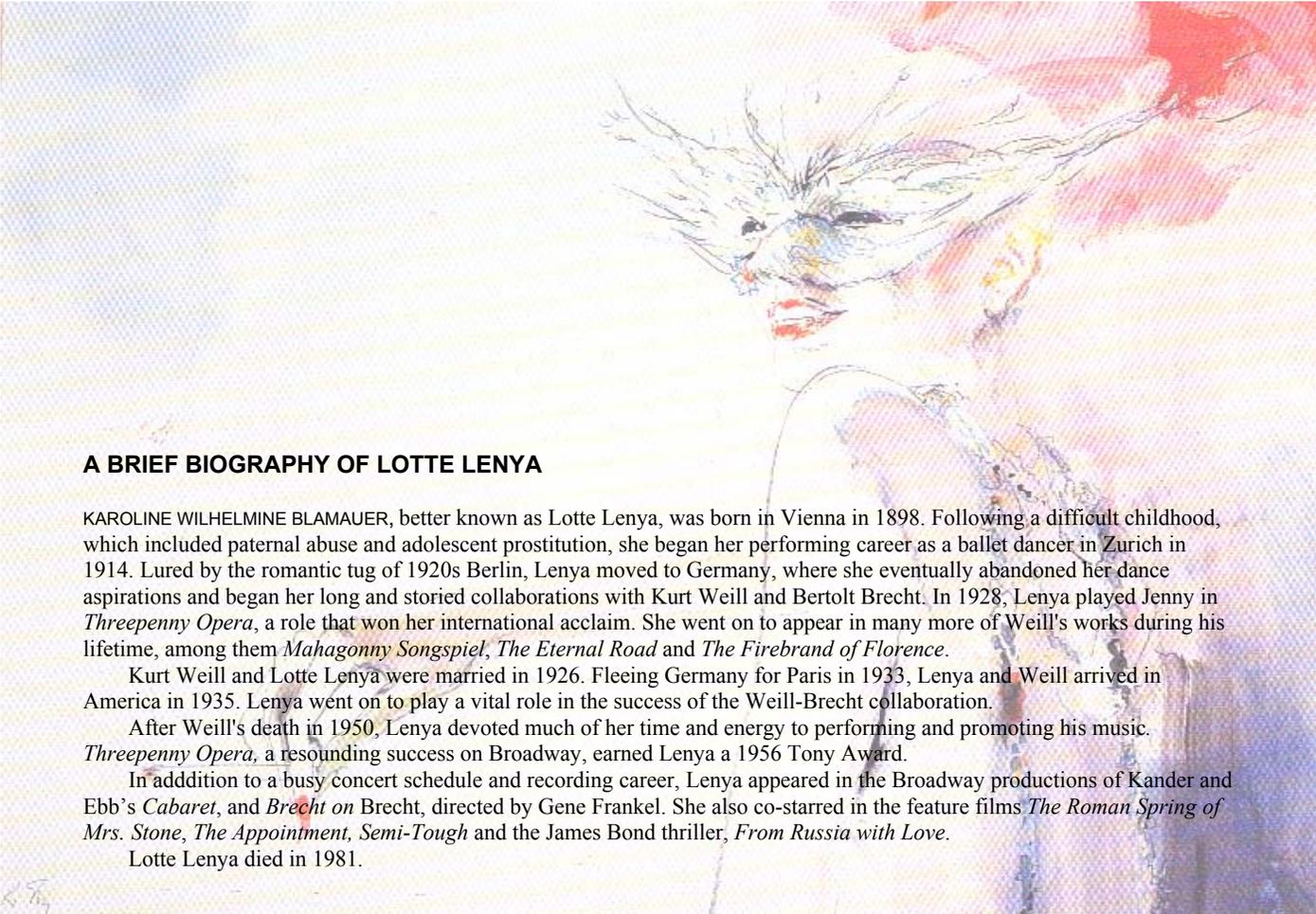
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SOUND DESIGN BY **DAN LEVINE**

## Weill-Lenya Research Center

For further information about  
Lotte Lenya and Kurt Weill,  
please contact:  
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[www.kwf.org](http://www.kwf.org)



## A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF LOTTE LENYA

KAROLINE WILHELMINE BLAMAUER, better known as Lotte Lenya, was born in Vienna in 1898. Following a difficult childhood, which included paternal abuse and adolescent prostitution, she began her performing career as a ballet dancer in Zurich in 1914. Lured by the romantic tug of 1920s Berlin, Lenya moved to Germany, where she eventually abandoned her dance aspirations and began her long and storied collaborations with Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. In 1928, Lenya played Jenny in *Threepenny Opera*, a role that won her international acclaim. She went on to appear in many more of Weill's works during his lifetime, among them *Mahagonny Songspiel*, *The Eternal Road* and *The Firebrand of Florence*.

Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya were married in 1926. Fleeing Germany for Paris in 1933, Lenya and Weill arrived in America in 1935. Lenya went on to play a vital role in the success of the Weill-Brecht collaboration.

After Weill's death in 1950, Lenya devoted much of her time and energy to performing and promoting his music. *Threepenny Opera*, a resounding success on Broadway, earned Lenya a 1956 Tony Award.

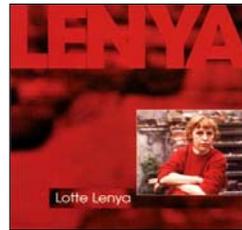
In addition to a busy concert schedule and recording career, Lenya appeared in the Broadway productions of Kander and Ebb's *Cabaret*, and *Brecht on Brecht*, directed by Gene Frankel. She also co-starred in the feature films *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*, *The Appointment*, *Semi-Tough* and the James Bond thriller, *From Russia with Love*.

Lotte Lenya died in 1981.

## MY FASCINATION WITH LENYA

I CAME OF AGE AS A YOUNG OPERA SINGER in Germany, less than 30 years after the Second World War. Some of my colleagues at the Essen Opera remembered the bombings, and how they'd helped dig out the ruins of the opera house so it could be rebuilt. With reminders of the war still in evidence, my young, impressionable psyche was deeply etched with those images. Although I eventually migrated back to the United States I've never lost touch with that place in my soul belonging to Germany.

The German music of Kurt Weill embodies the Gestalt of Berlin during the golden era of the 1920s and early 1930s and Lotte Lenya became my enduring link to that city and its music. There were parallels between her life and mine, some deeply personal. For many years New York was my home base as I traveled back and



forth to Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and other far away places for singing engagements. This was the same New York that had been home to Lenya for more than half her life. The musical and cultural life of the city shaped and molded us both.

While in Zurich in the late 1990s, I began to re-read biographies of Weill and Lenya, and happened to hear some of their letters read on a German radio broadcast. This experience made me believe that I could introduce Weill and Lenya to a younger generation. It is my desire to touch audiences of all ages with the simplicity and dignity of this woman, as well as her contribution to Kurt Weill and his musical legacy.

*Lynn Maxwell*

New York City, 2004

### **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

*A Whole Lotte Lenya* requires the following set pieces and equipment: sound system with microphone and CD input, slide projector, upright piano, music stand, eight-by-ten-foot carpet, armchair, wooden café table, hat rack, and bar stool.

A WHOLE LOTTE LENYA IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN A 45-MINUTE VERSION

### **WORKSHOPS BY LINN MAXWELL AND DAVID TABATSKY**

Linn Maxwell's master class, *The Three Voices of Kurt Weill*, explores the unique repertoire of Weill song literature in German, French and English. While challenging singers to explore both the dramatic and musical aspects of the literature, Ms. Maxwell works to help them find the proper vocal colors and styles, as well as expand their own abilities to develop a complete performance presentation.

David Tabatsky's workshop, *Writing, Performing, and Directing Solo Theatre*, examines the process of creating original material based upon fictional and non-fictional subject matter. Utilizing research and improvisational techniques, students will write and perform monologues and scenes, encountering various styles and directorial choices along the way.

WORKSHOPS ARE AVAILABLE SEPARATELY OR WITH PERFORMANCES OF A *WHOLE LOTTE LENYA*.

For more information, please contact:  
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