FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC OPERA THEATER

presents

AUFTIEG UND FALL DER STADT MAHAGONNY
(“THE RISE AND FALL OF THE CITY OF MAHAGONNY”)
Music by Kurt Weill; Libretto by Bertolt Brecht

KYNAN JOHNS, conductor; DONA D. VAUGHN, director

Wednesday, April 24, and Friday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, April 28 at 2:30 p.m.
in the School’s Borden Auditorium

The Manhattan School of Music Opera Theater will be presenting Kurt Weill’s Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny (“The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny”) set to a libretto by Bertolt Brecht for three performances on Wednesday, April 24 and Friday, April 26 at 7:30 p.m., and on Sunday, April 28 at 2:30 p.m. in the School’s Borden Auditorium. Kynan Johns will be conducting the MSM Opera Orchestra and the stage direction will be by Dona D. Vaughn. Beowulf Boritt joins the artistic team as scenic designer and Tracy Dorman as costume designer. Tyler Micoleau is the lighting designer and Rob Greene and Jared Janas will be designing the wigs, hair makeup.

Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny will be performed in German with English dialogue by Michael Feingold. This production is made possible by the Joseph F. McCrindle Endowment for Opera Productions at Manhattan School of Music and funded in part by the Kurt Weill Foundation for Music, Inc., New York.

An opening night Pre-Performance Talk with Gordon Ostrowski, assistant dean of opera studies and production will take place on Wednesday, April 24 at 6:00 p.m. in the School’s Greenfield Hall. This Pre-Performance Talk allows interested audience members the opportunity to hear directly from the production’s artistic team on the ins-and-outs of this production as well as hear a sampling of the evening’s music. This event is free and tickets are not required.

Tickets, priced at $30; $15 for students/seniors are required for the main stage productions of Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny For information please visit www.msmnyc.edu., or call 917 493 4428. Manhattan School of Music is located on the northwest corner of Broadway and 122nd Street and is easily reached by public transportation.

Kurt Weill’s Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny (The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny) is set to a German libretto by Bertolt Brecht. Weill’s score, composed when he was in his twenties, is a cornucopia of different musical styles – from jazz and ragtime to formal counterpoint. Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny is set in the fictional city Mahagonny, where pleasure and profit are the ultimate pursuits, and anyone can do whatever they desire. It was written as a political satire on American consumerism and Brecht’s libretto explores the “Do your own thing, with no limits to the extreme.”
*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* received its premiere on March 9, 1930 in Leipzig, Germany, following Weill and Brecht’s successful *Threepenny Opera* premiered in 1928. *Mahagonny* received its first Berlin performance in December 1931 at the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm conducted by Alexander von Zemlinsky. Lotte Lenya performed the role of Jenny, Trude Hesterberg was Begbick and Harald Paulsen sang the role of Jimmy. In 1933, the Nazis banned the opera and it wasn’t heard in a significant European production until 1963, when it was produced in London at Sadler’s Wells Opera conducted by Sir Colin Davis. A Berlin production followed in 1977, mounted by the Komische Oper.

In the late 1920’s, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* appeared as Mahagonny-Songspiel, a concert work composed for voices and small orchestra, commissioned by the Deutsche Kammermusik Festival in Baden-Baden. It was considered both a success and a scandal at its premiere on July 18, 1927. The ten numbers from this work (by Weill and Brecht) including “Alabama Song” and “Benares Song,” were all incorporated into the opera.

*Mahagonny*’s first U.S. performance took place in 1970, with an off-Broadway staging starring Barbara Harris as Jenny and Estelle Parsons as Begbick. In 1974, a fully staged version was performed by the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut, and in November 1979, the Metropolitan Opera staged a production by John Dexter conducted by James Levine. The cast included Teresa Stratas as Jenny, Astrid Varnay as Begbick, Richard Cassilly as Jimmy, Cornell MacNeil as Moses, Ragnar Ulfung as Fatty and Paul Plishka as Joe. Other notable productions included the Los Angeles Opera Jonathan Miller production from 1989; in Florence by the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino in June 1990; a 1998 production at the Salzburg Festival that featured Catherine Malfitano (Jenny), Gwyneth Jones(Begbick) and Jerry Hadley (Jimmy) followed in November 1998, by the Lyric Opera of Chicago. The DVD for the Los Angeles Opera’s 2007 production directed by John Doyle and conducted by James Conlon with Audra McDonald, Patti LuPone and Anthony Dean Griffey was the winner of the 2009 Grammy Award for “Best Classical Album” and “Best Opera Recording.”

**Cast**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Actor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begbick</td>
<td>Raehann Bryce-Davis</td>
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<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Amelia Berry</td>
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<td>Fatty</td>
<td>Peter Tinaglia</td>
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<td>Jack</td>
<td>Scott Ingham</td>
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<td>Jim Mahoney</td>
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<td>Bill</td>
<td>Justin Brown</td>
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<td>Moses</td>
<td>Gideon Dabi</td>
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<td>Joe</td>
<td>Brett Harrison Vogel</td>
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<td>Toby Higgins</td>
<td>Michael Papincak</td>
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**Men of Mahagonny**

Marcos Cuevas, John Callison, Alexander Frankel, Kai Chen, Jody Hinkley, Kim Johansen, Alexander Lee, Cameron Johnson, Kurt Kanazawa, Mingjie Lei, Chad Sonka, Thomas Mulder, Hans Tashjian, Stephen Steffens, Yunpeng Wang

**Ladies of Mahagonny**

Kerstin Bauer, Ann Louise Glasser, Nan Li, Kathleen Spencer, Leela Subramaniam, Ellen Teufel

**Off-stage chorus**

Jimin Baik, Helena Brown, Emilie Bry, Casandra Caminiti, Lyndon England, Anna Farysej, Ilana Goldberg, Rebecca Krynski, Tesia Kwarteng, Haya Nasser, Elizabeth Novella, Odemaris Ortiz, Clarissa Parrish, Elena Perroni, Tamara Rusqué, Emily Stauffer
**Biographies**

**Kynan Johns, conductor**

Resident Conductor to Lorin Maazel and Zubin Mehta at the new Palau de les Arts “Reina Sofia,” Valencia, Spain (2006-2010), Maestro Johns has established a reputation throughout Europe, Australia, Israel and America. Major prizewinner in the prestigious Dimitris Mitropoulos International Conducting Competition, finalist in the Maazel/Vilar International conducting competition and semi-finalist in the 49th Besancon International Conducting competition, Johns has conducted orchestras and opera companies throughout the world including, among others, the Israel Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Symphony and Chamber Orchestras, Philharmonica della Scala, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Sydney Symphony, Melbourne Symphony, New Zealand Symphony and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra. Johns has worked at La Scala, conducting Maazel’s opera _1984_, having previously assisted at Covent Garden for the world premiere, and in Valencia has conducted numerous symphonic and opera performances, including recently acclaimed performances of _Das Lied von der Erde_, _Luisa Miller_ and _Madama Butterfly_.

In 2004 Johns leapt to prominence when he replaced an indisposed Wolfgang Sawallisch, conducting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in performances of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony. Having served as principal conductor of the Ashdod Chamber Orchestra, Resident-Assistant Conductor for the Chinese National Symphony Orchestra, the Israel Northern Symphony and Resident Associate Conductor to the Symphony Australia network, Johns made his professional debut in 1997 with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (Australia) and has since conducted regularly all major symphony orchestra throughout Australia and New Zealand. Following his European debut in 2000 with the Netherlands Radio Symphony Amsterdam, Johns developed an ongoing relationship with the Limburg Symphony Orchestra. Recent engagements have included concerts with the Asturias Symphony Orchestra (Spain), North-West Deutsche Philharmonie (Germany), Philharmonica de La Scala (Italy), Sydney Symphony, Beijing Symphony Orchestra and Chinese National Symphony Orchestra (China), Manhattan School of Music Opera Theater, Santa Barbara Symphony and the Lafayette Symphony (U.S.). Holding a BM (Composition) and an MM (Conducting), Johns has studied with Lorin Maazel, Kurt Masur, Peter Eotvos, and Noam Sheriff, among others. He has been a recipient of numerous awards including the inaugural Australian Centenary Medal – conferred by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queens Trust Award, ‘Emerging Artist of the Year’ and Young Australian of the Year. Since 2003, Kynan Johns has also served as Director of Orchestras at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

**Dona D. Vaughn, stage director**

**Dona D. Vaughn,** Artistic Director of Manhattan School of Music’s Opera Program, also serves as Artistic Director of POR-Topera, a summer festival in Portland, Maine. From 1998 to 2008 she was Stage Director/Acting Coach for the Metropolitan Opera’s Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. A graduate of Brevard College (voice) where she currently serves on the board of trustees, she received her B.A. in music (vocal performance) from Wesleyan (Outstanding Alumni Award) and M.A. in theater (directing) from Hunter College, and an Honorary Doctorate of Music from the University of Southern Maine. She studied acting with Lee Strasberg and Uta Hagen, and dance with Martha Graham. She began her career as a performer in the original Broadway productions of _Company_, _Jesus Christ Superstar_, and _Seasaw_. She was assistant to producer Kermit Bloomgarden for the Broadway productions of _Equus_ and _Hat_ _L_ _Baltimore_; associate producer for Pavel Kohout’s _Poor Murderer_ and ABC Television’s _All My Children_; Dramaturge for the O’Neill Conference on Opera and Musical Theater, HB Playwright’s Unit, and the University of Kansas New Play Season; and assistant director for Tennessee Williams’s _Red Devil Battery Sign._

Directing credits include New York City Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, Wolf Trap, Palm Beach Opera, Ensemble Studio Theater, Lincoln Center Playwrights’ Festival, New York Repertory Company, Kennedy Center, Minerva Productions, Peterloon Festival, Heritage Theater (Calgary, Canada), DiVivreVoix (Vivonne, France), Florida Arts Festival, and many colleges and universities across the country. She directed the premieres of Roberto Hazon’s _L’Agenzia Matrimoniale_; Robert Sirota’s _Holy Women_, Francis Thorne’s _Mario and the Magician_; Ray Luc’s _Droane’s Wooden Image_ and _The Bullfrog_; New York premieres of Milton Granger’s _Talk Opera_ and _The Proposal_; the off-Broadway production of Murphy Guyer’s _World of Mirth_; and the European premiere of Carlisle Floyd’s _The Flower and the Hawk_. Formerly a member of the voice faculties for SUNY-Plattsburgh and Marymount Manhattan College, she often conducts master classes across the U.S. and Europe, and serves as an adjudicator for vocal competitions including the Metropolitan Opera National Council, The Richard Tucker Foundation, Denver Lyric Opera, Palm Beach Opera, The Jenson Foundation, The Opera Theatre of Saint Louis Artist-in-Training Program, and Premio Spiros Argiris International Competition (Italy). She has written for _Opera News_ and Italy’s _Musicalè_.

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**Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny**

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Cast

**Soprano Amelia Berry (Jenny)** from Wellington, New Zealand, is a second year Master's degree candidate under the tutelage of Ashley Purnam. Her credits include *Hansel and Gretel* (Mother) with Manhattan School of Music Outreach, *Pagliacci* (Nedda) for New Zealand Opera in Schools, *Il viaggio a Rheims* (Corinna) for Days Bay Opera, *La clemenza di Tito* (Annio) with the Auckland Opera Studio and the title role in Semele with the New Zealand School of Music. Ms. Berry was a 2010-2011 Emerging Artist with NBR New Zealand Opera, the winner of the 2011 Napier Aria, the 2010 New Zealand Aria, the 2009 Wellington Aria and the 2008 Otago Daily Times Aria. Future engagements include Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* for NBR New Zealand Opera.

**Baritone Justin Brown (Bill)** from Austin, Texas, is a second year Master’s degree candidate studying with Mark Oswald. Previous credits include *Manon Lescaut* (Sargeant c/o, ensemble), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (ensemble), *Ghosts of Versailles* (Figaro c/o, ensemble), *Pagliacci* (Silvio), *La Traviata* (Marchese), *Cosi fan tutte* (ensemble) and *Faust* (Wagner). He was also Edward Wehling Jr. in the world premiere of *The Happy Garden of Life* by Katarzyna Brochocka with Project 21 in Oklahoma City. Justin Brown has appeared with Chautauqua Opera, Oklahoma City Music Theatre and Opera Company.

**Mezzo soprano Raehann Bryce-Davis (Begbick)** from Keene, Texas, is a Professional Studies Candidate studying with Cynthia Hoffmann. She is a 2013 Fellowship Artist at the Aspen Opera Theater Center where she will sing Zita in *Gianni Schicchi*. Opera credits include the Owl in the American Premier of *Alice in Wonderland* with Opera Theatre Saint Louis as a Gerdine Young Artist, Countess in Tchaikovsky’s *Pique Dame* with Russian Opera Workshop at the Academy of Vocal Arts, and Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Opera on the Avalon. Manhattan School of Music Opera Theatre credits include Albine in *Thais*, Candelas in *El amor brujo*, and Carmela in *La vida breve*. In concert she has performed Mahler’s Symphony No. 2, Prokofiev’s *Alexander Nevsky*, Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*, Handel’s *Messiah*, Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, and Durufle’s *Requiem*, among others, and premiered *Four Songs for Mezzo Soprano and Orchestra* by Jacob A. Greenberg.

**Baritone Jason Cox (Bill)** from Dayton, Ohio, is a second year Master’s degree candidate under the tutelage of Maitland Peters. Credits with Manhattan School of Music Opera Theater include *Thais* (Athanaël) and *Cosi fan tutte* (Don Alfonso). Additional credits include *Cosi fan tutte* (Don Alfonso) with NY Opera Exchange, *L’heure espagnole* (Ramiro) with enCANTA Collective, and *Little Women* (Professor Bhaer) with the Intermezzo Foundation.

**Soprano Cree Carrico (Jenny)** from Detroit, Michigan, is a second year Master’s degree candidate studying with Marlena Malas. Previous credits include *The Ghosts of Versailles* (Marie Antoinette), *La voix humaine* (Woman), *Cosi fan Tutte* (Despina), *La Rondine* (Lisette), *La Clemenza di Tito* (Vitellia) and *The Magic Flute* (2nd Lady). Musical theatre credits include *Flora the Red Menace* (Comrade Charlotte), *Cabaret* (Frauline Kost and Frauline Schneider), *Sunday in the Park with George* (Celeste 1 and Harriet) and *Kiss Me Kate* (Lily/Kate). Cree Carrico will be joining Chautauqua Opera as a Studio Artist this summer.

**Gideon Dabi (Moses)** from Highland Park, New Jersey, is a candidate for the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree studying with Mark Oswald. He has performed with the Chautauqua Opera, Opera NJ, Rutgers Opera, Opera at Florham, as well as the Mostly Mozart Festival and Ash Lawn Opera. Last season he was heard as Beaumarchais in the Manhattan School of Music Opera Theater production of *The Ghosts of Versailles*, as well as Don Alfonso in *Cosi fan tutte*. He was a featured soloist on the Grammy Award-winning Anthology of Jewish American Composers on the NAXOS label. He is a graduate of Rutgers, Manhattan School of Music, and the Opera Institute of Boston University.

**Tenor Scott Ingham (Scott)** from Corvallis, Oregon, is a second year Master’s degree candidate studying with Mark Oswald. Previous credits include *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Arturo/Normanno), *Die Zauberröte* (TAMINO), *Madama Butterfly* (Goro), *Carmen* (Don Jose) as well as the title roles in Faust and Don Carlo.

**Bass-Baritone James Ioelu (Moses)** from Auckland, New Zealand, is a second year Master’s degree candidate under the tutelage of Maitland Peters. Previous credits include *The Ghosts of Versailles* (Louis XVI), *Seven Deadly Sins* (Mother), *Giulio Cesare* (Cesare), *La clemenza di Tito* (Publio) and *La sonnambula* (Rodolfo). Upcoming roles include Méphistophèles in Gounod’s *Faust* and Bruno in Michael Williams’ *The Juniper Passion*. Mr. Ioelu has received the New Zealand Young Performer of the Year award as well as being a finalist in the New Zealand Aria Competition and the Sydney Eisteddfod Aria Competition held at the Sydney Opera House.
Tenor Michael Papincak (Toby) from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is a first year Master’s degree candidate under the tutelage of Neil Rosenshein. Previous credits include Gianni Schicchi (Rinuccio), Die Zauberflöte (Monostatos), and Les mamelles de Tirésias (Chorus) with Lawrence University.

Mezzo-soprano Rachelle Pike (Begbick) from Christchurch, New Zealand, is a professional studies degree candidate studying with Ashley Putnam. Miss Pike was a Pricewaterhouse Coopers Dame Malvina Major Foundation Emerging Artist with the NBR New Zealand Opera. Credits include The Ghosts of Versailles (Samira), El amor brujo (Candelas), Elektra (Second Maid), Carmen (Mercedes), The Magic Flute (Third Lady) and Hansel und Gretel (Hansel cover) and mezzo soloist in Verdi’s Requiem with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. She has performed as a soloist for the Verdi Square Festival for the Arts, Southern Opera, the Southern Symphonies and the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra. Recently Miss Pike won the West Tennessee District Metropolitan Opera Council. This summer, Miss Pike will be an Apprentice Artist with Chautauqua Opera.

Tenor Aaron Short (Jim) from Olathe, Kansas, is a second year Master’s degree candidate studying with Mark Oswald. Credits at Manhattan School of Music include Thaïs (Nicias), The Ghosts of Versailles (Bégageas) and Lucia di Lammermoor (Edgardo) with Tom Muraco’s Opera Repertory Ensemble. Additional credits include Die Zauberflöte (Tamino), Cosi fan tutte (Ferrando) and the title role in Albert Herring. Aaron was a Studio Artist at Wolf Trap Opera this past summer, and he will be an Apprentice Artist at Chautauqua Opera this upcoming summer.

Tenor Peter Tinaglia (Fatty) from New York, New York, is a second year Master’s student of Maitland Peters. Last year at Manhattan School of Music he portrayed J. P. Morgan in the American Musical Theatre Ensemble production of Ragtime. Scene work includes La traviata (Alfredo), Madama Butterfly (Pinkerton), Lucia di Lammermoor (Edgardo) and Don Giovanni (Don Ottavio) and regional opera and operetta credits include The Rape of Lucretia, Cosi fan tutte, Les contes d’Hoffmann, Kismet, and The Great Waltz.

Bass Brett Harrison Vogel (Joe) from Fayetteville, Georgia, is a second year Master’s degree candidate studying with Maitland Peters. Previous credits with the Manhattan School of Music Opera Theater include Thaïs (Palémon) and The Ghosts of Versailles (Suleyman Pasha). Additional credits include La Calisto (Silvano) with the Manhattan School of Music Summer Voice Festival, H.M.S. Pinafore (Dick Deadeye), Falstaff (Pistola), and Don Giovanni (Il Commendatore) with the University of Georgia Opera Ensemble.

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