

**EDINBURGH  
INTERNATIONAL  
FESTIVAL**

# LONELY HOUSE

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**Katharine Mehrling** Actor / singer

**Barrie Kosky** Piano

20, 21 Aug 9.30pm

OLD COLLEGE QUAD

The performance lasts approx. 1hr with no interval.

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# LONELY HOUSE

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**Katharine Mehrling** Actor / singer

**Barrie Kosky** Piano

Weill **Lonely House** (*Street Scene*, New York, 1947)

**Oh Heart of Love** (*Johnny Johnson*, New York, 1936)

**Le grand Lustucru** (*Marie Galante*, Paris, 1934)

**I'm a Stranger Here Myself**

(*One Touch of Venus*, New York, 1943)

**Two Hearts** (*A Kingdom for a Cow*, London, 1935)

**September Song** (*Knickerbocker Holiday*, New York, 1938)

**Schickelgruber** (New York, 1942)

**Youkali** (*Marie Galante*, Paris, 1934)

**My Ship — The Saga of Jenny —  
The Girl of the Moment —  
Tchaikovsky — One Life to Live —  
My Ship** (*Lady in the Dark*, New York, 1941)

**Complainte de la Seine** (Paris, 1934)

**Speak Low** (*One Touch of Venus*, New York, 1943)

**Train du ciel** (*Marie Galante*, Paris, 1934)

**Here I'll Stay** (*Love Life*, New York, 1948)

# PROGRAMME NOTES

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Composer Kurt Weill had some remarkable successes early in his career in the febrile creative cauldron of inter-war Germany, most notably in his unashamedly political collaborations with radical playwright Bertold Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera* in 1928 (which includes Weill's most famous song, 'Mack the Knife') and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* in 1930. As a prominent Jewish artist with socialist sympathies, however, Weill was swiftly denounced by the Nazis. He fled Nazi Germany in March 1933, arriving first in Paris, where *The Threepenny Opera* and *Mahagonny* had already made their mark among French audiences. He collaborated again there with Brecht on the hard-hitting *The Seven Deadly Sins*, as well as mellowing his musical language for the musical *Marie Galante* and writing several stand-alone cabaret chansons.

There was interest in his works from across the Atlantic, including a moderately successful New York production of *The Threepenny Opera* in 1933, and Weill moved permanently to the city in 1935 – where he was surprised to find himself almost completely unknown and needing to relearn

his trade to satisfy the expectations of Broadway audiences. His first hit, nonetheless, was *Johnny Johnson*, followed quickly by *Knickerbocker Holiday* (which included his first American standard, 'September Song'), and his big breakthrough came with *Lady in the Dark*, Ira Gershwin's first collaboration since the death of his brother George, which ran for more than 700 performances.

There were even greater successes with *One Touch of Venus* (with lyrics by Ogden Nash), the opera *Street Scene* and *Love Life* (with lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner).

Weill was working on a musical version of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* when he died suddenly in 1950, shortly after his 50th birthday.

### **David Kettle**

David Kettle is a music and arts writer based in Edinburgh, who contributes regularly to the *Scotsman* and the *Daily Telegraph*. He has also written for publications including *BBC Music Magazine*, *The Times*, *The Strad* and *Classical Music*, and for organisations including the BBC Proms, Glyndebourne and Scottish Opera.

# KATHARINE MEHRLING

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Katharine Mehrling lives in Berlin, where she has won the Golden Curtain audience award six times as the city's most popular actress, for performances in productions including *Arizona Lady*, *Ball at the Savoy* and *My Fair Lady* at the Komische Oper Berlin. She was also awarded the Berlin Bear (BZ Culture Prize) in 2016.

She studied acting and musical theatre at the London Studio Centre and at the Lee Strasberg Theatre & Film Institute in New York. She made her stage debut in London's West End, at the Old Vic Theatre as Chrissy in *Hair*, going on to take the title and leading roles in *Irma la Douce*, *Piaf*, *Cabaret*, *End of the Rainbow* (as Judy Garland), *Kiss Me, Kate*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Tell Me on a Sunday*, *Next to Normal*, *Funny Girl* and *Evita* at Vienna's Ronacher Theater.

She created the role of Tippi Hedren in the musical *The Birds of Alfred Hitchcock* by William Ward Murta, written especially for her. She also appeared in the Hollywood movie *Valkyrie*.

Her love of jazz and French chanson is reflected in her live performances and on several CDs, including *Hommages*, *Bonsoir Katharine*, *Piaf au Bar*,

*Mehrling au Bar, Vive la vie, In love with Judy* and *Am Rande der Nacht* (At the Edge of the Night), which she wrote with jazz legend Rolf Kühn.

Since their collaboration on Paul Abraham's jazz operetta *Ball at the Savoy*, Katharine Mehrling and Barrie Kosky have enjoyed a special artistic friendship. Their collaboration *Lonely House*, which they premiered in December 2019, focuses on Kurt Weill's exile in Paris and New York.

# BARRIE KOSKY

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Barrie Kosky is Intendant and Chefregisseur of the Komische Oper Berlin, where his work has included *The Magic Flute* (co-directed with 1927), which has been seen by over a quarter of a million people in three continents, *The Monteverdi Trilogy*, *Ball at the Savoy*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Rigoletto*, *La Belle Hélène*, *Moses und Aron*, *La Bohème*, *Rusalka*, *Le Grand macabre*, *West Side Story*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Semele*, *The Fair at Sorochintsi*, *Die Perlen von Cleopatra*, *Anatevka* and *Candide*.

His awards include the Olivier Award for best new opera production for *Castor and Pollux* (English National Opera); best director at the 2014 International Opera Awards; and best opera house (Komische Oper Berlin) at the 2015 International Opera Awards. In 2016 he was named director of the year by *Opernwelt*, and in 2018 Kosky's Bayreuth Festival production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* was announced as production of the year, also by *Opernwelt*.

Kosky has directed opera productions for companies including the Bayerische Staatsoper (*Die schweigsame Frau*, *The Fiery Angel* and *Agrippina*),



Glyndebourne (*Saul*), the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (*The Nose, Carmen*), Oper Frankfurt (*Dido and Aeneas/Bluebeard's Castle, Carmen and Salome*), Dutch National Opera (*Armide*), Zurich Opera (*La Fanciulla del West, Eugene Onegin, Die Gezeichneten and Macbeth*) and the Bayreuth Festival (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*).

Born in Melbourne, Kosky was Artistic Director of Gilgul Theatre Company from 1990 to 1997, Artistic Director of the 1996 Adelaide Festival, and from 2001 to 2005 co-Artistic Director of the Vienna Schauspielhaus.

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