

ABSTRACT

This research report examines the opera *Der Silbersee: Ein Wintermärchen* (*The Silver Lake: a Winter's Tale*), 1932, by Kurt Weill and Georg Kaiser, as an example of what Weill defined as 'new opera', in his essay 'Der Neue Oper'.¹ It will discuss reasons for the work's rarity in its relative neglect as well as its significance as an example of what Kim Kowalke has called a synthesis of Weill's 'mature style'. Thus it will also be demonstrated that the work, even though rarely performed and often overlooked, is an important bridge between the works of Weill's 'German period' and his later works in the United States. It will be established that the work is of musicological significance as well as of interest and relevance to present-day theatregoers. The research argues that the work, though written in Germany during the 1930s as a form of operatic protest, is worthy of being seen as a timeless and universal piece, deserving of more attention. This investigation will be accomplished through an analysis of Weill's own writings found in his many essays, translated and collected by Kim Kowalke in his book *Kurt Weill in Europe*, through an examination of the historical and socio-political perspective of the work, as well as in a musical analysis.

¹ The essay entitled 'Der Neue Oper' which Weill wrote in 1926 is a core text in my Research Report (see Chapter 4). According to correct German Grammar, this essay should have thus been titled 'Die Neue Oper', as 'Oper' is a feminine noun in German. Naturally, this has created a certain amount of confusion as to what Weill actually meant by this title. Upon the consultation of a German speaking person, I have deduced that Weill indeed made no grammatical mistake at all. It is possible to conclude then that 'Der Neue Oper' is supposed to mean 'Of the New Opera', which may indicate its' genre. 'Die Neue Oper' meaning 'The New Opera' could thus then become a term for the characteristics of this new opera Form. Therefore, in this Research Report, I have tried to remain as true to this principle as possible; when mentioning Weill's essay or the genre of 'The New Opera', I have used the term 'Der Neue Oper'. In discussing the characteristics of 'The New Opera's' Form, I have referred to it as 'Die Neue Oper'.