



ADAM BENZWI Curriculum Vitae

Adam Benzwi is an American pianist, music arranger/director and conductor who has lived and worked in Berlin since 1984.

Benzwi grew up in La Jolla, California, where he began his professional career—as a twelve-year-old cocktail pianist. He attended Columbia University in New York and Stanford University in Berlin, where his passion for musical theater arose early. As a result, Adam Benzwi has dedicated much of his professional activity to bringing forgotten popular German music to the stage.

He is currently (2023) musical director of Barrie Kosky's new production of Brecht/Weill's *The Threepenny Opera* at Berliner Ensemble, where the piece was performed for the first time in 1928. He is currently also conducting at **Komische Oper Berlin**, where he debuted in 2013 as musical director of *Ball im Savoy*, directed by **Barrie Kosky**, followed in 2015 by *Eine Frau, die weiß, was sie will!* His third collaboration with Kosky was *Die Perlen der Cleopatra*. In December 2017, also at Komische Oper, Benzwi and Kosky collaborated again on the Paul Abraham musical comedy *Märchen im Grand Hotel* and in 2020 *Ich wollt', ich wär ein Huhn*, an evening of Berliner songs circa 1920-1945 with Swedish mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter. In 2022 Benzwi arranged and conducted *Barrie Kosky's All-Singing, All-Dancing Yiddish Revue* at the Komische Oper, June 2022. In March 2023 he created an evening with legendary theatre and opera director Andrea Breth at Berliner Ensemble, *Ich hab die Nacht geträumt*. At present he is putting together an evening with songs and texts of Brecht, also at Berliner Ensemble, directed by Oliver Reese and starring Katharine Mehrling.

Benzwi **began his Berlin career** at the Kleines Theater am Südwestkorso, a unique tiny theatre that offers new plays exclusively, with *Das Küssen macht so gut wie kein Geräusch*, the UFA-Revue: *Bombenstimmung* and *Blue Jeans* at the

Theater des Westens, Berlin's greatest theater for musicals, and *Bezauberndes Fräulein!* at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm.

Benzwi was also the **musical director** of the legendary production of *Cabaret* (at Bar jeder Vernunft, the historical mirrored circus tent Berlin's most renowned cabaret,) and *My Fair Lady* at Admiralspalast. Most recently he conducted and rearranged the revival of Offenbach's *Die Prinzessin von Trapezunt* at Theater für Niedersachsen, March 2019 and J.C. Bach's late baroque oper *Zanaida* at Staatstheater Mainz, November 2019.

He has **accompanied German stage and screen stars** such as Dagmar Manzel, Andrea Sawatzki, Daniela Ziegler, Gisela May (the most renowned singer of the songs of Bertolt Brecht), Helmut Baumann (director of Theater des Westens) and, last but not least, Germany's raunchiest comedienne, Désirée Nick. He has been working with stage and screen legend Angela Winkler since 2010; their CD *Ich liebe dich, kann ich nicht sagen* was released in 2012, followed by concerts at Théâtre des Abbesses in Paris and at Berliner Ensemble. In *Marlene* by Pam Gems/Volker Kühn, Benzwi accompanied Judy Winter "with sensitive verve" (from review in *Die Welt*.)

Benzwi is also committed to the education of young musical theater artists: from 1986-2022 he was on the faculty of the University of the Arts, Berlin, as musical director and professor in its four-year course for musical theater performance, which he helped Stanley Walden develop soon after his arrival in Berlin.

He was a member of the Board of Advisors for the **German National Singing Competition** 2003-2019 and accompanied the winners with his own band at the final concert at Friedrichstadtpalast, the biggest stage in Europe.

Adam Benzwi can be seen regularly **on TV and in the movies**, such as **THE FLORENCE FOSTER JENKINS STORY** with Joyce DiDonato.

