

# The New Studio Cast Album AND THE WORLD GOES ROUND

## The Songs of Kander & Ebb

They met in 1962. They had their first Broadway show in 1965 and their first Broadway smash hit in 1966. They currently have the longest running revival in history still on Broadway, packing in the crowds. They were one of the most amazing musical theatre songwriting teams in history – they were simply known as Kander & Ebb.

Two of their shows are amongst the most iconic in musical theatre history – *Cabaret* and *Chicago*, both at the time of this writing, currently playing on Broadway. The musical theatre of the last fifty years would be unthinkable without their contribution, and the amazing fact is that after the sad passing of Fred Ebb in 2004, the team has still had the new musicals that they'd pretty much completed – *Curtains*, *The Scottsboro Boys* and *The Visit* – produced both on Broadway and regionally, a pretty astonishing feat.

Back in 1991, a bunch of talented artists came together to create a musical revue based on the songs of Kander & Ebb. They were director Scott Ellis, choreographer Susan Stroman and writer David Thompson, all of whom would go on to work with Kander & Ebb on *Steel Pier* some years later. With musical director, David Loud, they created what the *New York Times* called “An unexpected delight: A handsome, tasteful, snazzily staged outpouring of song and dance that celebrates all the virtues of the Kander-Ebb catalogue, while scrupulously avoiding most of the cloying clichés of and-then-I-wrote anthologies.”

Audiences flocked to the show, which opened on March 18, 1991 at the newly renovated Westside Arts Theatre, where it played for 408 performances. After closing, the show had a ten-month national tour. It won the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical and the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Musical Revue. The show had a cast recording on RCA, and it has been

steadily produced all over the world ever since.

In 2013 I received a call from my pal Michael Sterling – he'd been talking with up-and-coming musical director Joshua Eli Kranz and the producers of a production of the show that had received glowing reviews at a tiny theater in North Hollywood. Michael had set up a radio interview with John Kander as a surprise to Joshua and during that interview the idea of doing a new recording was broached by Joshua. Michael then suggested they speak to me to see if I was interested in doing a new recording of the complete show. I'd seen the show off-Broadway right after it had opened and enjoyed it very much, and the teeny-tiny production had its pleasures, too. I was asked if I'd be interested in recording the show. Normally, if there's been a good cast album I'm rarely interested unless I feel I can bring something new to the table, recording-wise, or if the cast brings a whole new and fresh outlook to a piece. Since the original album was not complete and a lot of the great arrangements and songs as they are done in the revue had not been recorded, the idea did interest me, but not to do that particular production, as I wanted to use the show's original orchestrations (that production used only piano and drums) and I wanted to bring in a stellar cast if we were really going to record the entire show for the first time. Also, the original cast album had had its orchestra enhanced for the recording, but I thought it would be great to record the show's original orchestrations as they were written and as they'd been done off-Broadway.

So, I called my friend Paul McKibbins, who runs the Kander & Ebb publishing arm, and he thought it was a really great idea, and then John Kander and I conversed about it and he, too was all for it. I'd recorded a lot of their songs over the years, plus had done a critically acclaimed all Kander & Ebb album with Brent Barrett as well as jazz cover

albums of *Chicago* and *Cabaret*, with Brad Ellis and his Little Big Band. In fact, I'd first met and worked with John when I recorded some classical art songs he'd written, for an album called *Classical Broadway*.

The show's producers asked if I would keep one member of the cast of their production, and since I'd liked her in the show, I agreed. In casting three of the other roles, I simply turned to three of the best performers I knew and that I'd worked with many, many times – Brent Barrett, Jason Graae and Christiane Noll. Happily, all of them loved the idea of doing it and signed on. It was especially nice getting Brent, who'd done the workshop of *And the World Goes Round*, and, of course, our Kander & Ebb album and who'd performed in the *Chicago* revival as Billy Flynn longer than any other actor. I wasn't at all sure who the fifth cast member would be, but then by happy happenstance the show's musical director, Joshua Eli Kranz, and I saw a production of *Smokey Joe's Café* at the Pasadena Playhouse. A powerhouse lady came out, opened her mouth, and after four notes I knew we'd found our final cast member – Kyra Da Costa.

We finally got everyone's schedules worked out and went into the studio in February of 2014. Hearing these singers sing these incredible songs, with each making each number their own, was nothing but pleasure, and being able to record the entire show – every note – was fantastic.

We hope you'll enjoy this recording as much as we did making it. Even though it's a studio cast recording, we tried to instill in it a theatricality and life so that it would be the aural equivalent of seeing a great production of the show.

— Bruce Kimmel