

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**“WHAT PRICE CONFIDENCE,” A CHAMBER OPERA BY ERNST KRENEK,  
TO BE PRESENTED BY ELYSIUM – BETWEEN TWO CONTINENTS**

*September 21 - 30, 2000*

The **100th anniversary** of the birth of composer **Ernst Krenek** will be observed with the New York premiere of his rarely produced chamber opera *What Price Confidence*, at the Theater of Riverside Church, 120th Street and Riverside Drive (entrance at 91 Claremont Avenue). Performances are **September 21-23, 26-30 at 8pm**, and **Sunday, September 24, at 3pm**. The presentation of the 45-minute opera, cast in nine scenes, will be preceded by selected songs, including “Monolog der Stella” (1928; text by Goethe), “Drei Gesänge, Op. 56” (1927, text by Goethe), and “O Lacrymosa, Op. 48 (1926; text by Rilke). Prior to production in New York, the opera was presented in open rehearsal at the Compagnie de Comédie in Rostock, Germany.

Tickets are \$25 and \$15 and can be purchased by calling the box office of the Theatre of the Riverside Church at 212.870.6784.

On **Monday, September 18, at 8pm**, scenes from the opera and a panel discussion with the cast members, director, and conductor, will be presented as part of “Works & Process at the Guggenheim,” in the Peter B. Lewis Theater at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, located at 5th Avenue at 89th Street. Informal discussion and a reception in the museum’s rotunda will follow the program. Tickets are \$15 and \$10 for members, students and seniors, and may be purchased by calling the Guggenheim box office at 212.423.3587, or e-mail at [boxoffice@guggenheim.org](mailto:boxoffice@guggenheim.org)

The four-person cast of *What Price Confidence* includes mezzo-soprano Anne Duraski, soprano Julia Koci, baritone Joshua Parrillo, and tenor Christopher Pfund.

The opera will be staged by Gregorij H. von Lëitis. John W. Simmons is the music director, sets and costumes are by Melanie Swarovski, and Wendy Luedtke is the lighting designer. Krenek composed *What Price Confidence* to his own libretto in 1945. Set in London around 1900, the

opera's plot revolves around the relationships and inter-relationships between two couples, Gloria and Edwin and Richard and Vivian. The plot deals with themes of trust and mistrust in marriage, and considers issues of individual fulfillment and societal responsibility.

About the evolution of the opera, Krenek commented: "The opera was written at the suggestion of Herta Glatz, one of a group of four singers of the Metropolitan Opera who used to perform operatic fragments in concert performance accompanied by a pianist. The drawing room comedy that I conceived centers about the concept of confidence which, as I remember it, was on my mind after I had been impressed by Herman Melville's *The Confidence Man*. The Metropolitan singers never found the time for studying the piece (they had apparently been 'overconfident') so that the premiere had to wait." Ultimately, the premiere occurred in 1962 in Germany in a German-language version, and later in English by the Western Opera Theater in San Francisco.

**Ernst Krenek** was born in Vienna on August 23rd, 1900 and died on December 22, 1991 in Palm Springs, California. Early on, Krenek gained popular acclaim with his jazz opera, *Jonny spielt auf* (1927). Like many other artists, Krenek was forced to leave Europe during the rise of the Nazi party; he emigrated to the United States in 1938, where he assumed a position as professor of music at Vassar College and later moved to California. Krenek was a prolific composer who wrote more than 240 works over the extent of his career. His musical language incorporated the diversity of styles that defined the twentieth century, from expressionism to serialism, from popular idioms, incorporating jazz and dance, to aleatory and electronic music.

*What Price Confidence* is a production of **Elysium – Between Two Continents**, a German-American cultural organization devoted to the presentation of exceptional plays, operas, concerts, and exhibitions of broad cultural appeal. Elysium's 2000-01 season marks the centenary of Ernst Krenek's birth, and is dedicated to artists who were forced to flee from the Nazi Regime. Elysium annually presents the Erwin Piscator Award, honoring the legacy of the director identified with the establishment of modern political theater. This year's award recipient is the distinguished American actress Ellen Burstyn.

*For further press information about Elysium-Between Two Continents or for photographs,  
please contact Milina Barry PR at 212.333.5307.*

## Elysium – Between Two Continents

Calendar of Events

### **Monday, September 18 at 8 PM**

Guggenheim Museum

*“Works & Process”*

Scenes from Ernst Krenek’s opera, *What Price Confidence* will be the topic of a panel discussion. Participants include members of the cast, Director Gregorij H. von Lëitis and Conductor John Simmons.

### **Thursday, September 21-23 at 8 PM**

Theater of the Riverside Church

Ernst Krenek: *What Price Confidence*

John W. Simmons, music director

Gregorij H. von Lëitis, stage director

Melanie Swarovski, sets & costume

Wendy Luedtke, lighting

Julia Koci, soprano

Anne Duraski, mezzo-soprano

Christopher Pfund, tenor

Joshua Parrillo, baritone

### **Sunday, September 24 at 3 PM**

Theater of the Riverside Church

*What Price Confidence*

### **Monday, September 25 at 7 PM**

Theater of the Riverside Church

*“Music at the edge of life”*

Works by: Gideon Klein, Erwin Schulhoff, Lubos Fiser,

Rudolf Karel, Pavel Haas, and Viktor Ullmann

### **Tuesday, September 26-30 at 8 PM**

Theater of the Riverside Church

*What Price Confidence*

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