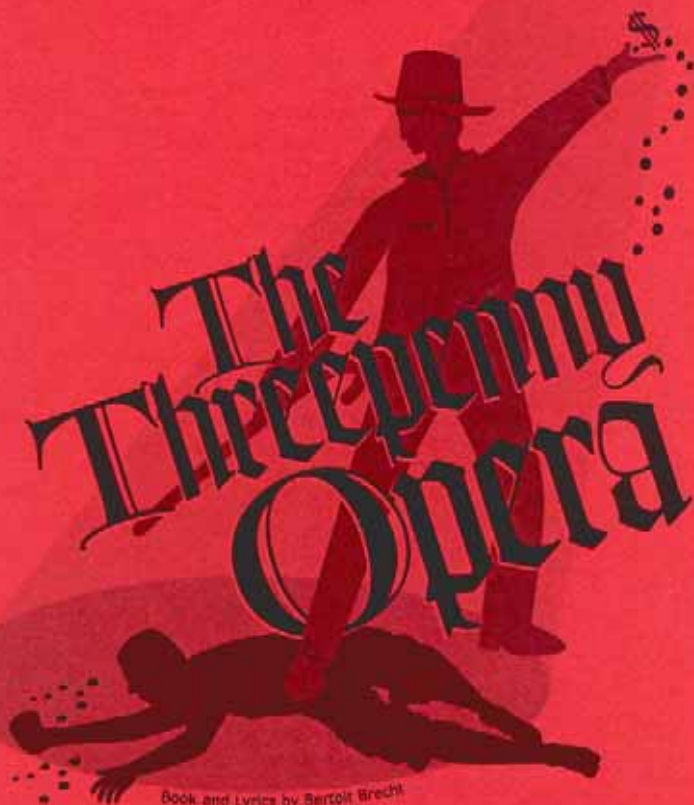


Presented By  
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania  
Department of Speech Communication and  
Theatre & Department of Music



Book and Lyrics by Bertolt Brecht  
Music by Kurt Weill  
English Adaptation by Marc Brynman

2004  
Birkenbach Theatre

**Faculty of the Department of**  
**Speech Communication and Theatre**

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Kutztown University's production of *The Threepenny Opera*  
is a participating entry in the  
Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival.

Kutztown University of Pennsylvania  
Department of Speech Communication and Theatre  
and the Department of Music Present

# **The Threepenny Opera**

by  
**Bertolt Brecht**

with music by  
**Kurt Weill**

English adaptation by **Marc Blitzstein**

**Director**  
Roxane Rix

**Musical Director**  
Dennis Williams

**Scenic and Lighting Design**  
Robert Lewis Smith

**Costume Design**  
Johanna Forte

**Assistant to the Director**  
Valentina Mohle

**Dramaturg**  
Maria Beach

**Stage Manager**  
Thomas Birch

**Prop Head**  
Brian Walsh

**Pianist**  
Michael Scales

**Choreography**  
Christopher Dickerson  
Tiffany Dow

Taking photographs and using recording devices is  
**prohibited** during the performance.

**Please silence all pagers and cell phones.**

Thank you!

## Cast List

Macheath	Adam Kissinger
Polly	Kristen Jarrett
Mr. Peacham	Cory Donchez
Mrs. Peacham	Jessica Greet
Jenny	Jennifer Price
Lucy	Tiffany Dow
Tiger Brown	Greg Davis
Street Singer/Rev. Kimball/Beggar	Marcos Villanueva
Smith	Valentina Mohle
Filch/Messenger	Rebecca Serra
Matt/Beggar	Patrick O'Neil
Jake/Beggar	David Picirilli
Walt/Constable/Beggar	James Corrado
Betty	Lauren Keil
Dolly/Beggar	Jen Newby
Molly/Beggar	Jen Kurtz
Coaxer	Lindsey Eck

### Director's Note

Welcome to *The Threepenny Opera*, here in Kutztown University's Rickenbach Theatre. If they haven't already, some of the student actors and singers may introduce themselves to you before the performance begins, because, in a play by Bertolt Brecht, you're a part of the event. You won't be asked to perform, but throughout the show the actors will engage you directly rather than create an imaginary world for you. Brecht's "Epic theatre" style points out that, though the action may be set in a different era (in this case, 1837), a play takes place here and now, in the theatre. That's also why there's no fancy scenery, and in our production, the approach is mostly modern, even though some script references aren't. The actors appear both as their characters and as themselves, and will be in view on stage and off. Sometimes, they'll stop the action to sing or talk about some important point. The characters and the action are not meant to be "believed" in the traditional sense, but viewed as direct reflections of society, which ring as true in America in 2004 as in the play's first performance in 1928 Berlin.

The plot of *The Threepenny Opera* revolves around Macheath ("Mack the Knife"), renowned as a suave man-about-town -- and as a thieving murderer (though he apparently never gets his hands dirty, but, rather, runs a gang and disavows or takes credit for their crimes as it suits him); his old army buddy, Police Commissioner Tiger Brown, buries the criminal records in exchange for a cut of the profits. Mack, though secretly husband to Tiger's daughter Lucy, marries Polly Peachum, whose parents control the local begging racket (they take more than half the beggars' money, and have thugs beat up anyone who refuses to pay). To get her back, Mr. and Mrs. Peachum blackmail Tiger to produce Mack's criminal records, and pay his favorite prostitutes to turn him in. Mack is about to get hanged when Queen Victoria not only pardons him, but gives him a castle, a title, and an income for life.

There you have it: in this play -- as in any society where money rules, Brecht asserts -- everyone's for sale, and crime does pay. There are no fully admirable characters. Brecht presents people not as they might pretend (or even wish) to be, but as he observes they

### Director's Note (con't.)

really are. He pokes fun in the manner of a rude jester, which Marc Blitzstein captures sharply in this 1954 American adaptation. His humor is often scathing, and if some of it offends you, that might be precisely the intent.

Brecht thought that theatre should inform people of the critical issues of the day and arouse them to action (this was termed "agitprop," discussed further in dramaturg Maria Beach's program notes). In that spirit, we have added to our production, in the lobby and on the electronic placards during the show, current facts about issues reflected in the play. The facts presented are from government agencies, mainstream news, and other respected sources, and sincere effort has gone into verifying their accuracy. Some may seem contrary to what you hear on radio and television or from your friends; some may appear to represent a particular point of view. This merely demonstrates two related principles: that, in any society, many popular beliefs are derived from unfounded assumptions, half-truths, and falsehoods, and those in power seek to perpetuate any beliefs that keep them in power, without regard to basis in fact. If the facts make you angry, it is as Brecht would want. His hope was that, instead of focusing anger on the messenger, denying the truth, or giving in to hopelessness, audiences would face the facts and resolve to change the conditions that created them.

The play is also very funny, by the way: Brecht also wanted to entertain, and so do we. Some of the humor is brutal and dark, some is silly, and there's plenty in between. If our play sometimes makes you angry or annoyed, we hope it will also make you laugh.

Thank you for joining us. We look forward to sharing with you *The Threepenny Opera*.

-- Roxane Rix

### Dramaturg's Note

Okay, let's get a few things out of the way. First of all, when you go to a production called *The Threepenny Opera*, you're probably wondering (with dread or anticipation, according to your musical tastes) if this is an opera in the classic sense of the word. No, it's not. *The Threepenny Opera* was inspired by John Gay's 1728 ballad opera *The Beggar's Opera*, which was a parody of highbrow Italian opera -- then very fashionable with the upper classes -- but using popular tunes that average folk enjoyed and characters drawn from London's underworld. *The Beggar's Opera* was a satire of 18th century British politics and society, and precisely two hundred years later Bertolt Brecht decided to adapt it to his own world -- post-World War I Germany. He split the difference time-wise by setting the play in early Victorian London -- but that is because Brecht thought that putting a little historical distance in a play would encourage the audience to draw parallels between their own world and the world of the play. (Later Brecht would come up with the theory of *verfremdungseffekt*, which is a big intimidating word usually translated as "distancing effect" or "alienation" and is the building block of his Epic Theatre style.) Brecht and his co-writer Elisabeth Hauptmann\* had just started to work on the adaptation when he was offered a chance to premiere the (mostly yet-to-be-written) work later that year. Composer Kurt Weill was brought in to create the music -- which is more like 1920s Berlin cabaret songs than opera -- and the whole thing was written and composed and rehearsed in one high-energy summer. It was actually a very successful show, not just an adaptation (only one tune from *The Beggar's Opera* remained), and it was a huge success when it opened in 1928 (McNeff 56-62).

Secondly, director Roxane Rix promised you in her program note that I'd define "agitprop" for you. This is short for "agitation propaganda" and it means theatre with an in-your-face political edge that is supposed to get the audience fired up to act themselves -- not on the stage but out in the world. It flourished in the 1920s and 1930s in places like Russia and Germany and the United States, particularly when worries about the economy and jobs were making news (sound familiar?).

### Dramaturg's Note (cont.)

There are many different kinds of agitprop drama, and people of varying political persuasions have employed it. One thing most agitprop plays share, though, is that they try not to wrap everything up in a nice, tidy, satisfying package for the audience. (Remember, you are supposed to be *agitated*, not satiated.) As you watch the play, you might see this for yourself. Brecht makes fun of the way we spectators want a neat, happy ending at the end of this play, too.

Finally, if you see the way this program note is titled you're probably wondering "What's a Dramaturg, anyway, and why is she writing this stuff?" Dramaturgs provide historical and literary assistance to a theatre production, serve as constructive critics in rehearsals, and try to act as bridges between the audience and the production (among other things). So think of me as your friendly guide to ideas found in this play and some of the goals of our production. This might be extra-helpful if you are here because you need to write a paper for a theatre class. Since I'm almost out of space, be sure to check out the lobby display for more information on Epic Theatre and the ways this play isn't just a history lesson about 1728 or 1837 or 1928 but also a reflection of some issues that are still with us in 2004.

--Maria Beach

\*Co-writer Elisabeth Hauptmann? How come she's not listed on the program or the poster? That's because Brecht is notorious for having lots of women as his creative and sexual partners but taking all the credit for himself. Pay attention to the way Mack the Knife juggles women and treats his gang and you'll see how art imitates life.

Work Cited: McNeff, Stephen. "The Threepenny Opera." *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*. Ed. by Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994: 56-67.



## **Production Crew**

### **Assistant Stage Manager**

Jessica Johnson

### **Assistant Dramaturg**

Evangeline Galliford

### **Scene Shop Assistants**

Katharine Ferguson

Dan Burda

Adam Kissinger

Elizabeth Yoder

Jonathan Greco

### **Scenery Construction**

Julianne Remus

### **Master Electrician**

Dan Burda

### **Light Board Operator**

Nikki Singleton

### **Follow Spot Operator**

Kimberly Levins

### **Projection Research**

Jen Kurtz

Kimberly Levins

### **Projection Operator**

Nathan Matz

### **Sound Production**

Patrick O'Neil

### **Sound Board Operator**

Mike Kneeram

### **Publicity**

Emily Bahlinger

### **Assistant Dramaturg**

Evangeline Galliford

### **Box Office Manager**

Maria Bernardo

Tara Mitchell

### **House Manager**

Lisa St. Armand

### **Prop Head**

Brian Walsh

### **Prop Procurement**

Jennifer Conrad

### **Props Running**

Amanda Kimble

Joanna Stevens

**Production Crew (cont.)**

**Assistants to the Costume Designer**

Rebeka Schaeffer

Terri Tobin

**Costume Shop Crew**

Laura Buttenbusch

Syretta Hill

Jennifer Price

Greg Davis

Sarah Langstrom

Tad Schlegel

**Dressers**

Elizabeth Yoder

Kate Fergusen

Wesley Trump

Matthew Burns

**Make-up Designer**

Jessica Johnson

**Make-up Crew**

Alex Grecco

Joshua Dusel

Stacey Williams

Amy Barone

**Hair Style Execution**

Marge Emerich

***Special Thanks to:***

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Troy Weidner

and the Department of Electronic Media

Marge Emerich and Zimar Hair Fashions

Bob Reinecke for headshots and website design

Talina Stackhouse for poster and program cover design

## Student Bios

**Thomas W. Birch (Stage Manager)** is making his debut as a stage manager at Kutztown University. He last worked on the KU Mainstage as an Assistant Stage Manager for the Fall '03 production of *Arms and the Man*.

**James Corrado (Walt/Constable/Beggar)** James is a Freshman Theatre major and this is his first Mainstage production at KU. During the Diversity Festival in the Fall Semester '03, James appeared in *Cootie Shots*. In high school, he was an active actor, musician, and vocalist.

**Greg Davis (Tiger Brown)** is a Senior Theatre major. He has been in several KU Mainstage productions, most recently playing Nicola the butler in the Fall '03 production of *Arms and the Man*. Last spring, he played the Old Man in *Iphigeneia at Aulis*.

**Cory Donchez (Mr. Peacham)** is a Junior Music Education major. He first appeared on the KU Theatre Mainstage in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. He has also appeared in the Sunshine Players' productions of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* and *Alice In Wonderland*. He is a member of *Broadway Magic*, *Afterhours*, *University Choir*, and *Chamber Singers*. Cory is the Musical Director this semester for the Sunshine Players' production of *Oz*.

**Tiffany Brooke Dow (Lucy/Choreographer)** This production of *The Threepenny Opera* marks Tiffany's third mainstage production at KU. Other roles Tiffany has played include Catherine in *Arms and the Man* and Belinda/Flavia in *Noises Off*. Tiffany is the secretary of KU's resident dance company and is a Sophomore Theatre major.

**Lindsey Eck (Coaxer)** Lindsey is a Freshman Theatre major. She has been in musicals such as *Annie* (Cecile), *Anything Goes* (chorus), *Leader of the Pack* (chorus), and *State Fair* (chorus). This is Lindsey's KU Mainstage debut.

**Jessica Greet (Mrs. Peachum)** Jessica is a Senior Related Arts major, with minors in Music and Crafts. She has been dancing for twenty years in ballet, modern, and tap. Jessica is currently the president of L. S. M. and is the treasurer of the Dance Team. This is Jessica's debut for the KU Mainstage.

### Student Bios (cont.)

**Kristen Jarrett (Polly)** Kristen played Louka in the Fall '03 production of *Arms and the Man* at KU. She is a Junior Speech Communication major with minors in Public Relations and Theatre. She is vice president of the KU dance company and is a sister of the Delta Zeta Sorority.

**Valentina Mohle (Assistant to the Director/Smith/Beggar)**

Valentina is a Senior Theatre major, and is pleased to be Assistant to the Director and to perform Smith/Beggar under the direction of Professor Rix. She is no stranger to the KU stage, having performed in *Baby With the Bathwater*, *The Seagull*, *Alice In Wonderland*, *The Hot I Baltimore*, and *Iphigeneia at Aulis*. She earned nominations to the KC/ACTF Irene Ryan acting competition for her performances in the latter two productions.

**David Piccirilli (Jake/Beggar)** Dave is a Senior Music major with a concentration in Guitar. He has been singing with the University Choir for ten semesters. He has also been playing guitar for *Broadway Magic* for three semesters. In Spring 2000, he performed in the Sunshine Players' Production of *Free to Be You and Me*.

**Michale Scales (Pianist)** Michael is a Freshman Piano Performance major, and is studying under Dr. Charisse Baldoria. He has played for several high school productions (*Bye Bye Birdie*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Anything Goes*), and is an accompanist and teacher at the Stage Door Workshop in Allentown.

**Rebecca Serra (Filch/Messenger)** Becca is a Junior Theatre major and is thrilled to be in her first mainstage production at KU. Other credits include Meg Brockie in *Brigadoon*, Katherine in *Taming of the Shrew*, and Helena in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

**Marcos Villanueva (Street Singer/Reverend Kimball/ Beggar)**

Marcos is a Sophomore majoring in Music: Vocal Performance. This production marks his debut on the KU Theatre mainstage. Past credits include performances in *Grease*, *Once Upon a Mattress*, and *A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum* at Parkland High School.

## Faculty Bios

**Professor Roxane Rix (Director)** joined Kutztown's Theatre faculty in the fall of 2001 after more than fifteen years of directing, teaching, and acting in university and professional venues from the northeast to the midwest. Memorable among her directing credits are *Twelve Dreams* and *JB* at Villanova University (where she also performed the role of "Pirate Jenny" in *Moll Flanders*). Since arriving at KU, she has directed *The Seagull*, and last spring's *Iphigeneia at Aulis*. Active in regional and national theatre organizations, Prof. Rix is best known across the country and in many parts of the world for her courses, workshops, and publications on Alba Emoting, a new technique to help actors gain emotional freedom (for which she also maintains the website [www.albaemotingna.org](http://www.albaemotingna.org)). Prof. Rix holds an MFA in Directing from the University of Minnesota and Certificate in Acting and Directing from Sonia Moore's American Stanislavski Theatre.

**Dr. Dennis Williams (Musical Director)** Dr. Williams is a member of the Kutztown University Department of Music faculty where he teaches conducting, voice, musical theatre, music literature, and serves as conductor of University Choir and director of the stage revue company *Broadway Magic*. Dr. Williams has served as musical director for productions of *Evita*, *My Fair Lady*, *Damn Yankees*, *The Sound of Music*, *Fiddler On the Roof*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Telephone*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Apple Tree*, *A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum*, *The Boyfriend*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Godspell*, *Olympus on My Mind*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, and *The Fantasticks*, among others. The Indiana University School of Music graduate has extensive experience leading both vocal and instrumental groups, conducting ensembles on college and community levels throughout the US and Europe and has served on the music faculties of several colleges. He frequently serves as adjudicator and clinician for competitions, workshops, and festivals. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting and is at home with a variety of musical styles, from standard choral/orchestral repertoire to musical theatre and show groups.

### Faculty Bios (cont.)

**Professor Johanna Forte** (Costume Designer) has been an Assistant Professor of Theatre at Kutztown since 1987. Originally from Michigan, Professor Forte came to KU with a wide range of professional experience, including designing at Meadow Brook Theatre, SUNY Purchase, two years as a resident costumer at Allentown's PA Stage Company, and assisting New York-based costume designers. The Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival has recognized Professor Forte for her costume designs in *Crimes of the Heart*, *The Lion in Winter*, and *All My Sons*, among others. Presently, she is the faculty advisor for the Sunshine Players. Professor Forte's most recent KU productions include Lanford Wilson's *The Hot l Baltimore*, Robert Brustein's adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Baby with the Bathwater*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, and *Arms and the Man*. She resides in Bowers, PA with her husband, Randall, and their two children, Melina and Byron.

**Professor Robert Lewis Smith** (Scenic and Lighting Designer) has spent thirty-plus years teaching design and designing for academic theatres in New York, Virginia, Maryland, and Washington. Before coming to KU, Professor Smith designed scenery for Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre in Missouri, where he designed the set for Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Other professional credits include designs for New York's AMAS Musical Theatre, The New Dramatists, Westbeth Theatre, Syracuse Stage (formally known as the Syracuse Repertory Theatre), the Arkansas Repertory Theatre, A Contemporary Theatre, Theatre Center Philadelphia, the Jersey Lyric Opera, and the New Jersey Ballet. KU Mainstage credits: *Rhinoceros*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Olympus on My Mind*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, *The Hot l Baltimore*, *The Seagull*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Baby with the Bathwater*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, and *Arms and the Man*.



The Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival-  
XXXVII

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The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for inclusion at the KCACTF regional festival and can also be considered for invitation to the KCACTF national festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2005.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.