

**THE  
THREEPENNY  
OPERA**

BY BERTOLT BRECHT | MUSIC BY KURT WEILL

PRESENTED BY

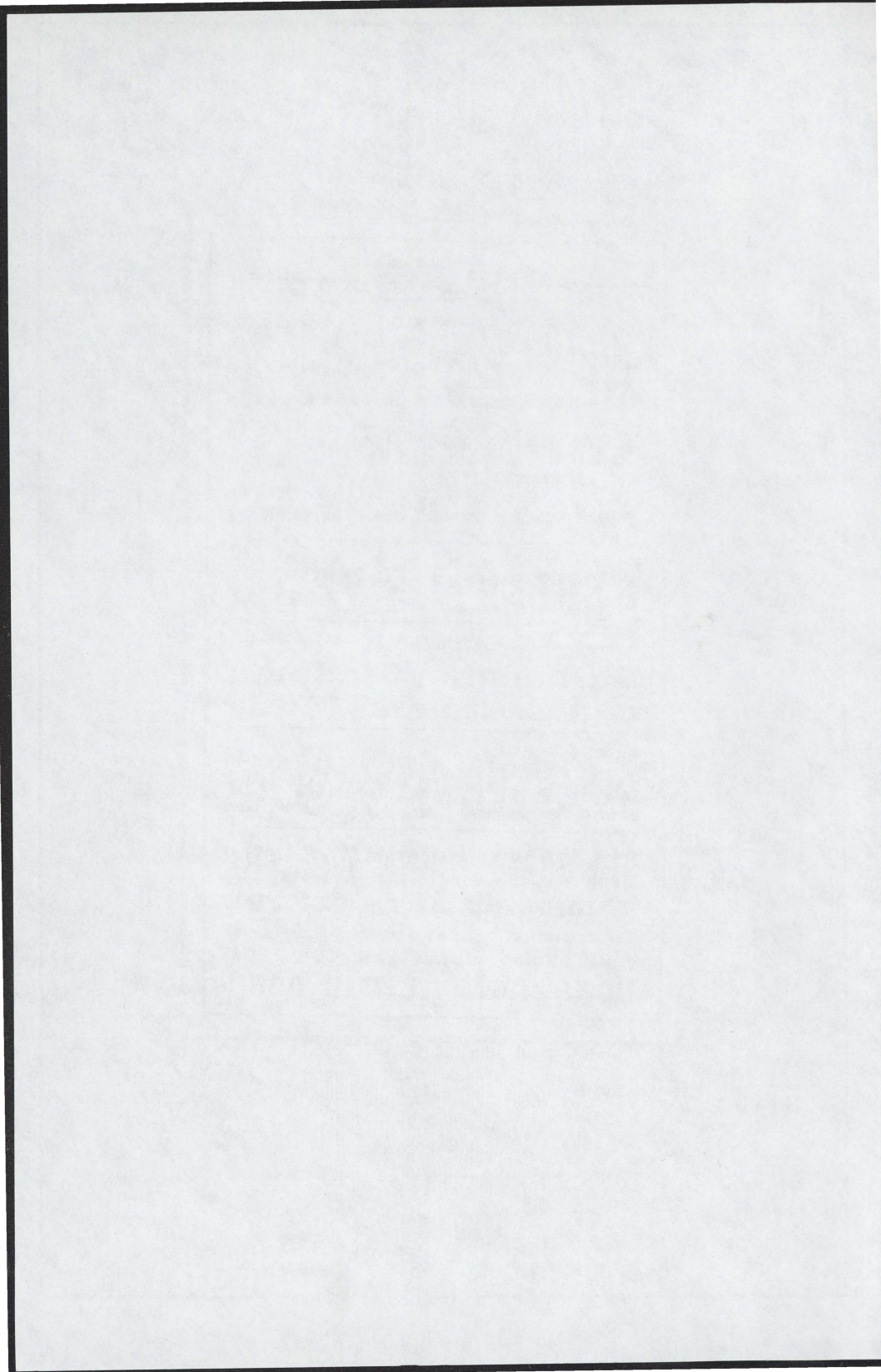
**Dalhousie Students  
of Theatre and Music**

**APRIL 4-6, 8PM**

**SIR JAMES DUNN THEATRE  
DALHOUSIE ARTS CENTRE**

To reserve a seat for the night of  
your choice please call 494-2233

**DONATIONS AT THE DOOR**



## TARA'S NOTES

When the offer to work with my professor David Overton was proposed, I could only think of one response: yes. I knew that it was guaranteed to be a project full of fun, adventure and of course, learning. What I did not realise was the extent to which these factors would become a disproportionate reality. Ironically, even Bertolt Brecht could not have imagined a more ludicrous situation under which this show has found its way to the stage. And quite frankly, I think Brecht would have relished in our process. Despite the adversities, more specifically, despite being stripped of my opportunity to work side-by-side with David, this experience has been worthwhile.

In theatre, as in everyday life, we are offered many obstacles and opportunities. This show was certainly not lacking in obstacles, but with every new difficulty came a new lesson to be learned. Everything that you see, and do not see, is the result of dedication and perseverance in this, the most strenuous of times. Without the convictions of David Overton, Lisa St. Clair, Peter Perina and many many others, this show would not have reached the point that it has. Their inspiration and blessing encouraged the rest of us to carry on. I only hope that we have done justice to their ideas and have achieved "happy endings, nice and tidy".

Enveloped in the words of this show are the individual emotions, integrity and spirit as discovered by each actor throughout the course of the process.

Although the text and music were scripted by Brecht and Weill, this is *our* story too.

# Theater am Schiffbauerdamm

Direktion: Ernst Josef Anfriedt

## Die Dreigroschenoper

(The Beggars Opera)

Ein Stück mit Musik in einem Vorspiel und 8 Bildern nach dem Englischen des John Gay.

(Eingelegte Balladen von François Villon und Rudyard Kipling)

Übersetzung: Elisabeth Hauptmann  
Bearbeitung: Brecht  
Musik: Kurt Weill  
Regie: Erich Engel  
Bühnenbild: Caspar Neher  
Musikalische Leitung: Theo Mackeben  
Kapelle: Lewis Ruth Band.

### Personen:

Jonathan Peachum, Chef einer Bettlerplattē	Erich Ponto
Frau Peachum . . . . .	Rosa Valetti
Polly, ihre Tochter . . . . .	Roma Bahn
Macheath, Chef einer Plattē von Straßenbanditen . . . . .	Harald Paulsen
Brown, Pollzeichef von London . . . . .	Kurt Gerron
Lucy, seine Tochter . . . . .	Kate Köhl
Trauerweidenwaller . . . . .	Ernst Romund
Müßmatthias . . . . .	Karl Hanneemann
Hakenfingerjakob . . . . .	Manfred Fürst
Sägerobert . . . . .	Josef Bunzel
Jimmie . . . . .	Werner Maaschmeyer
Ede . . . . .	Albert Venohr
Fild, einer von Peachums Bettlern . . . . .	Naphtali Lehrmann
Smith, Konstabler . . . . .	Ernst Busch
Huren . . . . .	Kuffner
	Jedekis
	Helmke
	Kliesch u. a.
Bettler . . . . .	Schiskaja
	Ritter
	Heimsoth u. a.

Banditen, Huren, Bettler, Konstabler, Volk.

(Ort der Handlung: London.)

Eine kleine Pause nach dem 3. Bild.

Große Pause nach dem 6. Bild.

Die Walzen des Leierkastens wurden hergestellt in der Fabrik Bacigalupo.

## BERTOLT BRECHT

Brecht was born in Augsburg, Germany in 1898 to a Catholic father and a Protestant mother. They lived a typically bourgeois lifestyle which Brecht would later reject. He was often ill as a child and suffered a heart attack at age twelve, but he soon recovered and continued his schooling. In school, he began to write articles and plays of a controversial nature. The young Brecht was almost expelled from his private school because he questioned the necessity of defending his country in time of war.

Brecht moved to Munich to study medicine. In Munich, he began to explore the cabaret scene and encountered two of his idols, Frank Wedekind and Karl Valentin. He also became sexually adventurous, visiting brothels to gain "experience". Brecht had many relationships throughout his life and his attitude toward women has proved controversial.

Brecht briefly served as an orderly in World War I before returning to Munich to work as a dramaturg. In 1922, his play *Drums in the Night* debuted. This was followed by *In the Jungle of the Cities* and *Baal* in 1923. Between 1923 and 1933, many of Brecht's works debuted including *Man is Man*, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, *The Measures Taken* and *The Threepenny Opera*. He also worked with Kurt Weill on operas and musical pieces including *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. Brecht married twice in this period and had three children.

Brecht fled Berlin in 1933 and continued to write as he traveled through Europe. He completed *The Good Person of Szechwan*, *Mother Courage and Her Children* and *The Threepenny Novel* (which developed *The Threepenny Opera* even further) before moving to the United States in 1941. Brecht traveled through the United States, writing *Life of Galileo* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* and returned to Europe in 1947.

Brecht's return to Berlin saw the creation of the Berliner Ensemble in 1949. He continued writing, adapting and mounting productions throughout Europe while working with the Ensemble. Brecht attended his last rehearsal four days before he died in 1956.

Brecht is considered a giant of 20<sup>th</sup> century theatre. His theoretical writings and practices greatly influenced the modern theatre. He is best known for his theory of Epic Theatre which endeavours to break down the illusions and false realism of traditional drama. Epic Theatre forces the audience to observe the onstage action rather than surrender to feelings of disbelief. This is accomplished by making the audience realize that it is indeed an audience watching a performance. Brecht used the Alienation Effect as a tool to separate the audience and performance, exposing the theatrical trappings of drama. He wanted to inspire his audience to take social action, which could only be done if they remained alert and outside the action. Thus, Epic Theatre has a social function. Brecht saw his work as an opportunity to change theatre and society.

While *The Threepenny Opera* is not as socially radical as Brecht's later work, which was influenced by Marxism, it is an example of Epic Theatre at work. Its music, presentational style and separation of elements have an alienating effect, forcing the audience to examine the proceedings, the characters and their motivations. Brecht and Kurt Weill turned Epic Theatre into Epic Opera, transforming a remote and aristocratic art form into something useful and socially conscious.

"Nothing is more revolting than when the actor pretends not to notice that he has left the level of plain speech and started to sing."

-Brecht on opera

"Epic theatre turns the spectator into an observer, but arouses his capacity for action, forces him to take decisions...the spectator stands outside, studies."

-Brecht on Epic Theatre

## THE RISE AND FALL OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

*The Threepenny Opera* commented on the social and political situation in Weimar Germany.

At the end of the 1800s, Germany was under the rule of Kaiser Wilhelm. The Wilhelmine Empire experienced huge urban growth at the turn of the century, as many people moved from the country to cities such as Berlin. There was also increased industrialization and by 1910, Germany was the second largest industrial power in the world after the United States. Yet growth was uneven and Germany experienced many social and political crises along the way.

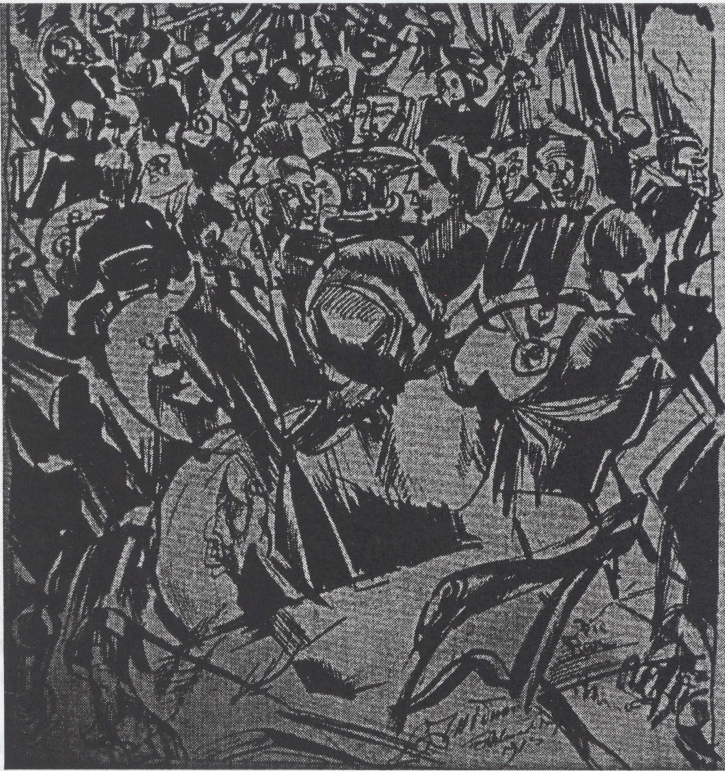
Pre-World War I Germany was characterized by growing political disaffection and corruption. Religion and a duty to family were still prized but there was an underlying sense of material gain in this increasingly industrialized society. There was a "cult of the Kaiser" in which the father of the nation embodied an ideology of law, order and conservative morality. This conservative order was displayed in strict censorship laws and in a conflict that arose with the more liberal ideology of free enterprise.

Artists were particularly sensitive to this sense of crisis and they began to question moral and social norms and bourgeois tastes. Wilhelmine society was considered "devoid of taste" and culture usually meant "high culture" which young artists considered "boring". Artists also began to react against views of sexual morality, increasing protectionism, anti-semitism and the educational system, which many considered anti-female and oppressive.

The Wilhelmine Empire eventually fell after World War I. The combination of losing the war and continued social disparity led to its dissolve. In 1918, the proclamation of the Weimar Republic gave Germany a new sense of hope and optimism. However, social inequality did not end in Germany. The Weimar justice system was

seen as hypocritical, with laws for the rich and laws for the poor. There was also a rise in nationalism and pro-military attitudes after the World War I loss and artists attacked the glorification and romanticizing of war. Many artists were critical of both bourgeois society and the chaos of urban life.

The Weimar Republic eventually gave way to Nazi rule. This ended what many consider a golden age of German art and culture.



*The Bar.* Drawing by Ludwig Meidner, 1919



## THREEPENNY FEVER

The 1928 premiere of *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Beggar's Opera*) which would later become *The Threepenny Opera* caused a sensation. It was a triumph for the playwright/lyricist, Bertolt Brecht, and the composer, Kurt Weill. They had created something new – an epic opera that attacked both traditional opera and the social problems of Weimar Germany. It was also highly entertaining. However, there was little indication that the show would be a success until the middle of the first act.

Bertolt Brecht was approached by a young producer looking for a play to fill his empty stage. Brecht mentioned that he was interested in adapting John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, which his mistress, Elisabeth Hauptmann, was in the process of translating. Gay's 1728 musical play had recently enjoyed a successful revival in London so the producer approved of the idea. Brecht and Hauptmann began to work on the script and songs while Kurt Weill began to compose the music. The producer, Ernst-Josef Aufricht, was initially worried when he first heard Weill's modern music. He even prepared a plan to use the original music or hire a new composer.

The group was sent to the south of France to work. Brecht added and cut scenes and inserted new songs. He found the original songs too "cozy" and "reassuring". He also used the poetry of Kipling and Villon, which would later ignite an authorship controversy.

Rehearsals were a disaster. The actress playing Polly dropped out of the production and her replacement had to learn her role in four days. Helene Weigel became sick and her part had to be cut, while Rosa Valetti, playing Mrs. Peachum, demanded one of her songs to be cut. The actress playing Lucy could not sing her solo properly and that had to be cut as well. The play was forty-five minutes too long and needed a great deal of editing. Brecht cut the script, wrote the finale during rehearsals and quickly wrote the show's most popular song, "The Moritat of Mack the Knife". And Lotte Lenya, who

## *The Threepenny Opera*

Director.....	Tara Patriquin
Original Directorial Concept.....	David Overton
Dramaturge.....	Tyler Foley
Musical Director.....	Lisa St. Clair
Assistant Scenographer.....	Jennifer MacGregor
Original Scenographic Concept.....	Peter Perina
Lighting Designer.....	Jennifer MacGregor

### Cast

Street Singer/Filch/ Reverend Kimball/	
Constable Smith/Mounted Messenger.....	Trevor Scott
Mr. J.J. Peachum.....	Al Amirault
Mrs. Peachum.....	D'Arcy Hagerman
Polly Peachum.....	Melissa Renshaw
Macheath.....	Gordon Trites
Jenny Driver.....	Holly Smith
Tiger Brown.....	Art James
Lucy Brown.....	Amanda Levcrown

#### ***Mac's Gang:***

Readymoney Matt.....	Gino Akbari
Crookfinger Jake.....	Omar Habib
Bob the Saw.....	David Flemming
Walt Dreary.....	Chris Kelly

#### ***Ladies of the Brothel:***

Sukey Tawdry.....	Kristin Bell
Betty Doxy.....	Liz Elliott
Molly Brazen.....	Amanda LeBlanc
Dolly Trull.....	Gillian Anderson

The ladies of the brothel are being created for this production, and are based on and named for characters in John Gray's *The Beggars Opera*.

### **Musicians**

Pianist/Conductor.....	Ingrid Perry
Guitarist.....	Jeff Torbert
Percussionist.....	Ryan Gray

The show will run for two and a half hours with one intermission.

## For This Production:

Stage Manager

The *Garrett*

Book Assistant Stage Manager

Blaine Fraser

Set Construction Crew

Kathryn Jansen, Jessica  
Lewis

Properties Crew

Hayley Dominey, Natalie  
Gooding, Melissa Herald,  
Margaret Kelly, Stephanie  
Lehman, Kirsten Petrie,  
Melinda Robb

Lighting Crew

Jeff Baggs, Megan  
Harrington, Julia Legge,  
Bruce MacLennan

Costume Coordinator

Adam MacKinnon

Costume Running Crew

Janine Cockburn, Jo Hickey,  
Geoff Hughes, Adam  
MacKinnon, Alanna  
McKnight, Mariette Ostrom,  
Kerry Withrow

House Manager

Deborah Preeper

Photographer

Kenneth Kam

Poster Design

Paul Williams

Programme Notes

Tyler Foley (Third Year)

### SPECIAL THANKS

Lesley Brechin, Susan Hall,  
Dr. Walter H. Kemp, Jody  
Lyne, Marion Marchant,  
Heather McGean, Allison  
Patey, Jacqueline Poole,  
Melanie Rasmussen, Sonai  
Senquipta, Dr. Lynn  
Stodola, Ian Thomson

played Jenny, was not included on the program.

At the premiere, the audience did not react until the "Cannon Song" ("Army Song"). Riotous applause followed the song and the show was a success. Productions throughout Europe and around the world soon followed. The 1930 film version by G. W. Pabst was also a success, despite Brecht's disapproval. The film ignited "Threepenny fever" in Berlin. A "Threepenny" bar opened and it played only "Threepenny" songs. Recordings of the songs were widely available and extremely popular, especially "Mack the Knife", which has become one of the most popular songs of the last century. Even "Threepenny" wallpaper, depicting the show's characters, was available.

*The Threepenny Opera* finally had a successful American adaptation in 1954 at the Theatre de Lys in New York. Marc Blitzstein adapted the show to suit an American audience and Lotte Lenya reprised the role of Jenny. The show continues to be revived in many forms. It has become an open piece that can be adapted to many time periods and styles and it obviously still resonates politically and musically.

BLUES TEMPO (♩ = 66)

SINGERS

1. ON, THE SHARK HAS PREET-TY TEETH, DEAR

AND HE SHOWS THEM TEARL-Y WHITES.

JUST A JACK-KNIFE HAS MAC-NEATH, DEAR

If people are coming expecting to hear Bobby Darin or Louis Armstrong, they'll get a nasty shock."

-Sting, star of a 1989 revival, commenting on "Mack the Knife"

## KURT WEILL

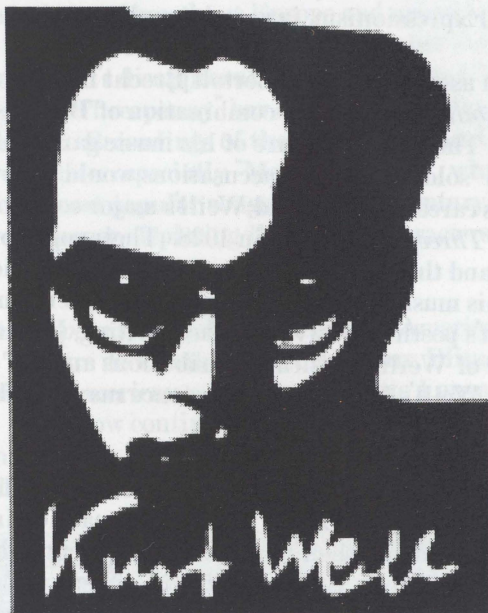
Born in Dassau, Germany in 1900, Weill showed an early interest in music. He moved to Berlin in 1918 to study and by 1923 he had five full-length classical works performed in Germany. His first opera debuted in 1926. Weill's early work was influenced by post-Romanticism, Expressionism, jazz and popular music.

Weill began an association with Bertolt Brecht in 1927 when they created *Mahagonny Songspiel*, a combination of Brecht's poetry and Weill's music. The popular nature of his music garnered accusations that Weill had "sold out". These accusations would follow him throughout his career. Brecht and Weill's major collaboration was, of course, *The Threepenny Opera* in 1928. Their collaborations ended in 1930 and the separation may not have been amicable. Weill believed that his music had become somewhat subservient to Brecht's text. In Brecht's posthumously published writing, he actually takes credit for some of Weill's musical contributions and his inventiveness. Weill's legacy and importance may have been obscured by his association with Brecht.

Weill's career continued to flourish when he moved to the United States with his wife, Lotte Lenya. The couple married in 1926, were then briefly divorced and then remarried. They remained together until Weill's death. Lotte Lenya, a prolific singer and actress, devoted herself to his musical legacy. She promoted, performed and protected his music for the rest of her life.

Weill's Broadway shows include *Lady in the Dark*, *One Touch of Venus*, *Street Scene*, *Love Life* and *Lost in the Stars*. He paved the way for composers of "Broadway opera" such as Leonard Bernstein and Marc Blitzstein. Weill brought opera to a wider audience in a new form and experimented with the concept musical.

Weill died in 1950 after years of hard work and medical problems. In Weill's obituary, composer Virgil Thompson said, "He was the twentieth century's greatest musical architect."



"I'm perfectly happy sitting in my study all day, composing."

- Kurt Weill

"Lenya, you know you come right after my music."

- Kurt Weill to Lotte Lenya

or Louis Armstrong, they'll get a nasty shock."

- Sting, star of a 1989 revival, commenting on "Mack the Knife"

## THREEPENNY COLLABORATORS

### MARC BLITZSTEIN

Blitzstein was drawn to music at an early age. He was born in 1905 in Philadelphia and made his professional piano concerto debut in 1921. He studied in Berlin and Paris and his early compositions were Modernist and rhythmic piano pieces. He proclaimed himself an intellectual snob, believing that true art was meant for the intellectual elite. Blitzstein even criticized Kurt Weill for pandering to the public with popular music influences.

Blitzstein changed his tune in the early 1930s. He began to emulate the words and work of Bertolt Brecht. He wrote that "music must have a social as well as artistic base; it should broaden its scope and reach not only the select few but the masses." He took back his remarks about Weill and attacked traditional approaches to art and music.

After the death of his wife in 1936, he threw himself into the composition of his political opera, *The Cradle Will Rock*. The idea was suggested to him by Brecht. This show, directed by Orson Welles, made Blitzstein famous because of a troubled and sensational premiere.

Blitzstein's next major success was his 1954 adaptation of *The Threepenny Opera*, starring Lotte Lenya. The rest of the 1950s were less successful. His Broadway work went virtually unnoticed and only *Juno* has since been revived. His 1949 opera, *Regina*, has also been revived.

Blitzstein died in 1964 after he was beaten by a group of sailors in Martinique. His good friend Leonard Bernstein said that Blitzstein's "special position in musical theatre is irreplaceable."

## RUDYARD KIPLING

English poet, born in India in 1865. Journalist and author of the *Jungle Books*. Brecht "borrowed" some of Kipling's poetry for *The Threepenny Opera*. While Kipling was credited, Brecht faced a controversy about these "interpolated" poems. Kipling's influence can be heard in "Army Song" and "Polly's Song".

## FRANCOIS VILLON

French poet, born in 1431. Villon lived the life of a criminal and thief. He was arrested and pardoned numerous times. He also wrote poetry in which he was often a character. "The Testament" is his major work. He finally faced the gallows and composed a poem while waiting to die. However, he was again pardoned and disappeared from Paris forever. Villon was Brecht's favourite poet and he incorporated his poetry into *The Threepenny Opera*. Brecht was criticized for this and again faced issues of intellectual property. Villon's voice can be heard throughout *The Threepenny Opera*, especially in the brothel scenes and Macheath's final speeches and songs.

## ELISABETH HAUPTMANN

Brecht's mistress, collaborator and translator. Her contributions to his work are immeasurable and still debated. She is probably responsible for a great deal of the text in *The Threepenny Opera* and she suggested the adaptation of *The Beggar's Opera* to Brecht.

## JOHN GAY

English poet and playwright who lived from 1685 to 1732. He is famous for his satirical fables and his 1728 ballad play, *The Beggar's Opera*, which ran for an unprecedented 62 performances. *The Threepenny Opera* is based on Gay's play, which satirized traditional opera and attacked the disparity of the social classes in 18<sup>th</sup> century London. There are obvious parallels to the political situation in Weimar Germany. Gay used a ballad style, sung in the vernacular with popular melodies, to parody opera and his play offered the realism absent from conventional opera.



## CABARET

German cabaret, inspired by Parisian cabarets and café society, is usually associated with Berlin. However, it really began in Munich, which provided a more intimate atmosphere. Munich became the center of theatrical, musical and visual arts in Germany and cabarets provided gathering places for artists sharing a distaste for bourgeois values. Munich's first cabaret, *The Eleven Executioners*, opened in 1901. An evening's entertainment would consist of songs, puppet shows, literary parodies, dances and drama. The tone was political and satirical, setting a standard for German cabaret performance. Songs were often combinations of storytelling and moral judgments. The "moritat", inspired by street singers who delivered the daily news in song, is the best example of this style.

After World War I and the proclamation of the Weimar Republic, Berlin became the artistic capital of Europe. Relaxed censorship laws led to a "gaiety bordering on hysteria" and cabarets flourished in this environment. Nude dancers, political poets, transvestites, folk singers and comedians all found a place in the cabaret scene. Cabaret managed to combine high and popular art, politics and entertainment.

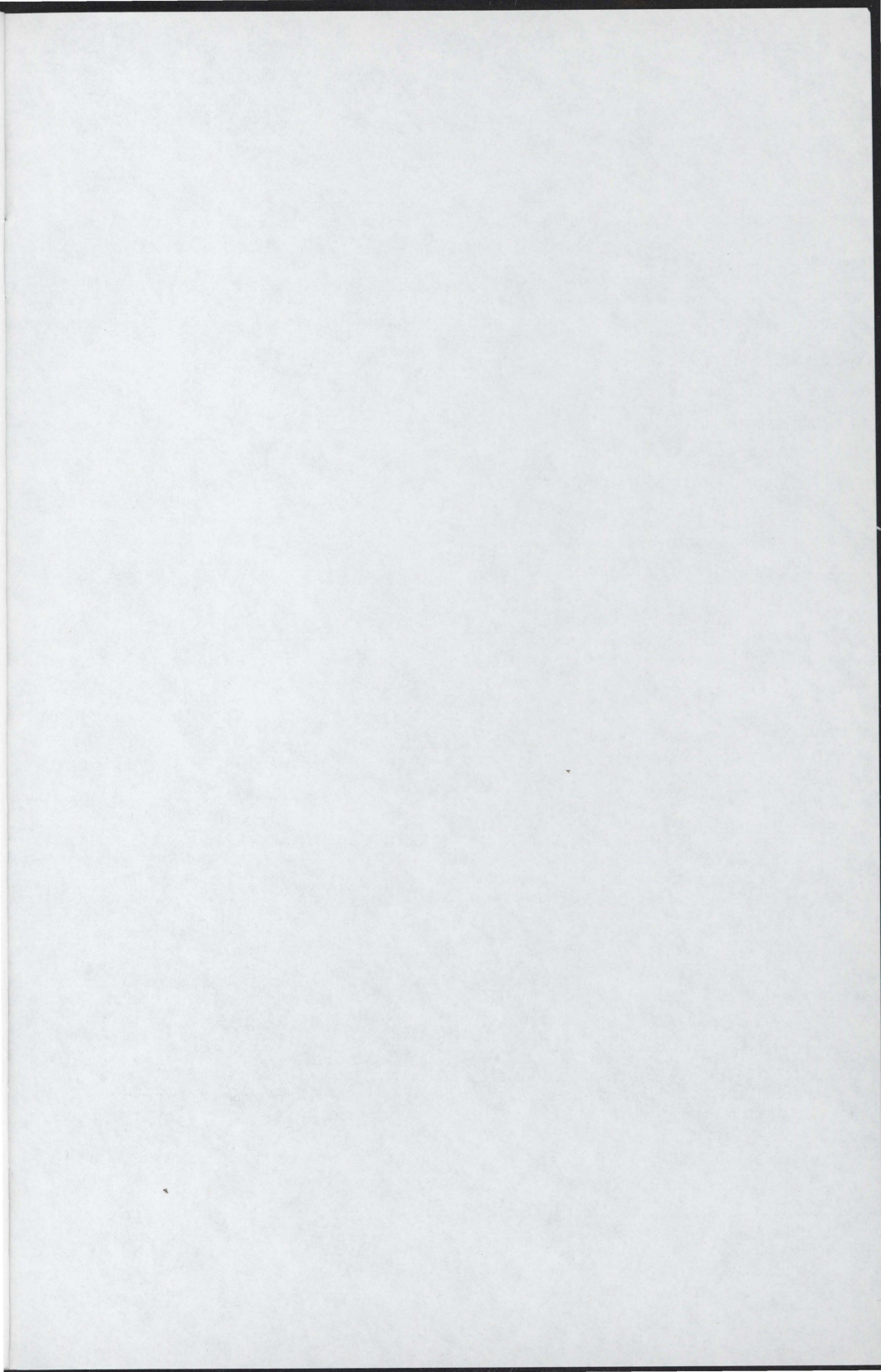
Bertolt Brecht was drawn to the dynamic world of cabaret in Munich. He was a writer and performer of cabaret songs and he opened his own Munich cabaret, *The Red Grape*, in 1922. The cabaret style eventually served as a model for his theatrical work. He incorporated the stripped down stage and sketch-like scenes of cabaret into his staging. He was especially influenced by the unique performer/audience relationship of cabaret and this figured prominently in his concept of epic theatre. The sound and style of *The Threepenny Opera* is obviously influenced by German cabaret. The success of the show in Berlin was due in part to audience familiarity with the cabaret style.

Cabaret began its decline in Germany at the end of the 1920s. The Nazis put an end to cabaret activity as they gained power, but there was a resurgence of the style after World War II. Stand-up comedy, sketch television and pop singers all owe a debt to German cabaret.

*SIMPLICISSIMUS CABARET*  
TEN RULES FOR CABARET LIFE

1. Come, if possible, late, so that the guests already there know that you *do* have something else to do.
2. Give your coat to the woman in the cloakroom. You're a friendly man and your coat is new.
3. Sit down haphazardly and noisily. Then change your seat often until you find one with the right shape.
4. Read the menu and wine list loudly and nosily to your companion.
5. When everything concerning your personal welfare has been looked after, take part – even if at first only unwillingly – in the artistic presentation. Look upon the conferencier with contempt right from the start. He's an ass and because of that, let him feel your spiritual superiority.
6. Place your loud interruptions exactly where they don't fit. This actually belongs to the enlivening of the programme.
7. If you're a woman, then criticize the dress of the performing artiste loudly and skillfully. Don't forget your lorgnette (opera glasses/eyeglasses) for this.
8. During song presentations, blow your smoke unbotheredly toward the podium. The singer will inhale it willingly. It makes his voice soft and supple.
9. During acts, use your cutlery and glasses in an unbothered fashion. Their sound does one good and replaces the band.
10. When you have been bored long enough by the programme and have gotten angry over your bill, leave as nosily as you came in with the consciousness of having spent a most enjoyable evening.

- Tyler Foley



Cabaret began its decline in Germany at the end of the 1930s. The Nazis put an end to cabaret activity as they gained power, but there was a resurgence of the style after World War II. Stand-up comedy, sketch television and pop singers all owe a debt to German cabaret.

### SIMPLIKESIM'S CABARET TEN RULES FOR CABARET LIFE

1. Come, if possible, late, so that the guests already there know that you do have something else to do.
2. Give your coat to the woman in the cloakroom. You're a friendly man and your coat is new.
3. Sit down haphazardly and noisily. Then change your seat often until you find one with the right slope.
4. Read the menu and wine list loudly and noisily to your companion.
5. When everything concerning your personal welfare has been looked after, take part - even if at first only passively - in the artistic presentation. Look upon the entertainer with contempt right from the start. He's an *arbeitslos* because of that, let him feel your spiritual superiority.
6. Place your loud interruptions exactly where they deal it. This actually belongs to the entertaining of the programme.
7. If you're a woman, then criticize the dress of the professional artists loudly and skillfully. Don't forget your *brille* (glasses/eyeglasses) for this.
8. During song presentations, blow your smoke unbothered toward the podium. The singer will inhale it willingly. He makes his voice soft and supple.
9. During acts, use your cutlery and glasses in an unbothered fashion. Their sound does one good and replaces the band.
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